

Mediations

Journal of the Marxist Literary Group



Volume 23, No.1, Fall 2007 || Dossier: Brazil

Published twice yearly, *Mediations* is the journal of the Marxist Literary Group. We publish dossiers of translated material on special topics and peer-reviewed general issues, usually in alternation. General inquiries and submissions should be directed to editors@mediationsjournal.org.

We invite scholarly contributions across disciplines on any topic that engages seriously with the Marxist tradition. Manuscripts received will be taken to be original, unpublished work not under consideration elsewhere. Articles should be submitted electronically in a widely-used format.

Manuscripts should not exceed reasonable article length, and should be accompanied by an abstract of up to 300 words, including six keywords. Articles will be published in MLA endnote format, and should be submitted with the author's name and affiliation on a separate cover page to facilitate blind peer review. Photographs, tables, and figures should be sent as separate files in a widely-used format. Written permission to reproduce copyright-protected material must be obtained by the author before submission.

Books for review should be sent to:

Mediations
Department of English (MC 162)
601 South Morgan Street
University of Illinois at Chicago
Chicago IL 60607-7120 USA

Articles published in *Mediations* may be reproduced for scholarly purposes without express permission, provided the reproduction is accompanied by full citation information.

For archives and further information, visit
<http://www.mediationsjournal.org>

Translations and this selection © 2007 by *Mediations*

Mediations 23.1, Fall 2007

Dossier: Brazil

Editors' Note.....	1
Paulo Arantes: Panic Twice in the City.....	7
Roberto Schwarz: Worries of a Family Man.....	21
Roberto Schwarz: The Relevance of Brecht: High Points and Low.....	27
Iná Camargo Costa: Reflections on Theater in a Time of Barbarism.....	63
Francisco de Oliveira: The Lenin Moment.....	83
Luiz Felipe de Alencastro: Brazil in the South Atlantic: 1550-1850.....	125
Book Reviews	
Milton Ohata: Our Lot.....	177
Milton Ohata: Brazilian Civilization's Missing Link.....	195
Contributors.....	221

Editors' Note

This number marks the inauguration of the second series of *Mediations*, the journal of the Marxist Literary Group. *Mediations* has circulated in various forms and formats since the early 1970s, and is now distributed free on the web. At a time when, as one of this issue's contributors has remarked elsewhere, the near closure of the global economic system has paradoxically led to renewed attention to a Marxist discourse that had, to some, ever since — well, pick your date — seemed obsolete and in desperate need of re-thinking, or at least had seemed ripe for scavenging by other discourses, this is a particularly opportune moment to be returning *Mediations* to circulation.

This second series of *Mediations*, published twice yearly, is in fact two series running in parallel. The Spring issues are peer reviewed and open submission. The Fall issues, like this one, consist of dossiers of material, usually in translation, on non-U.S. themes of interest. This year's dossier collects material from Brazil; more specifically, from a nucleus of Marxist thinkers in various disciplines (philosophy, history, literary theory, sociology, theater) who can claim São Paulo as their intellectual home. The core of their work is the relationship between broadly cultural phenomena and economic history; most particularly, the history that produces Brazil (but of course, not only Brazil, far from it) as a peripheral economy within several mutations of the modern capitalist system. Of paramount importance to each of these thinkers is the differential functioning of capitalist relations of production across geographical divisions of labor. In other words, it is never a matter of using the history of capitalism to collapse differences among regions or countries; but neither is it a matter of fetishizing such differences as having a substantial existence outside the history of capitalism. In other words, it is a question of studying the differential effects produced by a single process. The lessons drawn and insights gained are various and

profound: not only for an understanding of contemporary capitalism and contemporary society in general, but for the specific aspects of contemporary capitalism to which the first-world critic, even the first-world critic on the Left, is often blind.

We begin with the philosopher and Hegel scholar Paulo Arantes's "Panic Twice in the City," written in the aftermath of the events of May 2006, when São Paulo was shut down by attacks originating in a series of prison revolts. Mainstream North American reporting of the episode was typically sensationalist, but it does not appear to have been notably worse than its Brazilian counterpart. Arantes uncovers the meaning of the event by a surprising, but in retrospect necessary juxtaposition, placing it alongside a general strike that paralyzed São Paulo in 1917. Far from representing chaos, the disruption of the social order is in each case structured. The 1917 episode, though it initially presents the appearance, at least to the privileged classes, of mere bedlam, is quickly recognized by all sides as obeying a classical binary class logic, and the two sides wind up quite literally at the bargaining table. The logic of the 2006 episode, which springs into relief in comparison with the older one, is quite different, and offers insights into what class analysis can mean under conditions of deindustrialization and of the privatization of such basic public goods as order itself, as well as into the psychological and political effects, reaching far beyond Brazil or the third world more generally, of the functionalization of terror, itself only possible in its current form after the privatization of futurity.

From there we move to two essays by the great Brazilian literary critic Roberto Schwarz. Best known in the U.S. for his writings on Brazilian literature and particularly on Machado de Assis, Schwarz is here writing on European rather than Brazilian material. However, both contributions, the first obliquely and the second explicitly, find new meaning in these texts by exploring their insertion into a Brazilian context. The first article, from early in Schwarz's career, is a brilliant reading of Kafka's "Worries of a Family Man," a text that fascinated Adorno and Benjamin, neither of whom ventured to offer anything so definite as an interpretation. Schwarz, while making use of these and other earlier analyses — think of Benjamin's application to Kafka of the Brechtian notion of the gestic, which is mobilized quite differently here — boldly steps in and, to use a terminology that Deleuze would invent for Kafka a decade later, names the assemblage — class society — in which the narrative machine called "Odradek" can take flight. Schwarz's text is itself an allegory — the clue is the reference to "white men," which gives the reading a context foreign to Kafka's own — but that more particular allegory is made via an immanent interpretation of Kafka's text, so that the latter, once viewed through the lens of everyday life on the periphery of

capitalism, ultimately comes to embody, in gestic form, an anxiety peculiar to property relations under capitalism.

The second essay, from a recent collection (of which Milton Ohata provides a critical summary and review in this issue), concerns the reception in Brazil of Brechtian epic theater. It begins from a question that is all the more scandalous since it comes from the Portuguese translator of *Saint Joan of the Stockyards* and *Galileo*: What if Brecht no longer has any relevance whatsoever? Schwarz searches carefully for an historical justification for Brechtian practice, beginning from an initial contradiction in Brecht's method through a series of ambiguities suffered by Brechtian or quasi-Brechtian practice in Brazil, from the modernizations of the 1950s to the present day. But as Schwarz takes us simultaneously through the political and economic history of contemporary Brazil and possible permutations of the Brechtian problematic, contradictions — or is it a single contradiction, assuming multiple forms? — keep reappearing. Despite his evident sympathy for Brecht and the Brechtian, Schwarz's tour takes us everywhere but out of the deadlock. But a new question arises. In spite of everything, *St. Joan* speaks to the present. We know this, the actors know this, the audience knows this. How is it possible? Schwarz turns from Brecht the theorist of his own practice to Brecht the playwright to reveal the brutal, almost obscene parody that lies buried at the heart of *St. Joan*, a parody which reaches into the deepest pores of the dialogue and exposes an attitude proper to capitalist competition — call it cleverness-unto-death — that speaks as much to the still-looming global liquidity crisis and the threat of environmental ruin as it does to the stock market crash of Brecht's own day.

An indispensable theorist of epic theater herself, Iná Camargo Costa reports on the theory and practice of contemporary independent theater groups in São Paulo. Her contribution provides a sense of the richness of this scene, at the same time as it outlines some of the limitations of the assumptions that underlie it. The undergirding theme of the essay is that of theater as a response to barbarism. The logic of barbarism in this essay makes explicit reference to the German political economist Robert Kurz, who describes a kind of crisis, originating with the increasing structural redundancy of human labor power, which has the potential for permanence, or at least permanence within capitalism. Its effects are felt first in the "developing" world, but cannot be contained there forever. That is, "barbarism" names not a punctual crisis with a beginning and an end, but rather the emergent condition of capitalism itself. Barbarism is clearly cognate with terror in the Arantes essay, and crisis in the Schwarz (who, in fact, introduced Kurz into the Brazilian conversation), but it also has a specific meaning which can best be understood when Costa juxtaposes it with the older, Benjaminian thesis on

culture and barbarism. For Benjamin, barbarism was the secret underside of culture. For Costa, on the contrary, barbarism is the manifest condition of contemporary social life, and mainstream culture — including “alternative” and “cult” attractions within it — is a kind of boot camp for surviving it. Under these conditions, the decision to make art — and, not necessarily by choice, art that doesn’t sell — seems either self-indulgent or mad. The only possible choice, it seems, is to make art that speaks directly to barbarism itself. The second half of the essay is concerned with the practice of criticism. What is the critical mode that would best make this new theater intelligible?

Changing modes, we turn to the sociologist Francisco de Oliveira’s analysis of contemporary politics in Brazil. Oliveira’s contribution is, of necessity, thick with detail (and acronyms) concerning the recent history of Brazilian political and economic institutions, but this surface difficulty is worth overcoming. Oliveira’s task is to understand the meaning, both for Brazilian politics and for Left strategy in the neoliberal era more generally, of the presidency of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva. Lula’s presidency was initially understood in the U.S. as well as in Brazil as part of a wave of Left victories that swept Latin America in the first years of this century. The reality has been different. Oliveira describes Lula — possibly the only human being to maintain cordial personal relations with both Hugo Chávez and George W. Bush — as the “man without qualities,” an empty signifier that was initially able to appeal to various constituencies at a moment when, partly due to the ascendancy of a financial sector structurally in conflict with industrial capital, no class fraction stood a plausible chance of constructing a hegemonic position. The framing device of the essay, but also its lesson, is the peculiarity of the Russian revolution, which was famously double, with Lenin’s “crossing of the Rubicon” representing a charismatic decision in a moment of indeterminacy. Nor, famously, was the Russian revolution a phenomenon of the fully industrialized center, but rather of the underdeveloped periphery. The beginning of this century, on the deindustrializing periphery of contemporary capitalism, was characterized by a similar moment of indeterminacy. With hegemony impossible, what were Lula and his party to do with the power they had acquired? For Oliveira, Lula crosses the Rubicon in the wrong direction, for reasons which are both matters of decision and of much larger national, regional, and global political and economic processes.

Finally, we turn to the historian Luiz Felipe de Alencastro. Based on research that forms the foundation of his recent book on the Brazilian slave trade (also reviewed by Milton Ohata in this issue), Alencastro undertakes a wholesale re-ordering of the time and space that constitutes what we think of

as the history of Brazil. Here it is mutations in the mode of production — in the case of colonial Brazil, in the slave economy — that produce both the spatial connections and temporal disjunctions that comprise the pre-history of Brazil. Rio de Janeiro is thus “closer” to Luanda than it is to parts of modern-day Brazil which were excluded from the slave-economy circuit. The truth of Brazil, we might say, is Angola: since Brazil is in fact constituted by the African slave trade — Alencastro insists that until the middle of the 19th century Brazil experiences only a single, three-century economic cycle, that of the slave trade — the history of Angola is more integral to the history of Brazil than is the history of much of Brazil itself. In a fascinating postscript to Ohata’s review of *O Trato dos viventes*, Alencastro includes a decades-old review that foreshadows the work presented here. There the key date in Brazilian history is asserted to be not that of the Brazilianization of the Portuguese empire (1808), the declaration of independence (1822), or the establishment of the Republic (1889). Rather, the decisive date is 1850, when the slave trade is finally outlawed in Brazil. Only at that moment is the Brazilian territory transformed from a node in the colonial system, umbilically joined to zones of slave reproduction in Africa and the tribute-taking metropolitan centers of Portugal or England, to what it is today, a condition which is itself currently under mutation but which centrally concerns all of the writers included here: a peripheral economy dependent on the industrialized center.

This issue is largely the work of those of us with substantial knowledge of Portuguese: Nicholas Brown, Maria Elisa Cevalco, Neil Larsen, Silvia López, and Emilio Sauri. While initial translations were produced by individuals, the final drafts have passed under five sets of eyes, and so while credit quite properly goes to individual translators, any errors are collective responsibilities. Under these conditions it is impossible to speak of any particular philosophy of translation. Let us just say that while translation has tended to flatten out the differences among the very different styles represented by our contributors, we have tried to retain some impression of their distinct voices. It is nearly impossible to convey in translation the distinction between, say, the long sentence in Roberto Schwarz’s essays — where grammatical subordination acts as a brake on the fury behind the ideas, a kind of discipline, not unlike that of the dialectic itself, imposed upon the explosive material of contradiction — and the long sentences of Paulo Arantes, whose angular subordinations serve on the contrary to expose contradiction in its rawness and to give the prose its deliberately jagged edge. But we have done our best.

Nicholas Brown, for the *Mediations* editors

Panic Twice in the City

Paulo Arantes

Translated by Silvia L. López

“São Paulo is a dead city. The populace is alarmed; faces register panic and apprehension because everything is closed, without the slightest movement. Besides a few scurrying pedestrians, only military vehicles occupy the streets. ...Troops armed with rifles and machine guns have orders to fire at anyone who remains on the street.” This city emptied by fear is not the 21st-century megalopolis that on May 15, 2006 imposed a humiliating curfew on itself, prompted by a wave of attacks whose chain of command — no pun intended, despite its relevance — originated from inside an immense penitentiary system, following rebellions in at least 73 of the 105 prisons recently scattered all through São Paulo State by a carceral policy of unheard-of proportions. No, the city in question, even though the industrial center of the country, is still provincial, the factory system having been a lever recently added to the more traditional mechanisms of dispossession characteristic of a colonial economy. Even so, it is a city alarmed and held at bay by an uprising of classical European cut: nothing more or less than a workers’ general strike, which in July 1917 paralyzed São Paulo for several days.

At the height of the conflict, which for the first time brought the working-class masses into direct confrontation with the repressive apparatus of the factory owners (themselves a novelty within the oligarchic power structure), the number of uprising strikers reached the sum, terrifying for the time, of 50,000. The state government was forced to seek help from the federal

Translated from “Duas vezes pânico na cidade” (Paulo Arantes, *Extinção* [São Paulo: Boitempo, 2007] 295-311), this article first appeared in Spanish in the Argentine journal *Punto de Vista* 85 (August 2006).

8 Paulo Arantes

government, which sent troops and dispatched two war ships to the port of Santos. The strike had become total, and the city, for the first time, a disorderly battleground paralyzed by the surprising strategy of direct action employed by the rebellious masses.¹ The clashes between the unruly multitude and the Public Forces (something like today's Military Police) multiplied; public transportation came to a halt, partly due to a lock-out on the part of the owners and partly due to attacks on vehicles. The train services joined the strike. The uprising expanded to the suburbs, interrupting the supply of the central area. The labor leagues, which were organized in the workers' neighborhoods, erected barricades and set up strongholds in the tenements and alleys of those zones of ostracism and social confinement. There was no lack of gunfire: for example, between police and union workers entrenched on the construction site of the new cathedral, or barricaded in a popular coffee shop. Also disconcerting were the attacks on authorities: not only were there attempts to assault police stations, but the police chief's own car was shot, not to mention the expedition of a column of rebels to the residence of the Secretary of Justice, which was put down by his personal guards. The rebels' predilection for attacking gas streetlamps — there is more to this story, even though the description is in the sympathetic words of Everardo Dias, a former union militant and now historian of social conflict in Brazil — contributed to the phantasmagoric impression of a dead city lit up in flames.²

While it is undeniable that in this vision we can already make out urban terrors to come, not to mention those already crystallized by the feared anarchist immigration, it would be necessary to add to this ghostly scene certain elements that today seem to belong to another world: like the fact that the gaslights were merely the targets of street kids having fun, a caprice which happened to help the nocturnal mobility of the insurgent workers, or the continuous hijacking of buses, which allowed for free transportation and itineraries dictated by the whim of the passengers. A dead city? A question of class. In that time of struggle against absolute surplus value, a looming state of siege — but who was besieging whom? — was hard to distinguish from a world turned upside down by an ephemeral libertarian release.

To say that the real thing was in the offing would be an exaggeration, but even had it been at hand, this never to be repeated surge announced the decline of anarchism in the Brazilian workers' movement. It was also the beginning of the end of our long nineteenth century. We should recall that the dynamic nucleus of the first industrial revolution, the textile sector, reached us about 100 years later than in Europe. To compensate, we lived a very short twentieth century: exactly fifty years of a nationalist developmen-

Panic Twice in the City 9

talist project, between 1930 and 1980. It began under the ascendant sign of communist revolution, and would end without the recently-founded Partido dos Trabalhadores [Workers' Party, or PT] — all exaggeration aside, the repository of all the hope in the world — having the slightest suspicion that its eventual debut as the hegemonic organization on the Brazilian Left would inaugurate our precocious entrance into the disorganized capitalist system of the twenty-first century. (It must be remembered that the unraveling began in the periphery before reaching salaried, well-structured societies.) After a brief and glorious anarchic summer, followed by communist mistakes that had their own productivity, to the PT cycle would fall the highs and lows — until the current profound low, which a presidential reelection only makes gloomier — of the mere *administration* of a political vacuum filled until now by 25 years of socioeconomic decadence. This is not statistical rhetoric: current income per capita in Brazil is one fifth of that in the US; in 1980 it was close to being one third of it, and income from work made up half of the national income. Meanwhile, the wealthiest population quantitatively duplicated itself, with about 40% of the wealthy achieving their status through patrimonial inheritance: a revealing feature, since such wealth is decreasingly generated by licit, productive activity. In the past 25 years of stagnation and deindustrialization, the country has become urbanized, with the urban populace reaching an unbelievable 80% of the population. Unfortunately it's been quite some time since urbanization ceased to be synonymous with development, rather than with favelization and the informal, if not openly illegal, economy.³ This is a sign that the urban frontier has also reached its limit, provoking a wave of marginalization within marginality as occupiable land becomes saturated.⁴ In the metropolitan area of São Paulo alone, there are three and half million young people whose social vulnerability can be measured by the one million who can't get into school, which means they can't get any work. As the journalists, whose philanthropic spirit attains a pathetically Victorian quality, are wont to say, they simply do nothing.⁵

Without any future, the youth are the first to succumb to the seduction of crime and "its hard easy gains."⁶ Extrapolating within the limits of the reasonable, one could say that the human nebula in which the slum population and the new informal proletariat orbit each other — these are far from being the same thing, except for the dramatic circumstance of being no longer a reserve of anything — and which populates the urban frontier mapped out by Mike Davis, constitutes, in today's totally changed terms (and with apologies again for the word), the weakest link in the imperialist chain.⁷ To be more precise in this birds-eye view of the end of the line, we must add

that at the heart of this strategic link is the vertiginously growing mass of the prison population. That dam broke during the mega-revolt of May 2006, which however was confined, if not deliberately contained, within its urban floodplain. Thus we turn to the historical time lag between the social alarms that sounded in each of the two extreme periods of social warfare in São Paulo, which are serving here as a term of comparison.

The general strike that paralyzed and terrified São Paulo in 1917 blossomed in the midst of police management of the so-called social question, when the belabored classes seemed as foreign and dangerous (in the case of the immigrant population, the demonization of the poor was magnified exponentially) as barbarians of a new era camping out on the margins of civilized society. Nonetheless, the factory owners of São Paulo enlisted a commission of journalists to negotiate with the rebelling masses, which were represented by a Committee of Proletarian Defense. In spite of, or perhaps because of, the frontal clash, the struggle between the two fundamental classes, both clearly identified as such, imposed an order on the fear and gave it a tangible significance. At the other extreme of the historical cycle of the fears inherent to capitalist urbanization, the belabored class — and now I refer to the jailed subclass of surplus humanity — finally proved to be what bourgeois fear had always claimed they were, namely dangerous. No longer through the voice of a working-class militant, but through the megaphone of the mass media, São Paulo for the second time declared itself scared to death. The local press reported that the city had been swept by “the largest wave of violence in its history.” Illustrating the perverse symmetry, there was indeed a kind of negotiation in this final chapter as well. At some point — dates vary — the command in charge of the rebellion gave the order for all jail mutinies to end and for all street attacks to cease, even though police retaliation continued to escalate. This time, however, the classic antagonistic classes did not sit at the table. Not because they had disappeared, but simply because the mechanisms of social representation had become unrecognizable. And, in contrast to what had happened in the previous century, it is quite probable that the populace felt a rather more moral panic than less — a panic carefully nourished by those who govern and by their media extensions — when it realized that the penal arm of the state (assuming there is any other) was able to reach a deal with the parallel powers inside the prison system. Such a deal is an open secret, at least according to a classic of hip-hop literature: “Do you really think that the party members [Party of Crime, also known as First Command of the Capital, or PCC, the name taken by the majority faction in the prison system] were taken out of jail to simply contain

revolts? The whole thing revolves around money, the one and only cause of the whole situation, a failed extortion that ended with hundreds of deaths.”⁸

At this point is not really important to know who is blackmailing whom. The point is that it is now a matter of a private war between powers either parallel or converging. This war is, however, of maximum scope — not only in terms of the collateral damage caused by the shock waves between them, but in terms of its structural function in the containment of the Brazilian slum-planet.⁹ It is all the more symptomatic of the current disintegration when outlined against the background of the former historical shutdown of the city, when class struggle was anything but a private deal between workers and owners, as the present war between police protection and the agents of illicit markets seems to be (but isn’t).¹⁰

So, shootings and skirmishes aside, the history of the first “Battle of São Paulo” registered only one casualty: the assassination of a young anarchist shoemaker, whose funeral cortege fanned the flames of the strike, at once turning it into a general strike. In contrast, the eight days of private war of the PCC against the Prison State, and vice versa, saw 1978 shots fired and 492 people dead. On May 15th alone, on the day that São Paulo came to a halt — 5 million passengers without access to transportation, not to mention gigantic traffic jams aggravated by police blockades, businesses, shopping centers, and schools closing, etc. — 117 people were shot to death by an average of four shots per death. At worst, one person alone was shot 22 times. By way of comparison, in the massacre committed by the shock troops of the Military Police when they invaded the rebelling prison of Carandiru in 1992, executing 111 people, the average of fatal shots was five per victim. Confronting a paroxysm of this size — the present one — the president of the Regional Council of Medicine declared that we were living through a “catastrophic period” unparalleled for as far back as he could remember. When the rebel cease-fire was called, which seems to have been on Mother’s Day (May 14), between 25 and 30 security agents had been downed by the insurrectional criminal faction. As for those officially killed by the police, which numbered about 130 (poor, black, mulatto, for a change) — independent organizations reported that 60% of the victims presented evident signs of having been executed.¹¹

The dead unrelated to the PCC seem to number around 350. According to some testimonies, hooded men would arrive and open fire; they are alleged to have been extermination squads that involved members of the police. Security specialists and human rights activists are still trying to understand this spasm of violence, including all the isolated homicides (if one can refer to them as such) as well as all the suicides. When the average daily death toll

is 20 and it reaches 60 per day, this catastrophic outbreak could well indicate the uprising of the notorious dangerous classes deciding to do wholesale what they've always done retail.¹² The current theory invokes the opportunist action of different types of criminals, operating under the shadow of the larger organizations' prestige, confident that their responsibility would go unnoticed at a moment when the authorities themselves are most interested in the amalgam of "organized crime," the popular demon of the moment.¹³ This can be used to explain the truly horrific numbers, but not so much the real novelty, a rupture in the patterns we are accustomed to. In the opinion of a specialist — who is far from alone in his thinking — "we have reached a new level. The capacity to organize things on the outside from within the jail system, to coordinate the burning of buses, attacks on buildings and banks, and to disrupt the life of the city, was for me an immense surprise... It also confirms that the profile of spontaneous criminality organized around gangs is a thing of the past."¹⁴

A concomitant new level has been reached on the scale of old and new urban dread — security having long since become the main commodity of the political industry of fear. The same applies to the anti-commodity of systemic insecurity, needed as much by the state as by its mediatic extension: the former to sell protection and the latter to nourish social alarm campaigns and punitive clamor. One of the first measures taken in this vein was the announcement made by the chief of police, in a dozen obviously rehearsed interviews, that the entire prison population of the state of São Paulo (about 140,000 prisoners) was under the formal control of the same organization that outside the prisons can mobilize about 500,000 people (including family, sympathizers, and professionals). So, the populace is panicked and in disbelief¹⁵ — or better, it says that it is panicked, when asked, because that is what it hears, sees, and reads with respect to its own state of mind.¹⁶ Comparisons with 9/11, now a prestige brand in the scarecrow bazaar, were words practically put in the mouths of fearful secretaries and janitors alike, and even in those of renowned social thinkers who joined the bandwagon of "our" September 11.

In light of the predictable flood of silly claims, it would not hurt to review the basics. A specialist on this geography of fear had us remember that in a class society characterized, like Brazil, by a high tolerance for violence, the wealthy middle classes are the principal consumers of the main product of the industry of fear, namely the phantasmagoric "security bubble." "Every morning cars leave their gated condominiums (bubble 1) to go to private schools with guards at the entrances (bubble 2); later, they continue on to entertainment zones or private leisure areas (bubble 3)." It is not surprising

that the basic concept of the city has disappeared, and that the cordon sanitaire formed by such bubbles externalizes the latent insecurity. This became evident in the incidents of May, when retaliatory counter-violence expanded in a disorganized way, not surprisingly affecting anyone living outside the bubbles.¹⁷ A week before the above-cited article appeared, on the day following the Great Fear of the PCC no less, another observer of the São Paulo scene had anticipated the argument regarding the psychological effects that the fear industry had on its main consumers — who were, for that very reason, the first victims of the information war declared by the PCC. The latter had made, quite at random, threatening telephone calls that were immediately reproduced by the media, who seemed to be performing involuntarily the role that the PCC had planned for them. "The middle class that forbids its children to take buses or the metro and surrounds itself with security cameras, alarms, etc., ran to its domestic bunkers.... In the early hours of the night a mantle of silence descended over the city."¹⁸ The next day, the news reported that "São Paulo awoke sad, quiet, and confused." From embarrassment? The author just cited thinks so.

It is almost funny, considering the height of social disconnection that characterizes the so-called elites — from the financial to the labor elite, passing through respectable white society interpellated by its own local governor, himself amazed by the level of moral alienation — that civic energy should be demanded of the Brazilian middle class: unless, out of pure nostalgia, we remember that such energy provided the human base for armed struggle against the dictatorship. A supercharge of objective irony comes from the fact (remembered now and again in the columns of the same old cultural apparatus as always) that the Party of Revolution and the Party of Crime crossed paths over thirty years ago, in the depths of the terrible prison at Ilha Grande, in the unheard-of condition — utopic? dystopic? — of "almost brothers," in the inconclusive statement of Lúcia Murat's 2004 film about an encounter that, of course, nobody had sought. Returning to the subject: "It is a terrorized city, perplexed and feeling low," says the administrative assistant, "who yesterday left her job early, like millions of Paulistas, and could not believe what she saw on the streets" — in the words of a reporter on the hunt for what she had been told to find. The young woman in question was more suburban than urban — in the good working-class sense — but even so, that "low," with its flavor of idiomatic English in the subtext, offers an opportunity to reintroduce the hyperbolic comparisons of our author of a moment ago, who was infuriated with the lack of nerve of the Paulistanos. "London wasn't paralyzed during the Blitz. But São Paulo cowered before vulgar delinquency. Shame!" Quite. A less absurd compari-

son would be to what we saw after the bombings in London on July 7, 2005. Despite the complacency of the Blair government and its media, who prattled on about “standing united” as in the heroic times when the city firmly withstood Hitler’s bombings, London simply disappeared, holed up at home, frightened not of radical Islam but of its own compatriots. This and other significant observations are found in Charles Glass’ article *The Last of England*, where he offers the following explanation: “In 1940, Londoners believed they would forge a fairer and better world after the war. Today, no one believes the world will be better than before the war on terror began.”¹⁹

So it is. As in peripheral São Paulo, metropolitan London was also terrorized, or better yet, terrorizable for the same reasons: everyone is floundering in the mousetrap of the political vacuum that accompanies the mental and material eclipse of not being able even to imagine an alternative future to the recurrent disaster of the present. In Jacques Rancière’s excellent definition, societies today, assembled under the questionable and ambiguous protection of a state redefined exclusively by the administration of a strategic and collective feeling of insecurity, are increasingly nothing more than “communities of fear.”²⁰ For this reason — we might add this on our own account, since Brazil is the laboratory for a worldwide disintegration — they are decreasingly national societies, in the plausible sense given us by Benedict Anderson of imagined political communities. Hence we have a perverse integration based on fear, and its underside of illegalities and conflicts always on the verge of a violent explosion. The notorious voice of command saying “There is no alternative” expresses not an objective, unappealable restriction — or not only this — but also a real atrophy of the ability to imagine an alternative: a paralyzing atrophy provoked by fear, above all by the fear that any change could only be for the worse.²¹

So here we are — and at the head of the parade, intellectuals scared to death to open the Pandora’s box of non-trivial transformations. Trying in his turn to understand the nature of the panic that gripped the city of São Paulo on that fateful day of May 15, 2006, another journalist, not a little embarrassed by the fiasco of the middle class, ends up at the same end of the line drawn by Glass. It is not by accident that he resorts also to an analogy that encompasses the sensation of total insecurity, an increasingly uncertain future, and obscene indifference to the destiny of the poor who remain outside the security bubbles. Because in the end what we are talking about is the fear experienced by the poor themselves, in the midst of a war between two groups that are not only organized but above all indiscriminate within their adjacent zones. In his opinion, the fear that spread among the “excess population” originates in the perception of the evident “lack of concern of the

State for those who can’t afford private services, something similar to the unconcern shown by the Bush government towards the victims of Katrina in 2005, when the poor were left to their own devices.”²² One could continue to argue whether the poor blacks of New Orleans were as abandoned and unprotected as the Brazilian mass of “useless to the world,” but the point is that “the panic was already there, and was only waiting for the occasion to explode.” On the horizon: the disbelief that the world will be better than before this new war against the brotherhoods of crime began. This is the political vacuum usurped the Party of Crime.

Notes

¹ For the reconstruction and interpretation of the 1917 strike, see Boris Fausto, *Trabalho urbano e conflito social [Urban Labor and Social Conflict] (1890-1920)* (São Paulo: Difel, 1976) Ch. 6. For another account of that memorable strike, with a focus on the anarchist hegemony of the period, see Francisco Foot Hardman, “Anarquistas e anarco-sindicalistas no Brasil,” [“Anarchists and Anarco-Sindicalists in Brazil”], *República velha*, ed. Antonio Mendes Jr. and Ricardo Maranhão (São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1979), vol. 3 of *Brasil história*, 4 vols.

² Foot Hardman 319.

³ Márcio Pochmann, “Decadência e enriquecimento” [“Decadence and Enrichment”], *Folha de São Paulo* 12 Nov. 2005: A3.

⁴ Mike Davis, *Planet of Slums* (London: Verso, 2006). Interview with Fabiano Maisonnave in *Folha de São Paulo* 26 Mar. 2006. See also Antonio Luis M.C. Costa, “Planeta favela” [“Planet Slum”], *Carta Capital*, 10 May 2006. The last report UN- Habitat report titled *State of the World’s Cities Report 2006-7*, presented during the opening of the World Urban Forum in Vancouver, on June 19, 2006, predicts that at the present rate of growth, within the next 20 years the slum will be main form of housing in the world. Today, 1 out of 3 urban dwellers lives in a slum — the percentage is 90% in so-called developing countries.

⁵ Gilberto Dimenstein, “O problema não é o PCC” [“The Problem Is Not the PCC”], *Folha de São Paulo* 17 May 2006: C12.

⁶ To use the title of a study in opposition to conventional wisdom: Vera Malaguti Batista, *Difíceis ganhos fáceis: droga e juventude pobre no Rio de Janeiro [Hard Easy Gains: Drugs and Youth in Rio de Janeiro]*, 2nd ed. (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Revan, 2003). *Seductions of Crime* is the title of a well-known book by Jack Katz, who argues that the vocation for crime is not provoked by a utilitarian calculation, but is rather seen as an end in itself, along with its uncontrollable extra-economic attractions, including the extraordinary profits of anomie. Since we have entered in this topic, it would be fair to reshuffle the filing cards of current stereotypes.

According to one of the many commonplaces of the so-called postmodern sociology

of violence, young poor people of the periphery enter into drug-trafficking because of a dream of consumption whose realization involves extreme violence, characterized today as a total social fact. But some extraordinary research shows the opposite: when he gets involved in drug trafficking — quite at the bottom of the power structure — the poor young man, left to the flies in the contemporary social landfill, has not opted for crime but rather, as incredible as it seems, has simply landed himself a job. He thinks of himself as having entered a branch of the world of work. See Marisa Feffermann, *Vidas arriscadas: um estudo sobre os jovens inscritos no tráfico de drogas em São Paulo* [*Lives at Risk: A Study of Youth in the Drug Trade in São Paulo*] (Petrópolis: Vozes, 2006) and also Phydias Ataíde in *Carta Capital* 17 Aug. 2005.

⁷ For a characterization of this new imperialism as an interrelation of accumulation by dispossession on the peripheries of the South and North with a new production of space as an expression of the territorial power of global capitalist governance, see David Harvey, *The New Imperialism* (New York: Oxford, 2005). For a succinct discussion of Harvey's thesis see my article "Último Round" ["Last Round"] *Margem esquerda* 5 (2005). According to Mike Davis in *Planet of Slums*, Pentagon strategists and their affiliated think tanks have, more or less since the Mogadishu debacle in 1993, discussed the implications of a world of cities with no jobs. The discussion of the new and complex irregular wars begins with the admission that the "mega-slum" — representing a strategic arc of instability, not accidentally extended over the heart of the remaining energy resources of a planet covered by an urban stain of bankrupt cities — "has become the weakest link in the new world order" (204). In a previous article published in 2004 in *TomDispatch.com*, during the battle for Fallujah, Davis referred to the Pentagon as a "Global Slumlord." We must wait and see: meanwhile let's take note of the fact that we live in one of the biggest world laboratories of this planet of slums.

⁸ Ferréz, "Meu dia na guerra: ou vamos atirar nos entregadores de pizzas" ["My Day in the War; Or, Let's Shoot the Pizza Boys"], *Caros amigos* June 2006: 15. The work referred to is Ferréz's *Capão Pecado*, [*Sinful Thicket*, a novel based on life in Capão Redondo, one of São Paulo's largest slums. — Trans.] (São Paulo: Labortexto editorial, 2000). Rapper D.J. King speaks with the same certainty about the agreement between the government and the insurgent faction: "it is very simple, bro, in this country money rules;" in *Carta Capital*, 24 May 2006: 12.

⁹ The thesis of a "private war" between the repressive forces of the state and the armed retail sector of the drug trade, entrenched in the segregated space of the urban poor, can be seen, possibly not for the first time, in the documentary by João Moreira Salles and Kátia Lund, *Notícias de uma guerra particular* [*News from a Private War*], 1998-1999. Were there any doubt about the private character of the war — leaving aside what we could call in classic terms its regulatory function in the administration of risk — it suffices to mention the institutional nature of the targets of attack during the May rebellion in São Paulo: police posts, police vehicles, centers

of judicial power, etc. There were some attacks on banks: outside of business hours however, and usually at night — perhaps for sentimental reasons, since the founding nucleus of this criminal brotherhood, as well as of its precursor of the 1970s (the Comando Vermelho or Red Command), was formed primarily by bank robbers.

¹⁰ If I am not oversimplifying the extremely illuminating outline of Michel Misse, *Crime e violência no Brasil contemporâneo* [*Crime and Violence in Contemporary Brazil*] (Rio de Janeiro: Lumen Júris, 2006), especially Ch. 9. With regard to the recent battle for São Paulo — what the newspaper *O Estado de São Paulo*, with heroic spiritual elevation, calls the Mothers' Day Uprising, a formula that escaped a historian who was possibly thinking of the bloody rebellions of the 19th-century Brazilian Regency — Misse reminds us again that this is a private war caused by dangerous liaisons between the "illicit markets that specialize in orgiastic commodities (bodies, luxury, drugs, and arms) and political commodities (extortion and corruption practiced on the basis of state agents' excess of power)," Michel Misse, "Profunda e antiga acumulação de violência" [An Old and Profound Accumulation of Violence], *Folha de São Paulo* 20 May 2006: A3.

¹¹ The syncopated statistics of the rap group Racionais MC serve here as a counterpoint: "60% of the youth without criminal records have suffered police violence. Three out of four people killed by the police are black. Every four hours a young black man dies violently in São Paulo. The one who speaks here is Primo Preto, another survivor;" Racionais MC, "Capítulo 4, versículo 3," *Sobrevivendo no inferno*, Cosa nostra, 1997..

¹² See José de Souza Martins, "A ordem do avesso" ["The Order of the Underside"], *O Estado de São Paulo* 21 May 2006: J3.

¹³ This theory is endorsed by the author in the previous note. In the end, the argument goes, this is less about the opportunism of the small fry than a convergence of interest between smaller and bigger criminals. "A substantial part of the apparent force of the latter is due less to the articulation of a powerful and large organization, than to the cascade effect of larger criminal actions affecting the disposition towards crime and violence in independent groups."

¹⁴ Sérgio Adorno, "Claro enigma" ["Clear Enigma"], interview in *Folha de São Paulo*, *Mais!* magazine, 21 May 2006: 4. Another researcher from the Violence Study Group at the University of São Paulo, Fernando Salla, argues in the same vein in "Uma dura lição" ["A Hard Lesson"], *O Estado de São Paulo* 16 May 2006: C13.

¹⁵ The same goes for intellectuals. One can well imagine the Amazon of nonsense born of the fear of Brazilian intellectuals, whose political and mental timidity is certainly nothing new. But that is a topic for another occasion. Stupidities that lay dormant in the depths of their souls for a generation were awakened in a number of veteran intellectuals, stupidities of the "proud to be citizen of the state of the Bandeirantes" type. [The *bandeirantes* were colonial scouts based in São Paulo. They were also slavers of the Indian population. — Trans.] I am a Paulista, but it has been at least half a century since I heard a colleague honor the "vigor" of our state, not even in a graduation speech. But that our capital is "a magnet that attracts

18 Paulo Arantes

everyone from models to migrant workers” — that’s a new one. One must have studied a great deal, or have tremendous fear, to reach a conclusion of this caliber. As it is often said, and with reason, fear paralyzes intelligence. Let the rest remain unsaid — at least by me, since I don’t want to be identified with the aggressor, much less to libel the police abstractly.

¹⁶ “Day of terror in São Paulo” was obviously among the most common headlines. Just one example of this rhetorical contagion is the opening of the special issue of the *Folha de São Paulo* on the day after: “A wave of panic yesterday paralyzed the largest and richest city in the country, and sent shock and fear reverberating throughout the state of São Paulo.” For the average reader the eloquence of redundancy is enough; for the happy few acquainted with geopolitical talk shows, it refers to the decapitation strategy announced during the first hours of the attack on Baghdad in the second Gulf War: shock and awe (a fiasco, however, since in that first spectacular push, all of the big fish escaped unharmed.) The most interesting thing in all this is that nobody bothered to point out — and above all to draw the proper conclusions from — the real and fundamental continuities among the various and new private wars being fought around the world.

¹⁷ Vânia Ceccato, “A indústria do medo” [“The Fear Industry”], interview in *Folha de São Paulo, Mais!* magazine, 21 May 2006: 6.

¹⁸ Demétrio Magnoli, “Pânico no galinheiro” [“Panic in the Peanut Gallery”], *Folha de São Paulo* 16 May 2006: C20.

¹⁹ Cited by Tom Nairn, “The New Furies”, *New Left Review*, 37, Jan.-Feb. 2006.

²⁰ Jacques Rancière, “O princípio da insegurança” [“The Principle of Insecurity”], *Folha de São Paulo, Mais!* magazine, 21 Sept. 2003: 3.

²¹ Frank Furedi pursues this argument about the exhaustion of contemporary politics in *Politics of Fear* (London: Continuum, 2005).

²² José Arbex, Jr., “O Katrina nosso de cada dia” [“Our Everyday Katrina”], *Caros amigos* June 2006.

Worries of a Family Man

Roberto Schwarz

Translated by Nicholas Brown

Some say the word *odradek* comes from the Slavonic and look for the word's derivation on that basis. Others think it comes from the German, only being influenced by the Slavonic. The uncertainty of both interpretations permits one to conclude that neither applies, particularly since neither leads to a meaning for the word.

Naturally nobody would occupy himself with such study if there were not actually a being called *odradek*. It looks at first like a flat starshaped spool, and in fact it does appear to be wound with thread; which, to be sure, is really only ragged, old, knotted together or simply tangled pieces of string of mixed color and description. But it is not only a spool, since a small crossbar emerges from the middle of the star and another bar joins the first at a right angle. With the aid of this second bar on one side, and one of the points of the star on the other side, the whole thing can stand upright as though on two legs.

One is tempted to believe that this entity once had some purposive form and is now simply broken. Despite appearances, this is not the case. At least, no evidence can be seen for it; one cannot find a mark of incompleteness or rupture that would suggest anything like that. The whole thing looks senseless enough, but in its own

Roberto Schwarz's "Tribulação de um Pai de Família" (in *O pai de família e outros estudos* [São Paulo: Paz e Terra, 1978] 21-26), first published in 1966, begins with his translation of Franz Kafka's "Die Sorge des Hausvaters" (1917). [The version of "Worries of a Family Man" presented here hews as closely as possible to Kafka's German while following, where feasible, the stylistic choices represented by Schwarz's Portuguese translation. An English version by Willa and Edwin Muir ("The Cares of a Family Man," in *Franz Kafka: The Complete Stories* [New York: Schocken, 1971] 427-29) is more elegant than my own but differs from Schwarz's, which is closer to Kafka's language, in several respects. — Trans.]

way complete. At any rate, nothing more precise can be said, since Odradek is exceedingly agile and not to be caught.

He hangs around in the attic, on the stairway, in the hallways, in the entryway by turns. Sometimes he is not to be seen for a month at a time, having probably moved on to other houses; but he never fails to return to our house. Sometimes, if one steps out the door and he is leaning against the stair-rail just below, one feels inclined to speak to him. Naturally one doesn't ask him difficult questions, handling him rather — his smallness makes it hard not to — like a child. "What's your name then?" one asks. "Odradek," he says. "And where do you live?" "No fixed abode" he says, and laughs; but it is a laughter such as only one without lungs can produce. It sounds something like the rustling of fallen leaves. Generally that's the end of the conversation. Incidentally, even these answers are not always forthcoming; often he is silent for long periods, as wooden as he looks.

To no avail, I ask myself what will become of him. Can he even die? Everything that dies must previously have had some kind of purpose, some kind of activity which has exhausted itself; this doesn't apply to Odradek. Is he to be then always at the feet of my children and my children's children, tumbling down the stairs with threadfibers dragging after? He evidently harms nobody; but the idea that he is furthermore to outlive me I find almost painful.

"Worries of a Family Man" is a minor masterpiece. Its brief, delicate arabesque is extremely violent and touches the nerve of an entire culture. It doesn't explain, but rather implies bourgeois life with such felicity that the latter emerges pulverized — from a simple, if slightly fantastic, domestic scene. For Kafka, the key to the world is made of tin, and can be found on the outskirts of towns. If Kafka had been a revolutionary, he would have made suppositories instead of bombs.

The German and Slavonic camps argue over the word Odradek. They argue over it, but do not know what it means. This implies that they are idiots, quite unlike the family man who makes the observation and triumphs in these first lines. The family man consolidates his triumph, saying "actually, naturally, at first, in fact, to be sure," words which suppose, and in presupposing establish, a community of good sense. He is so prudent and objective, not to mention droll, that he doesn't say "I" or "we" until near the end. Meanwhile, however, he doesn't come to exist as a character; he is simply a narrative voice. The source of his affirmations is like the grammatical subject "one," which indicates the anonymous, indisputable and happy consensus of men of good judgment.

The reasonable man doesn't want to be a bore. Without endangering his hopes for general approval, the family man gives a comic description of Odradek, which he presents as some old thing whose use has been forgotten. A being in the form of a spool that is not a spool is profoundly ridiculous, all

the more so if it is covered in tangled thread. The smile before the useless and obsolete thing is one of superiority. To the superiority of a practical man is here added that of a humorous fellow with his head screwed on straight. Then comes the superiority of an adult, created by the bonhomie with which he speaks of little Odradek. The procedure is always the same: entice the reader, establish the tacit agreement among adults, whites, civilized men.

Suddenly, a detail which is not a detail: the strange thing can stand upright, it is alive. The fact is mentioned as though it were one more piece of thread on the spool. But it is not, and this changes everything. Why describe a living being as inert? It's like saying: more rounded than angular, yellow, slightly creased, and Arthur Johnson's cousin. With this detail, the physical description of Odradek — the description of a thingamajig — changes meaning: if among useful objects the thingamajig is always negative, among the living its gratuitousness can change polarity — as we shall see. The narrative then begins to seem intentional; there is a strategy in its sensible, descriptive gesture. The procedure might just be humorous, but the next paragraph already shows that it isn't. The anonymity of the voice is false. It allows us to discern, little by little, the family man's anxiety; and it falls apart in the final lines, where the natural pronoun of anxiety — that is, "I" — prevails. In a parallel movement, the family man recognizes the person of Odradek: he refers to him by the personal pronoun ("er," he), not the impersonal "es" as at the beginning. This twin recognition — of the existence of Odradek and of subjective unhappiness hidden only unsuccessfully by the reasonable public face — is what needs to be explicated.

Just as he withheld life from Odradek, the family man supposes for a paragraph that he is "simply broken" — even though the narrator soon recognizes, and repeats three times, that he is not. Quite to the contrary, Odradek is "in [his] own way complete." If we re-read the story we note, behind the objective posture — or better, in it — the impalpable but sustained defamation of Odradek: in the choice of words, in the careful reticence of the narrator. Why?

Odradek is mobile, colorful, irresponsible, free from the system of obligations that bind the man to the family. More radically put: Odradek, as a construction, is the impossible of the bourgeois order. If, in a capitalist society, production for the market permeates the social order as a whole, then concrete forms of activity cease to have their justifications in themselves. Their end is external, their particular forms inessential. Now, Odradek has no purpose (i.e. he has no external end) but he is in his own way complete; therefore he has his end (without which we could not speak of his being complete) in himself. Odradek, therefore, is the precise and logical construction of the negation of bourgeois life. Not that he is simply in a negative

relation to it; he is rather the very schema of its negation, and this schematism is essential to the literary quality of the story. This is what guarantees the details of this trivial and matter-of-fact prose their extraordinary reach and power; referring to Odradek, they become options facing culture.

On a modest scale, Odradek's Utopian existence is subversive: it's the family man's temptation. Gratuitous existence catalyzes the contradictions of bourgeois vocabulary, which values, but doesn't value, freedom. This is how we are to understand the mixture of disdain and envy that Odradek awakes, and therefore the defamatory strategy of the narrator. And there is yet another meaning for Odradek's seductive gratuitousness: its properly pecuniary, or better, anti-pecuniary side. Odradek is made of leftovers, of disreputable materials without name or price, eliminated from social circulation. He is the extreme image of liberty amidst the effort required by propriety; a perfection neglected but perfectly safe, since it is made of parts that nobody wants; a lumpenproletariat without hunger and without fear of the police. The dismissive gesture of the prose — a class gesture, emphasizing Odradek's sorry threads — is a tacit admission of the force and exertion behind the narrator's finer cloth — and of the risk of losing it. The social place of a reconciled life on the bourgeois map cannot be named; but it is trash.¹

Because he is the image of the absence of worries, Odradek worries the family man. The story owes its literary violence, however, to an astonishing phrase that frames the entire story. Odradek, after saying that he doesn't have a place to live, laughs; the narrator comments: "but it is a laughter such as only one without lungs can produce." The sentence is clearly different from the others. It has greater weight, since it is written with the body. To describe Odradek's laugh, the family man abandons the visual, "objective" posture, whose object is by nature indifferent and external, and looks for an image of internal feeling: what separates him from Odradek's happiness are his lungs. Because it is unintelligible without reference to our own body, the sentence does not allow us the distanced reading that the narrator invites. Its terror is in the "verification" it compels, verification which is entirely personal: to experience it and Odradek's prodigious laugh is to catch oneself in the act of the ambiguous laughter to which the narrator leads us. Bodily feeling, a limit facing Odradek's inorganic lightness, gives new viscosity to the description, even retrospectively. This is the context that stings, the restoration of the truth of the prose's matter-of-factness.

Odradek's charm is inhuman, and human life is dreary. It appears that there has been a displacement of the problem: the bourgeois order, which is not a biological fact, can be transcended; but the lungs in question cannot. A metaphysical reading presents itself, according to which Kafka is not speaking of a particular society but of mortality in general, of the anguish of

having entrails. According to this school of thought, what hurts is not being a family man, but being mortal. To me, the choice between the two readings does not appear free: were mortality the problem, the eternalization of a humdrum life of obligations would be the formula for paradise; God help us. The suspension of bourgeois obligations figured in Odradek, on the other hand, sustains its air of happiness in spite of the permanence of death. A laugh "such as only one without lungs can produce": unhappiness has become embedded in the body itself. What separates the family man from life is not death, but present life turned into an irremediable body.

From this perspective, the paradox and the sinister force of the final lines can be explained. On first sight, it appears that the narrator is jealous of Odradek's immortality. But we have already seen that immortality would not make sense to him. Also, from its position in the sentence, survival is demoted to a secondary consideration by "furthermore": "but the idea that he is furthermore to outlive me I find almost painful." The family man does not want to live forever, he wants to outlive Odradek: in other words, he wants Odradek to die first. Naturally he's too urbane to wish death upon a being who does harm to nobody, who is in his own way complete; but his urbanity doesn't prevent the existence of such a being from causing him pain. Respectable in every regard, the family man is the unacknowledged partisan of destruction.

Notes

¹ In a capitalist regime, any form of utility suffices to make anything or anyone "an official member of the world of commodities" (Marx, *Das Kapital* II, 20.8).

The Relevance of Brecht: High Points and Low

Roberto Schwarz

Translated by Emilio Sauri

No one's to blame for crises!
Over us, changeless and inscrutable, rule
The laws of economics.
And natural catastrophes recur
In dreadful cycles.

Bertolt Brecht
Saint Joan of the Stockyards (1928-31)¹

The rules of the global economy are like the law of gravity.
They are not American rules.

Bill Clinton to Boris Yeltsin, at a summit in Moscow.
O Estado de São Paulo, 3 September 1998

With your permission, I am going to play devil's advocate. I want to begin by explaining the point of view according to which Brecht today has no relevance whatsoever. It might be a good place to begin in order to test the relevance of Brecht, who enjoyed dialectic and might have approved of taking the discussion in this direction.

Roberto Schwarz, "Altos e baixos da atualidade de Brecht," *Sequências brasileiras: ensaios* (São Paulo: Companhia das letras, 1999) 113-148. This commentary followed a public reading of *St. Joan of the Stockyards* organized by the Companhia do Latão. [Thanks are due to Nicholas Brown and Maria Elisa Cevalco for providing incisive comments and suggestions that helped make this translation possible, and to Mathias Nilges for vetting passages that refer to a German original. — Trans.]

His trademark, as everyone here knows, is the aesthetic-political preference for “narrative” theater, along with the aesthetic-political critique of “dramatic” theater. In keeping with that position, Brecht proposes — in contradistinction to the actor who identifies himself with his role in the first person and tries to live it dramatically, in flesh and bone — an actor who considers it from a distance, as if he were narrating from the outside, in the third person.

On one side stands the anti-illusionist staging that lays the methods of theatricalization bare instead of hiding them. The audience consequently becomes aware of the constructed quality of the figures on the stage and, by extension, of the constructed quality of the reality they imitate and interpret. In underlining the extent of pretense in theatrical action, the extent to which it is a *made* thing, Brecht wants to demonstrate that the actions of everyday life also have a representational aspect, or else that outside of the theater the roles and the play could also be different. In sum, it is a matter of understanding that in reality, like in the theater, processes are *social* and, therefore, mutable. Meanwhile, on the other side of the partition would be the historically obsolete theater, so-called “Aristotelian” theater, which, through catharsis, the purging of affect, helps men to rediscover an equilibrium in the face of the eternal and immutable nature of human affairs.

To illustrate, I am going to read the prologue of *The Exception and the Rule*, where those themes are summarized. The author-narrator is speaking to the students for whom the play is intended (a non-commercial public, following Brecht’s own preference):

We are about to tell you
The story of a journey. An exploiter
And two of the exploited are the travelers.
Examine carefully the behavior of these people:
Find it surprising though not unusual
Inexplicable though normal
Incomprehensible though it is the rule.
Consider even the most insignificant, seemingly simple
Action with distrust. Ask yourselves whether it is necessary
Especially if it is usual.
We ask you expressly to discover
That what happens all the time is not natural.
For to say that something is natural

In such times of bloody confusion
Of ordained disorder, of systematic arbitrariness
Of inhuman humanity, is to
Regard it as unchangeable.²

You see here, marked by the relationship between exploiter and exploited, the convergence of the themes I mentioned a minute ago. Once things are examined carefully, without the anesthetic of illusion, the familiar will be revealed as strange, the most ordinary experience might be difficult to explain, and the rule, which is what we are used to, might be incomprehensible. And there also, under the pressure of the baleful character of our times, is the demand that we (the children and we) be distrustful, that we consider nothing natural so that everything may be considered subject to change. The didactic attitude and prosaic verse, in which we should recognize among other things an *avant-garde radicalization*, play an essential role in Brecht’s literary technique. The writer sought out cold forms of enthusiasm and emphasis, in order to respond effectively, as an artist, to the circumstances of class conflict. Naturally, the proximity to catechism is a risk.

In an extra-theatrical key, these themes can be approximated by the Marxist concept of “denaturalization,” of which you all have heard. Against economists, who considered the division of society into classes as the final expression of human nature, Marx explained it as a historical formation, which emerged at a certain moment and would disappear at another. It should be said between parentheses that the author of *Capital* considered that critical conclusion one of his sources of pride. Returning to Brecht, the well-known demand that the scene represent the world as transformable shares in the same spirit. If we consider it as merely a reminder of the historical, ever-changing character of human relations, always changeable, today it could only seem banal. Yet, if we recognize the emphasis on the *transformable*, with its tacit rejection of the exploitive present, we face a more difficult imperative, for which the comprehension of historicity cannot be said to be real if it does not attend to the need for a transformative intervention. The appropriateness of the demand and also the difficulty of fulfilling it become immediately clear.

Well then, this combination of political convictions, aesthetic theses, and literary methods that forms the texture of Brecht’s art has been severely affected by recent history. It is obvious that times have changed. Whoever is old enough to remember the Brazilian cultural climate before 1964, or before 1968 — which was when the rightist coup finally hit the intellectuals — knows that those positions stirred considerable emotion and agitation. When an actor said, as you heard in *Saint Joan*, that the injustice of class is not a

natural misfortune like rain, and that it therefore could be contested, the effect of revelation and even galvanization was incredible. The unanimity became even stronger if, on the contrary — because of blindness or collusion with oppression — the character declared that injustice is, indeed, a natural misfortune like rain, and therefore to fight against it is pointless. It seems that the rejection of the hypnotic force of conformism and of the stage did not itself fail to hypnotize... Thus, once we understood that injustice was social, and not natural, the difficulty seemed to have been overcome and the transformation of the world within reach. Time having passed, that ease, not to say credulity, now seems disconcerting.

As the words themselves suggest, that domination which owes its strength to custom, to constant repetition and to the appearance of naturalness, is of a pre-modern type. The struggle of doubt against obscurantism, inside and outside of our very selves, is a classic figure of bourgeois emancipation, which had for its adversary feudal authority and its religious guarantee. Clearly, Brecht's anti-obscurantism no longer belongs to that period, from which at the same time it does not disengage itself completely. It is as if something of feudal naturalness and prestige had been passed on to capital, and something of the resigned fatalism of the serf subsisted in the working class, so that the fight against the immobility of yesterday's powers remained on the agenda. As for today's capitalist system, whose foundation has not been for some time the veneration of old customs, we are all aware that the movement from naïveté to everyone-for-himself shrewdness is not enough to overcome it. Let us say that in denaturalizing submission and its automatisms, and in historicizing what had been eternity, the Brechtian theatrical gesture invoked a space of freedom in which the world figured as transformable *in the abstract*. Once the oppressed made out the strange in the familiar, the irrational in the everyday, and the anomalous in the rule, an acceptable and comprehensive reorganization of society was close at hand. This is the context, if I am not mistaken, in which to understand the muted pomp surrounding the estrangement effect and particularly its revolutionary aspiration.

In some parts of Europe, World War One swept away the superstition of order and authority, the same superstition that was in principle the target of denaturalizing criticism. The following years witnessed other equally "unnatural," and novel, cataclysms that exacerbated the upheaval. The list is well known: the Russian Revolution, hyperinflation, the crisis of 1929, unemployment, and the rise of Nazism. The summary of the contemporary world found in the prologue of *The Exception and the Rule*, published in 1930, brings news of a new scene. We live in a time of "of bloody confusion / Of ordained disorder, of systematic arbitrariness / Of inhuman humanity

[...].” In order for this state of things not to be called immutable, the school-master-actor beseeches the children to doubt... the habitual, the familiar, the simple. Well then, you will tell me if I am mistaken, but I find that between the synopsis of the period and the advice given with regard to it there is a certain maladjustment, *which reflects an objective insufficiency*.... The world in the two cases is not the same, the moments do not coincide. Bloody confusion, systematic arbitrariness, and ordained disorder are not habitual, familiar, or simple; and in this sense counseling against their credulous acceptance is like bringing coals to Newcastle. In other words, can it really be true that society a on the road to fascism, characterized by chaos, conspiracy, direct action, manipulation, etc., would seem *natural*? And can it be that the obstacle that keeps the exploited in their condition, closing off the exit that leads to a just society, resides precisely there, in that illusion of naturalness? Note that none of this causes Brecht's distanced and pedagogical gesture to lose its poetic force. We will return to the issue.

In 1948, soon after the end of World War Two, Brecht undertook to join the recommencement of life in the Soviet Occupation Zone, which later would become the German Democratic Republic. Fleeing from McCarthyism in the United States, which already had him in its sights, he sought to participate in the construction of socialism, about which he was full of his own, completely unconventional ideas. How should we consider this association — as a matter of fact, full of reciprocal reserves — between the avant-garde luminary and the new state? The latter strove to bring about one of humanity's historical aspirations — though this did not stop it from being a police state, as well as an imposition and a satellite of the Soviet Union. The situation's truly dark tangle proscribes poorly informed judgment, as my own would be in this case. The reader of *Working Diaries* and of the poems from that period nonetheless feels, along with the literary force and the thriving, sometimes astonishing critical disposition, moments of bureaucratic fustiness and signs of mummification. With the playwright's death in 1956, his worldwide consecration takes off. Depending on the circumstances, what prevails is either esteem for the most innovative of the artists on the Left, or the exploitation of his prestige with an apologetic end.

Brechtian theater entered the cultural life of São Paulo in the same second half of the 1950s, initially as part of the modernizing militancy to which the good professional companies dedicated themselves, bringing to the stage the renowned authors of the period: Tennessee Williams, Arthur Miller, Jean-Paul Sartre and others. It was only natural that Brecht's turn would come, recommended by a growing European glory. His assimilation however was more difficult. Not so much for being a communist author, since many of the nation's admired writers had been or continued being communist

militants and sympathizers, or interested critics of communism. As far as I can tell, what turned Brecht's plays into a foreign body was the radicalness of artistic innovation. In his case, it was not enough to accept or reject a set of more or less audacious positions, conventionally staged. The new proposal included a package of novel attitudes and methods whose A-B-Cs had to be learned. The general implications, which wished to be revolutionary in relation to bourgeois culture as a whole, remained shadowy for the moment. The difficulties ranged from the elementary, from the comprehension of what the "estrangement effect" could be, all the way to the inevitable contradiction with cultivated interests: theater companies revolved around famous actors, who wanted to know if their art of entrancing the audience now would be thrown in the dustbin — or rather, if the new technique didn't kill emotion. I remember the genuine confusion that accompanied the rehearsals of *The Good Woman of Setzuan* (1958), during which Maria Della Costa and Sandro Polloni asked for clarifications from Anatol Rosenfeld, who was beginning to assume with relish his role as Brecht's explicator.

The modernization of São Paulo stages during the 50s, which was a widely-noted advance, had depended on the contribution of foreign directors. It had also attained a new professionalism, with good actor training, an updating of the repertoire and, seen as a whole, a bourgeois aggrandizement of theatre life. At the premiers in the Teatro Brasileiro de Comédia one breathed class distinction, not unlike, incidentally, at Cultura Artística concerts, where internationally renowned musicians were presented under an atmosphere of civilized enjoyment and fur coats. Meanwhile, the tendency on the national level was another, imprinting the notion of progress with a different content. The radicalization of developmentalist populism began to gain momentum: a movement that would lead to years of pre-revolution — that is, of day-to-day questioning of the country's intolerable class structure — and to the military *dénouement* of 1964. In place of cultural *updating*, whose points of reference were prestigious American and European stages, came the interrogation of internal class relations, whose humiliating backwardness, in which we recognized ourselves as part of the Third World, was taken as a problem and necessary element of a sound, national and *modern* solution. For a lively period, which would not last, the commitment to the historical advancement of the working people took priority, as a condition of modernity, over the educated classes' longings for modernization.

Living culture veered to the Left: it changed class alliances, age group, and, with these, the standard for judging what should be considered relevant. A little in reality and a great deal in the imagination, the directors, audience, subject matter, program, technique, and international sympathies changed, all now fixed to the Cuban Revolution, a work also created by the non-

conformism of people who were not yet thirty years old. The new theater generation, representing a less finished training than the previous one, was aligned with the university movement and its rapid politicization. It sought contact with the organized working class and peasant struggle, *with popular music*, and shared the precarious and pre-adult lifestyle of the students, who were often poor themselves. The relative loss in artistic specialization, as well as a certain bohemianism, in this context figured as harbingers of socialism. Both tendencies disregarded the cultural boundary between classes and were in tune with the new shape of the populist movement. The umbrella of populist nationalism promoted contact between progressive sectors of the elite, organized workers and the left-wing fringe of the middle class, in particular the students and young intelligentsia: for ideological purposes, this semi-demagogic and semi-explosive alliance was now the people. The acute and critical injection of cultural exertion more than compensated for the artistic refinement of the previous decade, which at the end of the day had been quite conventional. The thorough permeation of the theater arts by the historical task of giving a voice to national inequalities was of immense importance. To this day it has not exhausted itself.³

The propensities and talents called for in this new situation were those of *agitprop*. There were distinguished predecessors in Brazilian modernism's shock phase of 1922, a likeness that nevertheless took a great deal to become conscious and productive. The alternatives in question, which were everywhere and had, even if precariously, historical scope and practical grounding, destabilized the usual compartmentalization of the life of spirit. The moment called for political intelligence, formal inventiveness, organizational agility, and a disposition for confrontation, in addition to irreverence in the use of consecrated culture and a capacity to deal on equal footing with the resources of erudite art and popular tradition. This is the stew of militant culture in which Brecht's artistic and ideological rigor, his systematic engagement with the revolution (which, partly because of language difficulties, was more guessed at than known) would go on to gain life. After decades, it was a matter of the Third World resurrection of the consequent artist of the 20s and 30s, who had conceived his combative avant-garde art within the immediate atmosphere of the Russian and German revolutions — already foreseeing, however, the antifascist clandestinity that would come afterwards. In truth, nothing could be further from the impeccable but outdated performances with which the Berliner Ensemble, under the direction of the Master himself, had won a certain hegemony in the European theater in the 1950s.

The usefulness of the Brechtian spirit for the Third World Left is easy to understand. The linking of language and literature to a program of collective experimentation of all sorts, be it artistic, political, philosophical, scientific

or organizational, along with the rejection of socialist realism, responded to real reformative impulses. Amid orthodox and heterodox communists, left-wing Catholics, anti-imperialist populists, vanguard artists and libertarians in general, and in spite of a lack of information, Brecht became something of a diffuse superego. The playwright whose innovations had as their reference the independent reflection on class struggle was an ideal, and in fact proposed a new axis. Indeed, the sense of reality and the wide spectrum of his experimentation changed the quality of experimentalism itself, conferring on it a different note, freeing literary modernism from mere scribbling. That said, it is worth mentioning, in order to reflect on the matter a bit, the incongruities occasioned by Brecht, since the 1920s were not the 1960s, nor was Germany Brazil.

As translators know, the bare language of class interests and contradictions, which marks the *sui generis* sharpness of Brechtian literature, has no equivalent within the Brazilian imaginary, informed as it is by relations of personal dependency and sallies of roguery. The understanding of life that is sedimented in our popular speech has a specific critical meaning, distinct from that of Berliner proletarian slang, which is informed and sharpened by class confrontation. In accordance with an analogous incongruity between the respective orders of the day, our Joe Nobody still needed to be transformed into a respectable citizen, with a proper name; while for Brecht overcoming the capitalist world, like the discipline of class warfare, depended on collective logic and on the critique of the bourgeois mythology of the detached individual. In short, the historical constellations were not identical, even though the underlying question — the crisis in the domination of capital — was the same, assuring a common denominator. Incidentally, something of that Brechtian aspiration for an overpowering anonymity can perhaps be found, among us, in the political poetry of Carlos Drummond de Andrade, who also wanted to annul the petit-bourgeois within himself. In this same vein, the linguistic codification of class antagonism was one of João Cabral de Melo Neto's programs.

The principle maladjustment, however, was bound up in the idea of estrangement itself. This required opening up a space between the individual and his social functions, in such a way so as to open the way to critical consciousness, making patent the absurd structure of society, the class logic of the system, and the ridiculousness of merely individual struggle. Now, the nationalist dimension of developmentalism required, on the contrary, a large dose of that mystifying identification which Brechtian estrangement — itself in part a product of the Left's critique of the patriotic slaughters of World War One — undid. The compromising solution developed by Teatro de Arena during the period became famous, brilliant from many perspectives, in

addition to being representative in its inconsistency: on center stage, a popular, nationalist hero, with whom the actor and public strongly identified; surrounding this figure, anti-heroes of the dominant class, to which Brechtian recourses to dis-identification and analysis, with the corresponding cool-headedness, lent a brilliance and truth which, by an irony of art, the other role, the one which should have served us as a model, ended up lacking.⁴

It occurred to no one to follow Brecht's teachings to the letter, but they nevertheless functioned as a kind of challenge, coming from more demanding regions of aesthetic and political reflection. The emphasis on clear reasoning, on class exploitation and on turning an x-ray on cheap ideologies turned the gelatin of nationalist populism indigestible — besides standing in sharp contrast to the weak political tenor of Brazilian literature in general. Without being able to speak of strict filiation, these were positions that artists in search of consequence, and some of the spectators, began to recognize as their own. Naturally, the literary historian might ask about the importance of Brecht for *Revolução na América do Sul* [*Revolution in South America*], Augusto Boal's crude and extremely innovative play, or for *A mais-valia vai acabar, seu Edgar* [*Surplus Value Won't Last Forever, Boss*], a didactic farce written by Oduvaldo Vianna Filho, in which the A-B-Cs of economic exploitation are explained. Yet, the question would be better and more materialist if it were asked the other way around. The truth is that the political ascendancy of the working masses and of conflicts proper to industrial society made the narrow frame of bourgeois drama irrelevant and forced the developing dramaturgy to reinvent the wheel, that is to say, the logic of narrative theater — with results that were as alive as they were precarious. In this context, Brecht's work had much to offer.

If I am not mistaken, its principal impact was in suddenly elevating the level of ambition, in a field that until then had not been very bold. The prospects that the new type of political theater opened to song — and vice versa — can give us an idea of the type of leap this was. As is well known, Brechtian song took part in the most advanced theatrical experimentation; it was composed by avant-garde musicians, its lyrics were the work of a great poet, and the conjunction of these elements produced a high point in the questioning of the bourgeois order. Without trying to belittle anyone, we must admit that this was a constellation that was not found in Brazil, except for, up to a certain point, the last of these elements. This, however, as if it were enough to suggest the rest, without, however, supplying them.... Our theatrical groups did not come from a strong literary formation, and the same could be said, as far as I know, about the musicians with whom they worked. Yet, inspired by the historical radicalization underway, which opened a decisive channel between artistic experimentation and the transformation of

the contemporary world, the shows performed by Teatro de Arena, the CPC [Centro Popular de Cultura], Oficina, TUSP [Teatro da Universidade de São Paulo] and certainly others reached new levels. Once nourished by the acute feeling of the present, to which it was necessary to respond with whatever means available, the relative cultural inadequacy and limitation of means changed signs, giving rise to an incredible demonstration of accelerated self-overcoming, in which for better or worse the historical moment pulsed. The clarity in regard to this aesthetic and political lack of training, during that moment of notable initiatives and improvisations, always somewhere between brilliant and amateurish, counts among the more memorable aspects of the period.

Returning to song: the theater's involvement with popular music would make a tremendous difference under these circumstances. For the theater, because the attempt to join its language — of restricted circulation — to another of immense popularity, with a very different productive process and class origin, changed everything. For song, because political and experimental theater directs itself, in the name of freedom, to the country's vigilant fraction of counter-elites, in opposition to the flock of consumers. This avant-garde posture (or pretension) bears something irreplaceable. It is true that the deliberate combinations of samba, an experimental spirit, and the conquests of modernist poetry, which forced together various social and cultural divisions, came from a previous moment and had not begun in the theater. Such juxtapositions formed a brilliant part of Brazilian modernization, with its moments of decompartmentalization and class realignment, where, thanks to imagination and artistic work, the well-known fissures that rendered the country unviable were surmounted in productive and promising ways. That said, the horizon of revolution, staged by the theater, introduced a radical point of departure into that process. The peculiar representativity of singer-songwriters like Caetano Veloso and Chico Buarque, or, in another sphere, the filmmaker Glauber Rocha, owes something to the radiation of that moment, when the processes of popular art, aesthetic experimentalism and political theater came together like a historical force.⁵

Something parallel occurred in relation to the revue, whose popular triviality was rejected by a serious theater, which sought to be culturally up to date. Skeptical of the seriousness of serious theater, the stages that took Brecht as a reference undertook to reconnect with the irreverent dimension of the revue; above all, with its loose form, intercalated songs, and general mischievousness, in which it discerned potential bases for critical distancing and resources for an antibourgeois art.

In 1964, without really facing any form of resistance, the rightist military coup truncated the vast democratic process to which the new theater had

sought to respond. As is well known, the suppression of the workers' and peasants' movement was brutal, whereas censorship, intended to paralyze oppositional students and intelligentsia, proved avoidable. Thus, in little time the Left returned to making its presence felt and even to prevail within the movement of culture, but now in a socially confined environment, ruled by the box office and aloof from the popular audience which in the previous period had conferred transcendence — in the proper sense — to its production. Due to an unfortunate turn of events, or better, due to the force of the Right's victory, the new theater generation finally reached artistic fulfillment — to which the question of revolution had been essential — at the moment in which the historical conditions favorable to its project had disappeared. Having once been an effective move on the part of the left-wing intelligentsia, the aesthetic-political turn to the people was reduced to the condition of glorious and interrupted experiment, which would continue to feed the imagination of many, while at the same time, on another plane, it was transformed into successful material for the cultural market. As was inevitable, the onstage triumph of the Left which, in the street, was beaten almost without a fight, would carry and elaborate the signs of what had happened — taking, among other things, Brechtian experimentation itself in unforeseen directions. For example, the use of narrative procedures, originally conceived as a means of fostering critical distance, was at times seen transformed by Boal and Glauber into its opposite, into a vehicle of national emotions “of epic proportions” to offset the political defeat. The compensating identification from which Brecht sought to liberate culture was making a comeback. At the same time, in the theater of Zé Celso [José Celso Martinez Corrêa], the estrangement effect acquired an equivocal quality, more in the order of rejection than that of enlightenment, in which fierce self-condemnation (the critical impulse) and shameless self-complacency (the discrediting of criticism, since its bearers had been defeated) alternated and were confused, staging a kind of hysterical and historical collapse of reason. These are substantial culminating positions, at times impressive, which allow us to consider the impasses of our recent destiny.

In 1968, with the Ato Institucional nº 5 [Institutional Act no. 5], the dictatorship extended to the middle- and upper- class opposition, as well as to the field of culture, the repression that it had heretofore reserved for the popular movement. Subjecting its own social base to terror, it lost whatever common sense it still had and reached a greater level of barbarism. In its critical role, intellectual life remained without any public dimension whatsoever. However, to prohibit is not to refute, and in that sense the Brechtian inspiration, like discussion on the Left in general, went offstage but did not lose its reason for being. On the contrary, its repression was like living

testimony of its relevance. The surprise would come much later, throughout the 70s, when democratization opened up a space in which to resume previous positions — *but these no longer convinced anyone*. Due to the dictatorship, the political debate had remained in the freezer while the world and the country changed. Now, however much our literary criticism might say to the contrary, artistic methods have presuppositions that are not themselves artistic: the fall of communism, which had begun, as well as new features of capitalism, affected the credibility of Brecht's theatrical technique. We were entering the world of today.

The foregrounding of artistic artifice was one of the avant-garde's general methods, determined to tear away the sanctifying and naturalizing veil of organic form. For some, it was a matter of attacking the pacifying reverence that formed part of the aesthetic attitude; for others, of de-automatizing the readers' and spectators' attention, dulled by habit; for others still, of highlighting the material aspect of the artists' work, to align it with progress, with other forms of profane production. All of these dimensions existed in the Brechtian method, where they nonetheless changed ambit when they were inscribed directly into the general turn of contemporary history from capitalism to communism. The link between provocative experimentalism and the struggle for the political transformation of society conferred Brecht's writing with a peculiar type of relevance, not to mention authority. For the same reasons, it would become more vulnerable than others to the denial that history inflicted on its expectations.

Schematically, the Brechtian transformation of theater — conceived in the 20s — presupposed the imminent *overcoming* of capitalism by communism, or, in a parallel track, its *cross-dressing* as fascism. Directed against this last possibility, anti-illusionist methods preached an anti-*kitsch* mental sobriety capable of exposing impostures. As for capitalism, the estranging stance threw into relief its *obsolete* irrationality, which the workers — that is, the revolution — would go on to overcome. Now, as it is generally known today, the historical experience created in the name of communism moved worlds away from initial intentions and got the worst in its confrontation with the capitalist order. There are different explanations for the defeat, but, whatever they may be, it was difficult to imagine that a better society might be gestating within the field of “actually existing socialism.” Thus, the clearheadedness and place on the leading edge of history that Brecht's method presumed found itself without support in the real course of things, transforming critical superiority into an illusion. Estrangement illuminated the backward aspects of the capitalist world, but by itself could not help visualize the hoped for better system of life — whose shape once again became unknown. Let us say then that, today like yesterday, capitalism's

absurd and devastating character imposes itself as a fact, which is nevertheless historically shackled to another, that is, to the revelation of the regressive dynamics of societies that broke with the bourgeois model in their attempt to overcome it. This does not make that model insuperable, but instead demonstrates that it is not enough to stand outside of it in order to create another, better order. Against what the Left supposed, the passage from criticism to overcoming revealed itself to be neither automatic nor obvious. Under these circumstances, the didactic component of Brechtian estrangement was left without having anything to teach, at least directly, and changed meaning. A staging that would be adequate to what we have painfully learned has to take that difficult horizon into account, or else it risks transforming the gesture of sobriety into second-degree *kitsch*.

Thinking about the public that inspired his innovations, which in turn shaped that public, Brecht refers to “an assembly of world transformers” — a peculiar company, of proletarian character, friend above all to a well-formulated dissatisfaction, critical in spirit and with subversively materialist and practical proposals.⁶ If it is not a retrospective illusion, this spectator tailor-made for political theater existed during a brief period, in a few places, attached to special conditions, which deserve consideration.⁷ It was the result of the junction between the “free theaters” — an important experiment, affiliated with literary naturalism, in which the voluntary contribution of its members removed business considerations and the official point of view from the scene — and the historical advancement of autonomous workers' organizations. As Iná Camargo Costa well notes, that alliance formed, partially, a popular appropriation of the means of cultural production.⁸ Soon after, however, with the imposition of Soviet national interests onto the workers' movement, the picture turned out to be different. The critical dimension of Brechtian estrangement no longer had the winds of history in its favor, especially in the socialist camp, and became an exercise in style or, further, in nostalgia for glorious times — times recently-ended, shut down almost before starting, though this transience does not keep them from having existed as a canonical moment of revolution. To close the circle let us remember that in the USSR of the 1970s the “obsession with fixing the world” came to be the very name of the mental illness of dissidents, whose cure required psychiatric internment. Working in the German Democratic Republic, it would not be strange for a worker with a Brechtian flair to have opposed “habitual but incomprehensible” ideological inculcation, only shortly thereafter to prefer capitalism and end up in prison. The automatic alignment of estrangement and socialism had long been ideology.

When it was brought down, in 1964, [President João Belchior Marques] Goulart's government had been raising progressive social flags. The military

coup in defense of “tradition, family, and property” once again confirmed a classical distribution of roles that had largely vanished from the agenda of the developed countries: the Left wanted to change society, while the Right clung to the past. Something like this traditionalism had been the initial horizon of the historical avant-gardes, a horizon that gave signs of persisting in the Third World, where Brecht’s literary technique found its old precision once again. In this way, the program of denaturalization of theatrical conventions seemed part and symbol of another more transcendent turnabout, aligned with the socialist triumph over of the bourgeois order, itself *incapable of evolving*.

Then, ten or fifteen years having passed, when the drawn-out process of democratization permitted aesthetic and historical thought to communicate again, it was evident that the years of the dictatorship had not exactly been conservative — its horror notwithstanding. In addition to the leap taken by industry and by its internationalization, which changed things substantially, there was during the years of the “economic miracle” a considerable liberalization of sexual habits, the relative routinization of drug use, the incorporation of a portion of the poor — precariously — into mass consumption, as well as the great deal of progress made by commercialization in the area of culture, with the corresponding desacralization of the latter. The dictatorship was authoritarian, but not traditionalist, nor did it scorn Machiavellian calculations, non-traditional in their own way. It is possible, for example, that it became “liberal” in taboo areas, until then unconnected to politics, while it suppressed, through policing and terror, essential public liberties. Caetano Veloso pointed out the problem from another perspective, in observing that tropicalist poetry had as its backdrop the convergence between the height of the counterculture and the worst authoritarian period.⁹

Be that as it may, the capitalist reactivation of liberatory aspirations, which until then had belonged to the anti-bourgeois tradition, had also begun in Brazil, deactivating at several points the system of alternatives that had inspired socialist commitment. The certainty of the Left, according to which it was the party of historical progress, while its adversary would be *conservative and traditionalist*, lost its footing in reality (and only maintained itself alive at the cost of its words losing all meaning). Capital’s victory was less complete than in the countries of the center only because among the forces that called for democratization was the new independent trade unionism, which would soon provide a foundation for the Partido dos Trabalhadores [Workers’ Party]. For several years, atypical in view of what was happening in the “advanced” world, the antagonism between capital and organized labor appeared to command the Brazilian stage in the classic manner foreseen by the Left. The idea of progress did not exhaust itself in mere change and

remained linked, as though to an evident prerequisite, to the more or less inevitable overcoming of historical iniquities — until here, too, trade unionism lost its initiative, beaten by the new supremacy that globalization, and the concomitant threat of crisis, conferred to capital. The latter proved itself through the quasi-fated and quasi-automatic nature of its course of accelerated changes, which were costly not to follow (more costly for some than for others); and while the resulting devastation no longer finds a plausible correlative in the notion of progress, neither does it in that of traditionalism. The supranational sphere of investment decisions, which is little influenced by socio-historical debts, reserves for its representatives the apparently exclusive use of relevant speech, or of speech with access to financing, which is the same thing. The sincere grievances of globalized and *progressive* capital’s proxies, who oppose the *unpatriotic conservatism* of unions and other always-defeated defenders of nationality, express the new system of illusions and the new set of forces. The questioning of capital now no longer seems to be the business of the workers, but rather of its own contradictions, which evolved unchecked by a worthy opponent. The innovative impulse — blindly enough, and following the rhythms of a technology expo, in which denaturalization acquires a somewhat excessive quality, like that of a natural catastrophe — resides with money. In comparison, there is nothing more *moderate* than the Brechtian desacralization of social inequality.

Although he considered himself the creator and theoretician of a new theater, Brecht insisted on the antiquity of epic theater. It had been practiced by the Chinese and Japanese, by Elizabethans and Spaniards of the Golden Age, not to mention the medieval *autos-da-fé* and the didacticism of Jesuit priests. Thus, his anti-illusionist representational techniques were not original, or rather, they became modern in a strong sense only when they were taken up again — as they were — within the revolutionary horizon around World War One, with its anti-bourgeois and anti-capitalist labor movement, which made the difference. Under those circumstances, several societies — perhaps we should say cities — were endowed with a *political theater*. It happened to be a peculiar institution, which had as its premise a popular movement that was powerful, emancipatory, and capable of defending itself against adversaries, in addition to taking an interest in the free examination of its vital questions with an eye towards practical transformations. Pointing out the uncommon quality of that creation, Brecht recalls that the majority of great nations did not tend to examine their problems on the stage, and that London, Paris, Tokyo and Rome maintained their theaters with completely different ends, remaining on the margin of innovation.¹⁰ — But let us return to the affinity between social revolution and the set of anti-illusionist methods. Staging that is equally concerned with

substantive material and with questioning itself on all levels, including its material conditions — as if denaturalizing the relations between these aspects — is analogous to a society on its way to explaining and transforming its very foundations. More or less consciously, the modernist cultivation of self-reference alludes to this Promethean, self-creating virtuality, which lends the former its *radical* vibration. Brecht's political clarity in this regard helps us to see the originary connection between the two, while forcing us to reflect on the course of their subsequent disconnection. The inviability of that critical theater in fascist countries and, from a certain moment on, in the USSR, requires no further commentary. It is more useful today to consider the redefinitions that have occurred in our own society, in which, until further notice, the point of view of the commodity has acquired an unprecedented primacy.

It is easy to note the use advertising has made of the most sensational discoveries of avant-garde art, among them the resources of the Brechtian actor. The gain in intelligence represented by the estrangement effect, formerly conceived as a means of stimulating criticism and liberating social choice, changes meaning against the new background of generalized consumerism, helping, say, to promote a new brand of cleaning product. You may remember the excellent actor who advertised Bom Bril scouring pads on television. The estrangement effect not only ceased to estrange, but on the contrary both gave life to and rendered palatable our semi-capitulation, the awareness that between competing brands of cleaning products there can be no great difference, though we nonetheless think of ourselves as “choosing.”¹¹ On another level, one can observe at the beginning of any television newscast that the Brechtian focus on the material infrastructure of ideology — on the didactic inclusion of the wings in center stage scenes — has also changed meaning, functioning as a prop for the authority of capital, and not as a critique. The cameras and cameramen film other cameras and other cameramen, who film the studio, the gigantic logo, and the anchormen. There it is, so as not to be ignored, the industrial-commercial apparatus behind the lies and inept reporting that we will hear shortly, whose seriousness becomes — due to the impressive volume of technology, work, and money involved, which certainly deserve credit — impossible to doubt. Thus, the very materialism of Brechtian self-referentiality seems to allow apologetic uses. Having once been a call to emancipation, the insistence on the social and non-natural character of the mechanism that conditions us came to function, paradoxically, perhaps due in part to a matter of scale, as a dissuasive.¹²

In other words, artistic distancing appears disabled by circumstances: what more could the materialist want, if there are commodities to choose from and if the gears of commerce integrate everyone? That objection, which

has (or had?) the support of the day-to-day in countries where wages and social welfare integrated the working class, is behind Brecht's transformation into a classic, that is to say, into a brilliant writer from another era. In Brazil, where we once again live a moment of *updating*, that is, a modernity defined by a globalized standard, which are the standards of the countries on which we are dependent, we wholeheartedly believed that we were in the same situation or, at least, on the same path. But would that be right?

In the realm of theater — which is not decisive in this episode — the renewed interest in Brecht points in a different direction. As far as I can tell, and you will tell me if I am mistaken, the lesson sought in his anti-illusionism is more on the order of a question than an answer, although the inquiry has collective commitment as its horizon. Not because the solution could be found there, readymade, but because in light of the proportions and history of Brazilian inequality the “up-to-date” and pro-market idea of renouncing collective intervention, or of remaining within recommended limits — of spectator, of consumer, and of voter — doesn't seem particularly adequate, implying rather the atrophy of forms of consciousness already developed. I apologize for the schematism, but we might imagine that until 64-68 Brechtian denaturalization functioned as a useful slogan, tailor-made to remove the varnish of eternity that protected, beyond the stage, latifundio and imperialism. Soon afterwards, with the industrial swell that took place during the “miracle” years and with the emergence of a modern working class, the moment would seem favorable to the anti-capitalist component of that slogan. Yet, the extra-national dimension weighed far more, as was moreover natural, and the period's dominant note was provided by the bankruptcy and defeat of the socialist camp, emptying the point of departure proper to the Brechtian conception, which is practical. The 1990s witness a new turnabout, when the official Brazilian ideology coincides with the point of view we included as an epigraph, according to which “the rules of the global economy are like the law of gravity,” a new nature that benefits all who do not disrespect it. In its wake, the veracity and appropriateness of the denaturalizing and estranging program have everything they need to re-emerge on a new level. And in fact, a small part of the theatrical world works exhaustively to assimilate Brecht's techniques, betting on them as the superior school of training: it hopes that this excellence in artistic orientation will deepen the notion we have of ourselves and of the deformed and intolerable quality of the present *social normality*, or of the present *modernity*.

For the purposes of our commentary, let us take the estrangement effect as the epitome of the *Brechtian attitude*, which we have discussed by examining its high and low points in recent history. We leave aside for the moment the great dramatic works themselves, in which the glory of the artist

is seated, the fate of which however involves many other factors. Brecht would not have considered this truncation wrong, since he in fact recognized a separate value in a certain personal type, which he had cultivated and perfected like a kind of left-wing dandyism: a mix of provocation and impudent distance, whose reach was not exhausted in the literary field. He ascribed to it a para-political function, like an anti-ideological vaccine, tailor-made for the deceptions of the bourgeois order. Indeed, in making the interference with empathy — brought about by estrangement — into the dialectic of his productions, on or off stage, in submitting the fascination for the individual to contradictory materialist causalities and collective realities, with their altogether different logics, Brecht explored a new form of consciousness, in tune with the *proletarian* overcoming of capitalist society. It was a matter of mobilizing the relativization of the individual, of which theoretical and aesthetic reflection had long been full, and above all of responding to the teratological nature of the spectacle offered by the society of capital once it was seen from a distance, through an antagonistic class-prism. However, if this effective process never took a victorious form and the course of things, still to be deciphered, was entirely different — then the prediction built into that posture becomes in turn a dubious proposition, to be taken as part of the problem, rather than as a lesson.

At a certain point in his capital essay on committed literature, Adorno observes — changing the terms of the debate — that in Brecht's theater the primacy of doctrine acts like an element of art; or that didacticism, in this case, is a formal principle. Although it smashed the bell jar of the aesthetic sphere, the militant relationship with the spectator would itself function as a law of composition, constructing a game that suspends simple transitivity. Thus, against claims to the contrary, the truth of the plays would not lie in the lessons passed on, in the theorems concerning class conflict, but rather in the objective dynamic of the whole, in which they and the didactic attitude itself would be a part of what is to be interpreted, and not the last instance. The essay, which knows and critiques Brecht's political-aesthetic positions, places greater emphasis on the work than on the theory, or rather, it sees the role of the latter inside the former. Notwithstanding many incisive objections — in my opinion all well-aimed — the rectification Adorno brings about helps the admirer of didactic theater to understand why lessons with a modest scope can interest him so much.¹³ It also opens our eyes to the formal elegance of Brechtian literature, obscured by the prominence of political questions, which are easier to discuss. We might look for examples to the dissonant mixture of brutalism and intellectual perceptiveness, or of heavy-weight materialism on one hand and, on the other, a delicacy of procedure and reasoning that verges on arabesque and abstract variation. The oblique

and wavering correspondences with class conflict make these unexpected combinations indefinitely contemplable by way of the contradictory suggestions they bear. In other words, after being disregarded up front, in avant-garde fashion, formal immanence restores itself elsewhere, with a more ample compass and without conventional guarantee, by reason of the immeasurable care taken with the composition. This care is subordinated to the political rejection of artistic insipidness — or vice versa? — in a manner that it falls to the stage production itself to shape. It is said, I don't remember where, that Brecht thought about reserving a room in his theater, in socialist Germany, for the production of scandals. It is a plausible story, which renders palpable his particular idea of literary commitment, related to the transformation of culture's techniques and practical procedures, to jolt the spectator, didactically, a little beyond aesthetic contemplation, but with his consent and under institutional protection.¹⁴

We have just finished seeing, on stage, that *Saint Joan* is a splendid work. Does this annul the questions we raised? A simple response would only do more harm than good. Before commenting on some of the extraordinary truths of its composition, which however are no less historical than the aesthetic-political theory in which they are bound up, we should note — in order to consider the matter — that here, too, we find those features which historical experience has made hard to accept.

You will have noticed that in comparison with other characters, contrary to what the author intended, the communist leader's language is not very interesting. It is true that he distinguishes himself by understanding the essential: he explains the mechanisms of capitalist exploitation and speculation, the connections of these to unemployment and to wage suppression, besides knowing that the workers are strong only when they act collectively, and that the push toward a general strike and toward the use of violence lies within the logic of that action. His theoretically informed intellect greatly contrasts with a general meanness and credulity. Or rather, his hard and objective reasons are advantageously counterposed with the grandiloquence of liars, which falls into ridiculousness, as is underlined by the dramaturgy. *However, his words, even so, do not inspire a vibration on the level of a prevailing and inaugural upheaval that they seem to promise*, which does not fail to propose an enigma. In spite of saying *what is*, and of acquiring the corresponding authority, the words are gray and *bureaucratic*, forming in fact an exception in the interior of the drama. It is as if the truth — or certainties — of the Bolshevik position were unable to give off that light the artistic composition expected of them. Or, inverting the terms, it is as if the composition were asking its content for that which it could not give...¹⁵

Let us recall that *Saint Joan* was written before Stalinism had taken root in the Left, and that the Brechtian attempt to find *poetry* in partisan language — anonymous, standardized, and authorized — expressed a historical sentiment and a wager: the outlawed militants, with their discipline and abnegation, would be among the key figures of the fight for the new age of freedom. Now, the proximity of this sentiment to Stalinist absolutism, which had begun to occupy the field, is absolutely clear today, rendering the complete separation of waters difficult. See in this regard the terrible panegyric to the heroism, or sacrifice, of professional revolutionaries.

- FIRST: Who are those men?
- SECOND: None of those men
Thought only of himself.
Never resting, they ran themselves ragged
For the sake of other people's bread.
- FIRST: Why never resting?
- SECOND: The unjust man walks the streets openly
The just man hides.
- FIRST: What will become of them?
- SECOND: Although they
Work for little pay and are useful to many
Not one of them lives out his natural life span
Eats his bread, dies with a full belly and
Is buried with honours. All
End before their time. They are
Struck down, trampled, and buried in shame.
- FIRST: Why do we never hear about them?
- SECOND: When you read in the papers that some criminals have
been shot or
Thrown in jail, it's them.
- FIRST: Will it always be like this?
- SECOND: No.¹⁶

Informed by the half-century that has passed and by the revelation of the other side of the medal of heroism, in particular the unconditional discipline and Soviet-nationalist appropriation of class struggle, it is hard to imagine welcoming these *just men* as the messengers of a new era. Taking into account the maze of interests excused in war, which is now generally known, the strong *activist* figures that gaze at us from the past acquire an ambiguous note. And what if on the contrary they are the temporarily reprieved *victims*, now generous, now authoritarian, now sinister, of States and of political police — the enemy's as much as that of the socialist camp itself? The interrogation of these hallucinatory ambiguities, to say nothing of duplicities, and of the expressive deficit that goes along with them — which itself reflects an immense historical upheaval — is perhaps the greatest challenge facing any responsible staging of the play.

In everything it says regarding the life of capital, on the other hand, *Saint Joan of the Stockyards* shines incredibly. Our very universe, from the moon to our genetic patrimony, tends at the moment to be quoted on the stock market, which lives on the verge of collapse, exactly as in the play, whose timeliness could not be grater. Even though the experts swear that the crash of '29 will never repeat itself, the wailing of the "small speculators," crushed by the speculations of the big ones, or the misery of the workers, who are left unemployed by the healthy competition between industries, seem as if they were taken from today's headlines. That said, this extraordinary impression is not merely the result of immediate similarities. Equally important is the resonance which the new and decisive issue — the cycle of capitalist crisis — finds in canonical cultural forms, which take part in the justification of the bourgeois order.

As is known, *Saint Joan* is the product of the Marxist studies to which Brecht dedicated himself during the second-half of the 1920s in order to understand the real movement of contemporary society and transpose it to the theater. Fredric Jameson correctly refers to a Balzacian aspect in work of the playwright, who was well-versed in all sorts of trade secrets, such as, for example, the workings of class conflict, the subtleties of money, the mechanisms of the Stock Exchange, the ruses of fascist rhetoric, the calculus involved in organized mendicancy, etc.¹⁷ This currency of artistic intelligence represents an achievement in itself, even more so if we recall the individualistic and anachronistic presuppositions of bourgeois drama with which a man of the theater had to contend. The inclination to bring into the world of letters the *realism* carried by the Marxist vision, or furthermore to avoid building on an obsolete foundation, brings among other innovations the substitution of the collective, mass axis for the individual axis in the composition. Around

this mass axis, the narrative arranges itself according to capital's cycle of crisis, with stages of prosperity, overproduction, unemployment, crash, and new economic accumulation, against which individual aspirations are smashed. That said, *Saint Joan's* singular stature, among Brecht's work as well, depends on the acceptance of another unexpected point of view, which — today — makes the difference.

It's easy to imagine that the confirmation of materialism, on the overwhelming scale provided by World War One and by the Russian Revolution, signified an ideological disqualification of the previous period. From that point of view, anything that smelled of idealism, patriotic pabulum, the authority of national classics, bourgeois insularity or remnants of feudal life, would acquire a grotesque or odious tonality. However, despite this sense of liquidation, different aspects of materialist criticism can perhaps be distinguished. On one hand, the millions of dead soldiers and the hunger of populations permit one to see that between economic interest (the arms industry) and cultural and nationalist indoctrination there is an alliance that makes war possible, and it is a class alliance. On the other hand, the same catastrophe shows that everything is an illusion save for the economic survival of the person himself, thus reproducing bourgeois individualism, or universal antagonism, on a new level. In each case, the ideological *corpus* of pre-war civilization undergoes a radical demoralization, be it in the name of the suffering masses (the Left's version), or in the name of naked and raw economic interest (capital's new realism), which a prior bourgeois culture politely hid. *Saint Joan* incorporated both meanings in their most contemptuous and well founded elements, *but without accepting their "reductionist" corollary*, tossing said culture in the dustbin for its lack of substance.

Rather than make a *tabula rasa* out of the past, Brecht, whose position in this respect was unique, tried to assemble a strategic anthology of the tradition's greatest texts, to which the characters' language systematically alludes. He did not abandon consecrated culture altogether, although he stressed its specious quality, which time had brought to the surface. Relying on his exceptional gift for pastiche, he presented the vicissitudes of class conflict and the calculations of the canned-goods cartel — new material — in verses imitative of Schiller, Hölderlin, *Faust II*, expressionist poetry, or Greek tragedies (perceived as German *honoris causa*). The most celebrated literary resources of national literature, or, by extension, the best and most sublime of bourgeois culture, shared the stage with economic crisis. To emphasize the affront, we see the latter in the satirical and bloody setting of the meat-packing industry, where slaughter, financial reasoning, and hunger naturally coexist, creating a metaphor for the times and establishing the lessons produced by the war.

The novelty was not in the artistic contrast between the modern world and the classical tradition. After all, the comical difference between the Homeric hero and the top-hatted and fat-bellied bourgeois was a commonplace in the 19th century. In another sense, several of the principal modernist writers tried to give their contemporary episodes a semblance of the mythical, either to attenuate their contingency and provide them with generality, archetypal dignity, eternity, etc., even if ironically, or on the contrary to accentuate their sordidness. One needs only think of Gide, Proust, Mann, Kafka, Joyce, Eliot and others. In Brecht's work, which pertains to almost the same years, that distance between illustrious models and the tone of the present assumes its own distinct shape, steeped in Marxism, that is to say, in class analysis and in the search for unity of process. The cold — yet mocking — concatenation of the rawest economic interest and the loftiest philosophical and lyrical idealism (the German classical tradition), under the sign of capitalist crisis, gives rise to a Frankenstein. Even today, the fierceness of that caricature sends a chill down the spine. Both outlandish and accurate, Brechtian montage annulled the passage of time and obliged the initial, as well as greatest, aspirations of bourgeois civilization to mingle indiscriminately and in public with its present manifestations. The products of that civilization in terms of degradation and class injustice provoke a dispiriting paraphrase of that same human dignity and social harmony which, at an earlier moment, philosophers and poets had idealized. Thus, what this dissonance puts in play is an *internal* historical relation, satirically compacted.¹⁸ The enormity of the effect says it all, but it is not easy to spell out.

Take the ingenious variations with which the canned-meat magnates formulate their distress — caused by unfulfilled contracts — in the majestic terms of a Hölderlinian sense of destiny: like water, which knows no rest, human beings (or would that be capitalists?) tumble from crag to crag down to the unfathomable depths of the abyss (the lack of solvent customers).¹⁹ Or take the vegetarian compassion — tinged with expressionist lyricism — which Mauler, the king of the meat packers, uses to justify the sale of his portion of the canning business at the right time:

Remember, Cridle, that big blond steer
Looking so dumbly skyward as the blow
Descended. I felt as if that blow had fallen on me.
Oh, Cridle. Oh, what a bloody business we are in!²⁰

What is the idea behind these *sarcasms of composition*? The deeply farcical tone is brought about by the ridiculousness of the capitalist as lyric figure, since by definition he defends particular and class interests alike,

which require cunning — the opposite of poetic abandon. In spite of the perfect stylization, which would appear pointed and unrevelatory, the farce could not be more ambivalent: to make a joke of capital through poetry, and of poetry through capital: nothing more sordid than capital, nothing more laughable than poetry. We find ourselves on the terrain of the political cartoons of the Weimar period, or of Grosz's paintings, with his capitalists with thick necks, pig snouts, impeccable frock coats and bulletproof cynicism, crossing the street with those mutilated by war, malnourished proletarians, and starving dogs, all crowned by clichés of official humanism, in an atmosphere of everyone-for-himself. The disgust and hatred concentrated in those images possess a range of significance, for the Left as much as for conformism or the Right. Unfolded by the theatrical plot, on the other hand, these same stereotyped figures will lash out during the crisis, when their ridiculous quality and their harsh humor are complicated even further, entering a dynamic of another order. Here the exploiters are confounded and the exploited cannot find the way out; previous moral classifications are put out of commission even while they go on to contribute to the chaos. In various ways, the contemporary relevance of this mode is related to this configuration.

Brecht wanted to stress — and assimilate? — the profligate shamelessness with which the bourgeoisie deals with the supreme values of its own civilization, according to the condition of the economy and the state of class conflict. In that sense, it can be observed that the brazenness of the moguls is not only denounced but also carefully examined, as if it were some kind of natural wonder, or a lesson on the modern function of ideas, which is to destroy the ingenuous, *but which even so cannot hold back the crisis*. The writer didn't come here to moralize — which he thought useless — but to sharpen critical intelligence in its class dimension. From his perspective, what the camp of the exploited lacked was not the disposition to understand, but rather a capacity to formulate and sustain new interests, capable of responding to the times, with the force of historical affirmation.

Although a bit formulaic, the coupling of lyrical-philosophical pastiches to the brutalities of economic competition and of class antagonism comprises a technique of great reach, due in particular to the marked breadth of scope that accompanies it. In what it says about the world of workers, for example, this formula avoids the cultural segregation in which they found themselves trapped, additionally giving expression to the divergence, to be overcome, between cultural excellence and the standpoint of the working class. Against the sentimentalization of working class culture, Brecht knew that their experience, despite having justice on its side, gains density only if it leaves behind its insularity and gets the better of its antagonist thanks to a superior

and generalizable perspective, which may or may not be worked out in detail. In order to have its full scope, approximating "possible consciousness," as Marxism called it at the time, the historical standpoint of the exploited depended on cultural accumulation and sophisticated formulation, as well as on the confrontation with hegemonic points of view, which are fiercely hostile to it.²¹ For that reason, working toward the mobilization of working-class language, the playwright rejected the existing framework, which demanded that the life of workers be confined to their immediate environment and to the naturalist register or else suffer a loss of authenticity. He sought, on the contrary, to see that life through the real (and rarely assumed) dimension of a structural force in the present, contending with other classes and with the entirety of contemporary culture. The realities of work and unemployment, of hunger and of the cold, of organized struggle and military massacre are presented in their direct and decisive reciprocity with the strategies of capital, with aesthetic conventions and economic theories, with the propertied classes' sense of themselves, with the lessons of morality and of religion, with the new means of production, etc., causing an extraordinary amplification and intensification of the present, which the antagonistic mirrorings stamp with an unparalleled literary and polemical quality. In breaking with an immediate verisimilitude sustained by the homogeneity of environment and discourse, *Saint Joan* arms a stage of superior scope, unique in Brecht's work as well. Later on we will comment on the final scene's incredible proto-fascist apotheosis, with its operatic multiplication of literary resonances — all significant in their depravity — which represents a high point in modern literature, unthinkable without the very truthful notion of class conflict within the realm of culture.

With regard to these processes of the social recalibration of forms, observe the change the romantic cult of simplicity undergoes, in the manner of *Lied*, in view of the homeless caught the middle of a snowstorm. The verses are written on a drop-curtain and serve as a mute finale to the episode in which the machine-guns triumph over the strikers:

The snow's blowing this way
So who would want to stay?
The same as stayed before
The stony soil and the very poor.²²

Analogously, what does tragic conciseness — borrowing from the Greek chorus — indicate when utilized by the working masses, waiting in front of the closed gates of the factory? And what do we make of the unintentional Leninist inflection that emerges from the indignant preaching of the young

woman from the Salvation Army? There is nothing less verisimilar than these montages and combinations never before seen (save for in student sketches), in which the modern situation of labor is nevertheless projected and discovered by reevaluating in its own terms the lyric detachment of the romantics, the sobriety of the Greek tragic accent, the Christian commitment to poverty. To appreciate the counter-intuitive daring of these solutions, one must remember that they force into contiguity that which history separated, and that they overcome, without failing to register, the disparity between erudite forms and social conflict, as well as the mutual preconceptions that correspond to them.

For those who have some conception of German literature, the play's most daring literary form lies in its system of images, a sort of lyrical topology, appearing as a collection of literary tics, which Brecht took from the final scenes of *Faust II* and from Hölderlin's song of Hyperion. The allusion to the most celebrated poems of the language functions as a ground bass. There they are, in numerous variants, the elevating aspiration of human beings, the tragedy of downfalls, the idolatry of summits and gorges, the glory of unities, the divine ether composed of heights, light, purity, immateriality and transcendence, the sententious harmonization of opposites, redeeming a past division, etc. Well then, in order for that parody to do its damage, those quasi-religious schemas of idealist set design and choreography need only be brought near the realm of the capitalist exploitation of labor, where they then become the structural — and completely plausible — correlative of the contempt for that which lies below, in the dark, in disorder, hungry and working hard. As we can see, reductionism and vulgar materialism also have their own moments of explosive intelligence.... Having drawn the parallel between the mountainous landscape through which lyrical ascension moves and, on the other hand, the social topography of capitalism, equally steep, the rest is automatic. Stirred to insinuations, puns, malice, critical perceptiveness, social resentment, etc., there is no way of stopping the process of reciprocal contamination. The mountaineering of the poetic soul can be translated to the vernacular of free enterprise, with its inexhaustible greediness, super-profits, bankruptcies, fraud and general cannibalism, not to mention the altruistic anxiety of not sinking into poverty. Inversely, the day-to-day competition on the market can find an advantageous version of itself in the destiny of eagles.

The demystification of class, which is devastating, in this case is connected to a work of extraordinary invention and *knowledge*. Among the play's objectives, Brecht listed the fixing of "the present evolutionary state of Faustian man."²³ That said, the satire has an expiration date. You all know that the initial scandal caused by materialist criticism — the crime against

humanity which Marx committed in the middle of the 19th century — was in affirming that capital, which is a class relation, is the secret of and key to bourgeois society, including its laws, state, morality, and culture. Far from being unconditioned and from promoting the human universality it proclaimed, these spheres would mesh systematically with an economic exploitation whose days would be numbered once it was recognized by the exploited as a mere fact of class, without divine or natural guarantee. The virtuosity with which Brecht makes us laugh at capital, presented in the very act of cross-dressing as something else, more universal and less objectionable, belongs to the same cycle.

Now, one has only to think for a moment to realize that the picture has changed and that economic determinism today functions as the explicit ideology of the dominant classes, who justify their own hegemony and social inequality itself through that ideology, which has changed sides. Thus, what used to be a skeleton in the closet has become a public banner, creating the mystery specific to the new phase: how can this banner be celebrated? If the so-called ideal reasons had previously hid material interests, understood to be particularist and indefensible, economic reasons now legitimate or critique the others, without having lost — if I am not mistaken — that same particularist character. Let us say, in order to exemplify, that an up-to-date government allocates funds for the arts thinking of the benefits that these bring to tourism, in the same way it conducts its educational reforms with an eye to the eventual gains in productivity, or explains the absurd distribution of income as among the contingencies of capital. *The proof of seriousness is provided by the obedience to economic considerations*, the very same ones whose anti-social tenor Marxism in another period denounced as an obscene secret of class. The reversal imposed itself in jolts, and World War One, which brought with it both the bankruptcy of bourgeois civilization and socialist internationalism, was one of its moments. The viciousness of the ideological denunciation in *Saint Joan* attests to the ensuing shock. The process was completed sometime after the following war, when the necessities of capital became to all intents and purposes the equivalent of reason, and when the abundance of commodities turned into capitalist society's ideology and reasonable justification, respected even by the working class. Returning to *Saint Joan*: what becomes of its relevance under those circumstances? Indeed, why still laugh — as we do, in fact, laugh — at the precedence of the economic motive over all others, if we are tired of observing it all day long, in everything and in ourselves, without great surprise and not always with a feeling of loss? Did demystification, fixated on the hidden place of the economy in the order of things, become an empty gesture?

When *Saint Joan* was written, resorting to the clichés of idealism as if it were a living force of the present would already have been somewhat strange, coming from a leftist and avant-garde writer. Why restore to life that which the war had buried? The Brechtian resurrection was naturally unique, emphasizing to the utmost the damage that the tradition had suffered, to the point of transforming it into a deformed and ridiculous figure — nonetheless endowed with reality. In the last scene of the play, for example, poor Joan is canonized against her will and promoted as the patron saint of capital in its new phase, all underneath flags, bathed in rose-colored light and accompanied by Goethean verses. The impudent and cynical proto-Hollywood *kitsch* provided a critical version of the cheap falsifications and mythicizations with which Nazism was beginning to construct its grandiose idea of the national past and of itself. From another perspective, there was a commitment to making class conflict and canonical literature commensurable, so as to undo the conservative unctuousness that accompanied the latter and, therefore, *return it to life* — which does in fact occur. In spite of the irreverence, or because of it, the investigation of the implications that working class struggle and materialism had for the modern physiognomy of the literary represented a critical verification of the first order.

In its own way, the cheek in dealing with bourgeois civilization's most prestigious ideas and formulations outlined the threshold of a new era, detached from its previous commitments, seen now as contemptible antiques. The obsolete protocol of the idealist tradition is complementary, in this case, to the superlative cunning of the men of capital, who on the subject of demystification — if the term suggests the precedence of money over all else — do not retreat before anything and represent the vanguard of the process. That said, the historical threshold of *Saint Joan* is another, more contemporary one. *Since it nurtures and deepens the crisis, the capitalist's extraordinary cleverness changes meaning, in turn becoming obsolete and pernicious.* What is on the stage, under the sign of crisis, is the transformation of the cunning of capital into reflexes that are counterproductive, one would almost say antediluvian. The contrast between the gambling that takes place in the stock exchange and everyone's panic facing the ups and downs of the economy recalls in fact a loss of judgment on a species-wide scale.

Clearly, in the Brechtian structure that negative progression — idealism overcome by the cunning that is revealed as blindness — is complemented by a positive movement: becoming unsustainable, the crisis ferments the proletarian revolution, and with it the overcoming of the impasse. Today's reader, made wary by the fate of revolutions, does not easily concede to this schema and looks for something more precise within the internal constitution of the play that would represent an advance. On my reading, this reader will

say that there is more evidence in the configuration of the impasse and of its deepening than of the revolutionary exit, which is limited to the determination to win, or to resist and perhaps even die so that other workers will win later on. Let us say that there is a lack of specific substance in the overcoming perspective — a lack which, however, neither undoes nor attenuates the irrationalities to which it responds, irrationalities which, in the absence of a tangible alternative, take the shape of (to borrow an expression from Walter Benjamin) permanent catastrophe. And let us even say that, at least until further notice, it is this that we retain from the play when we decant it today. The working class of the 1930s, in soft focus, seems to be the material of historical reconstruction, while the other class, well on its way to monopolizing the initiative, is the protagonist of an already-contemporary slapstick, with two modern emphases: one, shameless capitalist interest, running blindly; the other, the cynicism with which old and celebrated ideas, which nobody believes in, are adapted to circumstances. It is a matter of a simile of the historical present, of its triumphs without triumph, of continuous excess and of the tendency towards anything-goes.

In its time, I imagine, without denying the interrelation between the two innovations, which is obvious, that the incorporation of the cycle of crisis to the theatrical form had been a modernizing achievement of greater weight than the economic-political pastiche of the classics. Nevertheless, you observe that between then and now the changing role of economic determinism has altered this relationship. As ingenious as they may be, the interconnections and shocks of the economy do not open greater perspectives, beyond deepening the same thing, and they differ little from their equivalents in the daily press, whose restlessness constitutes part of the static of our time. Meanwhile, the grotesque reflexes couched in classical language live fully. Why?

The laughter that greets the coups of the capitalists in *Saint Joan*, especially when they come dressed as illustrious allusions, might be of a new kind. It is not a matter, as it was previously, of detecting the questionable interest behind a respected formula. On the contrary, anti-social interest is the notorious point of departure, and the joke is on the naiveté of those who still are unaware of this, and above all in the cheekiness with which national culture is placed in the service of business — not because the latter needs protection or because the former is credible, but rather because we are on the verge of coming to blows. In this sense, the disfigured classical citations are a kind of analogy for the disposition for reorganizing the notion of legality for one's own cause. And rather than laugh at the ingenuity of the coups, we laugh at their inexorable regularity. It is as if there existed an imperative, or a constitutional defect, demanding that nothing be done in which cunning does

not have a hand. The coups become a second nature — much more terrible, at this point, than first nature — which nothing, however, stands in the way of changing, except for itself.

We all know that today the one who accumulates forces, runs risks, spans the seas, agonizes, learns, bites the dust, etc., is capital, whose pale executives are businessmen and rulers, while the rest — to exaggerate a little — are its perplexed victims, actual or potential. In Marx's terms, it is a question of commodity fetishism, which gives things human attributes, and makes humans relate to each other as things. In other words, capital summoned to itself the alternatives and destinies that had been the subject-matter of literature and, correspondingly, transformed into a cheap lie the literature that had insisted in ignoring the hollowing out of the poor devils that we are. In saturating the world of wheeling-and-dealing with the classics, however, Brecht preferred to situate himself at the penultimate stage of fetishization, a step this side of the complete delegation of social energy to the market. Since the citations are deliberately disfigured, it makes little sense to imagine that they should introduce their own, different heading, one of resistance. Brecht wanted to demonstrate that something of Maier already existed in *Faust*, but not that the grandeur of the Enlightenment continued to live in speculations on the stock exchange. Let us say, then, that the universe of idealism is a presence that tends towards the exotic and only in part adheres to characters. It exists within the space of the social, where it is used by various and sundry people, with effects that always exceed their immediate intention. The result is a skewed illumination, which reveals the non-commercial face of business, which isn't pretty, and which does not allow fetishism to complete itself, or rather, does not allow capital to appear only as capital. Thus, the mocking proximity of the present with the defunct glories of the bourgeois order continues to question us, not because it might propose a return or a solution, but because of the evidence of fraud that it supplies.

Notes

¹ Bertolt Brecht, *Saint Joan of the Stockyards*, trans. Ralph Mannheim (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1969), 38.

² Bertolt Brecht, *The Exception and the Rule*, in *The Measures Taken and Other Lehrstücke*, ed. Ralph Mannheim and John Willett, trans. Ralph Mannheim (New York: Arcade, 2001) 35-60.

³ For a more detailed explanation, see Roberto Schwarz, "Culture and Politics in Brazil, 1964-1969," *Misplaced Ideas*, trans. John Gledson (London: Verso, 1992) 126-159.

⁴ The paradoxes of Teatro de Arena were analyzed in the heat of the moment, with sympathy and perceptiveness, by Anatol Rosenfeld: "Heróis e coringas," in *O mito e o herói no moderno teatro brasileiro* (São Paulo: Perspectiva, 1982).

⁵ These various intersections are richly described in Caetano Veloso's writings, *Alegria, alegria* (Rio de Janeiro: Pedra Q Ronca, n. d.), and *Verdade tropical* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1997) [*Tropical Truth: A Story of Music and Revolution in Brazil* (ed. Barbara Einzig, trans. Isabel de Sena [New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2002])].

⁶ Bertolt Brecht, *Arbeitsjournal*, vol. 1 (Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp, 1974) 270.

⁷ Commenting on the conditions of existence of a real political theater, Brecht notes with sardonic parsimony: "After World War One, there was theater in four countries: the first had endured a complete social cataclysm; the second, half of a cataclysm; the third, a 1/4; the last, an 1/8. — The third was Czechoslovakia, and the fourth the United States, after the great crisis." Needless to say, the first had been Russia, and the second Germany. Brecht, *Arbeitsjournal* 315.

⁸ Iná Camargo Costa, *Sinta o drama* (Petrópolis: Vozes, 1998) 19-26; Anatol Rosenfeld, *Teatro alemão* (São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1968) 120-3.

⁹ Veloso, *Verdade tropical* 363 (*Tropical Truth* 229).

¹⁰ See "Can Epic Theater Be Played Anywhere?" in John Willet, ed. and trans., *Brecht on Theater: The Development of an Aesthetic* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1992) 75-76, and "Short Description of a New Technique of Acting which Produces an Alienation Effect," *Brecht on Theater* 136-147. [Some relevant passages of this latter essay appear in this edition only in "Alienation Effects in Chinese Acting," 91-99. — Trans.]

¹¹ For an example of this campaign, see <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iywV9R69YhI>. [Trans.]

¹² Commenting on North American radio and cinema, Adorno observes that "They call themselves industries; and when their directors' incomes are published, any doubt about the social utility of the finished products is removed." Theodore Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. John Cumming (New York: Continuum Publishing Co., 1972) 121. There is an interval of more or less ten years between Brecht's formulations and Adorno's, which emerge at the beginning of the 1940s.

¹³ T. W. Adorno, "Commitment," *Notes to Literature* Vol. II, trans. Shierry Weber Nicholsen (New York: Columbia, 1992) 76-94. By the same author, also on Brecht's position, see *Aesthetic Theory*, trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1997) 247. For a less favorable account of the essay on commitment, see Iná Camargo Costa, "Brecht, Adorno, e o interesse do engajamento," in *Sinta o drama*.

¹⁴ Peter Bürger sought to point out Brecht's specific place on the map of modern art. More lucidly than the "avant-gardes," Brecht did not intend to undo the difference between art and life, nor did he want to dissolve the "artistic institution." Yet, he would not concede to leaving it untouched, in the way "modernist" writers did, either. For Brecht, who was inspired by Marxism, everything depended on not on contributing to such and such an institution, but on transforming it. Peter Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-garde*, trans. Michael Shaw (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984) 89. Also see José Antonio Pasta Junior, *Trabalho de Brecht* (São Paulo: Atica, 1986), which gives deserved importance to the role of scandal in the playwright's conception.

¹⁵ Brecht, *Saint Joan* 71.

¹⁶ Brecht, *Saint Joan* 101.

¹⁷ Fredric Jameson, *Brecht and Method*, 2nd ed. (London: Verso, 2000), 13, 154–55.

¹⁸ Praising *Threepenny Opera*, in 1935, Walter Benjamin observes that until recently the *modern* figure of the gangster had not been not well-known in Germany. "For only at a late stage does barbarism in the exploiters take on the same drastic form that already characterizes the poverty of the exploited at the beginning of capitalism. Brecht is concerned with both; he therefore draws the epochs together and assigns his gangster type to quarters in a London that has the rhythm and appearance of the age of Dickens. Private life is subject to the earlier conditions, the class struggle to those of today. These Londoners have no telephones, but their police already have tanks." "Brecht's *Threepenny Novel*," *Reflections*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (New York: Schocken, 1978) 193.

¹⁹ The verses written by Hölderlin that serve as a motif are the following, taken from "Hyperion's Song of Destiny":

But we are given
No place to rest;
Suffering men
Falter and tumble
Blindly from one
Hour to the next,
Like water from crag
To crag, hurled down
Year after year into the Unknown.

The stanza is opposed to earlier ones, where "blessed spirits" walk the "soft earth" or repose in innocent sleep, happy like children at the breast, when they are not "looking out with still / Eternal clearness." Note the Promethean tone in the nobility attributed to the "Unknown," to dissatisfaction, to suffering, which contrast with the quiet plenitude of the divine.

In what follows, I describe the main ways in which this framework is reused in *Saint Joan*. The reader should subsequently have an idea of the scope of the Brechtian process.

The first allusion to the poem refers to the decision made by Joan, who wants to know and combat the cause of the workers' misery. The warning comes from Martha, a fellow Black Straw Hat. [In Ralph Manheim's translation, the line is spoken by the Black Straw Hats. – Trans.]

In that case, Joan, your future looks black to us.
Don't get involved in earthly strife.
It will engulf you
Your purity won't last, and soon
Your bit of warmth will perish in
The all-pervading cold.
Goodness departs from those who leave
The comforting hearth fire.
Striving downward step by step
In search of an answer never to be found
You will vanish in the muck!
For muck is what gets heaped upon those who
Ask incautious questions. (13).

In place of Hyperion's fall, we have the deliberate descent of Joan, who wants to know the misery that reigns down there, in the "Unknown." A heroic descent and, in that sense, an ascension. This is not the opinion of Martha, who is afraid that Joan will disappear in muck, suggesting the affinity of the Unknown with the lower classes; or worse, who fears that the muck will be used (by whom?) to shut her up. If this were the case, however, the descent would no longer represent a promethean destiny, but a liquidation inflicted by those on top. In this case, would the gods be the dominant class?

This schema reappears in the language of Cridle, one of the meat kings, who takes the lockout as an opportunity to clean his yards, to oil the knives and buy

...some of those new
Processing machines that save a pretty penny
In wages. New contraption. Pretty fancy.
The pig rides up on a conveyor belt
Of wire netting to the topmost floor
And there the butchering begins. The pig
Plunges almost unaided, landing on
The knives. Not bad, eh? See, the pig
Butchers itself, converts itself to sausage.

From floor to floor descending, first forsaken by
 Its hide, to be fashioned into leather
 Then parting with its bristles, used for brushes
 And lastly casting off its bones — which give us bone meal —
 It's forced by gravity into the can
 That's waiting down below. Not bad, eh.? (16)

Here are the very gods (the industrial capitalists) that slaughter the mortal (the hog) and precipitate the course toward the Unknown (the can of meat). Technical intelligence is associated with cruelty toward animals and suggests that the victim, who continues to be skinned by a simple natural effect — gravity — is in some way indicative of the working class.

Convinced of the injustice suffered by the workers, Joan goes to join them in the stockyards, where the communists preach the use of force and the general strike, as the army begins to use machine-guns to clear the area. Assailed by fear, by hunger and by the horror of violence, Joan understands that her place is not there and she decides to go away. Taking a didactic distance from herself, she explains to the public:

For three days Joan was seen
 In Packingtown, in the swamp
 Of the stockyards, going down
 Lower and lower, hoping to transfigure the muck
 And be a light to the poorest of the poor.
 For three days striding downward
 She weakened on the third day and in the end was
 Engulfed by the swamp. Say:
 It was too cold. (83)

The descent Christian undertone and a salvational purpose, yet the pressure of misery and of the powerful prevails. At first glance, to disappear in the swamp means to confuse oneself with the exploited in their anonymity. At second glance, bearing in mind that Joan goes away, it might suggest a return to her former petty privileges.

Making use of "the complex / Tergiversations of" his "great brain" (92), Mauler signs large contracts with the meat packers, while at the same time buying on the side all available livestock on hand. To fulfill the contract, the meat packers are obliged to buy the meat from Mauler himself, whose agents raise the price higher and higher, causing the industries and market to collapse:

Like water hurled from crag to crag, the prices
 Fell from quotation to quotation, plumbing

Unfathomable depths. They stopped at thirty. (94, translation modified)

The subject of the descent here is the price of commodities, which falls from the heights of heaven and disappears into the Unknown of the loss of value. For the beasts, the disaster means freedom:

... And at that very moment
 Sighing as with relief, because no contract
 Compelled its purchase, beef went down
 And down and down. (94)

The unfathomable, appropriately enough in this instance, is the suppression of the commodity form.

With the general strike crushed, the economy begins to function once again, now with fewer employees. The Black Straw Hats — the Soldiers of the Lord — prepare the soup, the music and the prayers in order to snare the unemployed.

Here we are! There, they're coming down. They are coming down!
 Misery drives them in our direction like beasts at bay!
 Look, they must descend!
 Look, they are descending, they're descending!
 (Here they can't escape. For here we stand!)

Welcome! Welcome! Welcome! Welcome down to where we are! (99, translation modified)

The descent into the Unknown in this case ends in the webs of unemployment, religion and charity.

²⁰ Brecht, *Saint Joan* 3.

²¹ In an essay from 1920, Lukács distinguished between the workers' psychological or empirical consciousness, delimited by circumstances, and the class consciousness that would be "possible" for them by virtue of the key position they occupy within modern production. See "Class Consciousness," in Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1971) 46-82.

²² *Saint Joan* 84.

²³ Bertolt Brecht, *Werke*, vol. III, (Berlin-Frankfurt/M.: Aufbau-Suhrkamp, 1989) 451.

Iná Camargo Costa. "Reflections on Theater in a Time of Barbarism." Trans. Maria Elisa Cevalco. *Mediations* 23.1 (Fall 2007) 63-81. mediationsjournal.org/reflections-on-theater

Reflections on Theater in a Time of Barbarism

Iná Camargo Costa

Translated by Maria Elisa Cevalco

Apagaram-se as luzes: é o tempo sôfrego
que principia. É preciso cantar como se alguém
soubesse como cantar

The lights are out: it is the beginning of ravenous
times. We must sing as though someone knew how.

Herberto Helder, *The Blind Muses, II*

Art is in itself the historical voice of oppressed nature.

Theodor Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*

Practice: News from the front

When we say that capitalism has nothing to offer humanity but more barbarism, those who are immersed in the fog it produces hasten to declare that there is no alternative, and they do so without taking into account the fact that they are subscribing to the thesis of the beneficiaries of the system — not to mention deeper complicities. It is for them that I begin by quoting some data which have been recently published in the alternative press, in places like the newspaper *Brasil de Fato* and the magazine *Caros Amigos*.

Between 2000 and 2004, the arms industry in the US grew 60%; it deploys about \$100 billion a year in infrastructure projects, technical assistance, operational analysis, logistics and security, surveillance, and information services. The United States officially has 725 military bases on all continents, except the Arctic — obviously the secret ones are not included

in this figure. There are about 500,000 soldiers, spies, technical personnel, teachers, and aides working for the Pentagon and the CIA in other countries (*Brasil de fato*).

In an article published in the January 2007 edition of *Caros Amigos*, properly entitled “Fragments of Barbarism,” Jose Arbex, Jr. presents the following appraisal of the beginning of the twenty-first century: “the landscape in whole regions of the planet resembles the shambles left by the Nazi monster at the moment of its collapse: 600,000 people were killed in Iraq in the last three years alone; Palestinian women and children are murdered by Israeli troops on a daily basis; one billion people are suffering from malnutrition or famine in the continents of the South; pockets of poverty fester in the suburbs of Paris and of other great capitalist metropolises; whole populations are abandoned to their fates in New Orleans and in other regions of the United States; the population in Russia is shrinking due to hunger and alcoholism; millions of peasants are expelled from their land by the supposedly communist dictatorship in China attending to the demands of transnational corporations; we are witnessing the vertiginous increase, all over the world, in the rates of criminality and corruption and in the number of armed gangs. ...In London there is a surveillance camera for every fourteen inhabitants.”

Once we have mentioned England, a country that has contributed so much to the violent consolidation and expansion of the capitalist system, we might as well take a look at France. In the country that was once the land of “liberty, equality, fraternity,” nine new bills on delinquency were approved between 2002 and 2006, and a new bill aimed at the “prevention of delinquency” is under examination by the legislature. Among other humanitarian measures, it reduces the age of penal majority to sixteen years of age; it envisages denying privileged status to communications between defendants and psychiatrists, educators, and social workers; and proposes administrative sanctions against the families of children and adolescents facing “difficulties.” These are measures that make the Foucaultian panopticon seem like child’s play.

Of course the choice of the three major Western capitalist nations to illustrate the advances of barbarism is not unmotivated. Not only do they constitute the core of the Allied Forces who won the last two wars (World War II and the Cold War) but they also constitute the models of “successful societies” and provide the economic, cultural, and social referents for the image of a First World. Meanwhile, in Pindorama,¹ the talk of the town since 2006 is the need to use the Army Special Forces, created in 2003 by the Lula administration, to fight “organized crime,” a phenomenon that has begun to

challenge the State itself — thus demonstrating to the destitute that in countries like Brazil security is a privilege.

These data confirm the theses presented by Robert Kurz in his book *Der Kollaps der Modernisierung* (*The Collapse of Modernization*) 15 years ago.² There this true twentieth-century Cassandra warned that countries like Brazil (as well as those of the African Continent and eastern Europe) had already been victimized by the exhaustion of the capitalist system, and the next victims would be the Western centers. Even people on the Left reacted with incredulity to these “predictions,” declaring that they were too pessimistic. It is worth quoting him at length so that we can appreciate how right he was. “It is highly probable that the bourgeois world of total money and of the modern commodity will enter, before the end of the twentieth century, into a time of darkness, of chaos, and of a decadence of social structures unprecedented in world history. The two dimensions of this collapse, which will only hit the Western World (its main cause) later on, are, on one hand, the worldwide social dimension of the system and, on the other, its massive dynamics. No one can predict the duration of this major historical crisis nor the forms it will take.”

It is possible to understand the main argument — which comes from the Marxist tradition — even without any basic understanding of political economy. Since the capitalist system can only develop on the basis of the exploitation of the work force, it begins to decline the moment it is no longer able to do so on the scale required by its own development. And this has been the case ever since the last technological revolution, responsible for the phenomenon economists and sociologists call “structural unemployment.” One of its most evident consequences is organized crime.

Since the system is global, the signs of the general catastrophe first arise in the periphery and then reach the center. The end of the crisis may be, if we are lucky, the supersession of the system itself. But since this has not come about, we all live in the barbarous era which we Pindoramans entered long ago. The center has officially been hit by the crisis only in the present century, which, for this very reason, offers us a chance to live through interesting times — as the Chinese curse goes.

Characterizing Barbarism

With the movement “Art against Barbarism,” organized in the late 1990s, as its seismograph, the theater scene in São Paulo began to register the fact that the effects of the social catastrophe had hit even the sectors of Brazilian society that used to be relatively insulated. At the same time, some intellectuals, taking their lead from Kurz’s insights, began to turn sustained attention

to the theme. Thus, Marildo Menegat wrote his PhD dissertation “After the End of the World,” and in 2006 he published a collection of essays called *O olho da barbarie* [Regarding Barbarism]. The titles leave little doubt as to his interests. In one of the essays, he makes the timely observation that while in the first half of the 1990s it was considered weird to talk in terms of barbarism, “nowadays, when the latest event supersedes the previous one in its powers of destruction and already foretells the next one, the theme has become an obvious one.”³

With recourse to classics like Rosa Luxemburg, who made use of the concept of barbarism to understand the First World War, and to Marx and Engels, who on more than one occasion defined barbarism as the anachronism of social relations vis-à-vis the development of productive forces (in its modern form, an epidemic of overproduction that leads to the destruction of productive forces),⁴ Menegat, again taking inspiration from Kurz’s circle, this time from the *Manifesto against Labor*,⁵ reconstructs the process through which abstract labor (the kind we undertake to pay our bills), has been transformed into an archaic productive force on its way to supersession. This of course confirms Marx’s prediction that one day human beings would no longer be necessary as productive forces. This comes about precisely due to the fact that the “sociability articulated around the valorization of capital excludes millions of individuals from its social logic.”⁶ This is the essential aspect of barbarism that concerns peripheral societies in particular, as we are among the excluded. We will return to this later on.

Given the exclusion of millions of workers from the simple possibility of getting a paid job, or, to say the same thing in other words, to sell their labor power, it is timely to re-introduce another of the classics of socialist literature, Paul Lafargue’s *The Right to Be Lazy*. In this book, written at the time in which workers were fighting for the reduction of the work day to eight hours, Lafargue, who was a medical doctor, warned that work and its ascetic morality produced straitened souls and weak and degraded bodies. He thus recommended that we deal with work in the same manner that we deal with any commodity in times of scarcity: we should ration it and distribute it evenly to all. In this way, everyone would be able to dedicate their daily lives to “to accomplish the beautiful work of living a life among free and associated men.”⁷ As a militant of the socialist party, he knew that such rationing of the little work available would not come about on the initiative of those who were the beneficiaries of the over-exploitation of the work force, but as a result of a great deal of struggle involving both the unemployed and the employed.

With Paul Lafargue we introduce another aspect of barbarism, one that has been a theme on the Left since the nineteenth century: since the secret of

capitalism is the exploitation of the work force, its benefits can never be universalized no matter the level reached by the development of the productive forces. The main benefit, which is the right to idleness, is always denied to workers. This is an aspect of our current state of barbarism, as witness the systematic attacks on retirement rights.

In Brazil, Modernist writers like Mário and Oswald de Andrade dedicated themselves to this theme. The former created the character Macunaíma whose motto — “Oh, I feel so lazy” — speaks for itself. The latter, in the theses he presented when competing for a job at the University of São Paulo, “The Crisis of Messianic Philosophy,” echoes Lafargue when he says that “man accepts work in order to conquer idleness. ...Today, when we have reached an era in which machines work by themselves, man leaves his condition of a slave and arrives at the threshold of the dawning of the Age of Idleness. ...All social techniques aim at reducing work. This is the share of idleness to which every man has a right. And the common ideal becomes retirement, which is the metaphysics of idleness.”⁸

But we might as well remember that both those authors wrote under the optimistic inspiration which is a mark of all modernisms. As they were also defeated by barbarism, one of the tasks for those of us who have decided to confront the latter is to include them in our Garden of the Muses: we should learn both from Macunaíma’s laziness and from the revaluation of idleness which marks Oswald’s anthropophagic utopias. In this way, as he said, we can all be freed from the horrors of abstract work and can dedicate ourselves to speculation, to the arts, and to the feats of spirit.

Theater groups in a time of barbarism

Many of the participants of our independent theater groups are engaged with theater for two basic reasons. The first is a subjective one and it is certainly the most important: it is, of course, the desire to become an artist. This is quite a legitimate reason but with one component that few have taken into account: why not do something else? Why choose to be an artist when there are so many other professions available, most of them more immediately socially useful ones like fireman, garbage collector, mason, teacher, agricultural laborer, doctor, etc.? One of the rarely invoked reasons for this is the economic one, and this in a sense that few recognize: until they discover the very real difficulties involved in this profession, all that choose it believe that it is not heavy work, and that if one succeeds, one will lead the good life, with lots of money and all the benefits of affluence. As this belief is a more or less generalized, we who work in the theater should not be surprised when we are regarded with some (or enormous) suspicion that we are vagabonds.

And all things considered, from the point of view of a mason or of any other worker who has to put in hard physical labor, there is really a hint of laziness (synonymous with light work) in the profession we chose. Whether this is really the case is another matter.

But another reason to become a member of an independent theater group may simply be the lack of a better option. It might well be the case that we are all on this bandwagon because we have not yet been able to enter the cultural job market: maybe due to our lack of capacity to invest or to raise funds, or to find sponsors to produce hit plays. Or, most probably, because the market — that is showbiz and the culture industry — have no interest in exploiting our work force. This, as we all know, is a highly trained work force (at the very least merely in terms of years of training: it takes about eleven years to form an actor, if we take into account primary schooling). In a country like Brazil, which officially recognizes a 70% rate of functional illiteracy in the adult population, eleven years of schooling almost configures high specialization — and I do not mean a university education.

Once we have made the choice, or have faced up to the lack of a choice, we call ourselves theater workers and yet we haven't posed to ourselves elementary questions like "why do we do it," or "for whom do we do it?" The usual answer, "we do it for those who want to attend our plays," is the best way to evade the problem and to remain comfortably within the hegemonic ideology of the market. By the way, our anxiety over how our work will be reviewed by the press is the clearest symptom that deep inside, all we want is to find a space in the market, even a precarious one marked as "alternative" or, at best, as a "cult" attraction — knowing full well that the culture sections in the major papers are nothing more than cultural supermarkets.

In other words, we are excluded from the circuits which constitute the market; that is, showbiz, very much including alternative spaces and spaces for erudite art. We are also excluded from the culture industry: radio, television, newspapers, publishing houses, film producers, or advertisement agencies. We produce a kind of art that the majority of the people in our societies have never even heard about. Paraphrasing the evaluation made by Augusto Boal at the end of the 1960s: if we suddenly closed our doors, there wouldn't be a single gesture of protest. This is our greatest precariousness: we only exist because we are stubborn. As it is organized today, society does not need us.

It does not need us because, first of all, as we saw above, the market as a whole, including the cultural market, is shrinking for reasons which are intrinsic to the logic of capital — this explains phenomena like the recent official patronage of enterprises like *Cirque du Soleil*, whose performances in

Brazil were underwritten by a massive tax break. This subsidy, to a profit-making enterprise that sells tickets at over \$100, was granted by a national government that cannot even maintain decent public schools. We have also mentioned the fact that we are among the millions excluded from the interests of the market: when we manage any sort of precarious integration in the market, it is always in the worst of conditions and within a very limited time span. Furthermore, we tend not to pay enough attention to the real functions theater and culture in general have in our times.

Having become fully industrialized, culture has also become part of the effort to expand capital.⁹ This is its most important function, but there is still its ideological function, to use a term which has been philosophically superseded. Updating Adorno's and Horkheimer's analysis in their celebrated essay on the culture industry, Menegat introduces the concept of the culture of destruction in order to assess what remains of the diagnosis offered by the Frankfurt philosophers, what has been intensified, and what is new in these times of industrialized semi-culture.

In order to understand the function of semi-culture, it is important to understand the forms of articulation of the different levels of the social production of violence in the present era of barbarism. Thus, in the economic sphere, we have the arms industry as the forerunner in the process of destruction of the productive forces (as we saw above, it has grown at the rate of 60% in four years). In the social sphere, we witness the traumatic replacement of politics by the police, and individuals — both the included and the excluded — can find no means of representing to themselves the aggressiveness of the vulnerable.

In short, violence has become a habit: suffice it to observe how easily it manifests itself in everyday social relations, where we have the permanent war of all against all. We can then properly speak of a culture of violence, as it is aestheticized in the works of the culture industry, functioning as a stabilizing vehicle in the structuring of barbarism.

As violence begins to express itself in the smallest technical innovations in everyday life — it is their content — "a bunker is formed around the individual, in order to protect him from any experience of a complex life or of the thinking necessary to face it." Vulnerability migrates to the permanent fear of economic catastrophe and the implosion of society: "The feeling of being permanently in a state of panic is the sensuous form of manifestation of insensitivity. That is, it expresses from a private point of view the feeling of the destruction of any sense of the public; it is the impotence of the individual manifested as fear. It is the emptiness that hounds the masses after depolitization, after its individual identities have been reduced to the necessary minimum for the fulfillment of its functions. The culture then

produced becomes an invisible shield protecting individual psyches..., it protects them from any form of alterity which might disturb their participation in the universalization of the commodity, which is precisely what produces the catastrophe of our times.”¹⁰

The production of insensitivity is a result of a procedure that has been fully demonstrated in the Frankfortian analysis of the products of the culture industry, which all follow the same procedure, whether they are songs, novels, magazines, radio programs, television, video games, or virtual communities: the products of the culture industry are emptied out of any expressivity and they remind the individual how best to keep away from any feeling. This obstruction of sensitivity is essential to a social construction that legitimates the exclusion of the acting masses from public space. Instead of political rallies we have mega shows.

Properly trained in the construction of an insensitivity on the edge of a panic attack, enmeshed in the total commodification of the world and immersed in its semi-culture (with its daily ration of fiction, sports, religion, and boundless sex), the individual attacks everything that excludes him: real culture is hated by the masses, who, like pariahs, have already realized that in a bourgeois society their function is to keep their identity with the productive forces. Any form of refined behavior that carries within itself a hint of the possibility of another world in which the masses themselves would have more at stake, including a taste for what was once called high culture, appears as socially unacceptable and is always violently rejected.

As Walter Benjamin noted in his “Theses on the Philosophy of History,” the function of art and culture in times of capitalist expansion was to cover the presence of barbarism.¹¹ Nowadays, its function is to condition individuals to live in a situation in which barbarism is visible in every pore of social life, and to allow them to be freed of any scruple that comes with the attachment to a civilizing process. Reality shows are true training processes in this form.

In concluding his book, Menegat warns us that efficiency now designates the principal criterion of the present day society of barbarism, and that under the current system it will never be considered efficient to organize social life around concepts like rights, dignity, freedom, or democracy. And yet what is at stake is precisely the right to life, and this not only for the excluded, but also for those who believe themselves to be included or to have a chance of being included through abstract labor.

Testimonials

With different degrees of critical consciousness of the functions of semi-culture, the work being developed by theater groups in this new century constitutes well-thought-out testimonials of the way we live (?) in times of barbarism. These groups refuse to serve barbarism — which of course makes their inclusion in the cultural market much more difficult than they suppose. Without any pretension to exhaustiveness, or of making use of any other criteria but the thematic — not even a chronological one — I will then enumerate what we have been seeing in the past few years.

Of course the first reference is to *Babylon*, a play written by Reinaldo Maia and directed by Marco Antonio Rodrigues. It was produced by the group Folia D’Arte in 2001. This play is a radical aesthetic reflection on the many senses of exclusion. The play describes a group of street artists who are reduced to the condition of beggars or of homelessness. They have already got used to the state of barbarism and thus demonstrate with the utmost clarity that their rules are the same as those in the “organized world.” The play takes the logic of the commodity to its conclusion, as it operates even over the destinies of the totally excluded: the group in the play still cultivates the hope of being included in the art market. Their hopes are proved totally unfounded, with the analytic result that the artists have no chance of changing their status.

The Companhia do Latão [Tin Company] is one of the founders of a movement that since 1999 unites a number of theater groups in São Paulo under the significant name of Art against Barbarism. The Companhia do Latão take their name from Brecht’s essay *Der Messingkauf — The Buying of Copper*. In 1972 they produced the *Comédia do Trabalho* [Comedy of Work], a text written by the group and directed by Sérgio de Carvalho and Márcio Marciano. This production demonstrates that a notion which emerged from our present phase of finance capital — that the work force has become a commodity that no one wants to buy — was evident much earlier and available as a theme of representation. And in the *Auto dos bons tratos* [Down Home Hospitality: An Auto-da-Fé] (2002) the company made it clear that in its Brazilian version, the civilizing effort has always depended on barbarian practices, like slavery and genocide. Part of what makes Companhia do Latão so special is precisely this revealing of the marks of barbarism which are always part and parcel of our so called cordial sociability.

Engenho Teatral [Theater Factory] produced in the last years two complementary plays, *Pequenas histórias que à história não contam* [Little Histories That Don’t Make History] and *Em pedaços* [In Pieces]. The first is

a detailed panorama of the dimensions of barbarism as seen from the angle of an intellectual who still tries to understand it and from the angle of those who are immersed in it. The latter range from the informal worker (who, because she goes to live TV shows, believes she will one day become an artist), to the urban poor (like a woman who is made homeless because authorities pull down her house to open a new street). The second play makes its characters face the infernal dialectics of market domination, which at one and the same time excludes and demands that those excluded keep on fighting for inclusion.

Mire veja [Look See], by the Companhia do Feijão [Bean Company], superimposes several narratives that together construct a terrifying image of the ways in which the metropolis produces total inhumanity amidst illusions, dreams, and alienations. *Nonada [Nothing]*, by the same group, materializes class struggle as it historically manifests itself in Brazil. It also shows that as a consequence of this process, our ruling class preempts any type of movement by the dominated and imposes on them its own version of their history.

With the play *Bastianas [Abigails]*, Companhia São Jorge stages the results of its research among institutions that are dedicated to different categories of the excluded. It reopens the discussion of the frontier between public and private, and organizes and articulates the voices of those who were slaughtered by History. Starting from the political decision to equate the narrators of the many stories (interlocking, as in real life) with the female deities of candomblé,¹² the group is able to configure myriad experiences of the excluded, all of them of relevance to our theme here. And to go on with a play that establishes a close dialogue with this one, *Higiene*, by Group XIX, enacts at the same time a small genocide conducted in the name of urban development (or speculation) and the scientific/technological discourse that accompanies it.

And of course I could not fail to mention the work of Nucleo Bartolomeu. They are undertaking perhaps the most comprehensive of all the research under way by São Paulo theater groups. They have even invented a new form, hip-hop theater. The group turned inside out the Calderon de la Barca classic *La vida es sueño [Life Is a Dream]* with their *Acordei que sonhava [I Woke Up That I Was Dreaming]* and have created temporary zones of striking autonomy with the project *Urgência nas ruas [Emergency in the Streets]*. They erupted in busy streets in downtown São Paulo and enacted lyrical interventions based on chosen themes such as love and passion, arrivals and farewells, and garbage collecting. In 2007 their play *Frátia [Brotherland]* incorporates more fully their experiments with hip-hop and presents an inventory of the most violent and scandalous aspects of

present day barbarism. And they do all that without losing sight of (or failing to represent) the thousand and one ways in which references to what used to be called high culture still permeate everything.

A possible horizon

The enumeration of theater groups I have just presented has the sole function of showing how independent theater groups have a clear perception of the advance of barbarism, and the ways in which, in defiance of the imperatives of the semi-culture, they endeavor to present it in its various manifestations. What seems to be lacking is a certain awareness of the significance of their aesthetic and political feats and the horizons they may open up. This is partially due to the fact that the fierce struggle for survival does not leave much room for certain luxuries.

It is partially due to this hypotheses that it might be a good idea to suggest that a fundamental part of the current research may be the search for utopia. Again professor Marildo Menegat's book is a possible inspiration. In the last chapter of his *O olho na barbarie*, he presents a version of a famous utopia as retold by Italian emigrants to Southern Brazil. This is the story of the country of Cogagne which was first told in thirteenth-century France, as a response to the scarcity and threat represented by the dismantling of the medieval world and the onset of the capitalist era. In Cocagne, "the more you sleep, the more you earn"; there is no need to work, no commerce, and no prohibitions. To dream of idleness seems to be the only solace left to those condemned to the sufferings inflicted by abstract labor.

Inspired in the research undertaken by Hilário Franco Junior, Menegat tells us the sad fate reserved for this dream in nineteenth-century Southern Brazil: the coyotes of the day used it to attract Italian migrants to Brazil, which they said was situated in Cuccagna.¹³

Through cordel narratives,¹⁴ as professor Hilario Franco Junior tells us, we have also created a version of Cocagne in a land called São Saruê. In a poem by Manuel Camilo dos Santos published in 1947 one reads:

Everything there is good and easy,
There is no need to buy;
There's no hunger, there's no illness,
Life is simply living high;
It is a lovely land of plenty,
And work is never nigh.

It is an idle wondrous place,
 Where I spent so many days;
 I spent them happy and contented,
 In a loving happy haze;
 And I had nothing more to do
 Than to recite my tender lays.

It is not by chance that another group, Teatro dos Narradores [Narrators' Theater], in their most recent experiment, a cabaret piece inspired by the *Manifesto against Labor*, includes in their play one of the most sophisticated versions of the trip to Cocagne: the tango-habanera "Youkali," by Kurt Weill, with lyrics by Roger Fernay. This song was composed for an opera, *Maria Galante*, in 1934 — when Weill was in exile — and is inspired by the setbacks suffered by a prostitute in Panama. She dreams about going back home, and the story is more realistic than other versions of the legend as it ends referring to the need to face a hard and hostile reality. Any similarity with our present challenges is not a coincidence.

Keeping an eye on the enemy

When stumbling over the obstacles created by older forms of the culture industry (radio and cinema), Brecht formulated a challenge that remains, to this day, largely unacknowledged by those who work or reflect on the theater. He observed that intellectuals and artists, even though they work under ignoble conditions, see themselves as free from the determinations that other workers must submit to. And this is due to the fact that they understand freedom as the free market and the freedom they aspire to is the freedom to compete in the sales of opinions, knowledge, or technical abilities. They do not even admit being called intellectual workers, as they see themselves as entrepreneurs, or as petty bourgeois. Among these creative entrepreneurs we can still find some who believe they are free to renounce the new instruments of work. But this kind of freedom is exercised outside the productive process: there are no forms of thinking or of art that are exempt from the influence of modern technologies. Thinking and art are commodities through and through, or else they do not exist.

In simpler terms, the rise of the culture industry transformed the idea of art and thought as independent from the market into a thing of the past. Whoever makes art, regardless of what one wants to say with it, will only have any impact if he or she fights for the right to do so inside the productive process which, in our days, is controlled by the culture industry, including, of course, showbiz.

This was already clear for Brecht in 1930, when there was no television and no monopoly of the means of communication that determine the form of content. In his terms, the idea that it is only by renouncing the themes and forms we are interested in — that is, by submitting to the requirements of capital — that we will gain access to the means of production and diffusion of the arts, is a false one, and it can be explained politically. If capital and its agents no longer produce either art or culture, they can no longer open up a space for those like us, and we have to impose on them a "rationing of labor" so that we can all have access to the modern means of production. Those are the obstacles we have to remove from the path that will take us to the country of Cocagne. And there it will no longer be necessary to sell either our work force or our products: as the proponent of "temporary zones of autonomy" put it, the removal of all barriers between artists and users of art will tend to be a condition in which the artist is not a special kind of person, but very person is a special kind of artist.

Theory: Acquired rights

Ever since the end of the nineteenth century, with the experiments of the naturalists, theater has conquered rights that are not, to this day, respected by the critics, by part of the public, and worst of all, by practitioners themselves. Those rights refer to ways of writing plays, of choosing their subject matter, and of staging them — very much including the work of the actors and the function of the director.

The most important conquest, which is to this day contested by the adversaries of a theater that conceives of itself (to start right away using the language of Hegel and Adorno) as the consciousness of the destitution of our world, is the right to deal with any subject without submitting to the interdictions of the dramatic sphere, which prescribes as a fit subject only the field of interpersonal relations within the sphere of private life. For over a century the theater has been able to deal with the most intimate subjectivity as well as with the most epic matters — including history, economics, and politics. No one can say, without betraying his academic conservatism, that there is any subject which is not fit for the theater.

This conquest has led theater which is still vital to force the most important traditional categories of dramatic form into early retirement. These traditional forms are now reduced to possible choices among many options. The first to go was the category of closed action, to this day better known as "unity of action." That was soon followed by jettisoning the category of the empirical flux of time, that is, a present that points to a future. In its place we

now have experiments with simultaneous time, flashbacks, flashforwards, and all the possible combinations of temporal dimensions.

Strindberg, even though he was not aware of it, invented a narrator and thus did away with the absolute or self-sufficient scene in which characters evolve without the mediation of a point of view. His narrator practices a monologue disguised as dialogue which we call free indirect discourse. This type of discourse discards the verisimilitude of realist theater, undoes all the conventions or categories of character-individuation and causality. For the first time, he structures a drama according to the categories of composition identified by Freud in *The Interpretation of Dreams*: condensation, fusion, superposition, substitution, allusion, metaphor, and metonymy, among other less prestigious ones. His station-drama even makes use even of explicit quotes in form and in content. It is then no exaggeration to say that with this playwright, theater has technically consummated its freedom to deal with all literary, theatrical, and rhetorical genres.

The next chapter was written by expressionist theater. From then on, one cannot separate the text from the staging. With expressionism comes the awareness that all elements in a scene — actor and set, costumes, props, makeup, setting, lighting, sound effects: all have the same weight in the definition of the work as the text, which had hitherto reigned supreme. From now on, the text is one element among others in the theatrical experiment. Georg Kaiser identifies, among others, the following conquests of twentieth-century technical repertoire: in order to specify subjective (rather than purely objective) aspects, setting has become abstract, indeterminate, non-existent, distorted. Props, which can also be used as a substitute for costumes, are reduced to essentials so as to symbolize, rather than identify, social types; figures are used instead of characters to represent social groups; dialogue and action are fragmented; collective scenes are composed through allusion, through the use of choreographed rhythms. Expressionism also conquered a right which had been claimed since naturalism; that is, the right to speak openly about class struggle and to show the classes engaged in all direct and indirect forms of struggle, as was the case of Ernst Toller.

At the same time that the experiments and achievements of expressionism were taking place in Germany, the repertoire I have listed so far was taken to its ultimate consequences in Russia, and later in the Soviet Union, for the simple fact that they had had a proletarian revolution.

The last chapter in this history of achievements was written by Brecht's generation, starting with Erwin Piscator. It was actors and directors like them who adopted the concept of epic theater to make it clear that the theater they made had nothing to do with the categories of dramatic theater, which were still invoked by adversary criticism. On more than one occasion Brecht

declared that his own theater was part of the tradition inaugurated by naturalist experiments, by which he wanted to emphasize that epic theater claimed all the categories introduced by the break in the unity of action, which had been developed by the introduction of the narrator and radicalized by the political engagement of agitprop. After Brecht, there is no place for any normative aesthetics in theater.

The aesthetics of materials

In the field of aesthetics, dialectical thought, which was inaugurated by Hegel and taken to its final consequences by Adorno, showed us that the very separation between form and content is in itself a strategy employed by conservative thought in order to delay, or even to prevent, the comprehension of more significant artistic praxis. In other words, we can say that ever since the bourgeoisie succeeded in transforming all spheres of life into commodities, it is part of the duties of mercantile thought to secure, in the field of culture, the separation between form and content and the upholding of normative categories and values that have already been superseded in theater. Among those values are a rigid division of genres and their respective rules of composition and functioning; the professionalization of artists (meaning their submission to the rules of productive work under capital); the radical separation between art and truth; the definition of success as acceptance and consecration by the market (even though this may be restricted to a niche); and, in order to avoid endless enumeration, we can sum it all up by saying that the main duty of this kind of thought is to maintain itself as an active vehicle for the conservation of the dominant ideology though the defense of its formal components (in the case of the theater: dramatic action, rhythm, characters, realistic dialogue) as supposedly eternal and independent of content.

Instead of serving the values of the continuity of domination, a consequent theatrical criticism, allied with the experimental practices inaugurated by naturalism, can cultivate other values like the ones enumerated below, all present in Adorno's *Aesthetic Theory* — which I am not going to quote so as not to fill up this brief compilation with footnotes.

Criticism can only be justified because, as in social reality, the truth content of the works of art cannot be immediately apprehended. The task of criticism is to apprehend the truth or falsity of a work. Works of art are not conceptual, neither do they enunciate judgments in discursive form. Nonetheless, they have a specific logic, and the task of analysis is to identify this logic. The consonance of all the logical moments of a work constitutes its form. The difficulty of isolating the form is conditioned by the interlocking

of aesthetic form and its content. Form must be conceived either against the content or through it, and the artist can decide freely what kind of relation he wants to establish in his own work. In other words, we cannot establish from outside or a priori what kind of relation it will be.

Aesthetic form is the objective organization of everything that appears as coherent language in the work. Form is an unfolding of the truth of the dispersal that form organizes and conserves in its divergence and contradictions. Every work is a system of contradictions. It is in form that works reveal themselves to be self-critiques, and it is through form that works annihilate the practices and works which were consecrated in the past — even as they reinvent practices that have been suppressed by domination. Form is, in itself, sedimented social content. The secret model of a work of art is history.

Once it has been disentangled from convention, no work of art can convincingly present a conclusion in an overt form. That is why the audience of the most consequent plays cannot know whether the play has finished or is going to continue. The incapacity to conclude becomes a freely chosen principle of procedure or of expression.

A concept that may help advance the dialectics of form and content is that of material. This can be defined as the content mediated by the form. A definition for content may be “everything that happens in time.” Materials are everything an artist deals with: words, colors, sounds, their combinations, and the technical procedures proper to them. Forms are also materials.

The amplification of available materials in modern times mocks the old divisions between artistic genres. The material is historical through and through: it depends on the transformations of technique in the same way that the latter depends on the materials it elaborates.

Giving artistic configuration to any subject, theme, or motif consists in turning it into an important thing. Profound and socially relevant experiences are sedimented in the form this configuration takes. The artist’s intention, which is not to be mistaken for the content, works as a subjectively organizing force. That is why the analysis has to take into consideration the process that relates intention and material (many intentions turn into their opposites). The meaning of the work, which is not the final word about it, is a result of this dialectic. In contemporary works of art the ruptures between intention and effective realization multiply: the content manifests itself in those ruptures as well as in the realization itself.

Everything that is part of a work of art contributes, in a mediated or in an unmediated form, to the production of its meaning, but the parts have not all the same weight. The differentiation of weights is one of the most efficient ways of articulating the parts. Montage, one of the most eloquent of the

means of articulation, is also the way art makes explicit its impotence before capitalism. The negation of a synthesis becomes a principle of configuration; its residues suggest the meaning of visible scars. Montage denounces and negates the appearance of the organic character of experience. By means of the episode, the work admits in itself the impossibility of the identity of the one and the many as a moment of its unity. But there is a ruse of the work as well as of Reason, and the renunciation of unity as a formal principle still remains a unity. That is another of the reasons why every contemporary work is exposed to the risk of total failure. With its weaknesses, its stains, and its fallibility, the work of art is a critique of success.

Given its linguistic character, the “I” that speaks in any work is collective. In works of art, even in the ones which are considered individual, it is a “we” that speaks. Music says “we” right away, regardless of its intention. The aesthetic “we” is globally social, within the horizon of a certain indeterminacy, which is, nonetheless, as determined as the productive forces and the relations of production which are dominant in a given period.

The internal structuration and the rigor of a work depend on some sort of comprehension of reality. Therefore, what gives the work internal coherence comes from outside. The name of this comprehension is social reflection. The historical moment is constitutive of works of art; authentic works are those which surrender without reserve to the material content of their time and have no pretensions over it. They are the unconscious historiography of their period. The realization of art is in itself. Likewise, its cognitive power also proceeds in a dialectical way.

Art manifests itself at its most vivid precisely in the moments in which it destroys its own concept. What art is does not depend on the consciousness works have of themselves. Many works, such as documents, to give one example, are art even though they do not present themselves as such.

The artist does not fear the accusation of incomprehensibility leveled at demanding works. What seems intelligible to all is precisely what has become incomprehensible. Individuals manipulated by ideology reject what is in fact perfectly comprehensible: as Freud says, at bottom the uncanny is too familiar. That is the reason why it is rejected. Works that are submitted to conventions (because these are well known) die at the very moment in which they become accessible. The opposite is also true: vanguardist interpretations of traditional works, with rare exceptions, are false, absurd, and objectively incomprehensible.

The quality of a work of art is defined essentially by whether it exposes or avoids the irreconcilable. Profound works are the ones that do not mask divergences or contradictions. When they make contradiction appear, such works thereby admit the possibility of reconciliation. But of course giving

form to antagonisms does not suppress or reconcile them: present times radically refuse any possibility of reconciliation. The quality of a work also depends on its degree of articulation, and the demand for articulation means that every single idea must be pushed to its extreme. The more a work is articulated, the more it expresses its conceptions through this articulation. Last, the quality of a work of art depends on its truth content, which is profoundly historical.

Technique is the aesthetic name given to the mastery of the material, and the technique of a work is determined by its problems. In themselves, the technical forces of a period are nothing. They receive their positional value in relation to their function in the work and, in the final analysis, to the truth content of what is written, composed, or painted.

Every formal element in a work has implications for content that extend into the realm of the political. Art must proclaim its freedom in relation to the principles of property. And the function of aesthetics is to make forms eloquent. This can be done even in a time of barbarism, as the recent work of theater groups in São Paulo attests.

Notes

¹ A Tupi word for the territory they called “Land of Palms,” hence a non-nationalist word for Brazil. [Trans.]

² Robert Kurz, *Der Kollaps der Modernisierung* (Leipzig: Reclam, 1994).

³ Marildo Menegat, *O olho da barbárie* (São Paulo: Expressão Popular, 2006) 10.

⁴ See *The Communist Manifesto*, trans. Samuel Moore (New York: Norton, 1988) 59-61.

⁵ http://members.blackbox.net/oebgdk/krisis_manifest-englisch.html

⁶ Menegat 39.

⁷ Cited in Menegat 348.

⁸ Oswald de Andrade, “A crise da filosofia messiânica,” cited in Menegat 346.

⁹ In this and following paragraphs we will be paraphrasing ideas proposed in *Depois do fim do mundo* [*After the End of the World*] (Rio de Janeiro: Relume Dumará, 2003) ch. 3, “Cultura da destruição” [“The Culture of Destruction.”] 115-90.

¹⁰ Menegat 170.

¹¹ Walter Benjamin, “Theses on the Philosophy of History,” esp. Thesis VII. *Illuminations* (New York: Schocken, 1968) 253-264.

¹² An Afro-Brazilian religion. [Trans.]

¹³ See Hilario Franco Junior, *Cocanha: várias faces de uma utopia* [*Cocagne: The Many Faces of a Utopia*] (São Paulo: Ateliê, 1998), and *Cocanha: A história de um*

país imaginário [*Cocagne: The History of an Imaginary Country*] (Companhia das Letras: 2001

¹⁴ A popular folk literary form, illustrated by woodcuts, from Northeastern Brazil. [Trans.]

The Lenin Moment
Francisco de Oliveira
Translated by Neil Larsen

From the Finland Station

Between February and October there was April. With the tsarist monarchy deposed, the Provisional Government is still unable to organize power anew atop the ruins of Great Russian absolutism. The Bolsheviks remain outside the government, while the latter, resting precariously on the enthusiasm and euphoria unleashed by the fall of the Romanovs, is battered by its internal divisions, by an insurgency bent on restoring the monarchy, by an unpopular war and an unraveling economy. Kerensky acknowledges that the government does not govern — no one obeys it.¹ Democratic revolution continues to be the slogan of the Bolsheviks, a revolution swept along and, up to a point, controlled by the Soviets of workers and peasants — the latter in soldiers' uniforms. The most general objective: complete the work that the bourgeois revolution had already carried out in the West — except in those countries in which capitalism had arrived late, such as Germany and Italy — supported by the joint forces of a rapidly growing working class. Broad

This report was produced for the project "O pensamento nas rupturas da política" ["Thought in the Ruptures of Politics"], sponsored by The State of São Paulo Research Foundation (Fapesp). The present work [originally published as "O Momento Lenin," *Novos estudos* 75 (2005): 23-47], although signed by an individual, had its beginnings in 2000 in discussions organized by the Center for The Study of the Rights of Citizenship (Cenedic). Bringing it to completion would not have been possible without the active participation of my colleagues, and my gratitude should be taken here as recognition of the debt I owe others, a debt I hope to increase over the course of the years to come.

sectors of the latter, however, lack any real class-definition, something mirrored in the unfitness for revolution handicapping its class counterpart, Russia's incipient bourgeoisie.

The tsarist Russia of Stolypin and Lenin — ideological antipodes but also each other's equals when it came to playing the iron-willed authoritarian modernizer à la Peter the Great — might be thought of as, for its time, the first real instance of “underdevelopment”² in the sense that CEPAL³ would later give to this term in the case of Latin America. According to the Leninist and Trotskyist formula, this was a case of “combined and uneven development,” a condition proper to capitalism as such, but which, when its concept was applied to a feudal economy undergoing an accelerated modernization powered by the capital influx of French and German imperialism, fit that reality like a glove. The result of this “combined unevenness” was as much the “revolutionary handicap” of the Russian bourgeoisie as it was the precociousness of the workers' movement — a kind of truncated development produced by Russia's insertion within a dynamic and ruthless capitalism whose impulse was supplied from without by foreign imperialism, and, from within, by the pre-class formations then rapidly being created as a result of that very insertion. The very incompleteness of the system represents a new level of complexity, one that will only be fully understood well into the twentieth century by a line of Latin American thinkers with names like [Raúl] Prebisch, [Celso] Furtado, and Florestan Fernandes. The Russian transition from feudalism to capitalism results in a hybrid system that will never come to term, combining the ferocity of the new with the backwardness of the old. The “combined and uneven” formula — originally Marx's — refers to the time differences and asymmetry between the “departments” of capitalist accumulation, but the Bolsheviks, above all Lenin and Trotsky, gave it special prominence as a way to understand the “missing links” in backward societies newly penetrated by capitalism — links that could open up opportunities for revolution. Applied to peripheral economic formations generally, it would have made possible a highly original theoretical contribution — but one that a post-Leninist orthodoxy, under the command of the victorious Communist Party of the Soviet Union, was to be unable to realize.

Eighty years after the October Revolution, with Leninist “actually existing socialism” a thing of the past, the “combined and uneven” reappears: emerging from out of the shadows, still fully intact, the long-bearded patriarchs, partners in state power in addition to being keepers of the Russian soul, share the stage with a new and formidable form of predatory capitalism that has now become the distinctly peripheral mode of accumulation. But *both* of them, it is to be noted, are reborn from within a system that had

once stolen a march on the US in the space race. This was a system whose power, as Trotsky had magnificently foreseen, fed on its own retardation, one able to “burn up” entire stages of capitalist development, finally shaking off the old stigmas of backwardness.

Lenin's April Theses⁴ revolutionize the strategy and tactics of the Bolsheviks. Perceiving that the prolonged agony of tsarism went far beyond the simple exhaustion of a system only just emerging from absolutism, and that it was no longer possible simply to stand aside and support a bourgeois revolution, the April Theses argue that the objective now is to go beyond bourgeois democracy and install, under the dictatorship of the proletariat, a republic of Soviets charged with creating the conditions for a socialist economy. This is the Lenin Moment, in which the author of the April Theses grasps that the “combined and uneven” undermines the institutionalized forms of a democracy that the Marxist tradition, following in the footsteps of Marx himself, had considered to be merely a dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, its government the latter's executive committee. But the violence of capital in a *peripheral* economy — the latter a term whose time is obviously still to come at this point — is simply not to be contained within such an institutional framework.⁵

The Lenin Moment is a moment of indeterminacy. In its more impoverished versions Marxism was thenceforward to postulate the inevitability of major historical transformations — a matter of mere linear progress according to the Stalinist formula. But the truth of this particular moment of social transition gives rise instead to a double virtuality: on the one hand a development in accordance with the rhythms and outcomes of capitalist “underdevelopment,” with its violent contractions and the extreme superficiality of its institutions and, on the other, a historical capacity for making dramatic leaps forward towards a now possible socialist construction.⁶ Such leaps, in their turn, however, are nevertheless still inseparable from a capitalist process of development at the new social formation's central nuclei themselves, whence the formula “socialism equals soviet power plus electrification.” What were the conditions of possibility for this second historical outcome?

Generally, according to the Marxist tradition, the answer lies in the examination of class structure, and in this case, the structure specific to the February and October Revolutions. Their ideological consciousness raised, the dominated classes of Russia at the moment of its revolutionary conjuncture will act as the Revolution's midwives and agents. Trotsky's vivid description of this moment in *The History of the Russian Revolution*, the sheer quantity of workers concentrated in the larger factories, the surprisingly high number of industrial strikes,⁷ the powerful activism among the workers

in the Vyborg quarter of St. Petersburg — all appear to confirm an already impressive working class presence in the latter city and in Moscow. And who are the peasants? They are, in fact, soldiers, press-ganged into the huge contingents of the Great Russian army. Is it the classes belonging to this class structure that make the Revolution? If so, they make it, as it were, already transformed by their own future. They make it not because of the past but because of the *future*, of which they are simply the pre-figurations. It is as soviets that they make the Revolution, in keeping with their places of production, but having been transformed by their political point of insertion.

The future of the Revolution thus ends up in a tautology: it is the Revolution that makes itself. Only in the moment that it advances does it resolve a chronic state of indeterminacy, itself the result of a revolutionizing of the material base of a Russian capitalism financed from without by the French and the Germans, an indeterminacy amplified in the crisis of a tsarist State wasted by a war that has drained it of its best reserves and increased its financial dependency. War is, *ultima instantia*, the determining factor since it is war that has accelerated the expanded reproduction of this particular instance of “combined and uneven development”; it is war that has transformed peasants into soldiers. But this determination *ultima instantia* is in no way irrevocably destined to result in a socialist revolution: in a Germany no less shaken by the combined shock of an accelerated capitalist modernization, a military defeat, and the fall of an equally powerful monarchy, a state of chronic indeterminacy exists that will not be resolved until after the Second World War. In this interval the failed proletarian revolution of 1918 comes knocking, but, as the agony is prolonged further, Nazism becomes the bloody, exasperated response — a sinister rehearsal of future forms of administered capitalism.

The role of charisma becomes a decisive factor in such a crisis — a factor that enters, according to the Weberian perspective, as a historical force so as, finally, to become a personalized one. Raised up out of chaos to coalesce in the category of the *condottiere*, charisma embodies the new, still diffuse form of “moral direction,” and carried on the shoulders of the pre-class formations, it somehow or other jump starts the historical process, forcing it into a determinate direction. This it cannot accomplish without being already virtually contained in revolutionary conditions themselves, but there is in no sense a *pre*-determined direction here. Under the specific conditions of the Russian Revolution, Lenin is this charismatic leader. The April Theses are this Caesar’s Rubicon, which Lenin crosses, decisively and boldly, initiating a new historical cycle of proletarian revolutions and arguably making possible what was eventually to be European Social Democracy’s domestication of capitalist savageries. There is no Revolution

in the West, but in its place there occurs the social-democratization of capitalism. This is a historical cycle whose Thermidor will only arrive sometime later, with Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin and the Gulag. It is the specificity of the Russian Revolution to have pointed out how difficult a task it is to implant a capitalist economy in an absolutist social and political milieu — a lesson that will later be forgotten.

The Duckbilled Platypus in the Labyrinth,⁸ or, the 18th Brumaire of Luiz Inacio⁹

The election of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva in 2002 was already a virtual result of the new era of indeterminacy that had begun with the whirlwind of deregulations produced during the immediately preceding period, that of Fernando Henrique Cardoso. This was a period that, given the powerful changes undergone during the previous decade — themselves overdetermined by an intensified exposure to the globalization of capital — would be characterized by its apparent suspension of any relation between the economic and the political, between classes and their political representation.¹⁰ Institutional policy has followed an erratic, even an aleatory course, and no grammar or discursive code appeared able to decipher the new reality by translating it into the terms of party slogans, ideologies, or the interests of the social actors themselves. During the year 2002, voter preferences, as measured by surveys at the polls, gave Roseana Sarney, the governor of Maranhão state, an early advantage. But Sarney’s lead then abruptly and unexpectedly turned into an utter rout when her campaign was brought down by a money-laundering scandal. Yet voters did not at that point shift their loyalties from the heir apparent of the elder Sarney [José Sarney, President from 1986-90] to the government candidate José Serra, despite the fact that, Roseana’s candidacy having been blown out of the water, the impact of this collapse together with the concomitant and menacing rise in prospective voter support for Lula seemed to point towards a renewal of the same power arrangement that had propped up Cardoso.

Lula’s fortunes continued along an ascending curve, although this ascension was nothing spectacular, having been threatened by an increase in voter support for Ciro Gomes — that is, until the latter “slashed his (electoral) wrists” after a gaffe in which it was announced that Patricia Pillar, a well known actress accompanying Gomes on the campaign trail, had been given the post of “sleeping with the candidate.” As campaigning drew to a close, Anthony Garotinho also appeared to have become a threat to Lula, but his momentum got him nothing more, finally, than a strong second showing in Rio. In the end, after his fortunes had sunk to their historically lowest point, Lula was able to become a magnet for undeclared (“orphaned”) voters,

putting together a solid majority in the second round of elections thanks to winning the loyalties of substantial numbers of anti-Cardoso voters and to the more cautious support thrown in his direction by the losers in the first round. Then came the party gathering at the *Novotel*, a São Paulo hotel on the banks of the polluted river Tietê, issuing in the “Letter to the Brazilian People”: the so-called “June Capitulations.”

Not unjustly, it was the marketing guru Duda Mendonça who was given the credit for Lula’s performance in a conjuncture that had seen the relations of politics as usual ruptured and their inefficacy exposed. But why Mendonça’s success, when his counterparts had failed to deliver for their own candidates? Precisely because the other marketers were still in search of the “qualities” that would give their bosses the edge, while Mendonça resolved to emphasize only what was non-specific in his boss, that is to say, to push a “Lulinha for Peace and Love” as part of an operation in which the candidate was to be “de-PT’ed.”¹¹ That is, taking a cue from Robert Musil, the idea was to proclaim the quality of a “man without qualities.”¹² Everything that Lula had declared or that he had represented before was now worth as good as nothing, and his campaign thereby freed to promise heaven, earth, and all the little fishes in the sea. It was a repeat, in a somewhat different version, of what Cardoso himself had declared a decade earlier: “forget everything that I once was.”

The interesting fact is that it was precisely the losing candidates who had clung to a discourse in which society still appeared to be composed of definite relations between classes and of social cleavages that would, presumably, carry over and have an effect on the level of politics. José Serra went so far as to attempt to leave behind his poorly disguised unease at having to represent a disdained and crippled sitting government by delivering a message newly charged with productivism, economism, and rationalism, evidently believing that the electoral contest was a reasoned dispute based on class interest. That government had made drastic changes to the underlying property structure, temporarily upsetting power relations across a broad bourgeois spectrum that included the major foreign interests that had established themselves in the course of economic privatization. Serra’s visibly poor media performance — his “Brazilian vampire” face, in the words of José Simão, the caustic humorist of the *Folha de São Paulo* — certainly helped lead to his defeat, but it was not the decisive factor. Ciro Gomes trotted out a new line, revamped by his new chief ideologist, the social scientist Roberto Mangabeira Unger who, speaking with the accent of a gringo newly disembarked in the tropics, broadcast the same national-developmentalist message — a kind of reheated “juscelinismo”¹³ backed, not coincidentally, by the Popular Socialist Party,¹⁴ the most recent reincar-

nation of the old and anemic Communist Party. Gomes even tried to exploit his tabloid affair with Patricia Pillar, until the lover’s repressed *machismo* got the better of the candidate and came back like a boomerang to topple his rising fortunes. It was like a Globo TV soap opera, replete with love and tragedy. And then there was still Anthony Garotinho, exploiting grass-roots religious conflicts.

In each case a political form of discourse was supposed to be a way of summoning up the political forms of society itself. Only Lula and his marketing expert opted for the discursive form of the anti-discourse (with the single exception of a certain national-productivist tone, all that now remained of Lula’s old trade-unionist career). As with the choice of successful industrialist José Alencar as his vice-presidential candidate — like him, from a poor background — the strength of Lula’s campaign was its lack of specifics, its ineffable good vibe and the “Garanhuns road”¹⁵ itself, uniting a migrant from the Northeast with a country boy from Minas Gerais in a predestined mission to save a nation without hope. The vaguely neoliberal tonality expressed in the pairing of the financial success story with the self-made man, all of it baptized by the silvery rain showers falling on the meeting in Anhembi that launched both candidacies, combined to become the most Hollywood-ized electoral circus that Brazil had ever experienced. Unmistakably *kitsch* and just this side of Globo TV standards of quality, here, surely, was the same indeterminacy, on the level of the political campaign, that had come to define the era itself.

The stance of the media in the 2002 election remains an intriguing one. In 1989 they were a decisive factor in delivering the win in the final round of voting to Fernando Collor — and defeat to Lula, albeit by a narrow margin. Everyone remembers the way the Globo network created an aura of victory for Collor by manipulating the last debate between the two presidential candidates — although not falsifying it entirely, since Lula went into it already beaten by the class arrogance of his adversary. In this case however the era had nothing indeterminate about it. On the contrary, it was strongly determined by the then current economic crisis, with inflation at 80% during the last month of José Sarney’s administration.¹⁶ Collor was to be the Messiah. Then, with Cardoso’s election in 1994, crisis gave way to its opposite: the taming of inflation through the Plano Real,¹⁷ the strong recovery of real salary levels thanks to the elimination of the “inflation tax” and, despite his being an unpopular candidate with no charismatic appeal for the oppressed classes, the factor represented by Cardoso himself as, seemingly above the fray, Brazil’s “Grand Elector.” The 1998 contest was a reaffirmation of ’94 and the near certainty that a “reform” policy whose real hallmark was privatization would be extended and further consolidated. The appreciation

of Brazil's national currency, the real, created a consumer paradise for broad sectors of the middle class, whose shopping carts were at least half-filled with foreign imports.¹⁸

According to conventional opinion in Brazil, the media miscalculated by withholding their support for Lula in 2002. Their mistake, on the contrary, was that they went on believing that the old laws of politics, governing the latter's relation to the economy, to class, and to ideology, would continue to operate. Considering the sheer impact that Cardoso's restructuring of bourgeois property had had, there was little reason to doubt that Serra would be a strong candidate, with real chances for winning the election, despite the wear and tear on the incumbent administration. Even today, the *Folha de São Paulo* insists on charging Lula with having "betrayed" his class agenda — an agenda that the *Folha* was determined, however ineffectively, to combat. It's the same charge leveled against him by disappointed militants of the PT [Lula's *Partido dos Trabalhadores*, or Workers' Party], only with the poles reversed. At a certain point, when the voter-preference surveys began to show the damage being done to the other candidates and just how unappealing Serra was to the electorate, the big media lost no time in striking deals with the PT candidate. The Globo network, which was saddled by a huge foreign debt, changed its position, and, a day after the election aired a program on the "Garanhuns Road" as if the latter's victory had been predestined from the start. Yet this was still no admission of defeat but rather the announcement of what was to become a calculated way of making sure the president-elect understood what was in the interest of the class running society. What is interesting here is how the accusations that Lula was violating his own class's agenda, particularly as lodged by the *Folha de São Paulo* and by the news anchor Boris Casoy, continued to reach their target, only now with an opposite meaning: this time around they become a kind of snare and a warning lest the president should fail to make good on his commitment to respect the right of contracts, the touchstone proclaimed in the "Letter to the Brazilian People."

But the victorious candidate and his party interpreted the vote in his favor as though it had been cast by Brazilian society as a whole, synthesizing all its various sectors down to the nooks and crannies. And, unlike the *condottiere* crossing the Rubicon, Lula sets out in the opposite direction. (Recall that for Caesar, crossing the Rubicon meant crossing from Gaul into Rome, the latter being the goal of conquest. Failing to cross it would have meant surrender to Rome.) Lula assembles a government in the image and likeness of that which had seemed to be victorious along with him, and was the condition of his victory at the polls: the pledge to be a friend of Greeks and Trojans alike, of "going from a hundred to a thousand without the

number one" (Musil), a pledge that took him from Rio, where the socialite Vera Loyola had donated a solid gold dog collar — *her* dog's collar — to the Zero Hunger campaign, to the stilt-houses of the Brasília Teimosa *favela* in Recife,¹⁹ where the president-elect arrived with all of his new cabinet appointees in train to "get to know" the real Brazil and inaugurate his new virtual government. Any resemblances to Žižek's "desert of the real" are not coincidental.²⁰

Contrary to Lenin, who perceived the break-down of the dominant political order and pushed it further along in the same path, leading the movement to a socialist revolution, Lula *restored* the political order that the cyclone generated by Cardoso's deregulations and capitalist globalization had blown to pieces.²¹ The make-up of the new cabinet reveals what kind of society and system of representation the PT, and especially the president himself, were intent on bringing about. The government's leading inner circle was made up of the PT pragmatists: José Dirceu, the true genius behind the party's programmatic turn; Antonio Palocci, Lula's choice for Minister of Finance; and Luiz Gushiken, Secretary for Communications and Strategy, "communication" here meaning simply control over funds earmarked for government public relations — a "simply" amounting to R\$ 150 million — and "strategy" referring to Gushiken's real job: to establish the parameters for a new cycle of long-term change, inaugurated by the centerpiece that was to be pension reform. And, finally, in the role of acolyte, we have José Genoíno, who had lost the race for governor of São Paulo state, and who had now become the most right-wing of all the PT leadership, taking advantage of the rhetoric and the aura of the ex-guerrilla fighter to compete with the most right-wing elements of Brazilian society at large. This radical political change, indications of which had, however, long been in the wind, was only made possible by the charisma factor, a charisma personified in Lula but that went far beyond him and was, in the final analysis, exuded by the Party itself, the major protagonist and standard bearer of the social movement that had reinvented Brazilian politics during the period stretching from the final years of the 1964 military dictatorship to 1984.²² There is an interesting effect to be noted here: the personal charisma of the president has proven powerful enough to anesthetize the popular demands that had arisen in response to the policies of the Cardoso government, and it carries out a kind of kidnapping of organized society itself. It is the property of charisma to superimpose itself on whatever else acts to determine social divisions, and to annul, above all, the class division. Charisma belongs to the order of myth, the reverse of politics. The PT's switchover from opposition to government insider produces an immediate paralysis of the existing social movements. Here, that is, to employ Gramscian terms, the broad "movement" aimed at conquering

governmental power cancels its earlier “positions” once the party of Opposition becomes the party of Order. The result, for adversaries and allies alike, and especially for the left wing of the PT itself, is total perplexity.

Many of the ministries were cynically handed out like so many bargaining chips. Parties that were either allied with the PT or threw it their support wanted ministries in return and were rewarded with these. The PT even set aside the ministries with the least revenue-generating power and the smallest budgets for its own losing candidates in the races for the principal state governorships. And then to the representatives of “civil society,” i.e., high-profile entrepreneurs, ministries were doled out expressly in accordance with the nominee’s respective business interests or niche in the commodity-export market. A noteworthy trademark in all this is the absence of any prestigious intellectual from Lula’s cabinet, a symptom of a poorly concealed *ouvriériste* anti-intellectualism but also of the unmistakable monopoly exercised by the party *nomenklatura* over the realms of public opinion and governmental control alike. The scant importance given to the ministries is less a function of the personality contest that assigned some of them to second-rate individuals (and worse) than it is a reflection of a disfunctionality affecting the power arrangements of the political system, and of the level of complexity of Brazilian capitalism itself.

The de facto conservatism of the government-to-be, there for all to see as soon as its victory seemed likely, had already announced itself in the inflections of the “Letter to the Brazilian People” issued after the São Paulo summit at the *Novotel*. It was a clear message to the business class, to the “policing” institutions of finance capital (to wit, the International Monetary Fund, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the Inter-American Development Bank and the World Trade Organization) and to the big firms and major capitalist powers in general: Lula’s government would not violate the right of contracts. This was confirmed in the nomination as Finance Minister of Palocci, whose recent conversion to neoliberalism had promptly won him an insider’s position on Lula’s transition team, and in the indications that Henrique Meirelles, the ex-president of Bank Boston and the newly elected PSDB [*Partido da Social Democracia Brasileiro*, Cardoso’s party] deputy from the state of Goiás (where he had no political track record) would be named president of the Central Bank. No sooner was he sworn in as deputy than Meirelles resigned from that position, as if his tenure in the new government were assured — is it, in fact? — safe from any unforeseen happenstances along the way. Meirelles was the sixth or seventh person to be offered the post, and those who had turned it down were all, without exception, high-ranking financial executives, a clear enough indication of the policy options favored by the PT and president Lula. For it was clear from

the very first that this was not a transitional measure meant to calm the markets but a definitive political orientation.

Symptomatically, the announcement that Meirelles was the choice to head the Central Bank was made in the United States, where the still pre-inaugural president had gone to pay a call on George W. Bush. In what is becoming a hallmark of his government — specifying its very non-specificity — this marketing move was made simultaneously with another: Lula announced in the US as well the choice of senator Marina Silva, a symbol of the environmentalist movement in Brazil, to head the Ministry of the Environment. In Musil’s terms again, Lula had gone from a hundred — senator Marina — to a thousand — the banker Meirelles — without the number one, that is, totally oblivious to his campaign promises. Soon enough, when the day the prohibition against cigarette ads on Formula 1 racing cars was to have gone into effect was postponed until after the Formula 1 races (whose first time-trials were to be held in Brazil) it was clear what the nomination of Marina — now a burnt-out star in the ministerial firmament — had really been about: a measure of convenience, the first of many similar ones, that would simply make it easier, later on, for Lula’s administration to delay enforcing the anti-tobacco law.

Whither the Lula Regime?

This question, inescapable as a rule, was so obvious as to be beside the point when it came to characterizing or defining the Cardoso government, but it was a question begged by the Lula administration from its very first months. The new government began as the product of a coalition so broad that it was hard to locate its center of gravity. What was more easily understood was who was in control and who was issuing the marching orders to the unexpected majority that had been put together in the legislature. That control was exercised by the “hard core” nucleus made up of the ministers²³ already mentioned — Dirceu, Palocci, and Gushiken, subsequently joined by the new president of the Central Bank, Meirelles.

But where and what was the hegemony expressed in this new arrangement, and what were the forces in command of it? Here the matter becomes more slippery and enigmatic. It would be easy to answer that the ministers recruited to the government directly from the upper ranks of the business elite and that the open and unabashed conservatism of government economic policy were explicit signs of such a hegemony, but the easy answer here is a cover for its falsehood. This enigma went right to the heart of the government itself; and the very make-up of the cabinet points, on the one hand, to an ingenuous and over-simplified idea of “consensus” — idealized by the

government's constant references to "negotiation" — and, on the other, to a concerted attempt at making powerful allies. That is, what was idealized here as "negotiation" hides the weakness of the government when faced with national and international business. When it was a matter of having to deal with the much broader sector of society made up of various categories of workers, then "negotiation" was nowhere to be seen, as public servants were soon discover in the case of social security "reforms."

A brief parenthesis: the "negotiation" flaunted by the government as its democratic calling card was nothing more than the reappearance within government circles, now in the form of a simulacrum, of the trade-unionist negotiating practices that — according to Lula and to most of the analysis and commentary regarding the trade-union movement — had been responsible for the greatest successes of the new unionism born, beginning in 1975, under the leadership of the metallurgical workers of the ABC,²⁴ with Lula at their head. The truth is that the real successes of the metallurgical unions, even before the formation of the CUT²⁵ coincided — the chronology is not irrelevant — with the short-lived "Fordist" period of the "Brazilian miracle" and with its decline during the great strikes of 1978-1980, when Lula broke onto the political scene as the most outstanding working-class leader in Brazilian history. From that point onwards not a single union victory can be cited, even within the areas represented by the once powerful ABC unions. The gains won by organized labor at the negotiating table, especially under CUT leadership, are henceforth essentially nil, and give the lie to the "negotiation" evoked in the Lula government's idyllic vision.²⁶ The most successful negotiation from this period, the famous "acordo das montadoras,"²⁷ was a deal struck by the leadership of the automotive sector of the CUT during the Itamar period [Itamar Franco, President 1992-95], a time when the CUT itself was still uneasy with agreements of this kind and which owed its success entirely to the São Bernardo Metallurgical Workers' Union and the auto workers themselves.²⁸ The real political importance of the CUT, moreover, resided more in its ability to put together a stronger representational presence for workers and, together with the PT, to translate that presence into political reality, than in what turned out, for labor, to be a steady stream of disappointments and sell-outs at the negotiating table during the 1980s and 1990s, decades of weak economic growth and of the increasing exhaustion of the private welfare effects made possible by Fordism's Brazilian "miracle," debilitated still further by financial default and the restructuring of industrial production itself. In Brazil, centralized labor federations, outlawed before the Constitution of 1988, work differently than their European counterparts since they do not bargain directly with employers. This is reserved for the individual trade and industrial unions

themselves, while the centralized federations have a role to play only on the political level, not in the workplace. But the trade union reform under study by the National Labor Forum (*Fórum Nacional de Trabalho*) proposes to institute a practice of "binding precedent" for trade union matters, imposed from the top of the pyramid made up of the various union leaderships, and making it possible for employer negotiations, heretofore still the prerogative of the individual union locals themselves, to be conducted by a centralized federation — and leaving to the individual unions themselves the Herculean task of passing down the results of such centralized negotiations to their memberships. The representatives of the various labor federations serving on the National Labor Forum claim that this is what real trade union freedom is all about: one can always demand more than the wage or benefit ceilings agreed to by the individual federations, but never less. It would almost be funny — that is, if sell-out government unionism were somehow to become a laughing matter.

The Council of Economic and Social Development (CDES: *Conselho de Desenvolvimento Econômico e Social*) was formed along the same lines as the Cabinet Ministries, here with a rhetorical emphasis on contractualism. As one of the emerging theoreticians of a "new social contract" — post-class struggle — Tarso Genro was named its first head. Wolfgang Leo Maar was able to attend one of the CDES's most important meetings, at which the original proposal for reforming the government workers' pension fund was discussed. He captured its essence at the time in a single, lapidary phrase: "The CDES is a portrait of the society that Lula and the PT think exists, and, what's more, of the one they wish existed."²⁹ The CDES is conceived as a reproduction of "civil society": lots of representatives of the business elite, drawn from all sectors but especially from industry and finance; a dozen representatives of the labor unions; a few intellectuals, the eternal cherry atop the sundae; and one representative of Abong (*Associação Brasileira de Organizações Não-Governamentais*) the largest umbrella organization of Brazilian NGOs. The disproportion among the various constituencies "represented" is obvious, and all members of the CDES are nominated and chosen by the president from a list provided by the head of the Council, who can invoke the same authority in order to dismiss any of them. The sectors being "represented" apparently cannot furnish their own lists of possible nominees, a fact that as good as vitiates the make-up and independence of the Council itself. The CDES was proclaimed as a place for the forging of consensus and Genro's "new social contract." As a governmental body, it has no decision-making power, however, being limited to an advisory role.

It seemed at first as though the CDES would, in fact, become such a consensus-building body. Lula looked like nothing so much as a latter-day

Diogenes with his lamp, searching, in this case, for honest interlocutors. The regulations governing the selection of its members did have the advantage of being made public — a seemingly innovative practice by Brazilian standards. The only previous development council had been created by Kubitschek in the 1950s, although it did not include representatives of “civil society.”³⁰ Paradoxically, Kubitschek’s development council, together with the BNDE (no “S” here)³¹ really *were* the places in which developmentalist strategy was formulated, and the conflicts that were averted within this dual institutional space reveal more about the institutional brokering of developmentalism than does Lula’s council. Roberto Campos [first director of the BNDE], until his departure from the BNDE, was an opponent of nationalism, but together he and the Bank were responsible for producing the developmentalist consensus that was the underpinning of the Kubitschek government. Under military rule there was also a council of industrial development that functioned more as a clearing house for state bureaucracies and the business elite and that in this way also came to play a role in strategic planning. After a few months of existence, the CDES, by contrast, became a nonentity and may very well remain one as far as Lula’s regime is concerned.

The CDES, in this instance, does act in concert with the BNDES, which had initially been placed under the leadership of Carlos Lessa, a survivor from developmentalist days and representative of the current of which [PT-affiliated economist] Maria da Conceição Tavares remains the unquestioned leader. Lessa, it is said, was Lula’s personal choice for the job (a choice reflecting the latter’s productivist-developmental side) and had always been close to the wing of the PMDB³² linked to Ulysses Guimarães,³³ its old, steadfast chieftain from the days of military dictatorship, with whose death Lessa’s friends had lost their leading position in the party. The PMDB went on record to clarify that Lessa did not represent the party, which was under consideration for receiving two other important cabinet posts, Communications and Social Security. But there is nevertheless a perceptible absence of any fundamental linkage between the three poles: the BNDES, CDES and the leading business circles. Lessa was appointed against the wishes of Luiz Fernando Furlan, Minister of State for Development, Industry and Foreign Trade, to whom he was formally subordinate, and the occasional friction between them is what mainly left its mark during brief period of their joint incumbency.³⁴ There were frequent indications as well of the business elite’s unhappiness with the head of the BNDES, to whom were attributed excessively high dosages of economic nationalism and even statism. Of all the members of Lula’s government, Lessa was probably the one whose positions were the clearest and most definite, and he never made any bones about his nationalist-developmental ideals.³⁵

At a certain point, Gushiken went on record as to what he considered to be his office’s strategic mission, announcing the formation of a group of “notables” who were to work out the formulae for long-term planning. According to him, such a group, under the auspices of the Institute for Applied Economic Research (IPEA),³⁶ and which was to exclude academics who only wasted their time discussing the “sex of the angels,” would have as its objective the definition of projects, programs, strategic working groups, scenarios, etc., and the coordination of the various sectors and agents with a stake in planning outcomes. It seemed, at that point, that one of the identifying marks of the new government had revealed itself, partly at least, in what was to be the formation of a Gushiken-IPEA-BNDES axis. The ex-Minister of Finance, Palocci, seemed not to be averse either to this trend, as seen in the fact that, by all indications, it was Palocci, together with Gushiken, who was responsible for the appointment as president of the IPEA of Glauco Arbix, Palocci’s old comrade in arms in the exuberant, “radical chic” days of their political militancy in Libelu, a Trotskyite sect. An all-powerful Finance Ministry was less than happy with the direction being taken at the BNDES, but Lula himself would be the guarantor of the interface between the BNDES and his inner circle of strategists. Yet Gushiken’s axis never came together, despite the fact that Lessa had redesigned the BNDES, formerly run as an investment bank under Cardoso, as a fund for development and new initiatives. In any case, the BNDES maintains its primary role as an Intensive Care Unit for large privatization schemes gone bust — like that of the electrical utilities — and as insurance in case vital sectors such as civil aviation should fail — or “crash,” since we’re talking about airplanes. (There had been talk of a merger between the airlines Varig and TAM, an idea later discarded in favor of an individual restructuring of Varig. There was also the matter of a bailout for the television networks, especially for the dominant Rede Globo,³⁷ which is sinking beneath a mountain of un-payable debts, now that its comedy shows aren’t the least bit funny.) In this it looks more like the banking regulatory body known under Cardoso as the “Program of Incentives to the Reconstruction and Strengthening of the National Financial System” than an investment bank along the lines of the financialization strategies being pushed by Gushiken. Occasional reports about Gushiken’s group of “notables” appear in the press without much fanfare, and it would appear that despite minister Gushiken’s allergic distaste for the “sex of the angels,” the short, medium, and long-term scenarios assembled by his group of wise men have not amounted to more than scholastic exercises themselves.³⁸ It was *déjà vu* without let up, while the real coordination between financial and economic groups and state planning agencies became a balancing act perched

on the initial budget surpluses being racked up by then-Finance Minister Palocci.

So — where *is* the center of gravity in Lula's government? Surprisingly, for a government whose backbone is a party that grew directly out of the labor movement, a party that refers to itself as “of the Workers,” and that, in effect, took its structure from that of the labor force,³⁹ its center of gravity rests elsewhere: in the financialization of Brazilian capitalism. This contradiction, paradoxical in appearance, was explored in my “*O ornitorrinco*.”⁴⁰ It points to the formation of a new class, whose function in the system is defined by its access to public funds. And, given that accumulation itself is state-driven in Brazil's peripheral capitalism, the latter's financialization, in all its various forms, is also a product of the state, created initially through pension funds linked to state enterprises, a kind of private welfare system started under the military dictatorship.⁴¹ The principal investment firms in Brazil today are the pension funds: Previ, Eletros, Sistel, Petros, Portus, Funcef and the rest, whose names always refer back to the firm or the economic sector in which they originated. Such funds intervene directly in the stock market and were decisive in setting the agenda for privatizing state enterprises. They are owners and shareholders in the case of many of the economy's major undertakings.⁴² The 1988 Constitution gave the final push to financialization when it created the FAT (*Fundo de Amparo dos Trabalhadores*) — the Workers' Protection Fund — which is today the principal source of funds for the BNDES, that is, the country's principal long-term growth fund. Its representative par excellence is none other than Gushiken, not by chance the Minister for Communication and Strategy. But he is not alone — high-ranking pension fund officials are a notable presence in Lula's government.

Nevertheless, this center of gravity is not hegemonic in the Gramscian sense. It is, in actual fact, the PT's arm within the emergent class formation that has grown out of the simultaneous processes of globalization and privatization and the new relation between the State and the market that these have brought into existence. The vote in favor of pension reform was its first victory. The new statute created supplemental pension funds for the civil service — and will later do the same for the military. Notwithstanding the fact that these funds are supposed to be public and sheltered from market forces, they remain essentially a form of finance capital: their holdings are to be invested on the financial market and they are, in effect, destined to be capitalized themselves as the products of defined contributions but with no provision for paying out fixed benefits.⁴³ From this point of view, they are a continuation of what was already the policy of the Cardoso government. But this fact in itself is not sufficient indication of a hegemonic relation, if for

no other reason than because maintaining the basic neo-liberal ground rules does not guarantee a way out of the impending crisis of peripheral neo-liberalism itself. It might only make matters worse, as demonstrated by Lula's recurrent problems in securing foreign financing and the continued imposition of a foreign debt policy that only further confirms the “extroverted,” i.e. externally driven character of the accumulation of capital in Brazil. The effect of this, meanwhile, has been an exponential increase in the internal debt, further barriers to accumulation, and the creation of a powerful mechanism for concentrating profits within the financial sector.⁴⁴ As ex-president Cardoso once said to an interviewer, it's not the government that controls the debt, but the debt that controls the government. He forgot to add that this upside down version of government got its start under his administration.⁴⁵

The power structure whose disintegration had led to Lula's election — the latter interpreted as the will of a “unified nation” transcending class struggle — may at long last be on the way to being restored. But if so, then under a new system of domination generated by two seemingly contradictory realities, both extroverted in character and linked to the globalization of capital. The first of these is, again, the financialization of the Brazilian economy, in which the continued external financing of accumulation — its internal sources having dried up thanks to globalization — is now linked to the emergence of new forms of internally generated surplus value, both in the banking system, whose profits depend to a large extent on bond transactions, and in the pension funds. But financialization is unable to mobilize all the internal sources of accumulation, whence its resistance to being nationalized, that is, its inability to weld together the preponderance of bourgeois interests. Moreover, as interest-bearing obligations — according to Marx, one of the forms of surplus value, and, as such, in contradiction to the profits generated within the commodity-producing sector — financial profits themselves are merely transfers of income from the various sectors of individual business enterprises into the pockets of the financiers. This only serves to penalize real earnings thanks to the increased cost of borrowing borne by the firms, resulting either in a slowing of economic activity or in the increased rate of exploitation of labor-power.

The second of these contradictory realities is that of capital's real cutting edge when it comes to rapid expansion, namely the export sector, led by agribusiness, which has been on a steady upswing for three decades. Leading the way here, in terms of growth rates, have been the agricultural products typically traded on the commodities markets (e.g., soybeans), the only exceptions being exports of *Embraer* aircraft and of automobiles. But within the overall matrix of inter-industrial relations, such agricultural commodities

generate minimal added value and show no real capacity for producing higher levels of economic integration on either an industry-wide or a national scale. The possibilities of such exports sowing the seeds of a real process of self-sustaining economic growth are scant, i.e., agro-exports are scarcely up to the task of consolidating a broad range of economic interests. In general it is a question of highly self-contained, concentric spheres of production such as agribusiness, which rests on a base of unskilled labor. The national petroleum company Petrobrás is also a force in the export sector, especially in petroleum derivatives, but it owes its success to the fact that it is a state enterprise, whence the possibility of its quest for self-sufficiency and of its establishment of strong linkages to a national industrial base.⁴⁶

But can we speak of hegemony in the Gramscian sense here? The “great little Sardinian” had always understood hegemony to mean the “moral direction” of society, not merely its domination. Paradoxically, the PT and the social movements linked to it during the “age of invention” of 1970-1990⁴⁷ had almost managed to provide such “moral direction”: its demands for increased public awareness of fundamental social conflicts led to the establishment of a new set of rights and to the broadening of the basis for citizenship itself, both consecrated in the 1988 Constitution; to a general condemnation of patriarchal and politically arbitrary practices; to new controls over public spending and the strengthening of an independent Justice Department that for the first time was able to provide real oversight of government dealings. In sum, a renewal of public-spiritedness without parallel in Brazilian history. Even the ultra-neoliberal Cardoso regime was forced, in part, to accommodate such demands, even to the extent of approving, for example, a new Law of Fiscal Responsibility whose explicit purpose was to prevent sitting governments from taking on excessive debt but which was transformed into a powerful brake on spending, translating into fiscal surpluses.

What has happened since then, however, is, in the first place, a powerful erosion of the employment base and the subsequent weakening of the union movement. From the first lifting of commercial restrictions under Collor, and then on through to the Cardoso years, the loss of salaried jobs was relentless. Between 1989 and 1999 these losses reached 3.2 million, of which 2 million were in the industrial sector. In the same period the numbers of unemployed leapt from 1.8 to 7.6 million, and the unemployment rate increased from 3% to 9.6% of the economically active population. In the 1990s most of the new jobs created were extremely precarious ones, lacking all formal regulation and protections, and miserably paid. Four out of five were in what is anachronistically called the “informal sector.”⁴⁸ What social class could have withstood such gale force winds? And with what consequences for its

political representation, and for its relationship to institutionalized politics generally? The paradox of Lula’s electoral victory is that it is simultaneous with the sinking of his own social class into disastrous levels of disorganization. His electoral campaign’s lack of specificity — everything reduced to the level of “Lulinha for Peace and Love” — is the perverse and contradictory proof that his legendary class base had ceased to matter. Perhaps Lula and his marketing analyst alone had understood that his electoral sleight-of-hand was only made possible by the fact that the veto-power once exercised by his working-class constituency had been reduced to almost nil. But the personal charisma he had acquired through his affiliation with a labor movement that had once outfought the military dictatorship and helped re-democratize the country still remained, and was his alibi for winning the election — and for failing to cross the Rubicon.⁴⁹

But the sidelining of Lula’s working class base under the new political regime was not merely the outward result of the devastation caused by deregulation. The restructured production processes are internalized and give rise to a new form of subjectivity, inculcating values of individual competition and confronting workers with the objective reality of new production processes that corrode the sense of class identity once made available, at least in principle, by a precarious peripheral Fordism.⁵⁰ Newly molecularized labor processes such as production teams undermine the kinds of class self-awareness on which earlier forms of solidarity and organization had been based, making the unions themselves increasingly useless. The “collective” basis of production seems to vanish, giving way to nothing more than pure, individual competition, and the unions do not know how to operate in this new political universe. Moreover, new schemes, such as worker participation in company profits, instituted under Cardoso, effectively exclude the unions from negotiations with workers over profit sharing. Research conducted in sectors especially well adapted to production teams, such as pharmaceuticals and hygiene products,⁵¹ attest to the formation of a new sociability indifferent to larger collectivities and little interested in the political entities claiming to represent it. If one considers that, in addition to the restructuring being undergone by the workforce still employed in the formal sector, some 40% of workers are now employed in the informal sector, and that unemployment in Brazil runs officially at 10% — and in the big cities at least double that rate, as calculated by Dieese (*Departamento Intersindical de Estatística e Estudos Socioeconômicos*),⁵² the trade union research body — one has to ask what class demands are now viable and what sorts of political actions could back them up? Current welfare policies, in fact a political functionalization of poverty, are the counterpart to this trend towards the liquidation of class currently developing in Brazil. And it is not by chance that, precisely under

Lula's government, such policies have continued to multiply under a variety of headings, beginning with the Zero Hunger campaign.⁵³

Populism, Representation, Political Parties, and Hegemony

To the decomposition of his class Lula responds with a presidential style that some have termed a new populism, or "lulismo-petismo."⁵⁴ Whatever it is, the president displays it in his communication with the masses, bypassing political institutions themselves and even his own party, especially when what is at stake is the political functionalizing of poverty. The erosion of class as a basis for politics and the breaking down of any representational bond between society, parties, and other political organizations, including the trade unions themselves, produce a short circuit fatal for politics and the exercise of government.⁵⁵ So it is that the president launches himself daily into new rounds of activities, constantly announcing new programs and social projects that are for the most part merely virtual but that serve the function of communicating with a base now grown diffuse, and taking up simulated "positions" — in the Gramscian sense — in the political struggle. The electronic media are of enormous help for this purpose, giving the president constant exposure, often several times daily — and at the same time, thanks to the fleeting quality of its representations, avoiding any representational fixity when it comes to the president himself, so that his next political appearance always seems to be a novelty. But the basis for such media effects is itself the decomposition of class.⁵⁶ Here, perhaps, we really do find ourselves face to face with a new populism, given the impossibility of *any* politics based on class organization — a populism even purer in form than was the case under the classic Latin American populist regimes of Vargas, Perón and Cárdenas.⁵⁷ These operated as authoritarian forms of incorporating the new working classes into political life, breaking up the traditional power arrangements bequeathed by Latin American underdevelopment. This process, whose material base was precisely the growth of wage labor and especially its industrial form, gave rise to the social-democratic understanding of the working class as a simple *social* majority, making it the task of organized parties to transform the latter into a *political* majority. Up until the decline of the workers as a sectorial presence within the social division of labor, social-democratic strategy continued to be based on a kind of class demographics.

But the new, actually existing populism represents the exclusion of class from politics. It is neither an exclusively Brazilian phenomenon nor is it of ideological origin — it stems from the disintegration of the working class, above all of its hard core, the industrial proletariat. The same process has

visibly been occurring in Argentina and Venezuela. Néstor Kirchner was elected without having to rely on the support of a traditional working class Peronist base, thanks to the vacuum left by the devastating impact of the de-industrialization introduced by Martínez de Hoz⁵⁸ and the subsequent internalizing of globalization under Menem. The central "actor" of Argentinean politics has become the diffuse multitude of unemployed workers and *piqueteros*.⁵⁹ In Venezuela, the organized ranks of the petroleum workers, numerically small but the group that counts in the Bolivarian Republic, are the allies of big capital linked to petroleum, and Chávez has to resort to the cult of Bolívar to cement together a base that is no longer a social class. In both of these cases, just as in the Brazilian, the system of political parties has undergone a severe crisis, including the total demoralization — even more than in the Brazilian case — of the major traditional parties. But Chávez and Kirchner, in the midst of the indeterminacy provoked by the simultaneity of economic crisis and the destruction of the party system, attempt, unlike Lula, to cross the Rubicon in the direction of Rome and not the other way around.⁶⁰ The differences here are probably to be explained by the sheer scale of the devastation caused by the economic crisis in Argentina and Venezuela, while in Brazil what took place was more a change in the structure of effective power within the business elite than an economic crisis of any significant depth. All value judgments aside here, what is needed is to work out a sociological and political understanding of the new order of things on a capitalist periphery thrown into crisis by what is evidently the overturning of what had been a fundamental balance of socio-political forces. With the weakening of the mass base of the popular social movements, the relative strength of the other pole, that of capital, has been increased, although here too without any *bourgeois* unity either, since the sectors that emerge as winners from the financialization/extroversion of the economy cannot themselves manage to synthesize a more general class interest. And the populism characterizing the current form of political interpellation completes the un-balancing act: the government gets caught in the trap of believing that its election really *was* the result of an appeal to national unity, and any organized movement appears as an obstacle to the national unity over which it considers itself to preside.

Thanks to the sheer depth of social inequality in Brazil, hegemony becomes a virtual impossibility. The opening of a seemingly unbridgeable gap between the classes turns any experience in common, any public space, into a chimera. Any such public space has, in any case, already undergone an accelerated process of privatization, whose result is now a country of elite schools, brand-name hospitals, more than two hundred helipads in the city of São Paulo alone while New York City has only four (making air traffic

control for helicopters a necessity), condominium ghettos, and private police forces with more employees than those of the public police and the army combined. Since it belongs to the symbolic order, no hegemony can coalesce unless social equality achieves a minimum of plausibility, that is to say, without a minimum of material equality. But once the gap of class inequality becomes a virtual abyss, it cannot be closed even symbolically. And the abyss grows still wider. In 2004 the number of millionaires in Brazil grew 6% while the economy registered a negative growth rate of 0.3%, and the *Financial Times* reports a boom in luxury consumption that saw the opening of two Tiffanys in São Paulo, with a third soon to follow. The response of those ruled over by this system of privatization is a privatized violence: the exponential growth of criminality is proof of the impossibility of hegemony. What the vanished promise of equality can no longer deliver is accomplished through crime.

To the absence of hegemony the PT's only response is to retreat back across the Rubicon, surrendering to the Rome of the dollar, situated somewhere between the Avenida Paulista and Wall Street.⁶¹ In the worst tradition of the Brazilian patronage system, The PT has tried to monopolize the state machine, on all levels, as well as the directorships of the remaining — but hugely important — state enterprises and quasi-state organs such as the pension funds, staffing them with its own party loyalists. The only exceptions to the rule here are the offices charged with the formulation of economic policy, the chairmanship and the board of directors of the Central Bank and of the Bank of Brazil, which were turned over to major players from the finance and capital markets. In this sense, Lula and the PT have gone one better than even Cardoso himself, who filled these posts with intellectuals and economists affiliated with his own party. After their time in power, the latter, in most cases, moved on to head large consulting firms or to become bankers, occupying the right flank — assuming it is possible to say what that is! — of the new 'duckbilled platypus' class. In Lula's government not one of the above mentioned high-ranking economic or financial officials is or was a PT cadre, nor do any of them have any intellectual credentials to speak of — not that that is a guarantee of anything.

The government's media critics, as well as the opposition parties, hammer incessantly, as if from the left, about the PT's handing over of all government and civil service posts to its own apparatchiks, forgetting their own past practices. It is worthwhile looking more closely into the kinds of institutionalized relations that have arisen historically between parties, especially governing parties, and the state in Brazil. From the time of Vargas, civil servants had made their careers in a bureaucracy structured according to principles of meritocracy, competition and impartiality. Of course, Brazil's

patronage-based culture shaped the "Weberianizing" of the civil service in its own way, whether at the federal, provincial or municipal level. The military dictatorship began the slow process of dismantling the career civil-service system, and it was during this period that the North American-style revolving door, in which high-ranking members of the private sector rotate in and out of public service, began to be introduced.

With the PT in power, there occurs something more reminiscent of the socialist experience. In appearance there is a total occupation of the State by the party. Examined more closely, however, the reality is just the reverse: the party dissolves *into* the State. It does not govern but rather *becomes* the government. Within the socialist political system, the tasks, functions and obligations — in sum, the very *reasons* — of the State became, of necessity, the functions of the party. It is not the State that becomes partisan but, on the contrary, it is the party that is statified. This inverse relation is rendered opaque in the socialist instance because the latter was always a single-party system, making any further delineation of an otherwise blurred picture impossible. But the PT, luckily, is not part of such a single party political system.

The statification of the PT is, in part, a product of the fact that the party, on taking up the reigns of the government, is transformed into the party of Order, in the rigorous sense of that term. Whence, on the most immediate level, the contradictions that characterize its relations with working class organizations, with social movements, and with what the current literature refers to, broadly speaking, as "civil society."⁶² As a party, the PT cut its teeth by subverting — disordering — the existing order. But that only makes its role reversal and its strained relationship to its erstwhile political base all the more visible, especially considering how enormously society's capacity for organization has increased during the decades during which politics experienced its "age of invention."⁶³

Faced with the decomposition of its class-base and with the corresponding increase in the power of the bourgeoisie (despite the latter's lack of unity), and especially in the power of the "new class" of pension-fund managers, the PT responded with its own statification, occupying just those government posts and functions that allowed it to control and regulate access to public funds. This is the substitution of administration for politics, given the impossibility of the latter — a process involving dissent, choice and decision — within the framework of the current disjuncture. The "realism" of the PT is its statification, a symptom of the breakdown of hegemony as an effective means of mediating conflicts. Statification is the form taken by the political party on the capitalist periphery. Henceforward, to be a party is to be a state party. The decline of the PSDB, out of power, obeys the same logic:

notwithstanding its own intense efforts to portray itself as the party of the new globalized bourgeoisie, the PSDB throws its support to the PT, that is, to the government and the State. The opposition over which the PSDB has attempted to assert its leadership is anemic, lacking any popular underpinning as well as the allegiance of the business elite.⁶⁴ Cardoso parades himself as the representative par excellence of the global bourgeoisie, but a closer look suggests that he is only surfing along on a froth made up of special effects, among which are his intimacy with international personalities such as ex-president Bill Clinton. Cardoso poses as a Machiavellian “prince,” but he knows better than anyone that, as Clinton’s political strategist advised him during his first presidential campaign, when it comes to getting out the vote, “it’s the economy, stupid,” and that the State itself is the new “prince” — the prince of itself.⁶⁵

Having arrived at this point, the system finds itself on the hither side of hegemony. With the breakdown of class as the traditional ground of politics, a populism that emerges out of this very same class breakdown, a bourgeoisie permanently split thanks to the predominance of finance capital and a “new class,” the key to whose formation lies not in its relation to production but in its ability to legislate access to capital, the forging of consent, the “moral direction” of society, becomes virtually impossible. And, paradox of paradoxes, the statification of politics and of the parties becomes, under the reign of neo-liberalism, merely the flip side of the privatization of the economy and of life itself. But these privatizations are, in turn, opposite in meaning: the latter is the symptom of insecurity, taking shape as a subjectivity generated in turn by the sheer uncertainty of the social nexus. The former, that of the economy, is not something opposed to the State: on the contrary, as another name for the violence of an atomized primitive accumulation, such privatization becomes a reality only *via* the State. It is for this reason that the statification of politics, and, *in extremis*, its total militarization — as is now occurring in the US — is transformed into a substitute for hegemony. This is the new paradigm that, on the periphery, is made into a reality by the PT, a paradigm that casts all earlier theories of politics into the shadows.

During most of its recent history, political theory, in its liberal guise, has been dominated by a mix of neo-classical, marginalist and monetarist economic theory — accompanied by the suppression, obviously enough, of its Keynesian variant. Such theory has also been married to Weberian thought, not least because Weber himself had drunk from the waters of marginalist theory at their source in the Vienna School. The rise to absolute power of economic theory reaches its apex in “public choice” and “rational choice” theories. The fallout resulting from the triumph of economic theory and a

corresponding avalanche of intellectual capitulations has been the subject of an endless, wide-ranging and extensively documented discussion.⁶⁶ And yet what has now become the increasing decadence of economic theory itself was to give no hint of the degree to which its subordination of political theory in fact threatened the latter with complete obsolescence — which is to say that any ability of the “new” political theory to interrogate the real phenomena of politics today has essentially been nullified. In the oligopoly that the contemporary political system has become — not to say the monopoly: witness, for example, the virtually total control exercised by Microsoft over internet access software — choice itself becomes obsolete, and the adoption of a political theory that presupposes the latter category — along with competition, equilibrium, the free flow of accurate information, voter sovereignty, opportunity costs, game theory, and all the other simulacra of conventional economics — borders on the ridiculous.

The problem becomes more serious still given how completely politics itself today is in fact subordinate to economics. Business enterprises have been transformed into directly political actors. As a juridical person, the enterprise always had more power than the workers, who are, when it comes down to it, physical persons. The class struggle invented the labor unions so as to transform the workers themselves from physical into juridical persons. But the new forms of production and work organization annul the collective character of the unions, resulting in the disappearance of the latter as a political actor of any importance, even as deregulation opens up a space for the kind of underlying political agency that only the enterprises can occupy. The scaled-down, non-interventionist State, contrary to the inanities preached by the false utopia of neo-liberalism, is not the least bit non-interventionist when it comes to economics: its non-intervention is limited to the political sphere. In a two-pronged maneuver, the State maximizes its role in the economy while reducing its political role, working in tandem with itself to create an economy without politics, hence a status quo from which it is apparently impossible to dissent. Hegemony in the Gramscian sense loses most of the heuristic ability it once had to unveil the nature of class conflict, and the “long march through the institutions,” the erstwhile school for the building of a consensus that would one day constitute itself as a new power in society, looks less and less plausible. It is for this reason that parties such as the PT — the new prince — become institutionalized themselves and thereby lose the power they once had to politicize breaches in the social edifice. This is the sad fate that the PRI had already prophesied in Mexico in the third decade of the twentieth century when it dubbed itself an “institutional revolutionary” party: the statification of the revolutionary parties of the periphery. And in the Brazil of the twenty-first century fulfills that prophecy.

The tendency on the capitalist periphery is towards a system of totalitarian neo-liberalism:⁶⁷ when all that Henrique Meirelles, the president of the Central Bank, requires for special access to the Lula regime is the latter's arbitrary and provisional decree, this becomes a clear exception to the democratic rule of equal treatment. And sovereign is he who has the power to make exceptions — so sayeth Carl Schmitt, the theorist of Nazism. It would all verge on the theater of the absurd were it not for the exasperating fact that it rests on the no less real state of exception that excludes the working class from the bourgeois universe ushered in by globalization's restructuring of the relations of production — and were it not an ex-worker and ex-trade unionist who, as president, had turned back from the Rubicon to cross, instead, the threshold of totalitarianism.

Post-scriptum

"The Lenin Moment" was written a year and a half ago, [that is, in early 2005 — Trans.] in advance of its publication in a book project organized by Cenedic that was to have been published in August, 2006, and somewhat prior to the July 2006 issue of *Novos estudos Cebrap* in which it appeared for the first time.⁶⁸ In the meantime the reality upon which my original text was based has moved on, making some clarifications necessary. I have preferred to record the latter in the form of a postscript rather than to modify my original text, which would have rendered it false in relation to its own historical moment. I would not want to leave the reader with the wrong impression that my text had in fact anticipated some of the other "moments" of 2005 and the first six months of 2006, above all the "mensalão" scandal.⁶⁹ Social science cannot meet the predictive standards of a Nostradamus, but neither, on the other hand, is it entirely aleatory.

Thus it is that, although it cannot precisely claim to have "foreseen" certain of the more intricate developments in the current political conjuncture, the fact is that one can find in "The Lenin Moment" a theoretical, conceptual and analytical framework able to account for subsequent events without violating its own premises or negating its own conclusions. Revelations concerning the blatant corruption of the PT are not all that surprising when one takes into account the specific variable that was the control by party members — especially by PT trade unionists — of the pension funds. The importance of such funds in the Brazilian financial system — given that they are among the country's most important institutional investors — was in itself a virtual guarantee of the gangster-style struggle that was to erupt among economic interests willing to kill or be killed for the "favors" such funds could bestow. The wave of corruption that was to come was already

detectable under Cardoso when the Previ pension fund teamed up with the consortium that won out in the privatization of the Vale do Rio Doce state mining corporation.⁷⁰ And government involvement — first under Cardoso and then, on an even larger scale under Lula's administration — with groups such as Opportunity Asset Management and Brasil Telecom⁷¹ — both of which purchased the espionage services of the aforementioned Kroll corporation, which went so far as to spy on Lula's then Minister of Information — was a clear indication that the "Garanhuns Road" was leading straight into the kind of promiscuous intercourse between private and public sectors for which the PT, with its promise to reform partisan politics in Brazil, was supposed to have been the prophylactic. It may not be amiss here to say outright that I stand by the overall analysis proposed in "The Lenin Moment," as well as its conclusions. But the latter are not neutral: I went in search of them, taking as my object of analysis political developments over three and half years under the Lula administration. Neutrality does not exist in the social sciences, for which reason I prefer to follow Gramsci's advice: to take a position and, adopting it as a point of departure, to set in motion the theoretical-analytical elements of an interpretation. But neither were my conclusions determined in advance. The reader can be assured that I have always sought to anchor my thinking in historical events themselves — without merely becoming their mirror and never concealing the fact of my total nonconformity when it comes to the policies of the Lula regime.

In a certain sense the biggest surprise held in store by developments since the initial drafting of "The Lenin Moment" was not that the Lula government simply completed the cycle — begun under Collor and then powerfully accelerated during Cardoso's eight years in power — when it too adopted neo-liberalism as its official policy; Lula's candidacy itself, his electoral victory and the political alignments these entailed already presaged, to anyone willing to analyze them, the road that, once in office, Lula was to take. Even before Lula took power, I wrote an article for the *Folha de São Paulo*, "Entre São Bernardo e a Avenida Paulista" ["Between São Bernardo and the Avenida Paulista"]⁷² that pointedly addressed Lula's capitulationist stance; another text, published in the same newspaper in 2003 — "Tudo que é sólido desmancha-se em...cargos" ["All that is Solid Melts into... Government Posts"] — and doubling as my public resignation from the PT — forcefully denounced not only Lula's capitulationism but also the transformation of the PT into a governmental "conveyor belt."

The big surprise, in the end, was the loss of what had been the PT's tradition of high ethical standards as the Party of the Workers not only got swept up but emerged as the major player in the huge wave of corruption that, since 2004, has traumatized Brazilian politics but (and this is what

should really frighten us) has left the economic sphere unscathed: a powerful commentary on the irrelevance of politics itself. Saying that the media were responsible gets us nowhere, and nor does Lula's panglossian claim that nothing has really been proven, any more than the reminder that Cardoso's party was no different and that corruption is a Brazilian tradition. And in any case, it has to be said that Lula's panglossian stance is itself a fraud: Lula is an inveterate and incurable politician, and, as we now know, schooled, since his days as a labor leader, in the worst practices of what can in general be called the political culture of Brazil — or, to use the terms made classic by Sérgio Buarque de Holanda, schooled in the deeply rooted Brazilian patronage system before which all attempts at modernizing social relations have come to grief. This patronage system, otherwise known as Brazilian "cordiality," is permanently reproduced by social inequality that runs so deep that it turns any pretense of democracy into a chimera. This loss is not limited to the PT: it is a catastrophe for the Left itself, on a world scale, the infinite prolongation of the Brazilian "passive way." Now that society finds itself without "moral direction" in its full, Gramscian sense, the possibilities for social transformation are once again frozen, indefinitely postponed: for the process of constructing hegemony is not an easy one, and its agents cannot simply be substituted.

How did the PT manage to become one of the architects of such blatant corruption, and of the violence this has inflicted on the *res publica*? Here again there was no "bolt from out of the blue," even if the sheer depth and extent of the ethical morass into which the PT has sunk couldn't itself have been predicted, not even by the most exacting standards of social science. The foundations for this disaster — that is, if a morass can be said to have foundations — had already become structurally apparent in the petty and more or less negligible scandals at the prefectural level, in the turning of party cadres into the directors of state pension funds — a theme taken up in "The Duckbilled Platypus" and again in "The Lenin Moment" — and, finally, in the thoroughgoing bureaucratization of the party, in accordance with a tendency pointed out a century ago by Robert Michels. With apologies to Edward Gibbon, the great historian of Rome's imperial decadence, it might be said that if the decline of the PT was a long process, that process was to end in a sudden collapse, consummated when the party took office. There, to repeat, what took place was the *statification of the party*, and not simply the turning over of the state to party apparatchiks, the charge most frequently leveled at PT militants after their wholesale raid on state offices. The pen that appoints twenty thousand state functionaries — while the president of France, on taking the oath of office, apparently appoints only three hundred — is the great instrument of corruption, since it transforms

cadres into office-holders and ideology into material interests: the great majority of those occupying such government posts and jobs receive salaries several times higher than what the average Brazilian earns, and the "Maharajas" who run the large state firms are paid sums far in advance of thirty times the Brazilian minimum wage. Moreover, government jobs require daily contact with the biggest Brazilian business firms, making them a fertile territory for all sorts of corruption. And the large state firms are themselves part of the hard core of the globalized grand bourgeoisie. The BNDES is the largest development bank in the world; Petrobrás, the state oil company, now finds itself among the fifteen largest oil companies in the world (the biggest in Latin America); while the Bank of Brazil remains the largest Brazilian bank, bigger than anything in the private sector. And the list could go on, long enough, indeed, to prove that the state enterprises are not on the sidelines of corruption but are its protagonists. Something similar had already taken place under the Cardoso government, during the phase of privatizations. And the PSDB is, or was also a party-become-state: as shown, negatively, by the fact that once out of power, it has withered to the point that it cannot so much as field a minimally competitive presidential candidate, even in São Paulo where Serra [who lost to Lula in 2002 – trans.] had been governor for six years, and Mario Covas's⁷³ vice-governor for six years before that. The proximity of the PSDB — or at least of its *paulista* cadre — to São Paulo's major economic powers, as far back as the PMDB governorship of Franco Montoro, in 1982, had already corrupted the civilian and republican foundations that had been the party's strong suit, and that once promised to fill in what was missing in Brazil's ideologico-partisan deck of cards. Thus the PT had already been cheated even before it could play its hand.

Emerging out of that kind of political-ideological-material (dis)assemblage, the PT became, as has already been said, a governmental "conveyor belt," not to mention the linchpin in all the major policy decisions in the economic sphere. What is in the making is, to repeat, a "petismo-lulismo," the Brazilian version of a new populism that this time around is not the authoritarian form of working class inclusion in politics, but its reverse: the democratic (?) form of *excluding* the workers. The president bypasses both the political institutions and his own party. The virtually bottomless pit that is social inequality in Brazil, subjected to constant fire from the neo-liberal blitzkrieg with its privatizations, deregulations and all-out attacks on the rights of society, has not produced a new individualism, not even in its possessive form. It has merely made steeper the path that descends into social barbarism: greater competition in an already unequal society is not the formula for a democratizing individuality but for a dangerous form of social

and political cannibalism. Events that to this day have not been fully explained, such as the assassinations of Celso Daniel, prefect of the industrial city of Santo André, Lula's government program coordinator in 2002 and very likely his (ex) future Minister of Finance, and of Toninho de Campinas, prefect of the second largest city in the state of São Paulo, have aroused suspicions that militants — if not party leaders — of the PT itself were involved in corrupt dealings that probably led to the murders, which the PT lost no time in classifying as “common crimes.” The families of the murdered men continue to insist that these were political crimes, and the Federal Attorney General's office, in apparent agreement, is conducting investigations. A gangsterism very similar to that which has characterized certain other left parties in Latin America appears to be making the rounds — not forgetting, of course, that it was the Communist Party of the Soviet Union under Stalin that led the way in turning partisan, political conflict into gangsterism. Not so long ago the city of São Paulo, the biggest and most important in Brazil — along with Beijing, Mexico City and Cairo, one of the world's biggest cities — was brought to a halt on orders from the PCC (Primeiro Comando da Capital⁷⁴) a criminal organization based in the prisons that took on the police in an action that led to the massacre of some 150 gang members, police and innocent bystanders. To all of this the government responds with programs that do nothing but feed into the vicious cycle of poverty: the all-purpose “Bolsa Família” (Aid to Families) being the most typical of these.⁷⁵ A second-rate sociology insists that crime waves, the PCC, and the like are the products of poverty and the spread of slums, but this is a falsehood: crime, violence, the PCC and other criminal organizations are the products of the slums because the latter are *themselves* the illegality in a democracy — an illegality in which the PCC is accordingly able to conceal itself. We are, of course, not speaking of illegality in its strictly juridical meaning here, but in the stronger sense according to which poverty in Brazil is itself an assault on the citizenship of the poor. The PCC and its ilk take advantage of this illegality, and since legal contracts become an impossibility under these conditions, gangsterism exercises its own governance over the poor by means of illegal terror: the employment of children as mules and lookouts for drug traffickers and the imposition of a code of *omertà* on slum residents are just two ways of exploiting the pre-existing illegality of extreme poverty itself.

Given this endless litany of capitulations and fiascos, is it still possible stick to the analogy with which we began, that of the two Rubicons: the one crossed by Lenin and the one that Lula refused to cross? Any comparison between these two historical personages is, of course, a fallacy — and one having nothing necessarily to do with a *bien-pensant* attitude of disdain

towards the Russian leader and of benevolence towards the Brazilian. The October Revolution was the overture to a long cycle of proletarian revolutions and also opened the door to the social-democratization of the advanced capitalism of the West, a process that has now been checked by neo-liberalism. The Lula regime, clearly, lacks anything like the historical protagonism of its Soviet precursor, but one does not have to fall back into outmoded forms of Latin-Americanist or Brazilianist nationalism in order to justify a demand that what triumphed at the polls along with Lula's ticket — namely, the desire for broadly representative and democratic rule with clearly socialist leanings — make good on what could have been a decisive turning point in Latin America. Here was a chance to leave behind the neo-liberal morass and to overcome Latin America's subordinate status within capitalist globalization, present and future — and a chance for the left worldwide to make a reality of its civilizing and revolutionary mission.

That in itself is, in any event, a major argument in favor of the Rubicon analogy. But there is still another: Lenin had understood the failure of Kerensky and of the formally democratic path itself in a country scarcely one step removed from serfdom, and threw everything into the effort to undo the system that Kerensky was trying to reassemble. Lula, on the other hand, preferred the role of Kerensky, and failed for that reason — even though no one as yet has emerged to play the role of Lenin in Brazil. The “indeterminacy” shown by both conjunctures is in one respect identical: Lenin's Rubicon was visibly pre-determined by the expansionism of a Russian capitalism under the aegis of Franco-German imperialism — an expansionism that is in turn revoked by the Revolution itself. Lula's election and subsequent history of governance are no less pre-determined by an intense process of capitalist globalization and de-statification: his government, however, does nothing to revoke these. Rather it sanctions and kneels down before them.

But was another trajectory possible? Trotsky gives us what looks like an answer in his *History of the Russian Revolution*, whose first volume had tried to show how implausible the Revolution was, while the subsequent volumes took it upon themselves to demonstrate how it was that the Revolution unraveled its own contradictions and made itself a reality nevertheless. In the first, Russian instance, an emancipatory opening in the midst of social upheaval is opened still wider by the Revolution itself; in the second, Brazilian instance an analogous opening is closed, and closed by the very party that had helped to create it. Lenin makes his move within the context of a rapidly growing Russian capitalism; Lula makes his in the context of what is effectively an implant, a capitalism whose dynamic is directed entirely from without. All that can be said for now is that a satisfactory answer to the

above question — specifically put to me by my friends and comrades at the *New Left Review* — would require the writing of another “Moment,” a task in which I am engaged at present. In the meantime, however, much more water will have to flow under the bridge of the current fiasco before we are able to decipher the (im)moral truth of the “Lula Moment.”⁷⁶

Notes

¹ Leon Trotsky, *History of the Russian Revolution*, trans. Max Eastman (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1932-4).

² Lenin’s *The Development of Capitalism in Russia* can be considered the first systematic study of a case of “underdevelopment” — along with the chapter entitled “Peculiarities of Russia’s Development” and its appendix in Volume One of Trotsky’s *History of the Russian Revolution*. The term “narodnik,” “populist” in Russian, arose out of a conception of politics rooted in the special character of Russia — the supposed natural goodness of its people — and only a few degrees shy of an openly paternalistic program for national autonomy within a capitalist framework. Here we are not all that far removed from what would later be written about populist regimes in Latin America during the era of authoritarian industrialization. It should be noted here that such “populism” arises only under the turbulent conditions caused by accelerated industrialization in a society that, in the case of Russia, had not yet fully emerged from serfdom (not abolished until the second half of the nineteenth century) and, in the case of Brazil, a society that only abolished slavery in 1888. The Latin American thinkers who were effectively the founding fathers of the theory of populism most certainly made use of the Russian sources.

³ CEPAL is the Spanish and Portuguese acronym for the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLA). During the 1950s and 1960s it was a center for the Latin American dependency theory advanced by Raúl Prebisch and others. [Trans.]

⁴ See V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, vol. 24 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1964) 19-26. See also: <http://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1917/apr/04.htm>.

⁵ See the following excerpt from the second of the April Theses, on “fraternization”: “The specific feature of the present situation in Russia is that the country is *passing* from the first stage of the revolution — which, owing to the insufficient class-consciousness and organization of the proletariat, placed power in the hands of the bourgeoisie — to its *second stage*, which must place power in the hands of the proletariat and the poorest sections of the peasants.”

⁶ Trotsky recognizes this moment of indeterminacy in the last sentence of chapter XXIII of the first volume of *The History of the Russian Revolution*: “This first volume, dedicated to the February revolution, shows how and why that revolution was bound to come to nothing. The second volume will show how the October

revolution triumphed.” Lenin: “The question is not whether the workers are prepared, but *how* and *for what* they should be prepared;” “Notes for an Article or Speech in Defense of the April Theses,” *Collected Works*, vol. 24 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1964) 32-33. See also:

<http://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1917/apr/12.htm>.

⁷ Lenin, like Marx in his taste for close empirical study, does not stint when it comes to the actual quantitative indices of a new class in formation, as opposed to merely proclaiming its existence in ideological terms. Social differentiation within the peasantry, the typologizing of old and new forms of industry, the growing number of wage-earners, the spike in the number of strikes — all are studied with minute care. See, for example, Lenin’s references in his articles on strikes and in his writings on trade unions, as well as *The Development of Capitalism in Russia* (Honolulu: University Press of the Pacific, 2004).

⁸ This subtitle is meant to suggest what might have been a conclusion drawn by Adso of Melk after the burning of the splendid Abbey of the same name when he asked his master, William of Baskerville (Occam): “Master, have we found our way out of the labyrinth?” In response, William could have done little more than cast his eyes over the ashes and smoking ruins of the incomparable edifice... *D’après*, without the author’s permission, Umberto Eco, *The Name of the Rose*, trans. William Weaver (New York: Everyman’s Library, 2006). It’s the same question that can be asked of Lula’s government: has it found its way out of the labyrinth of neoliberalism?

⁹ The added phrase I owe here to my colleague and friend, Leonardo Mello e Silva, professor in the Department of Sociology at the University of São Paulo and researcher at Cenedic. In keeping with the calendar instituted by the French Revolution, it should rather have read “the 22 Prairial of Luiz Inácio,” the date of the “Letter to the Brazilian People,” or the June Capitulations. Lula’s “coup” was to win approval as a candidate and leader thanks to his opposition to neoliberalism, and then, disguising himself as “emperor,” adopting that same neoliberalism as the policy of his own government, without consulting the electorate. Typical of bonapartism.

¹⁰ This earlier conjuncture was the subject of an earlier study of mine written for a 2002 Fapesp research project and published as an article under the title of “Política numa era de indeterminação” [“Politics in an Age of Indeterminacy”]. It has appeared in the book *República, Liberalismo, Cidadania* [Republic, Liberalism, Citizenship], ed. Fernando Teixeira da Silva, Marcia R. Capelari Naxara and Virginia C. Camilotti (Piracicaba: Editora da Unimep, 2003).

¹¹ In the original, “despetizar”; PT = Partido dos Trabalhadores. [Trans.]

¹² “Here — in a matter that really didn’t affect him very seriously — was that familiar disconnectedness of impressions, dispersed and de-centered, that is so characteristic of the present age, and whose singular arithmetic it was to go from a hundred to a thousand without the number one.” Robert Musil, *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften* [The Man Without Qualities] (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1952) 31. [Translated directly from the German. — Trans.]

¹³ The developmentalist and modernizing ideology associated with the regime of Juscelino Kubitschek, president of Brazil from 1956 to 1961. [Trans.]

¹⁴ Partido Popular Socialista. [Trans.]

¹⁵ Garanhuns is Lula's native town in Brazil's impoverished Northeast. [Trans.]

¹⁶ I analyzed Collor's election and its "messianic" conjuncture in *Collor: a falsificação da ira* [Collor: The Falsification of Rage] (Rio de Janeiro: Imago Editora, 1992).

¹⁷ The Plano Real was a set of measures taken to stabilize the Brazilian economy in early 1994, under the direction of Cardoso as the Minister of Finance during the presidency of Itamar Franco. [Trans.]

¹⁸ My evaluation of the Cardoso government can be found in "Política numa era de indeterminação," but it had already been formulated in the article "A Derrota da Vitória: a contradição do absolutismo de FHC" ["Victory's Defeat: the Contradiction of Cardoso's Absolutism"], in *Novos estudos* (the journal of the Centro Brasileiro de Análise e Planejamento, or *Cebrap*) March 1998. The same journal, in its March, 1996 issue (#44) had taken note of my negative assessment of the Cardoso government, as expressed in a Cebrap-sponsored debate (November 26, 1996) on Cardoso's first year in office, at a time when the success of the Plano Real in slashing inflation had everyone in thrall.

¹⁹ Beginning in 1947, the coastal section of Recife now known as Brasília Teimosa ("Obstinate Brasília") was seized by local fishermen and other poor residents and turned into a semi-autonomous settlement of stilt houses. Over the years, residents have resisted many attempts by land developers and other powerful interests to dislodge them from what has become an especially valuable piece of real estate. [Trans.]

²⁰ Slavoj Žižek, *Welcome to the Desert of the Real* (London: Verso, 2002).

²¹ Note the difference. Lenin: "(1) Economic debacle is imminent. Therefore removal of the bourgeoisie is a mistake. (This is the conclusion of the bourgeoisie. The more imminent the debacle, the more essential is it that the bourgeoisie be removed.); see "Notes for an Article or Speech in Defense of the April Theses." And proceeding in the opposite direction, the "Letter to the Brazilian People," or the "June Capitulations," with its public pledge to respect the right of contracts and in which a conservative economic policy is justified with the argument that one must not encourage ruptures that would destabilize the economy and the government.

²² See my "Política numa era de indeterminação."

²³ Ex-ministers after the 2005 "mensalão" bribery scandal that shook Lula and the PT. [Trans.]

²⁴ A cordon of steel and automobile factories near São Paulo, site of the major industrial strikes of the late 1970s that catapulted Lula to prominence as a union leader. [Trans.]

²⁵ Central Única de Trabalhadores, the centralized organ of trade unions in Brazil. [Trans.]

²⁶ For a history and critical assessment of CUT-style unionism, see Roberto Veras,

"Sindicalismo e democracia no Brasil: atualizações do novo sindicalismo ao sindicato cidadão" ["Trade Unionism and Democracy in Brazil: From the New Trade Unionism to the Citizen Union"], diss., Department of Sociology, University of São Paulo, 2002.

²⁷ A deal struck between unionized auto assembly-line workers, employers and the state. [Trans.]

²⁸ See Alvaro Comin and Francisco de Oliveira, eds., *Os cavaleiros do anti-apocalipse: trabalho e política na indústria automobilística* [The Horsemen of the Anti-Apocalypse: Labor and Politics in the Automotive Industry] (São Paulo: Entrelinhas/Cebrap, 1999).

²⁹ Wolfgang Leo Maar, professor of philosophy at the Federal University of São Carlos, in a seminar sponsored by Cenedic.

³⁰ Juscelino Kubitschek, President from 1956 to 1961, is centrally associated with developmentalist politics and policies. [Trans.]

³¹ Banco Nacional de Desenvolvimento Econômico, created under the second Vargas administration in 1952. The "S" would stand for Economic and Social Development. [Trans.]

³² Partido do Movimento Democrático Brasileiro. [Trans.]

³³ Guimarães, who ran unsuccessfully for president as the PMDB candidate in 1989, was killed in a helicopter crash in 1992. [Trans.]

³⁴ "Gravação revela atrito entre Furlan e Lessa" ["Recording Reveals Friction Between Furlan and Lessa"], *Folha de São Paulo* 25 July 2004. The strained exchange between Minister and president of the BNDES, as reported in the above article, proves yet again that the dispute here is not simply a matter of opinions but represents a contest of power between nationalist and non-nationalist cliques within the developmentalist camp. This sounds almost like a repetition of the 1950s when Campos the dictatorial-developmentalists squared off against the nationalist-developmentalists. But it seems that Lessa could not count on a broad base of support within the business elite, precisely because the old conflicts between nationalists and non-nationalists long ago ceased to have any meaning — a clear indication, in its way, of the anachronism of Lula's government. There were similar conflicts under Cardoso, and the non-nationalists were also the winners, notwithstanding the fact that the nationalists too were able to line their pockets very nicely. Time passes quickly, and is implacable in its choice of winners and losers: in November of 2004 Carlos Lessa was removed from his post at the BNDES, ostensibly due to his polemical statements regarding the policy and the president of the Central Bank.

³⁵ It is of interest here to note how the "opposition" to the predominantly neoliberal stance in political-economic matters is now being represented and led by economists from the developmentalist camp, formerly tied to the PMDB. The August meeting of the CDES was devoted to discussions of development, and its leading figures were all developmentalist economists from the IE-Unicamp/IEI-UFRJ axis. Not one of the economists actually aligned with the PT, making up a kind of left opposition, was at

the meeting, called by the government minister Jacques Wagner. Paul Singer, legendary activist and a household name of the Brazilian left, not to mention a member of Lula's Labor Ministry, was not even invited.

³⁶ Instituto de Pesquisa Econômica Aplicada, a government foundation administered by Gushiken's Ministry. [Trans.]

³⁷ The enormous debts now saddling these business sectors were accumulated during the euphoric days of real-dollar parity, lasting until 1999, when a powerful currency crisis tore the mask from the real basis of stabilization under the Plano Real. Thanks to the subsequent de-valorization of the real, all the extravagant plans for an accelerated modernization went up in smoke.

³⁸ In July of 2004, the newspapers reported on the end of the first phase of "Brasil em Três Tempos," a program coordinated by minister Gushiken. According to these reports, it all pretty much amounts to researching and constructing scenarios regarding the "sex of the angels," with the second phase, in which plans for actual projects and coordination between the government and business groups are to be worked out in detail, reportedly still to come.

³⁹ Benedito Tadeu César's doctoral thesis, which I co-directed along with Prof. André Villa-Lobos of the IFCH at Unicamp, features an excellent profile and interpretation of the class character of the PT. At the time I was persuaded by this interpretation, but the party's subsequent development refutes the notion that it is a party of the workers. The latter certainly participate in it, but they do not stamp it as their own. See Benedito Tadeu César, *PT: A contemporaneidade possível. Base social e projeto político* [PT: Possible Contemporaneity. Social Base and Political Project] (1980-1991), diss., (Porto Alegre: Editora da Universidade/URFES, 2002).

⁴⁰ Francisco de Oliveira, *Crítica à razão dualista: o ornitorrinco* [The Critique of Dualist Reason: The Duckbilled Platypus] (São Paulo: Boitempo, 2003). [See also "The Duckbilled Platypus," *New Left Review* 24 (2003). — Trans.]

⁴¹ Ignácio Rangel predicted that the rise of finance capital in Brazil would be something ushered in by the state itself, and that the latter's indebtedness to the private sector was the surest sign of this. As with many of his renowned paradoxes, Ignácio was right in his prediction, but erred in thinking that finance capital could exist without the state, and did not contemplate the possibility that the financialization of a peripheral economy, far from being a sign that it had matured to the point of being able to finance its own growth, could in fact produce precisely the opposite result in the context of a globalized capitalism. It should be noted, by way of clarification, that the Bank of Brazil pension fund predates the military dictatorship, which adopted it as a model for the creation of similar funds in the case of other state enterprises.

⁴² In July of 2004, it came to light that the Kroll company was spying on behalf of shareholders in Brasil Telecom, and that it was taking a close look as well at the doings and connections of important figures in the Lula administration. What this *imbroglio* reveals is less a case worthy of Sherlockian fascination over revelations into what Elio Gaspari has called "privataria" — privatization by means of piracy —

than the key role played by the "new class" in the Brazilian financial system. And despite Gushiken's charges that theories regarding such a "new class" are exaggerated, he himself is the best proof that they are accurate: in reports concerning the Kroll/Telecom *imbroglio* Gushiken justifies his interference on behalf of the pension funds by saying that they are under an obligation to involve themselves in the administration of firms in which they own shares, so as to defend the interests of their own shareholders. The emphasis here is on shareholders: the minister said nothing about workers. See my "Viva o Ornitorrinco!" ["Long Live the Platypus!"], a series of articles for the *Folha de São Paulo* 22 July-25 July 2004.

⁴³ See Leda Paulani, "Sem esperança de ser país: o governo Lula, 18 meses depois" ["Without Any Hope of Being a Nation: Lula's Government, 18 Months Later"], *Desenvolvimentismo: um projeto nacional de crescimento com equidade social* [Developmentalism: A National Project of Growth and Social Equity], ed. João Sicsú, Luiz Fernando de Paula and Renaut Michel (São Paulo: Manoles, 2004).

⁴⁴ Paulani, "Sem esperança de ser país."

⁴⁵ See the journal *Primeira Leitura*, July 29, 2004. Incurring a national debt as a means of financing expenses not covered by state revenues is a universal practice, but a very recent one in Brazil, where previously governments simply printed money for this purpose. From the days of Delfim Neto, state borrowing has become an increasingly common practice, but the exponential increase in the national debt is something that should be credited — or is it debited? — to Cardoso. Even according to *Primeira Leitura* — beyond question a PSDB organ [i.e., controlled by Cardoso's own party, the PSDB. — Trans.] — the national debt had reached a balance of R\$ 6,700,000,000 in 1994, when Cardoso was elected. In December of 2002, when Cardoso handed over the reigns to Lula, it had jumped to R\$623 billion, a tenfold increase.

⁴⁶ This is not true in the case of other large exporters of petroleum, above all the Arab countries and Venezuela, none of which were able to exploit their oil so as to build up an industrial infrastructure. The private ownership of the oil industry probably helps to explain this weakness, and, in the case of Venezuela, a total dependence on petroleum exports and the resulting free-market orientation, which aborted any possible oil-based industrialization.

⁴⁷ Oliveira, "Política numa era de indeterminação."

⁴⁸ I take these data from Marcio Pochmann, *A década dos mitos: o novo modelo econômico e a crise do trabalho no Brasil* [A Decade of Myths: The New Economic Model and the Crisis of Labor in Brazil] (São Paulo: Contexto, 2001).

⁴⁹ Even for those who dismiss as nonsense the allegation that Lula and the PT capitulated to capitalist interests — here due to the sheer weight of the "new (pension fund management) class" in the command structure of the PT itself — Lula's complete, overnight conversion to the very ideas he had once condemned must be a matter of intense interest. My own interpretation of this puzzle is that Lula never was a man of the left, and that his ideological horizons never went very far beyond the values of individualism. Now that he is president, Lula has confessed that

he was never particularly comfortable with being categorized as a leftist. Professor Isleide Fontenelle, author of the excellent book *O nome da marca* [*The Brand-Name*] (São Paulo: Boitempo, 2002) opts for a more psychoanalytical hypothesis: she believes that Lula's conversion is more in the nature of a repressed desire. When his electoral victory was in sight, the repression was lifted and his "dreams" were superimposed on the ideology that Lula had, involuntarily, come to embody. Thanks to his charisma, he was able to impose his own conversion on his party and his followers, but in all likelihood he himself has remained unaware of the political contradiction between the political power of his charisma and his unconscious wish. It's a provocative idea — although, clearly enough, the bourgeoisie doesn't much worry about whatever went on inside Lula's head. It's only interest is in the "head" of state. But Isleide was not making things up: in an interview with the magazine *Veja*, in 1997, Lula declared to the reporter Thais Oyama: "I want to be rich and anonymous. I've gotten tired of being poor and famous." And still more: "I always had the dream (check this out Isleide) of going to Massimo's" — one of the most expensive restaurants in São Paulo — and "I'm going to have plastic surgery when the conditions are right (...) I always wanted to get rid of these droopy eyelids." Cited by Gilberto Maringoni, "Governo Lula: uma derrota histórica dos trabalhadores" ["The Lula Government: An Historic Defeat for the Working Class"] in *Palavra Cruzada* (<http://br.geocities.com/palavcruza/>) 11 Nov. 2004.

⁵⁰ This is a term coined by Alain Lipietz, referring to the adoption and adaptation of the so-called "Fordist model" of production and labor organization in underdeveloped economies. See Alain Lipietz, *Mirages and Miracles: Fortune and Misfortunes of Global Fordism* (London: Verso, 1987).

⁵¹ See Cibele Rizek and Leonardo Mello e Silva, report of the sub-project "Trabalho e qualificação no complexo químico paulista" ["Work and Skills in the Chemical Makeup of Paulistas"], Mimeograph.; also, Leonardo Mello e Silva, *Trabalho em grupo e sociabilidade privada* [*Collective Labor and Private Sociability*] (São Paulo: Editora 24, 2004); and Milena Bendazzoli, *O consenso dos inocentes* [*The Consensus of Innocents*], MA diss., Department of Sociology, University of São Paulo, 2003.

⁵² The Diesse and the IBGE [Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, the government census bureau — Trans.] differ as to methodology. The latter counts only cases of explicit unemployment, while the former's figures include disguised unemployment and the so-called "discouragement rate," i.e., persons who have given up looking for work.

⁵³ The Zero Hunger campaign is a cluster of initiatives involving direct aid to the poor in Brazil. The most well known of these is the Bolsa Família, described in note 77. [Trans.]

⁵⁴ Literally "Lulism-PT'ism." [Trans.]

⁵⁵ The CUT [see note 26], the once powerful centralized labor federation whose close ties to the PT are notorious — the party, after all, was established by the union leaders who later went on to become the members of the CUT itself — underwent a

change to its leadership when the new government took office. Lula intervened directly to remove its president, João Fêlcio, a candidate for re-election with strong chances of winning because his constituents, primary and middle school teachers, make up one of the largest of the unions affiliated under the CUT. Since this would have led the CUT to oppose the reform of the civil service pension fund, Fêlcio was "invited" to resign, and in his place Lula nominated Luiz Marinho, previously the president of the Union of Metallurgical workers of São Bernardo and Diadema. The metallurgical workers were one of the branches of the labor force, together with workers in the banking industry, who were the most seriously affected by the restructuring of production relations brought about by globalization, and although the metallurgical workers are one of the legendary constituencies of "CUT" style unionism, their powers of political dissuasion are notably on the decline. It is likewise symptomatic here that two of Lula's most powerful government ministers, the (now ex-) ministers Gushiken and Berzoini — the latter the principal architect of the pension fund reform — were formerly bank workers. Yet as members of Lula's government they represent not the banking workers' union, of course, but the "new class" of fund-management finance capital. Never mind Goulart, not even the populism of Getúlio Vargas would have dared go this far. The paradox is that the CUT, built for the purpose of fighting sell-out unionism, has been transformed into a conveyor belt for the PT government.

⁵⁶ It's worth remembering, yet again, the fact that the electronic media, in the days of radio, made its first triumphal entry into politics with Nazism, which exploited radio as a technical means of bypassing society's mediating institutions, and of making the media presence of the *Führer* seem more real by first discarding its older form and then re-introducing it as something new. See here the invaluable and irreplaceable essay of Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," *Illuminations* (New York: Schocken) 217-251.

⁵⁷ Getúlio Vargas was president of Brazil from 1930-1945 and 1951-1954; Juan Domingo Perón was president of Argentina from 1946-1955 and from 1973-1974; Lázaro Cárdenas was president of Mexico from 1934-1940. Each of these three presidents took measures to expand the domestic industrial base of his nation throughout the course of the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s — measures that linked industrial development policies to strong forms of nationalism. [Trans.]

⁵⁸ Argentina's Finance Minister during much of the military dictatorship of 1976-1982. [Trans.]

⁵⁹ Literally "picketers," but here referring to the full-time political activism of many of Argentina's poor and permanently unemployed. [Trans.]

⁶⁰ In an article written especially for the *Folha de São Paulo* ("Chávez dá esperança aos pobres" ["Chávez Gives Hope to the Poor"]) August 18, 2004) Tariq Ali relates the following from a conversation with Hugo Chávez: "I don't believe in the postulates of Marxist revolution. I do not accept the idea that we are living in a period of proletarian revolutions. Reality tells us as much everyday." What he is saying is that there isn't a working class in Venezuela that could be the agent of the

revolutions that he calls Marxist, that is, a working class that accords with its canonical form as laid down by classical Marxism.

⁶¹ The Avenida Paulista is São Paulo's center of banking and finance as well as the principal zone for elite, conspicuous consumption — a kind of Wall Street and Park Avenue combined. [Trans.]

⁶² Evelina Dagnino, "Os movimentos sociais na emergência de uma nova noção de cidadania" ["Social Movements in the Emergence of a New Notion of Citizenship"], *Anos 90: política e sociedade no Brasil* [*The 90s: Politics and Society in Brazil*], ed. Evelina Dagnino (São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1994); Grupo de Estudos sobre a Construção Democrática, "Os movimentos sociais e a construção democrática" ["Social Movements and the Democratic Construction"], *Idéias: Revista do Instituto de Filosofia e Ciências Humanas* 5.2 (1998) and 6.1 (1999).

⁶³ This is how I understand the period that extends from the first organized opposition to military rule up through the election of Fernando Collor de Melo, in 1989. See "Política numa era de indeterminação," and also "Os movimentos sociais e a construção democrática."

⁶⁴ The episode, in August of 2004, in which information gathered by a Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry (CPI) into the activities of Banestado [the Bank of the State of Paraná, which was investigated for its role in facilitating the illegal expatriation of funds — Trans.] was leaked to the press — information that had revealed the identities and confidential financial records of a number of bankers and high ranking financial executives — led to intense maneuvering on the part of all the legislative parties — *all* of them — for the purpose of blocking any further access to the activities of the CPI and returning to the Central Bank all the information relating to the aforementioned bankers and executives, since the latter were not suspects themselves. Sherlock Holmes would have died laughing. What would likely have escaped even Conan Doyle's famous detective is that the deputies and senators had most probably received the following message: if you do not let this matter rest, you will get no more campaign financing.

⁶⁵ See the interview Cardoso granted to the magazine *Primeira Leitura*, in which he proposes himself as the only person capable of renegotiating Brazil's national debt — a debt whose exponential growth had been overseen by none other than Cardoso himself — purportedly because only he possessed the kind of credibility needed to pull off such a feat without bringing down the wrath of big finance capital. Everyone trusts him, Cardoso never being the one to wobble, at least on his own debts. If Lula's government should collapse, then, to be sure, Cardoso has what it takes to stage a return to power — but only on the heels of some crisis or other, not because (as he imagines) he is the "representative" of the grand bourgeoisie.

⁶⁶ For an extremely interesting summary of the ideological traps lurking within economic theory, starting with John Stuart Mill type utilitarianism, and especially for a sense of the origins of the thinking of Hayek, see Leda Paulani's *Modernidade e discurso econômico* [*Modernity and Economic Discourse*] (São Paulo: Boitempo, 2005) and the book by Francisco Teixeira, *Trabalho e valor: contribuição a crítica*

da razão econômica [*Labor and Value: Contribution to the Critique of Economic Reason*] (São Paulo: Cortez, 2004).

⁶⁷ I addressed this question in "Privatização do público, destituição da fala e anulação da política: o totalitarismo neoliberal" ["Privatization of the Public, Repudiation of Speech and the Annulment of Politics: Neoliberal Totalitarianism"], *Os sentidos da democracia: políticas do dissenso e hegemonia global* [*The Meanings of Democracy: Politics of Dissent and Global Hegemony*], ed. Maria Célia Paoli and Francisco de Oliveira (Petrópolis: Vozes, 1999). The above text was accused of being exaggerated and the product of an "abstract humanism," in the words of Luiz Jorge Werneck Vianna. But an increasing number of intellectuals are using the term totalitarianism to describe the system being generated by globalized capitalism, under the implacable control of a United States that, with its "preventive wars," is "totalitarian" in the very precise sense that it excludes the working class from politics and has itself become increasingly statified.

⁶⁸ See Francisco de Oliveira and Cibebe Saliba Rizek, eds., *A era da indeterminação* [*The Era of Indeterminacy*] (São Paulo: Boitempo, 2007).

⁶⁹ See note 24. [Trans.]

⁷⁰ Vale do Rio Doce was privatized in 1997, when the Consórcio Brasil (Brazil Consortium), led by the National Steel Company (CSN) acquired 41.73% of the Federal Government's common stock for R\$3,338 billion, the equivalent at the time of \$3.14 billion. [Trans.]

⁷¹ Brasil Telecom is one of the large private telephone companies that emerged from the break-up of Telebrás, the formerly state-owned telecommunications company. Opportunity Asset Management, a Brazilian investment bank that managed some of the larger Brazilian pension funds, initially won out in the bid to control of Brasil Telecom. [Trans.]

⁷² The title of the article alludes to the trajectory that took Lula from the hotbed of Brazilian labor militancy in the strikes of the 1970s and 1980s to the seat of financial and elite political power in the first decade of the 21st century. [Trans.]

⁷³ Mario Covas was governor of São Paulo state from 1995 to 2001. [Trans.]

⁷⁴ Literally "First Command of the Capital." See Paulo Arantes's article in this issue of *Mediations*: "Panic Twice in the City." [Trans.]

⁷⁵ Part of Lula's Zero Hunger campaign, the Bolsa Família provides a small unconditional stipend each month to families in extreme poverty, and a conditional per-child stipend to all families below the poverty line who keep their children vaccinated and in school. [Trans.]

⁷⁶ This essay was finished in the winter of our discontent, 2006. Thanks to Rodrigo Naves for his comments, always generous and precise, and to my friends at *New Left Review*, especially Susan Watkins, for the patient and critical reading. [The essay translated here partially overlaps the author's "Lula in the Labyrinth," *New Left Review* 42 (2006): 5-22. — Trans.] Thanks also to my friends at Cenedic, who did much to persuade me to write this essay, and finally to John Steinbeck for inspiring the system of dating this PS.

Brazil in the South Atlantic: 1550-1850

Luiz Felipe de Alencastro

Translated by Emilio Sauri

The history of modern Brazil has always been interpreted on the basis of one central question or another. Cattle raising in the São Francisco valley, the relationship between masters and slaves, the structures of dependency generated by merchant capital, bureaucratic privileges, or the stakes of the gold economy in the eighteenth century: all have, in their turn, served as the connecting thread for studying Portuguese domination, which is disrupted by the economic plan in 1808, with the end of the metropolitan monopoly, and which comes to an end in 1822, with the independence of Brazil.¹

New research on the slave trade, on the subjugation of the Indians, on internal and international migrations, allows for the elaboration of an interpretive axis of wider scope: the transformations of labor in the colonial and national context through the middle of the nineteenth century. The only European colony of the New World that was not fragmented at the moment of its independence, Brazil possesses a powerfully regionalized historiography, as if the colonial history of the nation had been confused with the history of the Brazilian colonial territory. However, the investigation of the labor question invites us to turn to Africa as well and situate the colonial spatial matrix in the South Atlantic. Consequently, another periodization imposes itself: it is in 1850, with the end of the African slave trade, that the real breakdown of the colonial order takes place.

This article, published in French as "Le versant brésélien de l'Atlantique-Sud: 1550-1850" (*Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 61.2 [March-April 2006] 339-382), was written in large part at the John Carter Brown Library (Providence, Rhode Island), where the author spent 2004 as an Andrew W. Mellon Senior Research Fellow.

The Emergence of the South Atlantic System

Fifty years after the arrival of the Portuguese in 1500, the slave trade is initiated and the Luso-African colonization of South America begins. Since the end of the sixteenth century, exchanges between the metropolis and Portuguese America are carried out through a navigational corridor connecting, at the top of the Tropic of Capricorn, the zones of South American slave production with the slave trade zones of Central Africa. What this means is that the transatlantic slave space delimits the horizon of Brazilian history for three centuries. Rather than droning out the story of each South American territory, it seems preferable to retrace the evolution of African slave markets which, alongside the metropolis, shape Brazil.

Initially centralized in Senegambia and in the Gulf of Guinea, Portuguese slave trafficking was redirected toward Angola, where the littoral, bordered by the Benguela current, was more sheltered from privateers and European competitors. After the alliance with the kingdom of Congo, Lisbon's hold over Africa affirmed itself during the Union of the Two Crowns (1580-1640). As is well known, all Spanish contracts of *asiento* (privileges of slave importation) sold in Madrid between 1595 and 1638 were acquired by Portuguese traders, sometimes at the head of investment groups.² As a result, the slave trade employed structures capable of attracting large European merchant capital. And it is in Angola that the impact of the *asiento* was felt most.

Combining the roles of *asiento* holder and governor of Angola (1602-1603), João Rodrigues Coutinho triggers – from Luanda, the Angolan capital – several wars, with the aim of creating slave-trade markets. Having subdued a number of tribal chiefs (*sobas*), the colonial authorities organize slave markets within the interior. To this end, the Portuguese ally themselves with *jagas*, multiethnic warrior hordes that participated in the hunting of captives. Directly or by means of intermediaries, the *asiento* sharers associate themselves with the Angolan governors. In considering the tri-continental schema of the slave trade, it is in Africa that the most shadowy zones subsist. Yet Angola appears as the slaving enclave where one can best grasp realities that are difficult to perceive elsewhere in Africa.

With the establishment of maritime circuits and specialized practices within large-scale slaving, one witnesses the consolidation of the Portuguese presence within Central Africa. Four of the five forts located on the coast and in the interior, constituting so many points of articulation between Atlantic routes and African continental trade, were built or consolidated in Angola during the period of Portuguese *asientos*. In the first decades of the seventeenth century, Luanda became an important base for slave shipping,

prefiguring an evolution that made it the largest slave port in the history of the trade.³

At the same time, following Dutch offensives, and subsequent English aggressions in Asia, Portuguese merchant capital abandons the Pacific for the Atlantic. Within the context of Lusitanian imperial strategy, the South Atlantic took precedence over the Indian Ocean and Asia, and it is thanks to the slave trade that Lisbon defines its long destiny as a colonial power.

The framework of interwoven interests during the period of the Portuguese *asiento* appears within different spheres of power. João Rodrigues Coutinho was not only the governor of Angola and an *asiento* holder, but also the business associate of his brother, Gonçalo Vaz Coutinho – who held the *asiento* himself until 1609. One of the sons of the latter, Francisco de Sousa Coutinho, head of Portuguese diplomacy after the Restoration (1640), worked vigorously, in the United Provinces and within European courts, to restore Lisbon's sovereignty over Angola and Brazil.⁴ In so doing, the descendants of the Coutinho brothers remained active within the South Atlantic.

After the accession of the Braganzas to the throne in Lisbon [in 1640], the war between the two Iberian capitals explodes. With the displacement of the Portuguese from Hispano-American ports, those circuits of trade that had formerly been attached to the *asiento* were redirected toward Brazil, the only market open to their operations. This is due to a significant fact, inherited from the domination of the Habsburgs [1580-1640], in the Lusitanian Atlantic: even if the colonists could establish a regular trade of Amerindian captives, the plantations of Portuguese America were completely integrated into the gears of the slave trade developed through the *asientos*. Henceforth, and until the middle of the nineteenth century, Angola continued to be the private preserve of the Brazilian economy.

Presented in this way, this sequence of events has the whiff of a certain historical determinism. Yet, following the experience already accumulated in the Canary Islands, in Madeira, in São Tomé and, with the Spanish, in Hispaniola, the Crown's decision to introduce the cultivation of sugar cane in Portuguese America responded to a well-defined goal: to plug the region into the commercial networks operating in the metropolis and in African ports.⁵ This choice had durable consequences, which are nevertheless somewhat different than those observed in the islands cited above. The uniqueness of Portuguese America stems from its direct bilateral relations with African ports, alongside the triangular trade centered in Lisbon. How were these exchanges formed?

Sustained by the export of South American products, such as cowries, manioc flour, cachaça, and tobacco, various permutations persist until the

middle of the nineteenth century. Similarly, Portuguese triangular trade did not function in only one direction. Boats from Lisbon could transport European or Asian goods to Brazil, particularly fabrics from India, which were then re-exported to African ports. Inversely, slave traders regularly bought ivory or beeswax in Angola, which was brought into Brazilian ports in order to be redirected to Lisbon. Nonetheless, the bilateral trade between Brazil and Africa emerges as the cause of a certain contradiction between metropolitan and colonial merchants in the history of the Portuguese Atlantic.

Indeed, Angola's evolution differs from that of Portuguese and European outposts located elsewhere in Africa. The others were limited to seaports; Angola was the only region to witness an occupation of the backcountry, giving rise to the implantation of Iberian institutions. In the seventeenth century, the municipal chambers of Luanda and Maçangano (located 150 km southwest of Luanda) managed relations with the metropolis, on one side, and, on the other, native communities, colonists, merchants, and the clergy. The last was connected to the diocese of Congo and Angola, where the bishops resided between 1596 and 1621 at the Episcopal See of Mbanza Congo or São Salvador do Congo (200 km from the coast) – the first to have been established in the hinterland of the dark continent – and later in Luanda. River waterways and a number of paths connected the outposts of the interior with maritime ports.

The region included between one and five thousand Portuguese and Luso-Brazilian inhabitants in the seventeenth century, a figure shifting according to the number of soldiers on the ground. Ultimately, this possession represented, as late as the middle of the nineteenth century, the principal zone of European population in Africa. In alliance with the Portuguese, *jaga* warriors, Mubiré (the Vili tribe from the Congo participating in long-distance trade), and *pombeiros* (native wandering merchants) extended European commercial activities well beyond harbor zones.⁶ Unlike other regions of black Africa before the nineteenth century, the significance of the presence of European colonists in Angola (the “Angolistas”⁷) is far from negligible.⁸

The Thirty Years' War in the South Atlantic

The extension of the front lines of the Thirty Years' War to the shores of the South Atlantic reveals the complementarity established between Brazil and Angola. As we know, the Dutch West Indian Company (WIC) seized a portion of the sugar regions in Portuguese America in 1630. After having reactivated sugar mills seized in the colonies, the WIC administration in Pernambuco realized what profit it could draw from a confiscation of

Portuguese ports in Africa. The outpost of Elmina, in the Gulf of Guinea, was taken by the Dutch in 1637. Without the knowledge of the WIC administration in Amsterdam – which expected to attack Bahia, the capital of Portuguese America – the Dutch government of Pernambuco began a military campaign against Angola in 1641.

Seven years later, the Portuguese and the Brazilian colonists launched a counter-attack from Rio de Janeiro, this time crossing the ocean themselves in order to reconquer Angola. What were the motives behind an operation as surprising as it is unnoticed in colonial history? The commander of the campaign, Salvador de Sá, the powerful governor of Rio de Janeiro, whose father and grandfather had also controlled this territory, wanted to retake Angola for two reasons. First, it was for him a matter of securing blacks for export to Buenos Aires, in order to revive smuggling between La Plata and Rio de Janeiro. Second, the campaigners sought to provide the planters of Guanabara Bay with Africans. In reality, the demand for blacks in this sugar region was still modest and could be met through the subjugation of Indians. Knowing the South Atlantic well, Salvador de Sá had understood that the route from Rio de Janeiro to Luanda was the best means to reach Buenos Aires and gain access to the silver from the mines of Potosí.⁹

Initiated in the course of the last two decades of the sixteenth century, trade between La Plata and Rio de Janeiro is maintained intermittently until the beginning of nineteenth century. Thus, Buenos Aires – alongside Rio de Janeiro, Bahia, Recife, Ouidah, and Luanda – constitutes one of the poles of the South Atlantic system. So much so that the WIC and Portuguese Crown alike considered taking Buenos Aires from the Spanish with the aim of better controlling trade between Luanda and Potosí. This *peruleiro* (the name given to Portuguese traders in the region of upper Peru) plot designed by people from Rio de Janeiro gave rise to the Colônia do Sacramento, the illegal outpost by the River Plate, founded in 1680 by a Luso-Brazilian expedition led from Guanabara Bay.

The Luso-Brazilian Intervention in Central Africa

Deprived of the African pole of the South Atlantic system after their expulsion from Angola, besieged at Pernambuco, and weakened by the defeat of the United Provinces during the first Anglo-Dutch War, the WIC surrendered at Recife in 1654. These facts are exemplary in more than one way. All at once, the Portuguese and Dutch perceived the South Atlantic slave system as one front, confirming the strategic unity of the South American and African enclaves. But military operations in Africa present another interest. Elmina, where the Portuguese busied themselves above all in acquiring African gold

that was immediately dispatched to the metropolis, remained in the hands of the Dutch. In return, Angola was seized once again by Lisbon thanks to the support provided by South American colonists. Salvador de Sá himself became governor of Angola in 1648. He was later succeeded by other governors who came from Brazil or who were bound up with Luso-Brazilian interests. One could undoubtedly do no better than name the colonists settled in Portuguese America *Brasílicos*, as they were already called in the sixteenth century,¹⁰ suggesting that they possessed a solid regional identity (the Paulistas, the Pernambucans) distinct from metropolitans (the *reinóis*), without, as Brazilian historiography will later claim, constituting a supra-regional or proto-national community. Increasing the number of their transatlantic interventions, which have no equivalent among other American colonists, the *Brasílicos* emerge unquestionably as actors in the rivalries that clashed in Central Africa. In opposition to established colonists – the *Angolistas* – and the Crown itself, they asserted their own interests within African territory. *Brasílicos* and *Angolistas* alike are agents that were involved in the formation of the South Atlantic system.

Each of the three *Brasílico* governors of Angola – Salvador de Sá (1648-1652), João Fernandes Vieira (1658-1661) and André Vidal de Negreiros (1661-1666) – and the officers that accompanied them, owned slave properties in Rio de Janeiro, Pernambuco, or Paraíba, from where they watched the development of Angola. They knew that that the regional slave market was in the hands of *Angolista* merchants and their native *pombeiros*, who acted as brokers between the ports and the markets of the interior (*sertão*). Having settled in Luanda, the governors, who sought to bypass these intermediaries, launched several raids (*guerras do sertão*) against the rebellious natives and those suspected as such, capturing them and later deporting them to their Brazilian properties. These raids, however, disarranged the network of *pombeiros* and *sertão* markets, destabilizing regular land trade and resulting in the displeasure of the *Angolistas*. For this reason the *Angolistas*, in a petition sent to the Crown in 1660, protested against these wars, which ended up “blocking common trade” within the entire region.¹¹

Other reasons help explicate Lisbon’s opposition to the intervention of *Brasílicos*. In the middle of a troubled period, the raids launched by the governors mobilized troops toward the hostile and insalubrious lands of the interior, leaving the port of Luanda at the mercy of a seaborne assault. In fact, the armed truce between Portugal and the United Provinces was a tense one. In Lisbon, therefore, people feared that the Dutch, who reappeared in the Congo Estuary, would launch a counter-attack on Luanda. Similarly, Spain, which was at peace with France (The Treaty of the Pyrenees, 1659) but continuously at war with Portugal, was capable of surrounding

the Lusitanian territories. Without access to African markets, Madrid – leaning on Spanish capuchins settled in the Kingdom of the Congo – might send a naval expedition in the direction of Angola. Between 1650 and 1660, Luanda was on several occasions informed of a Dutch or Spanish threat.

During this same period, a number of mulatto militiamen arriving from Pernambuco played a major role at the Battle of Ambuila (1665), which broke up the Kingdom of Congo. Coordinated by the governor of Angola, André Vidal de Negreiros – former commander of the *Brasílico* forces that defeated the Dutch at Pernambuco and grand proprietor of sugar mills in Paraíba – Ambuila is the most important colonial battle of black Africa in the modern era. There too, one discovers the participation of colonists from Brazil. Unlike other Angolan governors, coming generally from Lisbon or Portuguese Asia with an administrative or concrete knowledge of indigenous hierarchies, *Brasílicos* remained strangers to the idea of native sovereignty. Nurtured by the South American experience – which included the subjugation of Indian communities and wars against *quilombos* (Maroon villages) – these governors considered the kingdom of Congo, whose independence was even recognized by Rome and Lisbon, a runaway-slave refuge, or a quasi-*quilombo*. Despite the reservations of *Angolistas* and the Court, the resultant *Brasílico* colonialism provided, in the long run, the Portuguese occupation with a more solid foundation. Between the middle of the seventeenth century and the middle of the eighteenth century, no less than ten *Brasílico* campaigns were organized in order to help the *Angolistas*; and there was at least one intervention carried out by *Brasílico* troops in Mozambique at the end of the seventeenth century.¹²

Inured to war in the tropics, partially immune to the diseases of the region – the cause of heavy losses among the soldiers arriving from the metropolis – *Brasílicos* proved to be better adapted to the theater of operations in Africa. Fighting with wheel-lock rifles, and later percussion rifles, more suited to ambushes and tropical humidity than the matchlocks used by European troops, eating cassava and dried meat, marching in sandals or barefooted, this “new model of colonial army” intensifies the plundering carried out by the slave trade. In addition, royal functionaries, missionaries, merchants, and adventurers who contributed to the expansion of Portuguese domination in Central Africa traveled between Brazil and Angola.

We should bear in mind that between 1648 and 1810 several bishops and a dozen governors in Angola occupied similar posts within Portuguese America, before or after having assumed their functions in Luanda.¹³ Some studies devoted to the careers of late seventeenth-century governors highlight the activities of royal officers who were connected through business and familial ties within the arrangement of exchanges in the South Atlantic.¹⁴

Soon thereafter, governorships were reserved for members of the metropolitan aristocracy, although some other functions in Angola were still carried out by colonists arriving from Brazil.¹⁵ In the last quarter of the eighteenth century, the decline of gold mining in Minas Gerais pushed adventurers and small businessmen toward the other side of the ocean.¹⁶

In order to approximate best the changes that took place after the Thirty Years' War, which Charles Boxer calls the "first world war," we should not turn to Lisbon, but rather to Rome. The new map of dioceses drawn up by Innocent XI (1676-1689), took into account not only geopolitics, but also trade circuits and their ease or difficulty. For this reason Salvador de Bahia in Brazil, raised to archiepiscopal rank in 1676, possesses authority not only over the Brazilian dioceses of Olinda and Rio de Janeiro, created that year, but also over the dioceses of Luanda and São Tomé (which included the harbor areas in the Gulf of Guinea), while the Episcopal See of São Luís (Maranhão in northern Brazil) was a suffragan of the Lisbon metropolis. Until 1845, Episcopal cartography codified and consolidated the South-Atlantic space in which Brazil took shape.

If it is true that African slavery asserts itself as the dominant form of labor within Portuguese America, it is no less true that the subjugation of Indians continues to play a decisive role within the regions not integrated into the Atlantic market, as is the case in São Paulo in the seventeenth century and in the Amazon until the last quarter of the eighteenth.

Expansion and Decline of Servile Amerindian Labor

On the margins of Rio de Janeiro's African connection, colonists in São Paulo expanded food-producing cultivation, notably the cultivation of wheat, and other activities founded on the subjugation of Amerindians.¹⁷ Amerindians were already employed in the transportation of goods and persons through the precipitous path separating the maritime port of Santos from the plateau of São Paulo. A preliminary question must be asked: what were the dimensions of the grain market in Portuguese America?

Somewhat isolated from Lisbon and the territories of the north, the government of Bahia was supplied by colonists from the south since the maritime stage of the Dutch-Portuguese War (1621-1630). The export of foodstuffs from São Paulo to the north increased with the movement of troops and the disembarkation in Bahia of Iberian soldiers who had come to battle the Dutch. The difficulty of obtaining fresh supplies became worse after 1640, when the Portuguese-Spanish conflict deprived Brazilian ports of the comestibles and dried meats exported from La Plata. It is within this context of a breakdown in the import of African producers and foodstuffs

that the great Paulista "*bandeirantes*" campaigns are launched to capture Amerindians, particularly in the Jesuit missions of Guyará. Seeking slaves, Portuguese American colonists not only crossed the ocean toward Africa but also entered Spanish territories, in the direction of Paraguay.

The Indians captured in the south are not sold to the planters of the northeast. They remain in captivity in São Paulo and, to a lesser degree, in Rio de Janeiro, used as they were in the transportation of goods, in the construction and maintenance of infrastructures and defense works, and, above all, in the production of foods that supplement the shortage of European, *porteña* and Brazilian comestibles in the ports of the northeast.¹⁸

This all suggests that the number of Indians captured and placed in captivity between 1625 and 1650 is equal to that of Africans introduced to Portuguese and Dutch Brazil throughout the same period. Globally, the number of Africans deported to the Americas, the islands of the Atlantic, and the Iberian Peninsula constitutes less than 150,000 during this quarter of a century.¹⁹ Concentrated in the south, and having brought about the capture of approximately 100,000 Indians, the *bandeirante* expeditions between 1627 and 1640 emerge as one of the most predatory slave operations of the modern era. Several indexes confirm that the Paulistas' grand forays took place in a situation wherein the breakdown of the Atlantic trade caused the price of African slaves to double in Portuguese America – a rise, moreover, that motivated the only two seventeenth-century slave-trader expeditions between Mozambique and Brazil, in 1643 and 1644, which sought to compensate for the loss of Elmina and Luanda.²⁰

In this connection, the slave-trade operations of colonists from Rio de Janeiro, Bahia, and Pernambuco, incorporated into Atlantic circuits, contrast sharply with the Paulistas' continental enterprises, founded on the subjugation of Indians and the production of comestibles for the interregional market. Experienced in land forays, the Paulistas mobilized warrior slaves (*servos de guerra*), typically Temiminó Indians, in order to form mobile columns of hundreds of combatants.²¹

The divergence of interests between colonists from Rio de Janeiro and those from São Paulo experienced its most striking manifestation in 1648. While Salvador de Sá brought together militiamen from the Guanabara Bay, Bahia, and Pernambuco for his transatlantic expedition, the Paulistas went off on their own. Worse still, since 1640, the year in which Pope Urban VIII's encyclical against the enslavement of Indians was declared, they had been engaged in a rebellion against the Crown that was prolonged until 1654. Having expelled the Jesuits from their city, the Paulistas refused to obey royal orders that required them to readmit the missionaries and to restore the Indian goods and villages under their jurisdiction. In the month of April of

1648, while Salvador de Sá's fleet prepared to raise anchor from Guanabara to fight a battle in Angola, the chief *bandeirante* Rapôso Tavares and his men departed from São Paulo, beginning their long trek in search of Indian slaves. For more than three years, they cross the forests and savannahs of the Center-West, descend the Mamoré, Madeira, and Amazon rivers, all the way to Belém, carrying out a journey of close to ten thousand kilometers.²² Little noticed, the concomitance of these two antagonistic expeditions reveals the political dilemmas engendered by the enslavement of Amerindians. Evolving outside of the Atlantic merchant networks, the circuits of Indian slaving evaded the Crown's control.

The Paulistas' situation became more uncertain during the second half of the seventeenth century. The Dutch withdrawal from Angola and Pernambuco reintroduced the import of Africans and of European comestibles, displacing São Paulo products from regional markets. Gradually, the cultivation of wheat disappeared from the Paulistas' countryside and memory.²³

Some colonists left the region. Besides those who set out for the São Francisco valley to devote themselves to cattle raising, other groups from São Paulo enlisted as mercenaries in the pay of authorities and cattle farmers grappling with the Indians of the northeast. In the course of one of these forays, the chief *bandeirante*, Domingos Jorge Velho, and his four hundred men attacked Palmares [the great Maroon kingdom in what is now Northeastern Brazil] several times – at the request of the governor of Pernambuco – destroying it in 1694. A dispute over the surrounding lands – land that had been promised to the Paulistas as recompense for their victory – then began between the Paulistas and regional proprietors. Underlining the royal guarantees which had been given to him regarding these lands, Velho added, “If not, for what reason would the supplicants [the Paulistas] have abandoned a land incomparably vaster and better – excluding its distance from maritime places – which belonged to them without opposition, to come and conquer others?”²⁴ This is a crucial question that illustrates a fact: the land had value only if it were found within an accessible region.

Pleading their case, the Paulistas explain that the lands in Palmares were better because they were located in the vicinity, not of a simple port, but of a “maritime place,” that is, of a port connected to the Atlantic market. Their petition returns to this point in addressing the land shortage in São Paulo: “The intention of the aforementioned Paulistas is to attract many other colonists [*moradores*], their compatriots, who wish to spread out, because in São Paulo there are no longer any lands where they can cultivate and plant.” To believe the *bandeirantes*, in the middle of the seventeenth century, there were no longer any vacant lands. What can be said about such a paradox? Simply this: the Paulistas owned Indian captives and lands in São

Paulo that had become useless due to waning activity at the port of Santos, a decline in the demand for comestibles from the interior, or the isolation of their properties. There one touches upon one of the fundamental ideas underpinning the notion of commercial circuits in Braudelian analysis: “completion impossible, business impossible.”²⁵

One could object that other Paulistas were able to settle in the *sertão*, away from the coastline. Although this is true, it remains limited to cattle raising. Jorge Velho's compatriots themselves wanted to “cultivate and plant” in the northeast, where the only profitable crops were tobacco or sugar cane. But in order to transform the output of their lands and of their Indians into commodities, they were required to go through traders found in maritime places. Yet these buyers of regional output also controlled the sale of products imported from Europe and of African slaves. Ultimately, it is through market supply that both the slave trade and black slavery spread throughout the colonial space. The circuit is in this way completed. The enclave of São Paulo was subsequently going to be grafted onto metropolitan merchant networks.

This is the process that elsewhere we have called the “colonization of colonists”:²⁶ the Crown learned to direct the flow of Brazilian rivers toward the metropolitan sea; the colonists understood that the apprenticeship of colonization had to coincide with the apprenticeship of the metropolitan market. Only then do colonial domination and colonial exploitation understand and complement each other. At this stage, the lack of land and labor has little to do with South American geography and Amerindian demography: it is a question of the connected variables that fit into the wider-ranging whole shaped by colonial slavery. Various reports of metropolitan ministers observe, from the middle of the seventeenth century, the preeminence of the Angolan slave trade, the decline of Amerindian populations, and the fact that they are no longer an alternative to servile African labor. For Lisbon, the exploitation of Brazilian territory became a Portuguese and African affair.²⁷ Is it necessary to recall that the slave trade was transformed into an important source of revenue for merchants and the Crown, and that, without access to the Spanish *asiento*, Portuguese slave traders were henceforth required to search for slave markets in Brazil? In any event, it is worth noting that four of the five signatory ministers of the report, in 1656, on the decline of Amerindians and the advantages of Angolans had links to the slave trade.

Cattle Raising and Repopulation

In the middle of the seventeenth century, the development of cattle raising in Brazil acquired a new dimension within the Portuguese Empire. As is known, cattle breeding increased food supplies within coastal plantations, allowing for an increase in the concentration of slaves used in export agriculture. Entitled *Brasilia qua parte paret Belgis*, a map representing Dutch territory in South America in 1647 already indicates the advance of cattle within the São Francisco valley. This is the reason why the region constitutes one of the stakes of Luso-Dutch negotiations behind the treaties of Westphalia.

Extending the occupied territory, including in the south, where herds from Jesuit missions were scattered, the rapid development of beef herds transformed colonial society. Beginning in the 1680s, livestock farming was partially drawn by the Atlantic market with the startup of tobacco exports, whose rolls were wrapped in leather that represented 15% of the exported product's price.²⁸

One must point out that extensive farming created production relations unfavorable to the slave system. The weak presence of merchant capital, the nature of the production process, and the absence of the direct control of owners reduce slavery's influence in the heart of these ranches, although one there observes the presence of black, Indian or mixed-race captives, cow-herds paid in kind or by the piece for pasturing the herds and driving them to markets.²⁹ Whether he was free or not, the cowherd of the São Francisco *sertão* – called a “*curraleiro*” – had few things in common with the captives or free farmers supervised by the mill masters from the coast. An activity ancillary to export agriculture, cattle farming extends the market zones, drives the Indians off of their lands and extends domination throughout the hinterlands. Here we find ourselves within a logic of colonial repopulation: the natives are expelled or eliminated while their territory is repopulated by colonists and black and mixed-race captives.³⁰ Undoing the isolation of the state of Grão-Pará e Maranhão (the Portuguese Amazon), the raids against Indians and the advance of cattle open up routes to the northeast and to the territories of the north, otherwise isolated due to opposing maritime currents. In his *Crônica* on the Amazon (1698), Father Bettendorf records the gripping event that occurred in the year 1696: the arrival in Belém (at the mouth of the Amazon), “of men from Brazil”:³¹ farmers who came on horseback from Bahia, across the vast savannahs of the backcountry, to solicit the governor of Pará in order to obtain pastureland for their cattle.

Throughout the Portuguese overseas, the colonial repopulation of Brazil already marked a difference. Comparing the scarce data available for the seventeenth century, one might note that in India, the population of

Portuguese origin declined and consisted of less than two thousand individuals; that in Angola it remained stagnant at somewhere between three and five thousand colonists; while in Brazil this population had doubled, reaching one hundred thousand people in 1700.³²

The Brazilian-African Bilateral Trade

A number of South American commodities for their part subtend Luso-Brazilian operations in the Gulf of Guinea and in Central Africa. Several indexes show that the export of cowries (*zimbos*) from the beaches of Bahia – ignored by many researchers – possessed considerable importance. Standard currencies in Angola and in the Congo, these Bahian *zimbos* stimulated sixteenth- and seventeenth-century South Atlantic circuits.³³ Moreover, facing the difficulty of storing foodstuffs in the tropics, colonists, sailors, servicemen, and merchants appreciated the preservability of cassava, sweet potato, peanut, and corn cultivated by Amerindians. Introduced in West African ports, in Luanda and in Mpinda (at the mouth of the Congo), these plants were later cultivated on the farms of Jesuits from Bengo, close to Luanda. In this well-irrigated zone, the missionaries – assisted by many slaves – transplanted fruits of South American origin, like the banana, the papaya, the guava, the Cayenne cherry (*pitanga*) and the *araçá*, a fruit-bearing myrtle tree. Sometimes possessing nutritious and curative qualities, these foodstuffs and their fruits were also cultivated along paths, facilitating the expansion of land trade and the maintenance of captives.³⁴

Known since the Pre-Columbian era by the peoples of Tupi-Guarani as *oui-antan* (“war flour”), manioc flour was exported from Brazil to Africa until the nineteenth century. At the same time, one witnesses the rapid development of the Angolan production of this foodstuff, whose sum total, around 1630, could represent a third of the value of blacks exported from Luanda.³⁵ Little by little, manioc became an essential component of the “slave diet” on both sides of the South Atlantic and in a part of the Antilles.³⁶

Tobacco exports from Bahia permitted Portuguese trade to recover a footing in the Gulf of Guinea, in spite of the loss of Elmina and competition from other European markets within the region. These bilateral exchanges of slaves for tobacco were maintained as late as the middle of the nineteenth century, not without creating conflicts between colonial merchants and metropolitan merchants. It is again in the last decades of the seventeenth century that Brazilian exports of *jeribita* (or *cachaça*, an alcohol made from sugar cane) to Angola are initiated. Competing with Portuguese wine and eau de vie (*aguardente*) on the Angolan market, measures were taken in Luanda, under pressure from metropolitan exporters, against the import of this

Brazilian drink. A few years later, in 1690, these prohibitions were lifted, thanks to a collusion of interests between sugar cane planters, *jeribita* manufacturers, merchants, and slave traders from Brazil and Angola. Exemplifying the dynamism of inter-colonial exchanges, Brazilian products gained the advantage over metropolitan products in Angola – all, of course, in the interest of the slave traders and of the South Atlantic system.³⁷ Exported to Africa, *jeribita* played at that time an anticyclic role during the economic crisis at the end of the seventeenth century. This product upheld Afro-Brazilian exchanges and reduced the price of slaves acquired by planters from Portuguese America. From this point of view, *jeribita*'s arrival in the Atlantic circuits made it one of the first distilled drinks to be exported on a large scale. It helped to anchor Angolan trade further in the Brazilian market. After Brazil's independence (1822), *Angolistas* protested against new Portuguese tariffs which, quite naturally, taxed *jeribita* as much as foreign eau de vie. According to them, the preservation of these tariffs would bring about "the all but total destruction of trade in Angola."³⁸

The Justification of the Slave Trade by the Jesuits

We know that important Iberian missionaries explained to American colonists and to the metropolis the correlation between the emancipation of Amerindians and the enslavement of blacks.³⁹ Those missionaries believed that the introduction of Africans would reduce the pressures on the labor of Amerindian communities required to fulfill the *corvée*. African slavery thus became a necessary compensation for the catechization and freedom of Amerindians. As regards to this subject, we should briefly recall the particular attitude of Portuguese Jesuits with respect to the African slave trade.

Having arrived in the Congo in 1548 and in Angola in 1560, the Jesuits lend a strong hand to the governor, Paulo Dias Novais, during the conquest of the region. As Superior of the Luandan order, Father Balthazar Barreira – considered in his time as the greatest expert on African affairs – supported the legitimacy of the slave trade, and in particular of the Angolan trade, in his correspondence with the lay intelligentsia in Salamanca, Évora, and Coimbra, who raised doubts about the matter.⁴⁰ Soon afterwards, his successor in Luanda, Father Luis Brandão, presented a peremptory defense of the Angolan slave trade in response to Father Alonso Sandoval's inquiry regarding African slavery.⁴¹

The Jesuits in Angola, as the result of their guardianship over village communities combined with bequests left by colonists, became proprietors, like their counterparts in Brazil, of a certain number of slaves, notably on their farms in Bengo. Exempt from the payment of export taxes, they

oriented the trafficking of Angolans toward their sugar mills and their college in Bahia, where they possessed many slaves as well. Involved in the slave trade circuit, engaged in both missionary work and the material life of the South Atlantic slave system's two poles, the Portuguese Jesuits were – more than any other religious order – directly invested in the slave trade. Some colonists, several authorities, and even some Italian capuchins in Angola challenged them on this subject.

It is within this context that the Jesuit António Vieira (1608-1697) takes a decisive step by setting forth an audacious justification for the Atlantic slave trade. In his sermons delivered to the blacks of the Bahian friary, Our Lady of the Rosary, Vieira explains the "great miracle" accomplished by their holy protectress: the transplantation of Africans to Brazil delivers them from a certain death in paganism, ensuring the health of their souls in a Christian land. To better understand the argument, we should add that over the years the Jesuits manifested less and less enthusiasm for their Angolan missions. They believed that the unfortunate climate and epidemiological environment, as well as the natives' resistance, blocked evangelization in this part of the globe. In the interests of their health, it was necessary to remove Africans from Africa and to enslave them: the present captivity of their bodies assured the future liberty of their souls. This is precisely what Father Vieira says in his Bahian sermons: "The captivity of the first transmigration (*transmigração*) is ordained by Her grace [Our Lady of the Rosary] for the liberty of the second." In other words, deportation to Brazil is presented as anticipating the migration of souls to Heaven....

The thesis that Vieira expounds – that the slave trade can save souls from paganism – was not new.⁴² It had been formulated at the very beginning of the African slave trade by Pope Nicolas V,⁴³ and disseminated throughout Brazil and Portugal, where Father Vieira published his sermons a few years later.⁴⁴ And the author of *Peregrino da América* (1728), a book of Christian morality that underwent five editions in the eighteenth century, constituting a colonial "best-seller," contributed to spreading Vieira's ideas concerning the evangelizing role of the slave trade.⁴⁵

The religious justification of the slave trade coincided with its civil legislation, which resulted from the Crown's taxation of the slave. In fact, the levying of taxes on each deportee, sanctioned by the Crown's seal branded with red iron onto the bodies of Africans, granted – upon departure from Luanda – royal recognition of the lawfulness of the slave property. From this transatlantic perspective, the debate concerning the legitimacy of slavery in Brazil became a secondary exercise, and, in the instruction provided by professors from Coimbra and in the decisions of colonial authorities, the proof was already there:⁴⁶ why call into question the right to possess slaves in

America if this right has already been ratified, by the prince and by the Church, the moment the slave trader purchased the slave in Angola?

Gold and the Inter-regional Division of Labor

At the turn of the seventeenth century, the mining of Brazilian gold, a source of profound transformations within the Portuguese Atlantic, begins. Little by little, the growing number of prospecting sites in the hinterlands draws out a vast mining polygon, with its center located in Minas Gerais and its angles in Mato Grosso, Goiás, and Bahia. A new stage in the history of the South Atlantic subsequently opens.

In the beginning, the Crown sought to restrict exchanges with the interior, in order better to incorporate the mining regions within metropolitan networks, especially in view of the reversal of alliances that Lisbon carried out after the War of Spanish Succession, which rendered Portuguese America vulnerable to attacks and, in particular, to French naval incursions.⁴⁷ In agreement with this policy of containing the gold mines, the opening of the “Caminho Novo” (1701), connecting Minas Gerais to Rio de Janeiro, was completed through the interlocking of paths between Minas and the territories of Bahia and Espírito Santo. The discovery of gold in Goiás (1725) pushed the Court to restrict access to the region to only one route, eliminating contact with Maranhão in the north. Finally, the opening of new paths toward the mines was prohibited in 1733. These measures stemmed from laws that had curbed the emigration of metropolitans to the colony since 1720.

But the colonists continued to spread throughout the mining zones, bringing about a new turn of the metropolitan screw. An embargo was placed on the collection of gold in Rio de Janeiro, Bahia, and Maranhão, while the prospecting of diamonds in Minas Gerais was placed under the direct control of the Crown. A singular case during the colonial period, a biannual head tax – levied on merchants, on artisans, on each slave and each free prospector – was applied to the mining regions between 1735 and 1750.⁴⁸ Operations prone to squander capital and blacks at the gold mines were banned. In fact, the Crown had prohibited the construction of sugar mills and the production of *cachaça* in Minas Gerais since 1714. Partially applied, this legislation contributed nonetheless to the concentration of productive forces within the dominant branch of economic activity in each territory. Under these conditions, the administrative and fiscal web pierced the regional economic specializations around the mining polygon.

With the negotiations that led to the Treaty of Madrid (1750), one witnesses a complete inversion of royal directives: the policy of containment

is succeeded by a state interventionism having territorial expansion in mind. Previously prohibited, riverine connections across the 5,000 km separating Mato Grosso from the port of Belém (at the mouth of the Amazon) were thus authorized in 1748. In order to stimulate trade between the two regions by way of the Guaporé, Madeira, and Amazon rivers, the Crown granted the merchants of Belém the monopoly of the sale of salt to Mato Grosso. Similarly, Africans imported to Mato Grosso through northern waterways, and not by the usual paths from the southeast leading to São Paulo and to Rio de Janeiro, would be exempt from taxes (1752). In 1770, a decree determined that all trade from Mato Grosso should only be done via the rivers leading to the port of Belém.⁴⁹ From that moment on, the Crown depended on the dynamic of the mining regions in order to redeploy colonists and transportation routes, in view of a better occupation of the territory gained from Spain [with the Treaty of Madrid].

Activities in the south of the colony, which were more characteristic of the consolidation of regional economies within the mining network, illustrate the scope of the new territorial politics. Besides the cattle coming from the *fazendas* (large properties) of the São Francisco valley, Minas Gerais received, as of the 1730s, via São Paulo, horses and in particular mules from the southern plains — mules whose increasing use helped the circuits of transportation and population evolve. Some directives regarding the mule trade were decreed by Luiz Antônio de Souza, the *Morgado de Mateus*,⁵⁰ governor of São Paulo from 1765-1775, whose jurisdiction extended above all throughout the south of Portuguese America.⁵¹ Having prohibited mule raising in Mato Grosso, Goiás and in Minas Gerais, Souza reserved this activity for farmers from southern prairies, who drove herds up to markets in both São Paulo and Minas Gerais, along paths lined with posts for royal collection (*registros*) of tolls (*entrada*) on the “beasts coming from the South.”⁵²

The Crown subsequently benefited from the deterritorialization of mule reproduction, obtaining three advantages: complementarity of regional economies, the growth of market and tax department revenues, and the consolidation of the southern frontier, the only point of contact between Portuguese and Spaniards. This politics of economic and regional complementarity, which de Souza’s successors adhered to, marked the mule market until the middle of the nineteenth century.⁵³

This schema of mule trading helps us to understand the profits obtained by the deterritorialization of slave reproduction in the Atlantic. To be sure, by acquiring blacks, the colonists of Brazil developed an economy that complemented that of Portuguese possessions in Africa, increased the profits of merchants and of the royal Treasury, and strengthened the Portuguese

presence in American and African lands. From the transatlantic point of view, it has been observed that the diversification of trade in Portuguese America was sustained by access to new ports in the Gulf of Guinea and by the increased consignments of the Angolan trade. The slave trade became invaluable for assuring the development of the ensemble of Brazilian regions. Unloaded in greater numbers, directed toward new and traditional trade sectors, Africans labored on littoral plantations while developing the mines and annexed zones of the backcountry. The intensification of trade reduced the intra-sectional productivity gaps (existing between the different regions of the coast devoted to export agriculture) and the intersectional profitability gaps (between mines and agriculture). In other words, the continued flux of Africans amortized – to the benefit of less dynamic regions and forms of trade – the competitive effect created by the transfer of Africans and capital to the mining zones.

Seeking to occupy the territory gained as a result of the Treaty of Madrid (1705), which redrew the borders of the Portuguese and Spanish empires, the Crown promoted an interregional division of labor around gold-producing zones. Posts for military training and tax collection were installed along communication routes. From Viamão (near Porto Alegre), in the south, to Alcobça (Pará), well in the north, from Cuiabá (Mato Grosso), in the far west, to Paraty (Rio de Janeiro), south of the Atlantic coast, no less than 138 *registros* dotted the continental circuit of trade formed around the gold and diamond mines in the eighteenth century.

The Reforms of the Marquis de Pombal

Accelerating Atlantic exchanges, Brazilian gold exposed the political and economic vulnerability of the metropolis. Moreover, it was well known in Europe: Portugal, a “precarious power which has no other sovereignty than independence,” mined gold from Brazil “for the account of some Englishmen for whom it is nothing more than the middleman,” declared the Marquis de Mirabeau. Voltaire spoke of the same thing: “It is on behalf of the English, in fact, that the Portuguese have toiled in America.”⁵⁴ These reflections date from 1756, when the production of Brazilian gold was at its height. The Marquis de Pombal, the all-powerful minister in Lisbon between the years 1755 and 1777, would have challenged neither one. Indeed, it is this assessment that led Pombal to formulate – a novelty in Europe – a project of national development in a situation defined by dependence on another power – an initiative that brought about the reorganization of Portuguese trade with England and the definition of an industrial politics in the metropolis.⁵⁵

Within the South Atlantic, Lisbon was to take up a completely

different challenge. Boosted by gold, the slave trade gave rise to a loss of equilibrium within Atlantic exchanges, to the detriment of metropolitans and to the advantage of Brazilian slave traders. Thus the most emblematic measures are taken within the domain of the organization of labor. At the instigation of the Crown, two trade companies, “Companhia Geral do Grão Pará e Maranhão” (CGGPM) and “Companhia Geral de Pernambuco e Paraíba” (CGPP), were founded in Lisbon, in 1755 and 1759 respectively, in order, among other things, to provide the north and northeast of Portuguese America with slaves. Funded by the governments of Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau, the CGGPM was intended to stimulate commercial agriculture on the Amazonian littoral by providing slaves from Bissau. The transatlantic dimension of their allocation demonstrates the shortcomings of any analysis that limits the colonial history of Brazil to the Brazilian colonial territory.

Extending beyond commercial transactions, the CGGPM mobilized African slavery in order to initiate the Amazon’s passage from a forest gathering economy to a plantation economy. On its initiative began the cultivation of white rice and the regular planting of cacao and cotton, until then mostly gathered in the forest. Developing cattle raising and granting loans to the Crown, moreover, the CGGPM facilitated the construction and population of frontier forts on the Amazon and in Guinea-Bissau.⁵⁶ For this reason, the Portuguese Crown was able to consolidate its territories flanking the Spanish Empire in South America, and in Senegambia, where the presence of the French became progressively significant.⁵⁷

For its part, the CGPP bought Africans in the Gulf of Guinea and Angola to sell them in Pernambuco, in Paraíba, and throughout the surrounding regions. In addition to establishing measures aiming to reorient shipping toward African ports better controlled by Lisbon, the company favored the participation of metropolitan merchants in a branch that up to that point had been monopolized by *Brasílicos*. Furthermore, analysis of company stockholders shows that the majority of them resided in Portugal, confirming that the operation sought to reduce the hold Bahians had on Atlantic trade.⁵⁸ But these last came to oppose the inclusion of the Bahian territory in the region covered by the company. The Crown nevertheless placed Pernambuco, Paraíba and their annexed territories – regions dominated up to that point by Bahian merchants – under the monopoly of the CGPP. Consequently, throughout the years 1760-1770, all of the territory north of the São Francisco River (that is, the largest part of the northeast, and of lands allowing access to the mines, including the Amazon), fell under the control of the two companies.⁵⁹

Isolated from the markets of the mining polygon, the slave trade in Bahia underwent a refocusing that worked in favor of sugar cane and tobacco

planters, who were able to acquire the majority of the regional supply of Africans. Ultimately, despite the metropolitan commercial offensive, the Bahian markets pulled through. Through an increase of marginal gains, obtained thanks to a reduction in the weight of tobacco rolls exported to Africa, they were able to compensate for losses brought about by restricted access to the markets of the gold mines.⁶⁰ In fact, when he stressed England's ascendancy over Portugal, the Marquis de Mirabeau referred to the power struggle operating on the northern side of the Atlantic system. King Agonglo's dissatisfaction with the smaller tobacco rolls points to the situation that prevailed on the southern side. One can, therefore, retrace the chain reactions generated by the asymmetrical exchanges that underlie the Portuguese Empire in the eighteenth century: England taxed Portugal, who taxed the Brazilian colonists, and they themselves the African aristocracies, and those, finally, their village communities.⁶¹

For all that, Portuguese and Luso-Brazilian cooperation within the South Atlantic met its limits. After the two companies ceased to trade (the CGGPM in 1778, the CGPP in 1780), the African slave trade continued to slip away from metropolitan circuits. A point of no return had been reached in the Gulf of Guinea, where the domination of Bahian and Pernambucan slave traders (who also exported tobacco) was a *fait accompli*. Such are the conclusions of the Portuguese overseas councilor, in a memorandum addressed in 1779 to the governor of Bahia.⁶²

Further down the African coast, the rivalry between metropolitan and colonial slave traders had other consequences. In order to get around Lisboan competition in Luanda, Brazilian trade, and in particular that of Rio de Janeiro, increased slave traffic departing from the port of Benguela.⁶³ Immediately following Brazilian independence, in 1822, the government of Angola warned Lisbon of anti-metropolitan movements existing in Luanda, and above all in Benguela: "The public opinion is steered by some rich men whose interests are closely tied to the slave trade from Rio de Janeiro and Pernambuco."⁶⁴ In fact, there was only one part of Portuguese South America to have been transformed by the intervention of Pombal's companies: the Amazon. Indeed other circumstances accelerated these transformations, at first within this region, and later throughout all of Brazil.

The Enlightenment and Indian Policies

One can measure the simultaneous development of the organization of the slave trade and Amerindian politics, in noting that the three royal edicts drafted by the Marquis de Pombal – declaring the Indians of the Amazon free, transferring the control of native villages held by Jesuits to officers of

the Crown, and creating the chartered company (CGGPM) in order to introduce Africans into the region – were signed without delay by King Jean V, on June 6 and 7, 1755.⁶⁵ Once again, the slave trade's role as instrument of colonial politics reemerged. Once more, the bondage of Africans appeared as the guarantor of the freedom of Indians. To pull the Amazon out of the seclusion preserved by Jesuit missions, the Crown had to connect the region to the African market, as a means to link it eventually to metropolitan circuits.

After the Jesuits had been isolated and the order expelled from the kingdom (1759), the royal code, which was decreed in 1758 – the *Directório* – was the instrument through which the royal administration upheld the preeminence of secular thought over religious thought in the process dedicated to the social integration of Indians.⁶⁶ Applied to the whole of Portuguese America since 1759, the code's ninety-five articles concern, among other things, the management of Indians (transformation of settlements [*aldeamentos*] into villages enjoying municipal franchises, recognition of Indian leadership), the organization of villages (construction of homes for each household in place of collective dwellings) and the economy (increase in the cultivation of cassava, beans, corn and "all comestibles"; growth of exchanges "so that the Indian can be civilized by the gentle means of trade and of communication"). This last point allows us to grasp one of the principle objectives of the *Directório*: the managed labor of Indians was meant to complement the servile labor of Africans. Hence the emphasis placed on the cultivation of "comestibles," intended to counterbalance the chronic shortage in the supply of foodstuffs, caused by the hypertrophy of slave production oriented toward exportation.

The advancement of the Indian fit into imperial geopolitics, providing foundation stones for territories delimited by the Treaty of Madrid. It was necessary to guarantee the freedom of the nomadic tribes of the south, the Marquis de Pombal wrote to the general charged with drawing up the new Luso-Spanish frontiers, so "that they find more advantages living in the territories of Portugal than in those of Spain."⁶⁷ The majority of these measures unquestionably remained dead letters and the confiscation of Indian *aldeamentos* placed tribes under a new kind of servitude. Employed in the fabrication of canoes and small boats, forced to serve as rowers for merchants, functionaries, and clerics, the Amazonian Indians were severely exploited.⁶⁸ Even though the code continued to have supporters in Portugal and in Brazil, the Marquis de Pombal's reversal in 1777 led to the annulment of the *Directório* in 1794. This code nevertheless represented a turning point in colonial politics.

What is most interesting about it is the application – for the first time in the West – of the concepts “civilization” and “civility” to a body of laws concerning thousands of natives, in the heart of a territory of continental dimensions.⁶⁹ Recasting from scratch royal legislation and missionary practices relating to Indians, the *Directório* and its corresponding legislation drew their inspiration from the very sources of the rationalist and universalist ideology of the Enlightenment. “His Majesty decided that after the discovery of Brazil no other matter had become as important as the civility of the Indians, and that the difficulties encountered in gathering them into society arose from our barbarity and not theirs,” wrote the Overseas Council in 1771.⁷⁰

Absent as such from the *Directório*, the word “civilization” appeared for the first time in Portuguese in the “Plan for the Civilization of Brazilian Indians...,” composed in 1788 by a Luso-Brazilian officer.⁷¹ Nevertheless, we know that the Marquis de Mirabeau’s aforementioned book – in which the concept of civilization was originally announced – was commented on in 1758, in Bahia, during the royal advisors’ meetings on the application of the new Indian code.⁷²

The commitment to the lay virtues of power, labor, and civilization, the training of Indians by a number of civil directors, their role in the defense of colonial frontiers, the superior character of their village law, the conjunction between the method for “civilizing” and the search for socially useful labor (one should write *colonially* useful), emerge as equally original elements. From this viewpoint, the *Directório* presents itself as a key document among colonial doctrines conveying the ideology of progress developed in the West throughout the nineteenth century. It is also during the Pombalian period, and around the mining pole, that Brazil assumes a more well-defined social profile. For the first time since the arrival of Europeans, colonists coming from the different territories encounter each other in the middle of Portuguese America, pouring into the cities of Minas Gerais. Little by little, the *Brasílicos* become *Brasileiros*. Previously designating the trader of Brazilian wood, this last word takes on, during the eighteenth century, its generic and present meaning, namely Brazilian.⁷³

The Napoleonic Wars and Brazilian Independence

Not unlike the upheavals provoked overseas by the Thirty Years’ War, the international conflicts at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries changed the cartography of the South Atlantic.

Chased from Lisbon by French troops, the Portuguese court transferred to Rio de Janeiro in 1808. In contrast to the drop in the production of gold

and diamonds, commercial agriculture had been booming for two decades. To sugar cane, tobacco, leather (more and more exported from the South), and other traditional commodities, cacao and cotton were added, as well as two crops newly introduced into the territory: white rice and coffee.⁷⁴ At the same time, one witnesses disruptions in competing agricultural zones. The American Revolution, the Haitian Revolution, the continental blockade, and uprisings in Spanish America all brought about a rise in the price of tropical commodities, favoring Brazilian exports. Decreed in Rio de Janeiro in 1808, the opening of trade to third countries, and above all Great Britain, underscores this evolution.⁷⁵

Rio de Janeiro’s ascension to the status of capital of the monarchy (1808-1821) led to Brazil’s elevation to the rank of United Kingdom of Portugal, Brazil and the Algarve (1815) and – in 1822, after the court’s return to Lisbon – to independence. Organized in the form of a constitutional empire, Brazil came to be the only monarchy in the New World (1822-1889). At the same time, the transplantation of the metropolitan bureaucracy provides the new national capital with an administrative pole capable of incorporating the regions of the former Portuguese viceroyalty. With good reason, the transformations brought about by the arrival of the Court and the liberalization of exchanges with foreign countries, in 1808, occupy an important place in the history of Brazil. Yet it might be necessary to consider the impact produced in Brazil by another decisive event that occurred in this same year: the abolition of the slave trade by England and the United States. In fact, the withdrawal of England, the United States, and other nations that until then had permitted slavery left more African ports in the hands of traffickers who supplied Brazil and, to a lesser degree, Cuba.

Various factors bolstered the South Atlantic routes. Most importantly, the enlargement of exchanges with Europe and Africa favored the growth of agriculture. We should note that British exports destined for Brazil included goods suitable for African commerce, stimulating in turn the purchase of slaves. At that time, Brazil also assumed control of slave trafficking in Mozambique, in India and in the Indian Ocean, reorienting the trafficking of East African blacks toward Brazil. This is what we have called elsewhere the “Atlanticization of Mozambique.” Casting its nets wide, the Brazilian trade dominates slave traffic in the Atlantic of the first half of the nineteenth century.⁷⁶

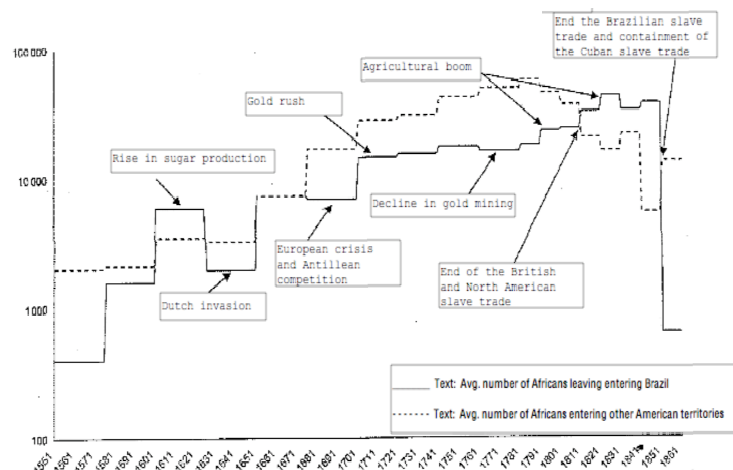
There we touch upon an essential point. If one compares the slave trade oriented toward Brazil with those from other parts of the Americas, one observes a permanent feature: each new productive period in Brazil entails an acceleration in the import of slaves. This was the case between 1575 and 1625, the ascendant phase of sugar exports; in the years 1701-1720, with the

beginning of gold mining; and throughout the period 1780-1810, during the new agricultural boom that included the cultivation of coffee. Inversely, the years marked by a crisis or recession in colonial production mark a reflux in the trading of slaves. One perceives it in the seventeenth century, with the Dutch invasion (1625-1650), as well as through the accumulated effects of the European crisis and of Antillean competition, and in the eighteenth century, during the declining phase of gold production.

Few statistical curves synthesize the evolution of production and labor in a given region, over the long term, with as much sharpness as can be clearly seen in the graphic below. This curve partly charts the characteristics proper to the slave trade itself and to the sale of export commodities, which are similarly found in the majority of American slave societies. And yet, the fact that the curve representing the import of Africans also clings to the fluctuations of the economy further responds to the fluidity of the networks that joined Brazilian productive sectors to the African slave trade zones.

This is because only one economic cycle exists for modern Brazil: the multi-century cycle of the African slave trade. All the rest – those of sugar, of tobacco, of gold, of coffee or of cotton – stem directly from the *longue durée* of the slave trade, which persisted from 1550 to 1850.

Annual Averages of Africans Unloaded in the Americas



Source: Klein, *The Atlantic Slave Trade* 210-211, and Alencastro, *O trato das viventes*, appendix 7, for the seventeenth century.

The Pax Britannica and the Slave State

Latin American national independence is often presented as a tipping of the scales that drove Liverpool to displace Cadiz and Lisbon as principle commercial port to the former Iberian colonies.⁷⁷ This is not the case with Brazil, where the country's independence did not alter the colonial spatial matrix. Liverpool did, indeed, replace Lisbon as primary commercial port; yet before and after 1808, and until 1850, it is the African ports – with Angola first among these – which maintained second place among the country's foreign exchanges.

This kind of international integration set the new state against the current of the juridical order and market that England imposed on the seas. Settled in 1810, when the Portuguese Crown remained hostage to the Royal Navy, the Anglo-Portuguese treaty of alliance required Lisbon to cooperate with London in bringing the African slave trade to an end. A new treaty between the two countries, signed in 1815 at the Congress of Vienna, reiterated this policy, which brought about the permanent ban on the trade north of the equator.

Undergirded by a territorial approach to political change, Brazilian historiography often chooses to overlook a question posed with great acuity at the time of independence: how would the leadership manage to develop the new state within the international sphere? Or, more precisely, how would the slave state fit into the concert of nations?

With Brazil's declaration of independence (September 1822), England's diplomatic recognition – crucial for the nation, since it entailed Portuguese recognition – was conditioned by the acquiescence to the embargo placed on the trafficking of Africans. Since February 1823 – and no less than five times – the minister of British Foreign Affairs, George Canning, made several proposals to this effect to the government of Rio de Janeiro. These were rejected by virtue of the argument presented by the principal Brazilian minister, José Bonifácio Andrada, according to whom the "precipitous" termination of the import of Africans placed the very existence of the State in danger.⁷⁸ As in the seventeenth century, when the sudden emergence of the Dutch affected both shores of the South Atlantic, the encroachment of the Royal Navy gave rise to similar reactions in Brazil and Portuguese Africa. Once known, Brazilian independence provoked troubles within the African enclaves. Pro-Brazilian factions sprung up in the ports of trade, notably in the outpost of Ouidah – controlled by the trafficker Francisco Félix de Souza, the *Chachá*, a very influential Bahian mulatto close to Ghezo, the king of Dahomey – but also in Angola, and in particular in Benguela, where the authorities loyal to Lisbon denounced movements sympathetic to the Brazil-

ian empire, which were supported by Rio de Janeiro. Simultaneously, debates in the Brazilian Parliament indicate a consideration of the nation's "union" with Angola.⁷⁹ In order to deal with this risk, the British Foreign Office included a clause that obligated Brazil to abandon the annexation of Portuguese colonies in the Anglo-Brazilian treaty of 1826. Moreover, Lisbon signed a naval pact with London safeguarding its possessions in Africa. In Rio de Janeiro, the British envoy concluded the announcement of this pact with a warning to the government against all intervention in Africa.⁸⁰ Brazil's influence in the slave enclaves did not end there. In 1839, the Portuguese authorities still reported the presence of a strong "Brazilian party" in Angola, while at the fortress in Ouidah the Brazilian flag was hoisted until 1844, when a Portuguese detachment reestablished the sovereignty of Lisbon.⁸¹

In order to better assess the extent of Anglo-Brazilian disputes, we should stress the situation of two other slave societies. Like Brazil, Cuba and the South of the United States adapted the slave system to transformations resulting from the industrial revolution and the rapid development of Atlantic exchanges. Yet Brazil was the only state involved in trafficking blacks and equipped with a slave system of continental dimensions. Rendered illegal in 1831, by legislation enacted under pressure from the British, this trade persisted until 1850, while slavery was abolished only in 1888.

In Brazil as in the South of the United States, the local or national character of norms and of laws in Brazil brought about the reconceptualization of slavery within the framework of modern positive law. To be sure, this reconceptualization dug into the contradictions constitutive of the institution, and notably the antagonism between the right to freedom and property rights.⁸² Nevertheless, in these contexts the contradictions manifest themselves at the core of the nation-state – where the sovereign power that makes laws resides – and not in the juridical and social alterity separating the colonial and metropolitan spheres, an alterity displayed in the laws of many European nations, which relegated slavery to colonial territories alone while reiterating the emancipatory virtue of metropolitan soil.⁸³ Obviously, the commitment to slavery as the foundation of national sovereignty indicates, in the North American South and in Brazil, a historical field specific to the nineteenth century.⁸⁴

Bur Brazilian slavery was extended over the whole of the country's territory and was not limited to certain states, as it was in the United States; it involved every social milieu and welded national opinion to the preservation of the institution. On one hand, the nation evaded the contradiction at work in the United States, which led to juridical conflicts and then to the Civil War, which opposed the legislation of slave states to that of free states. On the other hand, the continuation of the slave trade achieved the externali-

zation of conflicts, conferring an international dimension to the disputes produced by Brazilian slavery.

In addition, due to the intensity of the African slave trade, slave ownership circulated through all levels of society.⁸⁵ In the province of Rio de Janeiro, which surrounded the nation's capital, the number of slaves (293,554) exceeded that of freemen (263,526). Not confined to the rural zones, the institution had its place in the cities. Several cities, such as Recife and Salvador, or Campos and Niterói, in the province of Rio de Janeiro, possessed an elevated proportion of captives. But it was the country's capital, with a population of 266,000 inhabitants in 1849, of which 110,000 were slaves (41.3%), which maintained the largest concentration of captives recorded in the New World.⁸⁶ Such broad national consensus regarding slave ownership nourished the South American monarchy's African plan. What this means is that the greatest obstacle to the separatism of certain Brazilian regions can be found within the sphere of international relations.⁸⁷ In the provinces where slavery predominated – the wealthy regions of the country – regional oligarchies attempting to elude central power would have run up against the British embargo on the commerce of slaves.

The two longest rebellions in Brazil broke out in the *sertão* of Maranhão (the "*Balaia*da," 1839-1841) and in Rio Grande do Sul (the "*Farroupilha*," 1835-1845), cattle raising zones where the slave trade did not play a decisive role. What we find here is a phenomenon observed in the seventeenth century: the most severe regional rebellions took place in zones isolated from the slave trade, from the Atlantic market. One perceives the double role played by centralized power: inside the country, with the establishment of its authority over the provinces, and, outside the country, with Brazil's integration into the concert of nations. Flaunting its ties to European dynasties and its status as sole American monarchy – allied with "European politics" against "American politics" (republicanism) – the strategy of Pedro I (1822-1831), of regents (1831-1840), and of Pedro II (1840-1889) consisted of tergiversating before British pressures in order to present themselves to the regional oligarchies as their privileged representative among the other European monarchies. This perverse equilibrium assured the preservation of the imperial crown during the first half of the century, all the more so given that the policy of buying time with England involved important economic stakes. In fact, the triangular negotiations between Rio de Janeiro, London, and Lisbon – leading to the recognition of independence (The Luso-Brazilian treaty of 1825), the Anglo-Brazilian treaty prohibiting the slave trade (1826) and the trade agreement between Brazil and England (1827) – complemented each other on many levels.

What are the reasons that led the Brazilian trade to cease all at once in 1850, and not in 1831, when it was declared illegal? Why did it not continue until 1867, following the example of Cuban trafficking? The answer to these questions is important for several reasons: it allows us to grasp the transformations brought about by English domination in the South Atlantic; it requires us to consider Brazilian domestic politics; and finally, it clarifies the transition from the slave trade to immigration to Brazil in 1850.⁸⁸

Representing its own interests and those of the Portuguese Crown, England maintained the upper hand over the accords signed immediately following Brazilian independence. In accordance with the treaty of 1825, Lisbon received the sum of 1.5 million pounds sterling of indemnification for the recognition of the Empire of Brazil, a sum covered by a loan contracted by the government of Rio de Janeiro with the Rothschilds, in London.⁸⁹ Although weighing heavily, and in a durable manner, on the nation's finances, this loan also presented itself as London's endorsement of the monarchical government and of Brazilian national unity. Guaranteed by the revenues generated by Rio de Janeiro's central customs houses, the British loan presupposed that these would not drop as a result of possible regional successions.

In an attempt to buy, at the time of the anti-trade treaty of 1826, additional time for the slave trade, the government conceded tariff privileges to English products in the trade agreement of 1827.⁹⁰ Afterwards, several other countries obtained the same rate. Such tariff concessions represented a heavy budgetary constraint, given that Rio de Janeiro had neither the means nor political will to tax the rural proprietors or to increase export duties on agricultural products.

With the expiration of the trade agreement in 1844, Brazil raised taxes on imports and initiated negotiations with its trade partners.⁹¹ Nevertheless, in England, the tariff question was grafted onto the abolitionist campaign, dividing opinion into two camps. All abolitionists were found in the first. Joining protectionist Tories and the representatives of Antillean planters – their enemies only until recently – abolitionists fought for the preservation of the surtax on Brazilian and Cuban sugar, products of servile labor.⁹² In the anti-abolitionist camp, the Anti-Corn Laws movement pursued the elimination of taxes on foreign sugar, without getting tangled up in the abolitionist politics advocated by the government. For this reason, the brand new *The Economist*, organ of Free Trade advocates, scorned England's "puerile and suicidal" policy as regards Brazil, pointing to the American penetration of the Brazilian market, as well as the trade agreement that Rio de Janeiro

was preparing to sign with *Zollverein* [the German Customs Union].⁹³

The rest is well known. A firm believer in Free Trade, Lord Russell passed the Sugar Act, in 1846, eliminating the surtax on "slave-grown sugar" and announcing a tariff equalization between foreign sugar and British colonial sugar, from 1851 onward. At the same time, this act anticipated the elimination of the disparity in taxes between British colonial coffee and foreign coffee. Revived by English tariff reductions, poor Cuban crops in 1845, and the relocation of the Royal Navy to Buenos Aires, the import of Africans experienced a revival in Brazil. Informed of this news, English abolitionists and the government saw their worst fears confirmed: the reduction of tariffs on sugar reinvigorated Brazilian and Cuban slavery, and augmented the African trade.

Mobilizing their networks, traffickers succeeded in doubling the number of Africans unloaded in Brazil after 1846, principally in the region of Rio de Janeiro. As they had at the end of the 1820s, slave traders adjusted the supply of blacks according to Anglo-Brazilian tensions, driving proprietors to make advance purchases before the supposedly imminent termination of the trade. Several reports indicate that Brazilians used clippers, and at least two large steamships. Crossing the Congo Estuary, the commander of one of the flotillas of the Royal Navy explained that these two steamships could load "at least ten-thousand slaves per annum." Whereas no ship sailing under the Spanish flag had been reported, 120 slave ships "under Brazilian colors or without nationality" were seized throughout the course of the year 1847.⁹⁴

Be that as it may, qualitative analysis demonstrates an undeniable recrudescence of transfers to Brazil. Compared to those during the period 1841-1845, ships in the years 1846-1850 were faster, bigger, and transported more blacks. In total, there is an increase between these two periods of 152% in the number of Africans unloaded.⁹⁵ Meanwhile, the Brazilian trade extended beyond its usual zones. South American craft were reported in Sierra Leone, while the plunge in the price of Africans in Rio de Janeiro, provoked by massive arrivals in 1848, drove traffickers to head north, to conduct business in Cuba and Puerto Rico. Moreover, news arriving from the Gulf of Guinea confirmed that the enlargement of the slave trade hampered licit African trade and, in particular, the export of palm oil to England.⁹⁶

The failure of English policy became patent on both sides of the ocean: raids in African ports proved ineffective, while the presence of contraband grew on the Brazilian side, attracting speculators from other nations. All in all, the widening of Free Trade intensified the Atlantic slave trade and hindered English market penetration in Africa. For the government and English experts, it became clear that the Royal Navy's cannons should have pointed, not toward the open sea or the African ports, but toward Rio de

Janeiro. Naturally, the elimination of the economic embargo on “slave-grown sugar” precipitated the hardening of military pressures.⁹⁷

Focused on the examination of English and North American trade, or on relations between English industrialists and slave-owning cotton producers in the South of the United States, historiography has neglected the contradiction between Free Trade and the slave trade in the middle of the nineteenth century. This inattention entails misunderstandings that extend even to the history of art.⁹⁸ Trends in opinion and the British press help to explain the hardening of London’s position. Moreover, the geopolitics practiced during the Opium War and the Treaty of Nanking (1842) already foreshadowed gunboat diplomacy and the second European expansion.

The new offensive unfolded in three waves. The first was marked by the Palmerston Act (1839), which unilaterally established the right of access over Portuguese ships. The Royal Navy was consequently able to crack down more broadly in the Congo Estuary and on the Angolan and Mozambican coasts, exclusive preserves of the trade destined for Brazil. Directly taking aim at Rio de Janeiro, the following stage of the offensive was commanded by Aberdeen, Palmerston’s successor in the Foreign Office. After having maintained that the Anglo-Brazilian treaty of 1826 already placed the illegal trade in the same category as piracy, Aberdeen brought to vote a law, known as the Aberdeen Bill (1845), authorizing the right of search and seizure of slave ships flying Brazilian colors.⁹⁹ Throughout this period, however, other conflicts engrossed European politics in the South Atlantic. In Argentina, the caudillo [Juan Manuel de] Rosas interfered with English and French trade, extending his influence into Uruguay and Paraguay. Then followed an Anglo-French blockade of Buenos Aires and a temporary suspension of English pressure on Rio de Janeiro.

Acceding to the head of the Foreign Office for the third time (1846-1851), Palmerston returned to office with his convictions having been reinforced after the tariff reductions of 1846, favoring Brazilian sugar. Although historiography has in part chosen to overlook the economic motives of English abolitionism, one of those motives preserves its place in Palmerston’s policy: for him, without the prohibition of the slave trade, the growth of Brazilian sugar production would bring about a serious blow to the colonists of the British Antilles.¹⁰⁰ Unlike Aberdeen, who limited the Navy’s actions to international waters, Palmerston authorized incursions on the Brazilian coast. The risk of an armed conflict between the two nations became clear after the settlement of Anglo-Argentine disputes, in 1849, when English war ships were relocated from Buenos Aires to Rio de Janeiro.

English pressures, from 1808 on, unquestionably constitute the determining factor of the suppression of African slave trafficking. Notwith-

standing, its abolition in 1850 – intervening all at once and in an irreversible manner – responds to the withdrawal of slavers from negotiations with Brazilian authorities, and not to a heightened effectiveness of the British naval repression or to the dismantling of slave trade networks in Brazil. Moreover, the London Committee of the Anti-slavery Society believed that the definitive abolition of slave trafficking was the result of Brazilian initiatives.¹⁰¹

The Second Birth of the Brazilian State

The Aberdeen Bill’s assimilation of the Brazilian slave trade to piracy reduced the Empire to the status of the “barbarous nations,” giving a concrete dimension to the threat of British intervention. This categorical slippage discredited the civilizing guarantee that the Braganza monarchy claimed it secured for the nation. The Crown’s double ascription – central power within the national space and representative of the regional oligarchies within European courts – found its political consubstantiality under attack.

What this means is that the government of Rio de Janeiro did not present itself as a simple emanation of the will of slave traders and planters. Acting mainly at the regional level, these last possessed little experience in public affairs, at a time when diplomacy determined the country’s future. With regard to diplomacy, the imperial administration had inherited from the apparatus of the metropolitan state the diplomatic expertise that authorized it to evaluate the dangers of the international situation. In brief, facing the risk of embargoes and of hostilities with England – both the hegemonic power and the country’s principal market – the government preserved a trump card that could force the slave traders and their allies to yield.

The Brazilian law of 1831 – prohibiting the slave trade for the first time – created uncertainties, given that it stipulated that Africans introduced after this date would be considered free individuals. The result was that neither the property rights of the masters of 710,000 Africans imported after 1831, nor their rights over the descendants of this contingent of individuals were established. Additionally, in virtue of Article 179 of the Criminal Code, they committed the crime of reducing free persons to a state of captivity. Non-compliance with this legislation, derived from the Anglo-Brazilian treaty of 1826, could provide another reason for British intervention. Moreover, at the time of sale, of mortgage, or of the conveyance of inheritances, the right of property over this contingent of slaves could be contested, threatening owners as a whole and doing nothing to alleviate anxiety about the menace of revolt among the slaves. All of Brazilian society was concerned with the problem. Once again, one grasps the ways in which slavery and law overlap:

the slave constitutes private property, the possession and control of which requires the repeated guarantee of the public authorities, the power of masters over slaves being a constitutive element of the social pact. For this reason the institution, although founded on constraint, depends on a legitimacy that stems from lawfulness. With masters uncertain of their property, the government could promise a regularization of their patrimony, within the framework of the new legislation concerning the slave trade, which it did in a very officious way.¹⁰²

More generally, new facts began to change attitudes with regard to the slave trader. Early purchases of Africans left planters in debt, resulting in the seizure of goods belonging to a number of planters by creditors associated with traffickers.¹⁰³ Another perspective came from businessmen practicing licit trade along the coast, who suffered increasing losses occasioned by British naval operations close to the ports.

On the social plane, the slave trade had increased the proportion of slaves and of Africans in Rio de Janeiro, projecting the specter of an urban insurrection, bigger and more dangerous than the “revolt of the Malés,” which, to the great horror of the white population, had been raised in 1835 by free blacks and slaves from the city of Bahia.¹⁰⁴ Sometimes in a veiled manner, the newspapers during this period became the echo of apprehensions inspired by urban captives. Other events came to exacerbate this anxiety. At the beginning of 1850, and for the first time, a yellow fever epidemic struck the country, above all the population of European origin in the capital and principal cities.¹⁰⁵ According to general opinion, Africans clandestinely unloaded at Guanabara Bay had spread the disease that had become endemic to Rio de Janeiro.

The prospect of such social and epidemiological dangers fueled the campaign of those who rose up against the “Africanization” of society – an anxiety expressed in the editorials of Rio’s press since 1831 – and who banked on the boom in European immigration as a means of civilizing the nation. For the government, that which was essential remained to be done: to convince slavers, intermediaries and planters of the need to end the African slave trade.

The task was completed under the government directed by Eusébio de Queiroz (1812-1868). This was a seminal rupture that signified a second birth for the state. Descended from a Portuguese family from Angola, Queiroz maintained political and familial connections with high functionaries, members of Parliament, planters, and slavers. Between 1833 and 1844, he occupied the post of Chief of Police of Rio de Janeiro, exercising his authority over the provincial capitals. Through his relations and in the exercising of his functions, he could measure the extent of African contra-

band. Owing to either complicity or political realism, or for both reasons at the same time, he did not suppress illegal trade, which was widely practiced. Named Minister of Justice in 1848, he fulfills, *de facto*, the post of Prime Minister at the heart of a government whose cohesion left its mark on the history of the nation. He then changes sides and succeeds in definitively ending the slave trade. Carried out by a man rooted in South Atlantic culture, this change in attitude toward the slave trade demonstrates the transformation of the balance of power that occurred in the heart of the state.

This turn occurred in several stages. The government first set the stage through measures that had an immediate effect, including, above all, amnesty for traffickers and owners of blacks brought in after 1831. In so doing, the government ratified the captivity of thousands of blacks who, in the eyes of the law, had become free persons after having tread Brazilian soil.¹⁰⁶ More symptomatic of the global negotiations underway, the English government played the game, avoiding opposing itself to this iniquitous decision, even though it had the juridical and diplomatic means of doing so.¹⁰⁷ To that is added the Brazilian Ministry’s notice addressed to the principal traffickers, enjoining them to withdraw capital, goods, ships and crews from the African slave trade before a harsher law was passed.¹⁰⁸

Several other initiatives form part of the transformations of the nation’s economic geography. As against the seasonal cultivation of sugar cane, coffee presented itself as a semi-permanent crop, in constant progression toward interior lands. The distance from ports increased the expenses planters paid to mule-drivers, responsible for the delivery of harvests up to the ports of Guanabara.¹⁰⁹ For the coffee planters in the countryside inland of Rio de Janeiro, the purchase or rental of mules became an economic variable just as important as the acquisition of slaves, because of the increase in the costs of transport at the beginning of the 1840s. Exceeding the regional oligarchies’ means of financing and of management, the transport of harvests was transformed in an affair of state. Do we need to recall that Rio de Janeiro, the final destination for most of the 560,000 Africans unloaded in the south of Bahia between 1831 and 1850, was the principal zone of slave trade contraband in the country?¹¹⁰

For the first time since independence, Brazil maintained a trade surplus between 1845 and 1849, under the combined effect of coffee exports and the rise in import tariffs that occurred in 1844. So much so that Parliament was able to resume discussion concerning the construction of a railway up to the coffee frontier, whose distance was already situated 150 km from the sea-ports. Through a law passed in 1852, the imperial government guaranteed the shareholders of railroad companies a minimum dividend. Providing a solution to the financing problems that had made similar projects fail in the

past, the allocation of public funds rendered the operation viable. An English railroad company was then set up in Rio de Janeiro and, in 1858, the trains began to transport coffee to the capital's port.¹¹¹ In order to convince planters of its good intentions, the government granted them a reduction of 25% of the export tariffs on agricultural products.

Yet, the most important decisions concerned legislation related to spaces belonging to the public domain, that is, the "land laws." Crucial to the future of rural property and of slavery, this legislation was voted and promulgated in 1850, two weeks after the new law regarding the suppression of the slave trade. The coincidence is not fortuitous: the law concerning the devolution of lands was a precondition of immigration policy as well as of the redefinition of the labor market after the termination of the slave trade.¹¹²

Immigration and Nationality

Within the framework of the debates on immigration, three motives inspired governmental initiatives. In the beginning, the authorities had brought in colonists in order to consolidate militarily vulnerable regions, such as the south of the country, where some Azorean families were established after the border treaty with Spain (1750).¹¹³ In the same way, public lands were distributed to some European colonists in zones threatened by Indian tribes or by Maroon villages. Secondly, the admission of wage laborers responded to the need for bridge and road services. In a province such as Rio de Janeiro, marked by a rolling landscape and a rainfall that regularly damaged roads, new transportation infrastructures were indispensable. For this, the authorities requisitioned Indians from *aldeamentos* (in accordance with the *Directório*), as well as slaves and tools belonging to planters. But these measures gave rise to protests and were difficult to employ. From the 1830s on, the provincial assembly of Rio de Janeiro made the most of its new fiscal prerogatives for subsidizing the arrival of Portuguese "volunteers" bound for roadwork. In this phase, immigration once again presents itself as a necessary complement to the rise of slave exploitation.

Everything changes in a third stage, with the end of the slave trade, when immigration policy initiated the substitution of slavery by wage labor. For rural proprietors, then, immigration became an issue of leading importance. But the Brazilian policy had larger significance than it presents at first sight. In Parliament, within the provincial assemblies and within the press, two quite distinct points of view emerged.

Supported by prominent traders, the planters hoped to acquire proletarians from all parts of the world and of all races, provided that they be channeled toward the *fazendas* [coffee estates] to take the place of

missing slaves. Inversely, anxious about the social and cultural composition of the nation, the imperial administration, the intelligentsia and a portion of the urban population sought to make immigration an instrument of "civilization," in other words, of the whitening of the country. These positions sketched out two opposing ways of envisioning the intervention of the state in agrarian and immigration policy.

If the new policy limited itself to substituting Africans with immigrants on the plantations ("directed immigration"), the state should have moved in two directions. Upstream to the migratory flow, official subsidies would facilitate the payment of tickets for the poorest immigrants, European, Asian, or eventually, free Africans.¹¹⁴ In this way, the country could hope to accommodate a significant number of international migrants, and notably those who were forced to work on the *fazendas* from the time of their arrival at Brazilian ports. Downstream, the access to public lands would be regulated in such a way so as to keep these immigrants from turning away from the plantations in order to set themselves up on their own in the countryside.

On the other hand, if one decided to attract colonists ("spontaneous immigration") in order to recompose rural property, production, and society, budgetary subventions should have another destination. Funds would be allocated for the development of a survey of public lands and the opening of routes linking these lands to regional markets. Mapped and cleared, these would be sold to emigrants in the Brazilian consulates in Europe. In which case, official subventions for the transport of immigrants would have no *raison d'être*, since these buyers would have at their disposal their own funds for the trip. Becoming proprietors in Brazil, they would propagate the model of a modern familial agriculture that would break with rustic character of the countryside and society alike.¹¹⁵ On the other hand, proletarians and marginal Europeans, and more generally, Asians and free Africans would have no access to Brazilian ports. In order to facilitate the influx of Protestants – some Swiss and some Germans had already settled in Brazil – the government would establish civil registers in place of the parish registers that had been maintained by curates appointed by the state. Eventually, the Church would lose its status as official religion noted in the Constitution. The "civilizing" current thus expected to seize this opportunity in order to start an agrarian reform and a reform of society as a whole, by changing the race of rural producers. One clearly sees how the labor question leads directly to the national question.

The opposition between these two ways of transitioning from slavery to wage labor becomes as obvious in parliamentary debates as in the press. In order to regulate land laws, the government issued a decree specifying how the law should be applied in 1854 and set up, this same year, the Directorate-

General of Public Lands [*Diretor-Geral das Terras Públicas* (DGTP)], embryo of the future Ministry of Agriculture, created in 1862. Appointed as head of the DGTP, Manoel Felizardo was the emblematic figure of the “civilizing” current and opponent of the policy of “direct immigration,” embodied by Senator Nicolau Vergueiro, with whom Felizardo clashed in 1855, during a parliamentary debate.¹¹⁶

At the moment when Parliament discussed the budgetary subventions for immigration, in 1855, Senator Vergueiro’s opinions were firm. Like the planters he represented, he wanted public subventions for financing transportation to Brazil – and new laborers for his own *fazendas*. In this way, the sale of allotted lands to immigrants hoping to become rural proprietors, but “having hardly enough money to buy a plot of land,” seemed to him to be a bad solution. Without any capital for clearing and cultivating the lands situated in the forest, with regards to routes and markets, these immigrants, he added, could do no good there. “Only a prominent capitalist capable of mobilizing many people” would be able to develop the country’s virgin lands, he concluded. His colleagues in the Senate and the readers of his speech – published shortly thereafter in the principal journal of the capital – knew that in saying this he had in mind the labor carried out on his own coffee estate in São Paulo, worked by Swiss and Germans according to a system closely related to sharecropping.¹¹⁷

Manoel Felizardo’s response is just as instructive. For the minister of public lands, the planters should not have counted on state subventions to make up for the lack of rural workers: “The *fazendas* have always been supplied with slaves acquired without the slightest pecuniary aid from the government.” If it is true that the African slave trade had ended, it was equally true that there were many emigrants whom the planters could make come at their own expense. Consequently, he continues: “Is it just that the nation should contribute so that ten, twenty, one hundred, or two hundred *fazendeiros* are provided with hands at the expense of the entire country?” Felizardo considered that government subventions should be reserved for “spontaneous immigration,” which would redesign the country’s social profile. In the end, the central government did not settle this debate. It is the provincial governments, in particular that of São Paulo, closest to Vergueiro and the agrarian oligarchies’ ideas, who would facilitate the arrival of rural workers.

In essence, the investigation of the rupture produced by the end of the African slave trade allows us to establish a new periodization, whereby the effects are apparent upstream of and downstream from Brazilian history. Upstream of it, one notes that the colonial spatial matrix is defined within the South Atlantic of the seventeenth century, and that, despite Brazilian

independence, it is preserved until 1850. Downstream from it, the internal negotiations that bring about the end of the slave trade as well as agrarian and immigration laws demonstrate that the slave system’s greatest point of crisis and the beginning of its end comes about in 1850, and not in 1871, when the law of the free womb was brought to a vote. Although somewhat minor within Brazilian historiography, this interpretation is not new. In a capital work on the Empire of Brazil, the abolitionist leader and political writer Joaquim Nabuco explained at the end of the nineteenth century: “It was easier to abolish slavery all at once [in 1888] than to enforce the law of September 7 [1831],” which rendered the slave trade illegal.¹¹⁸

Widening the approach, one observes that the contradiction between the agrarian and Afro-Brazilian slave system, on one side, and the British industrial and Free Trade system, on the other, seems symmetrical to that which opposed the South and North of the United States, on the eve of the War of Secession. But whereas the conflict in North America concerned the matter of federal State control, what is at stake in the South Atlantic is the international division of labor, that is, the direct exchanges between the English industrial center and the South American and African peripheries.

Always in a general viewpoint, these events illustrate the structural changes that took place in the Atlantic. In fact, English domination imposed a transformation of Portuguese colonial space within the South Atlantic. There, one touches on the line separating modern colonialism and contemporary imperialism, the first and second European expansion. Along these lines, the Brazilian case points to the difference between the first phase of overseas Victorian expansion, characterized by the assertion of commercial interests and of treaties considered favorable within the framework of an “informal empire,” and the second phase, comprising territorial conquest and the founding of a “formal empire,”¹¹⁹ as well as the attention of keepers of the doctrine of “humane interventionism.”¹²⁰

The debate concerning the labor market and agrarian organization once again placed on the agenda a question recurrent since the Marquis de Pombal’s reforms: the civilization of Indians. Some discussions on that subject took place in the Constituent Assembly, in 1823. Very familiar with Europe and European politics, [José Bonifácio de] Andrada – the head of the Brazilian government – was fully aware of the international disputes created by the slave trade. He therefore proposed two complementary projects: the first in relation to the “the general civilization of Indians,” the other pertaining to the end of the slave trade and the gradual extinction of slavery.¹²¹ With the Constituent Assembly having been dissolved by Pedro I, the two projects remained dead letters.

Yet his program for the civilization of Indians would represent a milestone. A descendant of the Marquis de Pombal's policy, Andrada carried on with the general tendencies of the *Directório*, with one difference. Facing British pressures against the slave trade, he considered the labor of Indians not as a complement to African slave labor, as the *Directório* had, but instead as an alternative to the slave trade. His proposal might seem illusory. It wasn't, since it was believed that the Amerindian population remained rather dense. The bishop of Pará, for example, placed the number of subjugated and rebellious Indians within the Amazon region alone at 500,000. In the absence of reliable statistics, this testimony was enough. Andrada, in other words, counted on the demographic growth of the free and emancipated population within the country.

Until the 1850s, the idea of utilizing the Indians in commercial agriculture was discussed in Parliament and within the other spheres of Brazilian power. Despite the increasing importance of immigration, the civilization or "domestication" of Amerindians became integrated into the general politics of the organization of labor. In budgetary debates, subventions for the civilization of Indians were always associated with funds intended for immigration. And the Ministry of Agriculture, created in 1862, quite naturally also managed Indian affairs. The Republic, proclaimed in 1889, maintained this state of affairs, associating the indigenous question with the labor market, extending from the directions taken by the Marquis de Pombal's and Andrada's reforms, which came to be anachronistic.

But this debate had consequences of a completely different kind. One will have noted that the problematic born of the secularization of Indian politics remains ambivalent. If on one hand it announces the future of the Indian, on the other hand it confers the mission to civilize the Indians to the metropolitan state and its agents. Moving toward the nationalization of this enlightened colonialism, Andrada had transferred the tasks that had previously been responsibility of Lisbon to the Luso-Brazilian monarchical bureaucracy. From the perspective of the nation's formation, this mission took another significance. From now on, national leaders were seen as entrusted with the civilization of Indians and, by extension, the civilization of those classes not integrated into society.

This is a thoroughly modern step, since it associates incorporation into the labor market with the juridical personhood of citizens. This ideology – and it is one – was reinvigorated throughout the nineteenth century by the dissociation between the monarchical bureaucracy and the composite population that forms the Brazilian nation. Hollowed out by slavery, then through the arrival of European, Mediterranean, and Asian immigrants, the nation's cultural disparities lead the ruling classes to unite under a "state

nationalism," whose corollary is the reconstruction of society: if the organization of labor in the latifundia continually incorporates foreigners, dismantling the structure of the social body, then the high clerks, the lay intelligentsia, the bursars – the state and parastatal intelligentsia referred to in Brazil as "*bacharéis*" – take on the historical mission of civilizing the nation. This is the "burden of the *bacharéis*," the ideological support of authoritarian thought – in line with the idea of the "white man's burden" that justified the second European colonial expansion. Failing to help the natives, the debate surrounding the civilization of Indians provided the foundations for Brazilian authoritarianism.

Notes

¹ The importance of cattle raising was highlighted by João Capistrano de Abreu, *Capítulos de história colonial* (1907; Belo Horizonte: Itatiaia, 2000); the relationships between masters and slaves in the sugar mills are studied by Gilberto Freyre, *Malteses e escravos* (1933; Paris: Gallimard, 1997); Caio Prado, Jr. analyzes the impact of merchant capitalism on colonial society in *Formação do Brasil contemporâneo* (São Paulo: Livraria Martins Editora, 1942); Raymundo Faoro looks into bureaucratic privileges with *Os danos do poder* (Porto Alegre: Editora Globo, 1958); Celso Furtado studied, among other things, the articulation of the domestic market, based on "the gold economy," in the international market in *La formation économique du Brésil* (1959; Paris: Publisud, 1998).

² Enriqueta Vila Vilar, *Hispano-América y el comercio de esclavos: Los asientos portugueses* (Seville: Escuela de Estudios Hispano-Americanos de Sevilla, 1977).

³ José C. Curto, "Luso-Brazilian Alcohol and the Legal Slave Trade at Benguela and its Hinterland, 1617-1830," *Négoce blanc en Afrique noire*, ed. H. Bonin and M. Cahen (Abbeville: Publications de la Société française d'histoire d'outre-mer, 2003) 351, n. 2.

⁴ Evaldo Cabral de Melo, *O negócio do Brasil: Portugal, os Países Baixos e o Nordeste, 1641-1669* (Rio de Janeiro: Topbooks, 1998) 78.

⁵ The link between sugar cane and the advantages of African slavery is established in, among others places, the royal orders of 1562, intended for the Island of Madeira. Although white workers were used there, the Crown encouraged the slave trade and the substitution of African slaves for European day laborers, in order to increase sugar production and royal revenues (Alvarás, October 16, 1562 and October 30, 1562): Antônio Brásio, *Monumenta missionária Africana*, 2nd ser., vol. 2 (Lisbon: Agência Geral do Ultramar, 1958-1992) 491-498. Also see Barbara L. Solow, "Capitalism and Slavery in the Exceedingly Long Run," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 17.4 (1987): 711-737.

⁶ Joseph C. Miller, *Way of Death: Merchant Capitalism and the Angolan Slave Trade, 1730-1830* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1988) 199-200.

⁷ The word “Angolista” referring to colonists from Angola was suggested by José Mathias Delgado, taking up once again an expression commonly used during the nineteenth century: see his commentary in José Mathias Delgado, ed., *História geral das guerras angolanas*, vol. 1, by António de Oliveira Cadornega (1680; Lisbon: Agência Geral do Ultramar, 1972) 322-324.

⁸ Delgado, *História geral*. Published only in 1940 in Portugal, the book’s manuscript had nevertheless circulated throughout Europe. See Charles R. Boxer, “A ‘História’ de Cadornega no Museu Britânico,” *Boletim cultural*, 1 (1960): 73-80; Beatrix Heintze, “Antônio de Oliveira de Cadornegas Geschichtswerk – Eine außergewöhnliche Quelle des 17. Jahrhunderts,” *Studien sur Geschichte Angolas im 16 und 17. Jahrhundert: Ein Lesebuch*, ed. Beatrix Heintze (Cologne: Rüdiger Köppe, 1996) 48-58.

⁹ Nevertheless, contrary to what Charles Boxer has written, the aggravation of the Hispano-Portuguese conflict prevented the revival of trade between Luanda and Buenos Aires after 1648, frustrating Salvador de Sá’s projects: Charles R. Boxer, *Salvador de Sá and the Struggle for Brazil and Angola, 1602-1686* (London: University of London, 1952).

¹⁰ Francisco de Brito Freyre, *Nova Lusitânia–História da guerra brasílica* (1675; Recife: Governo de Pernambuco, Secretaria de Educação e Cultura, 1977) 399.

¹¹ Lisbon, Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino (AHU), Angola, Box 8, Document #8: “Consultas de Conselho Ultramarino, outubro de 1665.”

¹² Roquinaldo Amaral Ferreira, “Transforming Atlantic Slaving: Trade, Warfare and Territorial Control in Angola, 1650-1800,” diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 2003, 183-236.

¹³ Anne W. Prado, “A Comparative Study of the Portuguese Colonies of Angola and Brasil and Their Interdependence from 1648 until 1825,” diss., Boston University, 1977.

¹⁴ Maria de Fatima Silva Gouvea, Gabriel Almeida and Marília Nogueira dos Santos, “Redes de poder e conhecimento na governação do Império Português 1688-1735,” *Topoi*, 5.8 (2004): 96-137.

¹⁵ See the important study by Mafalda Soares da Chuna and Nuno G. F. Monteiro, “Governadores e capitães-mores do império atlântico português nos séculos XVII e XVIII,” *Optima pars: Elites Ibero-Americanas do Antigo Regime*, ed. G. F. Monteiro, P. Cardim and M. S. da Chuna (Lisbon: Imprensa de Ciências Sociais, 2005) 191-242.

¹⁶ See Elias Alexandre da Silva Corrêa, *História de Angola*, 2 vols. (1782; Lisbon: Editorial Atica, 1937), in particular vol. 1, 39-42.

¹⁷ With regard to this subject, see John M. Monteiro, *Negros da terra: Índios e bandeirantes nas origens de São Paulo* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2000).

¹⁸ Luis Felipe de Alencastro, *O trato dos viventes: Formação do Brasil no Atlântico Sul, séculos XVI e XVII* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2000).

¹⁹ Herbert S. Klein, *The Atlantic Slave Trade: New Approaches to the Americas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) 210-211, along with the statistical revision by David Eltis, Stephen D. Behrendt, and David Richardson, “A participação dos países da Europa e das Américas no tráfico transatlântico de escravos: novas evidências,” *Afro-Ásia*, 24 (2000): 9-50, here 28.

²⁰ No regular trade occurred between Mozambique and Brazil before the end of the eighteenth century.

²¹ The column of *bandeirantes* that assisted Rapôso Tavares during the expedition of 1648 counted only eighty *paulistas* and eight-hundred Indians. See Jaime Cortesão, *Rapôso Tavares e a formação territorial do Brasil*, vol. 2 (Lisbon: Portugal, 1966) 175-176; Monteiro, *Negros de terra* 62-63.

²² Cortesão, *Rapôso Tavares*.

²³ In the second half of the eighteenth century, a new attempt to develop the cultivation of wheat, undertaken by some Azorean colonists in Rio Grande do Sul, similarly fails, facing competition from metropolitan and foreign wheat after 1808; Fernando Henrique Cardoso, *Capitalismo e escravidão no Brasil meridional* (São Paulo: Difusão Européia do Livro, 1962) 49-69.

²⁴ Ernesto Ennes, *Os palmares: Subsídios para a sua história* (São Paulo: Companhia Editora Nacional, 1938) 66-69, 79-80, 123 and 135.

²⁵ “If, in some circumstance or other, a commercial circuit cannot achieve completion, for whatever reason this may be, it is evidently doomed to disappear”: Fernand Braudel, *Civilisation matérielle, économie et capitalisme, XV-XVIII^e siècles*, vol. 2, (Paris: Armand Colin, 1979) 121.

²⁶ Alencastro, *O trato dos viventes* 22-23.

²⁷ Lisbon, Arquivo nacional da Torre do Tombo, Manuscritos da Livraria, liv. 1146, p. 63, “Representação do Conselho da Fazenda sobre as necessidades urgentes em que estava o Reino apontando os remédios, 23 maio de 1656”; A. Brásio, “Consulta de 12 fevereiro de 1656,” *Monumenta missionária Africana*, 1st ser., vol. 12 (Lisbon: Agência Geral do Ultramar, 1953-1988) 7-9.

²⁸ Jean-Baptiste Nardi, *O fumo brasileiro no período colonial: Lavoura, comércio e administração* (São Paulo: Editoria Brasiliense, 1996) 92 and 109.

²⁹ André João Antonil, *Cultura e opulência do Brasil* (1711; São Paulo: Editoria da Universidade de São Paulo, 1982) 99-201.

³⁰ I am here taking up the analysis of colonial repopulation in the Canaries and in the Antilles discussed by Anthony M. Stevens-Arroyo, “The Inter-Atlantic Paradigm,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 35.3 (1993): 515-543.

³¹ Bettendorf, *Crônica dos padres* 607.

³² Maria Luíza Marcílio, “The Population of Colonial Brazil,” *The Cambridge History of Latin America*, ed. L. Bethell, vol. 2 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984-1995) 37-63; Adriano Parreira, *Economia e sociedade em Angola na*

época da Rainha Jinga, século XVII (Lisbon: Editorial Estampa, 1990) 98; Teotónio R. de Souza, *Goa medieval: A cidade e o interior no século XVII* (Lisbon: Editorial Estampa, 1994) 110-120; Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *The Portuguese Empire in Asia, 1500-1700: A Political and Economic History* (New York: Longman, 1993) 261-269.

³³ Vicente do Salvador, *História do Brasil, 1500-1627* (c. 1627; São Paulo: Editoria da Universidade de São Paulo, 1982) 110. The most complete study on the subject does not mention the case of the Bahian *zimbo*: Jan Hogendorn and Marion Johnson, *The Shell Money of the Slave Trade* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986). [Zimbos are small oval white shells and a type of porcelain, used as ornaments and currency in several areas of Africa and India. – Trans.]

³⁴ Olfert Dapper, *Description de l'Afrique* (Amsterdam: Boom & Van Someren, 1686) 386. As a result of improvements in sea transport, the mortality rate of slaves shipped by European slave traders as a whole decreased throughout the course of the eighteenth century: Oliver Pétré-Grenouilleau, *Les traites négrières* (Paris: Gallimard, 2004) 127-145.

³⁵ Alencastro, *O trato de viventes* 254-255.

³⁶ Article 22 of Colbert's *Code noir* (1685) refers to it as food for Antillean slaves: "The masters will be obliged to provide their slaves [...], for their victuals, two and a half pots, Paris measurement, of manioc flour [...]," *Recueils de règlements, édits, déclarations et arrêts, avec le Code noir*, vol. 2, (Paris: Les Libraires Associés, 1745) 89.

³⁷ Frédéric Mauro, *Le Portugal at l'Atlantique au XVII^e siècle* (Paris: SEVPEN, 1960) 512-526; Stuart B. Schwartz, *Segredos internos: Engenhos e escravos na sociedade colonial* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1988) 152; Vitorino Magalhães Godinho, *Introdução à história econômica* (Lisbon: Livros Horizonte, 1970) 173-174.

³⁸ Manuel dos Anjos da Silva Rebelo, *Relações entre Angola e Brasil, 1808-1830* (Lisbon: Agência Geral do Ultramar, 1970) 437-440.

³⁹ For the Spanish Dominican Bartolomé de Las Casas, refer to Marcel Bataillon, *Études sur Bartolomé de Las Casas* (Paris: Centre des recherches de l'Institut d'études hispaniques, 1966) 91-94; for the Portuguese Jesuit António Vieira, see Antonio José Saravia, "Le père Antonio Vieira S. J. et la liberté des Indiens," *TILAS [Travaux de l'Institut d'études ibériques et latino-américaines]*, III (1963): 483-516, and "Le Père Antonio Vieira, S. J. et la question de l'esclavage des Noirs au XVII^e siècle," *Annales ESC*, 22-6 (1967): 1289-1309.

⁴⁰ Brásio, *Monumenta*, 1st series, vol. 3, "Informação acerca dos escravos de Angola" (1582-1583), 227-231.

⁴¹ Brásio, vol. 15, "Carta do padre Luís Brandão, Luanda, 21 de agosto de 1611," 442-443. There is a recent edition of Alonso de Sandoval's treatise, *De instauranda Aethiopum salute* (1627), edited by Enriqueta Vila Vilar, *Un tratado sobre la esclavitud* (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1987) 154.

⁴² This thesis is also supported by the Jesuit Luis de Molina: see António Manuel Hespanha, "Luís de Molina e a escravização dos Negros," *Análise social*, XXV, 157 (1999): 937-990; and also, Domingos Maurício, "A Universidade de Évora e a escravatura," *Didaskalia*, 7 (1977): 153-200.

⁴³ See the bull *Romanus Pontifex* (1455), in A. Brásio, *Monumenta*, 2nd series, vol. 1, 277-286; Charles-Martial de Witte, "Les bulles pontificales et l'expansion portugaise au XV^e siècle," *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique*, 53 (1958): 455.

⁴⁴ P. António Vieira, "Sermão XIV," and "Sermão XXVII do Rosário," *Sermões*, vol. 4 (Porto: Lello e Irmão, 1993) 733-769 and 1202-1241.

⁴⁵ Nuno Marques Pereira, *Compêndio narrativo do peregrino da América*, vol. 1 (1728; Rio de Janeiro: Academia Brasileira de Letras, 1988) 149-150.

⁴⁶ D. António de Castro Xavier Monteiro, "Como se ensinava o direito das gentes na Universidade de Coimbra no século XVI," *Anais* (Lisbon, Academia Portuguesa da História: 1993) 26; and "Opinião do um frade capuxinho sobre a escravidão no Brasil em 1794," *Revista do Instituto histórico e geográfico brasileiro*, 40.2 (1897): 155-157.

⁴⁷ Nuno Gonçalo Monteiro, "Portugal, a guerra de Sucessão de Espanha e Methuen: Algumas considerações gerais," Coimbra, Congresso de Associação portuguesa de história econômica e social (2003): 1-16.

⁴⁸ Cláudia Damasceno Fonseca, *Des terres aux villes de l'or. Pouvoirs et territoires urbains au Minas Gerais*, Paris, Centre culturelle Calouste Gulbenkian (2003): 220-230.

⁴⁹ Colin M. MacLachlan, "The Indian Labor Structure in the Portuguese Amazon, 1700-1800," *Colonial Roots of Modern Brazil*, ed. D. Alden (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973) 199-203.

⁵⁰ [Morgado de Mateus is a title of Portuguese nobility. – Trans.]

⁵¹ Heloisa L. Bellotto, *Autoridade e conflito no Brasil colonial: O governo do Morgado de Mateus em São Paulo, 1765-1775* (São Paulo: Conselho Estadual de Artes e Ciências Humanas, 1979).

⁵² *Documentos interessantes para a historia e costumes de São Paulo*, vol. XVI (São Paulo: Arquivo do Estado de São Paulo, 1895) 45.

⁵³ *Documentos interessantes*, vol. XIV (1893) 264 and 287; *Documentos Interessantes*, vol. XIX (1898) 414.

⁵⁴ Marquis de Mirabeau, *L'ami des hommes ou Traité de la population*, Avignon, (n.p., 1756) 329; Voltaire, *Essai sur les mœurs et l'esprit des nations* (1756; Chicoutimi, Université de Québec: 2002) 117.

⁵⁵ Kenneth R. Maxwell, "Pombal and the Nationalization of the Luso-Brazilian Economy," *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, 48.4 (1968) 608-631; Jorge Pedreira, "A indústria," *História econômica de Portugal, 1700-2000*, ed. P. Lains and A. F. da Silva, 3 vols., vol. I (Lisbon: Imprensa de Ciências Sociais, 2005) 178-208.

⁵⁶ Manuel Nunes Dias, “Estratégia Pombalina de urbanização do espaço amazônico,” *Como interpretar Pombal? No bicentena_rio da sua morte*, ed. M. Antunes *et al* (Lisbon: Edições Brote_ria, 1983) 299-365; José Mendes da Chuna Saraiva, *A fortaleza de Bissau e a Companhia do Grão Pará e Maranhão* (Lisbon: Arquivo Histórico, 1947).

⁵⁷ Nearly 25,000 would be sold in Maranhão (42.2%) and in Pará (56.1%) by the CGGPM between 1756 and 1788. Their origin was Bissau and Cacheo (66.6%) and Angola (28.5%); Antônio Carreira, “As Companhias Pombalinas de navegação, comércio e tráfico de escravos entre a Costa africana e o Nordeste brasileiro,” *Boletim cultural da Guiné Portuguesa*, 23-91/92 (1968): 454.

⁵⁸ José Ribeiro Júnior, *Colonização e monopólio no nordeste brasileiro: A Companhia Geral de Pernambuco e Paraíba, 1759-1780* (São Paulo: Hucitec, 1976) 92-101.

⁵⁹ From 1761 to 1786, approximately 49,000 Africans are brought by the CGPP to Pernambuco (92.5%) and to Rio de Janeiro (3.5%); 87.7% of the deportees come from Angola and 12.3% from the coast of Mina: A. Carreira, “As companhias Pombalinas” 24-93 (1969): 79.

⁶⁰ “Dois embaixadores africanos mandados à Bahia pelo rei Dagomé,” *Revista do Instituto histórico e geográfico brasileiro*, 59 (1896): 413 sqq. [?]; the ambassadors of the king of Dahomey, Agonglo, complain about this situation in 1795.

⁶¹ This is what a historian has called “the quadrangular trade”: Sandro Sideri, *Trade and Power: Informal Colonialism in Anglo-Portuguese Relations* (Rotterdam: Rotterdam University Press, 1970).

⁶² See Pierre Verger, *Flux et reflux de la traite des nègres entre le golfe de Bénin et Bahia de Todos os Santos, du XVII^e au XIX^e siècle* (Paris: Mouton, 1968) 232.

⁶³ José C. Curto, “Luso-Brazilian Alcohol,” Joseph C. Miller, “Legal Portuguese Slaving from Angola. Some Preliminary Indications of Volume and Direction, 1760-1830,” *Revue française d'histoire d'outre-mer*, LXII-226/227 (1975) 135-176.

⁶⁴ “Junta do Governo de Angola, 19 junho de 1823” (Lisbon: AHU, n. d.) Angola, Box 142, Document 57.

⁶⁵ Antônio Delgado da Silva, *Collecção da legislação portuguesa desde a última compilação das ordenações*, vol. 1 (Lisbon: Typografia maigreense, 1825-1830) 369-376.

⁶⁶ “Directório que se deve observar nas povações dos Índios do Pará e Maranhão enquanto sua Majestade não mandar o contrário” (Lisbon: n. p., 1785). Written in 1757 by Francisco Xavier de Mendonça Furtado, brother of the Marquis de Pombal and governor of the Estado do Grão Pará e Maranhão, this code becomes a royal edict on August 17, 1758. For a recent analysis, see Barbara A. Sommer, “Negotiated Settlements: Native Amazonians and Portuguese Policy in Para, Brazil, 1758-1798,” diss., University of New Mexico, 2000, 55-152.

⁶⁷ Instructions sent, in 1751, to Gomes Freire de Andrada: Marcos Carneiro de Mendonça, *O marquês de Pombal e o Brasil* (São Paulo: Companhia Editora Nacional, 1960) 179-189.

⁶⁸ John Hemming, *Red Gold: The Conquest of the Brazilian Indians, 1500-1700* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978) 458-460; Roberta M. Delson, “Inland Navigation in Colonial Brazil: Using Canoes on the Amazon,” *International Journal of Maritime History*, VII, 1 (1995): 1-28.

⁶⁹ See Fernand Braudel “L’histoire des civilisations : le passé explique le présent,” in *Écrits sur l’histoire* (Paris: Flammarion, 1969) 225-314; Georges Benrekassa, “Civilisation, civilité,” *Dictionnaire européen des Lumières*, ed. M. Delon (Paris: PUF, 1997) 219-224.

⁷⁰ Mertinho de Mello e Castro to the governor of Goiás, 1771; José Martins Pereira de Alencastre, *Anais da província de Goiás* (1863; Brasília: Editora Gráfica Ipiranga, 1979) 183.

⁷¹ Domingos Alves Branco Moniz Barreto, “Plano sobre a civilização dos Índios do Brasil e principalmente para a capitania da Bahia...,” 1788: *Revista do Instituto histórico e geográfico brasileiro*, 19 (1856): 33.

⁷² Émile Benveniste, “Civilisation: contribution à l’histoire du mot,” *Problèmes de linguistique générale*, ed. É. Benveniste *et al.*, 2 vols., vol. I (Paris: Gallimard, 1966) 336-345.

⁷³ It is, in fact, in 1706 that this name appeared for the first time with its present meaning: C. Furtado, *La formation économique du Brésil* and Antônio Candido, *Formação literária do Brasil* (São Paulo: Martins, 1959) consider the gold cycle, in the eighteenth century, as the definitive moment of Brazilian national formation, within the economic sphere (C. Furtado) and within the literary sphere (A. Candido).

⁷⁴ “Memória sobre a introdução do arroz branco no Estado Grão-Pará,” *Revista do Instituto histórico e geográfico brasileiro*, 48 (1885): 79-84.

⁷⁵ For an analysis of the period and the historical debate regarding the “crisis of the colonial system,” see “Colonial Brazil: Foundations, Crises, and Legacies,” spec. issue of *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 80.4 (2000) and particularly the article by Jorge Pedreira and José Jobson de A. Arruda.

⁷⁶ David Eltis, *Economic Growth and the Ending of the Transatlantic Slave Trade* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987) 234-244.

⁷⁷ Tulio Halperin Donghi, *Histoire contemporaine de l’Amérique latine* (1970; Paris: Payot, 1972) 83 and 95; Davide Bushnell, “Independence Compared: The Americas North and South,” *Independence and Revolution in Spanish America: Perspectives and Problems*, ed. A. McFarlane and E. Posada-Carbó (London: University of London Press, 1999) 68-83.

⁷⁸ *Arquivo diplomático da Independência*, Brasília, Ministério das Relações exteriores, 1972, vol. 1, *passim*.

⁷⁹ Speech delivered by the influential minister from São Paulo, Nicolau Vergueiro (around 1823), *Diário da Assembléia Geral Constituinte e Legislativa do Império do Brasil*, vol. II (1823; Brasília: Câmara dos Deputados, 1973) 677.

⁸⁰ “Cartas de João Loureiro ao Conselheiro Manuel José Maria da Costa e Sá 1826-1842,” *Revista do Instituto histórico e geográfico Brasileiro*, 86 (1913): 29.

⁸¹ Regarding the reorganization of Portuguese politics in Africa after the independence of Brazil, see Valentim Alexandre, “The Portuguese Empire 1825-1850,” *From Slave Trade to Empire: Europe and the Colonisation of Black Africa, 1780s-1880s*, ed. O. Pétré-Grenouilleau (London: Routledge, 2004) 110-132.

⁸² “American Slavery and the Conflict of Laws,” *Columbia Law Review*, 71.1 (1971): 74-99; Louise Weinberg, “Methodological Interventions and the Slavery Cases, or Night Thoughts of a Legal Realist,” *Maryland Law Review*, 56 (1997): 1316-1370.

⁸³ Notwithstanding, of course, the preeminence of property rights over the right to freedom that, often, allowed Antillean masters to retain their slaves when they resided in the metropolis; see Roger Botte, “L’esclavage africain après l’abolition de 1848. Servitude et droit du sol,” *Annales HSS*, 55-5 (2000): 1009-1037.

⁸⁴ Analyzing the economic and social aspects of the modernization of slavery in the nineteenth century (in Cuba, Puerto Rico, the United States and Brazil), without considering the relationship between this process and the “state building” of the United States and Brazil, the notion of a “second slavery” – conceived by Dale Tomich and utilized by other specialists – loses a great deal of its force; Dale W. Tomich, “The ‘Second-Slavery’: Bonded Labor and the Transformation of the Nineteenth-century World Economy,” *Rethinking the Nineteenth Century: Movements and Contradictions*, ed. F. O. Ramírez (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988) 103-117; Tomich, “World Slavery and Caribbean Capitalism: The Cuban Sugar Industry, 1780-1868,” *Theory and Society*, 20.3 (1991): 297-319, as well as Sidney Mintz’s commentaries on pages 383-392 of the same volume.

⁸⁵ Owners having 1-4 slaves represented 59.6% of the masters in São Paulo (in 1829), 60.2% in Minas Gerais (in 1833), but only 50.1% in the South of the United States (in 1850) and 54.4% in Jamaica (in 1832); Francisco Vidal Luna and Herbert S. Klein, *Slavery and the Economy of São Paulo, 1750-1850* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 2003) 129. See also Stuart B. Schwartz, “Patterns of Slaveholding in the Americas: New Evidence from Brazil,” *American Historical Review*, 87.1 (1982): 55-86.

⁸⁶ The municipality of Rio de Janeiro was comprised of rural parishes. In the urban parishes (206,000 inhabitants), the number of slaves reached 79,000 individuals (38%); Mary C. Karasch, *Slave Life in Rio de Janeiro, 1808-1850*, table 3.6 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987) 62; *Almanak Laemmert 1852* (Rio de Janeiro: Laemmert, Suplemento) 95-96.

⁸⁷ England imposed anti-slave trade treaties on Chile (January 1839), Venezuela (March 1839), Argentina (May 1839), Uruguay (June 1839), Haiti (December 1839), Bolivia (September 1840), Mexico (February 1841) and Texas (November 1841).

Senior members of the Brazilian Council of State closely followed these English initiatives: “Consulta de 20.09.1845,” *Atas do Conselho de Estado*, vol. 1 (Brasília: Senado Federal, 1978) 433-448. The press in Rio de Janeiro and, in particular, the daily *Jornal do Comércio*, paid a great deal of attention to parliamentary debates and articles in British newspapers – regularly translated and reprinted – related to the suppression of the trade and to tariff policies vis-à-vis Brazilian products.

⁸⁸ The 6,400 Africans brought to Brazil between 1850 and 1856 represent a residual effect of the great flows interrupted in 1850.

⁸⁹ More accurately, Brazil took responsibility for repayment of the loan, of an equivalent amount, contracted in 1823 by the Portuguese government with the same Rothschilds; see Caroline Shaw, “Rothschilds and Brazil: An Introduction to Sources in the Rothschild Archive,” *Latin American Research Review*, 40.2 (2005): 165-185, and Stephen Haber and Herbert S. Klein, “The Economic Consequences of Brazilian Independence,” *How Latin America Fell Behind: Essays in Economic Histories of Brazil and Mexico, 1800-1914*, ed. S. Haber (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997) 243-259.

⁹⁰ Since 1833, with the exacerbation of Anglo-Brazilian disputes regarding the African slave trade, decreed illegal in Brazil in 1831, senior members of the Council of State stressed that regulations on the slave trade and tariff policies would remain associated in negotiations with London overall; *Atas do Conselho, 10 de outubro de 1833*, vol. 2, 293-296.

⁹¹ This concerns the Alves Branco tariffs, fixed for the first time at a rate of “ad volarem,” the declaration of which dates August 12, 1844, but whose application, subject to discussions with interested countries, was added to the budget of 1845-1846: *Anais do Senado*, Rio de Janeiro, 1845, book 3, 454-456.

⁹² C. Duncan Rice, “‘Humanity Sold for Sugar!’ The British Abolitionist Response to Free Trade in Slave-Grown Sugar,” *The Historical Journal*, 13.3 (1970): 402-418.

⁹³ *The Economist*, April 19, 1845.

⁹⁴ *British Parliamentary Papers: Slave Trade*, vol. 4 (1847-1848) (Shannon: Irish University Press, 1968), *Reports from the Selected Committee on the Slave Trade*, “2nd report” 169-170.

⁹⁵ Eltis, *Economic Growth* 234-244.

⁹⁶ “Journal of Lieutenant Forbes, on His Mission to Dahomey,” *British Parliamentary Papers*, vol. 38, *Correspondence with the British Commissioners on the Slave Trade*, 1851, 329-347.

⁹⁷ See, regarding this subject, François Crouzet, “Puissance maritime et blocus,” *La puissance maritime*, ed. C. Buchet, J. Meyer and J.-P. Poussou (Paris: Presses de l’Université de Paris-Sorbonne, 2004) 467-478.

⁹⁸ English abolitionism also attracted writers and painters, who depicted the tragedies of the slave trade. For this reason, *The Slave Ship* (1840), by [J. M. W.] Turner, remains the icon of the ideological power of the campaign against the slave trade. Contrary to the standard interpretation, linking the scene in this painting to the

drowning of Africans perpetrated in the Antilles in 1781, by the captain of a slave ship (the *Zong*) based in Liverpool, it has been demonstrated that the painting refers to the dramas born of the revival of the Cuban and Brazilian trade at the end of the 1830s. *The Slave Ship* was exhibited in London in 1840, during the World Antislavery Convention, whose success made this event the foundational act of an international congress committed to political mobilization. The painting was initially called *Slavers Throwing Overboard the Dead and Dying – Typhoon Coming On*. See John McCoubrey, “Turner’s Slave Ship: Abolition, Ruskin and Reception,” *Word & Image*, 14.4 (1998): 319-353; and Marcus Wood, *Blind Memory: Visual Representation of Slavery in England and America, 1780-1865* (New York: Routledge, 2000) 41-74.

⁹⁹ Leslie M. Bethell, “Britain, Portugal and the Suppression of the Brazilian Slave Trade: The Origins of Lord Palmerston’s Act of 1839,” *The English Historical Review*, 80.317 (1965): 761-784; Wilburn D. Jones, “The Origins and Passage of Lord Aberdeen’s Act,” *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, 42.4 (1962): 502-520.

¹⁰⁰ This is confirmed in one of his responses, in March 1848, to the House of Commons commission of inquiry on the slave trade: “In Brazil, the amount of land that can be cultivated, if there were an unlimited supply of labor, is incalculable. It is a big mistake to believe that the fear of disorders within the social order could cause [the Brazilians] to limit the import of blacks [...]; these dangers [...] would not have the effects that only after having reached such proportions would be likely to move the Brazilian government. Meanwhile, our Antillean production would have already been subjected to the repercussions of the enormous expansion of Brazilian production”: “First Report from the Selected Committee on the Slave Trade,” March 21, 1848, in *British Parliamentary*, vol. 4, 4 [?].

¹⁰¹ Howard Temperley, *British Anti-slavery, 1833-1870* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1972) 183.

¹⁰² “Discurso do conselheiro Eusébio de Queiroz Coutinho em 16 de julho de 1852”: Agostinho Marques Perdigão Malheiro, *A escravidão no Brasil: Ensaio histórico, jurídico, social*, vol. 1 (1867; Petrópolis: Vozes, 1976) 201-222.

¹⁰³ See the debate that took place in the Chamber of Deputies on January 23, 1859, reproduced in the *Jornal do Comércio* on January 28, 1850.

¹⁰⁴ João José Reis, *Rebelião escrava no Brasil* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2003).

¹⁰⁵ Luiz Felipe de Alencastro, “Prolétaires et esclaves: immigrés portugais et captifs africains à Rio de Janeiro, 1850-1875,” *Cahiers du CRIAR*, Publications de l’Université de Rouen, 4 (1984): 199-156.

¹⁰⁶ Joaquim Nabuco, *Um estadista do Império*, vol. 1 (1897-1899; Rio de Janeiro: Topbooks, 1997) 229, n. 6. I am willing to wager that Brazilian movements, today, claiming reparations for the descendents of slaves will surely evoke this precise point.

¹⁰⁷ Richard Graham, “Os fundamentos da ruptura de relações diplomáticas entre o Brasil e Grã-Bretanha em 1863: A questão christie,” *Revista de história*, 49 (1962): 117-138, and 50 (1962): 379-402; Robert Conrad, “Neither Slave nor Free. The *Emancipados* of Brazil, 1818-1868,” *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, 53.1 (1973): 50-70.

¹⁰⁸ The law being prepared stipulated, notably, that crimes related to the slave trade would pass from the jurisdiction of popular juries, manipulated by slavers, to the tribunals of the War Navy, managed by the government.

¹⁰⁹ Luiz Felipe de Alencastro, “Le commerce des vivants: traite d’esclaves et *Pax Lusitana* dans l’Atlantique Sud, XVI^e siècle-XIX^e siècle,” *diss.*, Université de Paris-X – Nanterre, 1986, 522-527.

¹¹⁰ D. Eltis, *Economic Growth* 234-244.

¹¹¹ William R. Summerhill, “Market Intervention in a Backward Economy: Railroad Subsidy in Brazil, 1854-1913,” *The Economic History Review*, 51.3 (1998): 542-568.

¹¹² Warren Dean, “Latifundia and Land Policy in Nineteenth-century Brazil,” *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, 51.4 (1971): 606-625; Lúgia Osório Silva, *Terras devolutas e latifúndio: Efeitos da lei de 1850* (Campinas: Ed. Unicamp, 1996).

¹¹³ José Damião Rodrigues, “Entre duas margens: A circulação atlântica dos Açorianos nos séculos XVII e XVIII,” *Arquipélago*, VI (2002): 225-245.

¹¹⁴ José P. Xavier Pinheiro, *Importação de trabalhadores Chins* (Rio de Janeiro: Typographia de J. L. da Silva, 1869).

¹¹⁵ Luiz Peixôto de Lacerda Werneck, *Idéias sobre a colonização* (Rio de Janeiro: Ed. Laemmert, 1855).

¹¹⁶ Born in Portugal, trained in law in Coimbra, Nicolau Vergueiro arrives in Brazil in 1803, and is then elected deputy to the Portuguese Constituent Assembly convened in Lisbon (1821). Favoring Brazilian independence, he returns to South America to be elected to the Constituent Assembly of his new country (1823). Yet, in exchanging the Constituent Assembly in Lisbon for that of Rio de Janeiro, Vergueiro does not choose Brazilian independence solely: he also opts for the preservation of the Brazilian presence within the South Atlantic. He advocated then the slave “union” project between Brazil and Angola, already mentioned. Several times minister and member of Parliament, prominent land owner, he carried out the illegal trade of Africans after 1831. Perceiving the changing winds, he began transporting, from 1843 on, Swiss, German and Portuguese immigrants to his coffee plantations in São Paulo.

¹¹⁷ On the limits of this experience see Thomas Davatz, *Memórias de um colono no Brasil* (1850; Belo Horizonte: Itataia, 1980), and above all the preface by Sérgio Buarque de Holanda, 15-46.

¹¹⁸ Joaquim Nabuco, *Um Estadista do Império* 228.

¹¹⁹ John Darwin, “Imperialism and the Victorians: The Dynamics of Territorial Expansion,” *The English Historical Review*, 112.447 (1997): 614-642.

174 Luiz Felipe de Alencastro

¹²⁰ Michael Byers, "Policing the High Seas: The Proliferation Security Initiative," *The American Journal of International Law*, 98.3 (2004): 526-545; Chaim D. Kaufmann and Robert A. Pape, "Explaining Costly International Moral Action: Britain's Sixty-Year Campaign Against the Atlantic Slave Trade," *International Organization*, 53.4 (1999): 631-668. Like other authors, C. Kaufmann and R. Pape stress that the expenditures for the suppression of the slave trade were superior to the profits obtained for England by the slave trade. Without diminishing the reach of abolitionism, one should dissociate the two questions: the social sectors having profited from the slave trade are not the same as those which, later, would choose to pay for its suppression.

¹²¹ José Bonifácio de Andrada e Silva, "Apontamentos para a civilização dos índios bravos do Império do Brasil (1823)", *Revista do Instituto histórico e geográfico brasileiro*, 12 (1849); Andrada, *Representação à Assembléia Geral Constituinte e Legislativa do Império do Brasil sobre a escravidão* (Paris: F. Didot, 1825).

Our Lot
Milton Ohata
Translated by Nicholas Brown and Emilio Sauri

Seqüências Brasileiras [Brazilian Episodes]. Roberto Schwarz. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1999, 250 pp, R\$ 85.50. ISBN 8571649189.

If time is cruel to most, it has been only kind to the writings of Roberto Schwarz, whose clarity of vision is the result of a diagnosis developed in part thirty years ago. With a few hesitations along the way, he has unswervingly affirmed this point of view, which consists essentially of drawing aesthetic consequences from national impasses, themselves taken as signs of impasses endemic to contemporary capitalism.

His judgment found its feet at the end of an historical cycle in which accelerated industrialization in the periphery raised political expectations in the popular field, requiring a change in the system of relations between social classes and pointing towards a belated but democratic national integration — an integration which, until further notice, did not occur. According to the idea of those who sought this progress, it was the Sovereignty of the Peoples confronting Imperialism. In these decades the debate on our “duality” gained density — placing on one side a backward Brazil, to be overcome, allied with imperialism and consisting of huge landed estates, and on the other an industrial and modernizing Brazil of the bourgeoisie and the national working class.

The coup of 1964 and the crackdown of 1968 threw a wet blanket on the excitement and broke by force the promises of the earlier period, confirming Brazil’s subordinate position within the framework of the Cold War — which nonetheless did not prevent an accelerated rate of economic growth. The playacting of the forces of reaction, whose aim was to promote the

conservative modernization of the nation, included “the revenge of the provinces, of small proprietors, of sexual and religious prudery, of small-time lawyers, etc.,”¹ forming a *systemic* combination “of the most advanced manifestations of international imperialist integration and of the most ancient — and obsolete — bourgeois ideology centered on the individual, on the family unit, and on its traditions” (139). Juxtaposed with the presence of a semi-integrated, urbanized populace, these anachronisms cease to be mere residues of the previous process, instead coming to revolve in a different orbit, perhaps one of greater weight. An absurdity at first sight, “the disjunction reveals to the onlooker a real historical abyss, a conjunction of different stages of capitalist development” (140, translation modified). In this move, Roberto relied substantially on the studies of the sociologist Fernando Henrique Cardoso, who also had concluded, on the eve of the 1964 coup, that our duality was not merely a domestic issue. Recent history had demonstrated its relation to so-called dependency, understood, according to Paulo Arantes, as the development of the definite structural disproportion expressed by this duality — that is, “the reason for our dual nature lies in the advance of capital and not in some idiosyncratic local compartmentalization.”² Seen through this prism, backwardness is not mere backwardness, since it discredits progress as much as the latter in turn discredits it. This impasse in Brazilian history has implications beyond Brazil, since it finally demonstrated the rigid and immobile side of the extraordinary dynamo that is contemporary capitalism. Roberto’s accomplishment has been to work out the consequences for Brazilian culture of this fact, particularly in his analyses of Machado de Assis.³

After the brilliant slim book *Duas meninas* [*Two Girls*] (1997), Roberto Schwarz returns to the scene with *Seqüências brasileiras* [*Brazilian Episodes*], which brings together writings published between 1988 and 1998. His essays, enemies of preestablished hierarchies, unashamed before mythologies and fashions — always explosive, though discreet — tend to risk untraveled roads, bypassing techniques and manias common among specialists. In the disalienating territory of the modern, lively interest might lie in the diary of a girl, the novel of a popular musician, or the polemical book of a taxi driver — and in the consideration of these together or in the confrontation between them.

Take, for example, the analysis of Francisco Alvim’s uncommon poetry — poetry without metaphors! Before the most delicate of artifacts, a banal commentary would try to emphasize some personal tone, the virtuosity of reference or technique. Period. Without denying the significance of such dimensions, Roberto’s analysis adds others, bringing these poems down to earth and pointing out that in them “what is said is extremely easy and almost

nothing, but the whole, consisting of voices that speak over and through one another, bears the complexity of life itself and sketches out something like a fragmentary national comedy, private and public” (206), but always with possible contemporary implications of a worldwide scope.⁴

If the movements in these essays consistently astonish, we need to read them in reciprocal light in order to discern a constant both stronger and less palpable than their diversity: the coherence of the critical work they are based on. In *Seqüências brasileiras* this critical underpinning achieves a plenitude that provides Roberto’s critical activity with a significance that could only be guessed at in his previous books. We saw above that his point of view was armed by the revelatory power of an underlying historical movement which had hollowed out and redefined the previous experience of an entire society, encoding impasses that lay beyond itself. This fact sharpened a sixth sense in Roberto for other types of hollowings-out. Let us say that the author has focused his observations on the dissolution of mobilizations (economic, social, political, cultural) dating from the 1968 era and the period leading up to it — all progressive certainly, but today weakened or relativized by the course of contemporary capitalism — the whole comprising an *organized substance* at the disposal of its interpreter.

Analyzed in this spirit is Jean-Claude Bernadet’s fictional prose, which Roberto initially places squarely within a very French tradition, that of “confessions of the inconfessable, for which artistic value is inextricable from the risk — in a strong sense — incurred in the search for personal truth, above all on the terrain of sex” (189). Nevertheless, in traveling across the Atlantic the genre undergoes a refraction. If in Europe it sought to combat bourgeois hypocrisy (the carapace of the well-dressed and serious family man), in the tropics and above all “in a nation with a gregarious and highly public sexuality such as Brazil” (formed in the brutality of colonial life), the possible stridency gives way to a narrative sobriety unheard of among us.

The critic provides a detailed description of the novel and of the situations of the plot, connected to the discreet affirmation of a homosexual identity among French immigrants, dominated by the rigid figure of the Father. In the book, meanwhile, when all is said and done, “all kinds of energies, moral, intellectual and others, formed in the struggle against a fundamental prejudice, are exhausted in an untranscendent way. Along the same lines, note the parsimony and the near complete lack of consequence for the narrative when, here and there, references appear to the political history of the century. ... The summary treatment given to these intimations responds, from a distance, to the aforementioned modest effect resulting from the emancipation of homosexuality, together with which it composes a figure. Through this figure the book alludes to the times and tells us that

tremendous episodes, in which the greatest forces and hopes were unleashed, ended up being reduced to signs of private life" (197-198). Roberto seems to ask: would it be an exaggeration to add to the experience recounted in the book the greater part of what once upon a time confronted the establishment? The power of youth, hippie clothing, part of the ecological movement, alternative psychotherapies, marketable images of the revolution, drugs and freaking out today go peaceably hand in hand with the culture industry, ties, consumer rights, astrology, the aesthetic of the video-clip, the credit card, etc.⁵ Transgressions in this situation do not transgress like they once had, or even to the limited extent they still do in the US or Europe; they do not add up to an overcoming that matters.

Since 1968 we have grown accustomed to relative conquests within the sphere of conduct. But *Seqüências brasileiras* also concerns a progress of quite different reach and complexity, which also concerns us but which was destined to remain incomplete: that of developmentalism on the periphery of capitalism. Its periodization, its problems, and its ramifications in the best of Brazilian culture are material for reflection in the greater part of these essays. Note that the author sidesteps debates concerning method and always describes with precision the structures of the works that he comments on, and of the authors' intentions — but both are always seen as though in negative.

During the month marking the thirtieth anniversary of the 1964 coup, Roberto could reaffirm the justice of his historical perception, identifying the illusions of our developmentalism by taking stock of the period ("Fim do século" ["End of the Century"]). However, the standard used to periodize and to comprehend the era was not limited to the usual sequence "democracy-dictatorship-redemocratization," within the internal space of the Rule of Law and of a nullified citizenship. The sequence did exist but circled in another orbit, still to be considered, since the dictatorship had suppressed whatever democratic features developmentalist nationalism exhibited. But developmentalist nationalism itself, "after a brief interruption — an initial moment of direct submission to North American interests — returned and was even intensified, now under the direction and with the characteristics of the Right — to such an extent that a fraction of the intelligentsia, more developmentalist and anti-imperialists than democratic, followed the generals' project of transforming Brazil into a great power with some sympathy" (158).

Today we know that on the periphery of capitalism various strategies — democratic and dictatorial, Left and Right — were pursued to achieve development. We also know that such development had objective limits which, despite this diversity of strategies, made themselves known through the two petroleum crashes, the debt crisis, and the dynamic of the Third

Industrial Revolution, "which together erected a barrier and transformed the landscape" (158).

Indifferent in part to open or closed political regimes, "developmentalism tore populations from their old social and geographic territories, in a certain way liberating them, in order to reterritorialize them within an occasionally titanic process of national industrialization which, at a certain point, facing new conditions of economic competition, could not be continued. Now having no place to turn, these populations found themselves within a new historical situation, that of *monetary subjects without money*, or of virtual ex-proletarians, available for criminality and all sorts of fanaticisms" (159-160). This is the balance that redemocratization and two "lost decades" sadly would not succeed in settling, despite the Constitution of 1988, Keynesian or neoliberal economic policies, etc. For those who do not place their bets on barbarism, the incomplete task of incorporating the excluded that never were included continues to be an imperative, more than a hundred years after the abolition of slavery. To make matters worse, the demands imposed by the present-day economy unfortunately "fit marvelously with our secular disregard for the poor. With their 'lack of training,' the latter are failing to attract interest even as a more or less free labor force" (162).

Whether we like it or not, the colonial legacy persists and remains the unavoidable given that conditions any project leading us toward modernity. Roberto points out that this fact is nonetheless almost always taken as an abstract norm, which greatly limits the exercise of critique. From this perspective, the problem would stem not from the "course of the world itself, but only from our relative position within it" (161). Confronted realistically, however, modernization has a history, it's not a kindly old lady, and within it "there may not be room for us, much less for everyone."

Facing contemporary social disintegration (which apologists call "creative destruction"), Roberto concludes his panorama by questioning the meaning of a national culture "that no longer articulates any collective project of material life," being rather only "a consumerist aestheticization of aspirations for national community" (162) — a real program of study for the next century, if the country insists on existing.

Brasil: a construção interrompida [*Brazil: The Interrupted Construction*] — the title of a 1992 book by Celso Furtado — is symptomatic, and perhaps points to the end of an historical line. In the past, when the modernization of the ex-colonial country promised a happy ending, the process inspired a veritable genre, with authors and publishers committed to serving a captive audience — books that introduced Brazil to Brazilians and tried to explain our formation, undergirded by colonial roots. Roberto notes the trouble with

taking up this genre in the present, faced with the changes we have seen since developmentalism reached its limit. But what then is the meaning and relevance of this collective process of intellectual accumulation, which for decades asked about our past and our future? The question is implicit in a good number of essays in the book, but the answers, as we shall see, vary widely according to the author analyzed. They bring into proximity authors as different as Alfredo Bosi and Paulo Arantes, who have recently taken up the “formation” genre again. They allow a critical view of *uspiano*⁶ Marxism, which also sought to explain the country’s formation and was fundamental to Roberto’s own essayism. They also facilitate an evaluation of the highly characteristic and superior status of Antonio Candido’s work within the genre.

“Discutindo com Alfredo Bosi” [“Arguing with Alfredo Bosi”] is one of the highlights of the book and comments in detail on the relevance of *Dialética da colonização* [*The Dialectic of Colonization*] (1992), which attempts to produce a new interpretation of Brazilian history, from [José de] Anchieta to the idealizers of the Vargist⁷ state. *Dialética da colonização* seeks to join Bosi’s erudition and democratic spirit to the broad movement of nonconformist Catholics, who since the 1960s have had a voice in national public debates. This special connection makes the book important, given the inclusion of the Church within the universe of the dispossessed: “Far from signifying the triumph of reason, which at some moment it might have been, the absence of the Catholic prism in the political-cultural debate is a failure, a sign of precarious representativity” (62).

There is no room here to comment extensively on the Roberto’s detailed reading of *Dialética da colonização*. There are explicit differences with regard to properly literary analysis, to the function of the liberal pantheon of ideas in our 19th century, to the positive contribution of popular culture in the construction of the nation, and to the Catholic appropriation of Marxism. Essentially, the major objection hinges on the return to a genre whose conditions of possibility seem, barring misunderstandings, no longer to exist.

Bosi’s book is anchored in a broad social movement that reached its height during the 1970s, taking solidarity with the oppressed as its principle within the framework of the dictatorship. The fundamental goal is a developed and more democratic nation. But Roberto does not limit himself to this side of the intellectual Left, and points to difficulties on the opposite pole, or of the materialist ivory tower, which is in good part derived from his own work. He notes that the “formation” genre also encounters difficulties in Paulo Arantes’s book, *Um departamento francês de ultramar* [*An Overseas French Department*], quite opposite in spirit to the ideal of the small church. In *Um departamento francês de ultramar*, published two years after Bosi’s

work, local experience encodes the impasses found at the center of capitalism. The inspiration comes from Antonio Candido’s classic *Formação da literatura brasileira* [*The Formation of Brazilian Literature*], which narrates the process of the creation of a literary system in the Brazil, which had begun to filter fashions coming from Europe. “Paulo adapted the formula and wrote a history of *Paulistas* in their desire to construct a philosophical culture. The process described by Candido however occurs between 1750 and 1870, a temporal distance that allows the author to treat the ironies of the situation with forbearance. The process Paulo studies is already more or less contemporary” (208) — a fact that requires Arantes to consider himself “part of the contradictions and alienations” he describes.

Another difficulty stems from the extremely uneven role played by literature and philosophy in national culture. As a formative process running parallel to and in relative disproportion with the others, philosophy perhaps yields less. See the analysis of Bento Prado Jr.’s ephemeral literary philosophy, in which blood is drawn from a stone, “in such a way that one might say that Paulo mobilized ideas and a perceptiveness of considerable scale in order to explain something that almost did not come to be” (211).

The genre to which Alfredo Bosi and Paulo Arantes recently returned was established during the first decades of the 20th century. Following the explanatory yield of the 1930s and 1940s, a second interpretive crop emerged in the transition from the 1950s to the 1960s. In it the limits of developmentalism are clearer, but even so its presence is strongly felt, as Roberto notes. “Um seminário de Marx” [“A Seminar on Marx”] can be linked back to “Digressão sentimental sobre Oswald de Andrade” [“A Sentimental Digression on Oswald de Andrade”], an invention of Antonio Candido’s that has the consistency of a literary form unto itself, combining “precise personal testimony and analysis,” but unsullied by any of the nostalgia and self-complacency common among sexagenarians. Roberto’s essay sums up in a critical way the intellectual trajectory of a group of professors at USP, from different fields, who in 1958, benefiting from the heterodox climate of the times, came together to read *Capital*. Roberto was finishing his undergraduate degree in Social Sciences, but participated precociously in the experiment. This went on to bear fruit in the following years and resulted in an “idea that is not an exaggeration to call a new intuition of Brazil.... In brief, the novelty consisted of combining that which was generally separate, or better, in articulating the nation’s sociological and political particularity with the contemporary history of capital, whose orbit was of a different magnitude” (93).

Although praising the remarkable inventiveness of the works by members of the group, including in relation to Marx himself, Roberto's basic objection is informed by the course of recent history, and he focuses on the developmentalism evident in the books written by his ex-professor Fernando Henrique Cardoso. The pepper in this broth derives from the links between the academic and the politician.⁸ FHC's reasoning on the subject of dependency guided his trajectory as a public figure, including more recent episodes like his current term in office. However, despite accentuating in a remarkable manner the limits of developmentalism (FHC did not consider the history of nations was merely the history of nations, but rather the history of capitalism), "the local agenda, of overcoming backwardness by means of industrialization," made this Marxism somewhat "abstract and timid in regards to the effective course of the world," more preoccupied with the future of Brazil than with critiquing capitalism. After all, Marx did not write *Capital* in order to save Germany.

It is no secret that Roberto's trajectory was nourished by continuous reflection on the work of Antonio Candido, which is demonstrated here by the four essays devoted to the master. These form the first part of *Seqüências brasileiras* and they are crucial to understanding the book, as we shall see. The first, "Saudação *honoris causa*" ["*Honoris Causa Address*"], opens the book and has a simplicity that could only result from a constant reading of the master's work, tracing in it a sober intellectual biography, light-years from empty praise. The essays that follow focus on two points that had made Candido's work — always committed to discerning the (extremely varied and enlightening) relations between literary structures and socio-historical processes — unique.

"Sobre a *Formação da literatura brasileira*" ["On *The Formation of Brazilian Literature*"] was originally the afterword to an essay by Paulo Arantes,⁹ but to call it an afterword is misleading, since here it is simply a matter of situating Candido's classic within the tradition of the other "formations," while nonetheless pointing out its definitive peculiarity, bound to the history of its object. Unlike the classics written by Gilberto Freyre, Sérgio Buarque, Caio Prado Jr. and Celso Furtado, those by Candido attempted to "narrate a formation that had already completed itself [with the emergence of Machado de Assis]" (18). Clearing up misunderstandings to which even today the book falls prey, Roberto demonstrates that in it "literary nationalism is understood as a force and effective end, to which the critic however, being a staunch internationalist, does not adhere. He recognizes a productivity in it up to a point, a dimension of relative progress, which does not prevent him from also noting and objecting to the role played in it by

ideological concealment, by the imposition of class standards, as well as by the indifference to aesthetic quality — 'defects' marked with a particular irony which is itself a literary discovery, the felicitous condensation of a substantive aesthetic-political prism. The point of view is differentiated and free of any myths: after having been an aspiration, the formation of the Brazilian literary system is a fact, with advantages and shortcomings to sort out. The local constitution of a field in which contemporary questions can be appropriately articulated represents an enormously significant step that does not however make the *total* difference imagined in the most emphatic conceptions of the national future" (18-19). In other words, to state the obvious not always taken into account, the periodizations of different "formations" (political, literary, economic, etc.) do not coincide. "Os sete fôlegos de um livro" ["The Nine Lives of a Book"] (46) also points to the peculiarity of *Formação da literatura brasileira* and its final part analyzes five possible meanings of the term "formation" today.

With "Adequação nacional e originalidade crítica" ["National Adequation and Critical Originality"] Roberto supplements his own "Pressupostos salvo engano de *Dialética da malandragem*" ["Presuppositions, Barring Error, of Antonio Candido's *Dialectic of Roguery*"] (1979).¹⁰ Both comment on Antonio Candido's readings of two nineteenth-century Brazilian novels, *Memórias de um sargento de milícias* [*Memoirs of a Militia Sergeant*, by Manuel Antonio de Almeida] and *O cortiço* [*Slum: A Novel*, by Aluísio de Azevedo] — readings in which literary form is considered in a way that breaks away from commonplaces, neither being outside of the world nor simply reflecting it, but sharing with it structures that are not always perceived by the novelist himself and that fall to the critic to identify.

Attending to a dialectical ideal that until then had been rare among us, these essays by Candido complement and at the same time diverge from *Formação da literatura brasileira* (note that they were written after 1964 and after the abortion of the democratic aspirations of the previous period). They complement it because they comprise what Roberto calls the "subterranean landscape of *Formação*," processes that run beneath the "alliance between artistic force and national mission," pleasant up to a certain point but always conscientious and edifying. The divergence stems from not always creditable revelations (*O cortiço*, for example, promotes a very unpleasant patriotic point of view), present in the novels as if against the will of the authors, the unconscious outweighing conscious intention.

The analysis of Aluísio de Azevedo's novel, paralleling Zola's *L'assomoir*, proves that "the demonstration that even a naturalist text is the offspring of other texts and is not born of simple registration of the world does not exclude as false the moment of such registration itself. Against the

pre-modern idea (still in tune with mass media consciousness) that literary works are simply procreated by others in a kind of social vacuum without reference to extra-textual realities, Candido's argument suggests a kind of salvaging of contents and forms within the gravitational field of another historical experience — an experience that bears upon the imported model itself, potentially destroying or revitalizing it, transforming it properly or improperly, and in all cases reorganizing the model as if by remote control while leaving its own imprint on it" (26).

Contrary to what naturalism ordains, the narrative focus in *O cortiço* (on the ever-resentful "customer owing money to the local merchant") has an extra-literary existence and presupposes a functioning social system — of which it is an important part, in this case marked by slavery and the free Brazilian's relation to it. Up to this point, the same could be said of *Memoirs of a Militia Sergeant*. However, for Roberto the essential part of the essay lies in paying attention to the literary yield of this focus, in the complex relation between the movement of the novel and its system of ideas (both ideological and literary). Thus, the dynamism of the intrigue "not only does not confirm, but incisively and painfully gives the lie to the system of beliefs that foreground the novel. In standard appraisals of *O cortiço*, the novel subsists on naturalist stereotypes in matters of race and environment, and on nationalist stereotypes when it is a matter of portraying the former colonizer. Yet, consider that the respective polarities that organize and give a touch of 'science' to the narrative spectacle — those between black and white, tropics and Europe, Brazilian and Portuguese — are just as clearly disregarded and overthrown by the unfolding of the plot [which expresses the rhythm of the accumulation of capital in a peripheral country]" (37).

At first glance, this discrepancy might only be considered a defect of composition. "Discredited by the plot, the novel's naturalist and nationalist perspectives would seem to parade about as mere empty chatter, which in part they are. But they could also be understood as *ideology*, in which case the contradictory composition acquires critical functionality and *mimetic value* in relation to Brazil" (38). Antonio Candido therefore does not take literature, history, and literary theory as absolutes, but rather in their effective development. If at a moment prior to 1964 he described from the outside a formative process with a beginning, middle and end, in the period that followed, and by the suggestion of history itself, he went on to describe its underside — a fact that distinguishes it a great deal within the tradition of the "formation" genre. Incidentally, I believe that, together with Adorno's work, "De cortiço a cortiço" ["From Slum to Slum"] (much more complex than "Dialética da malandragem") inspired all of Roberto's books between 1973 and now. I believe this can be seen fully in *Seqüências brasileiras*; not only

in its consideration of the meaning of our formative process but also in the style of analysis, which first seeks to identify the authors' intentions so as to later follow their actual execution within the works, an execution that might bring about unexpected revelations, behind the backs of the authors.

If progressivisms within the sphere of conduct and in the national sphere were hollowed out by the course of history, the level of complexity rises when Roberto seeks to analyze the inadequacies of the Left itself, or of the class points of view that would, according to their own lights, bring about the turn toward an egalitarian society without classes, without State, and without national borders.¹¹ Apart from the practical level, the critical deficit is also an aesthetic question, above all when one discusses an artist who, more than subscribing to the theses of the Left, tried to respond with an art appropriate to them. Bertolt Brecht organized his work so as to overcome the formal impasses of bourgeois drama, opening up the theater to new possibilities of figuration which would take the century's burning questions — its crises, classes, and wars — into account. Thus, just as Marx had sought to denaturalize the laws of political economy, Brecht intended to challenge the theater that staged "human nature" as an immutable thing, using the estrangement effect as a weapon with which to de-automatize social behaviors, opening up a space for a future transformation.

However, Roberto notes that Brecht's precepts had suffered objections soon after being born, since the whole of the conservative social order, which it explicitly resisted, had already toppled to the ground in World War One. "The following years witnessed other equally 'unnatural,' and novel, cataclysms that exacerbated the shakeup. The list is well known: the Russian Revolution, hyperinflation, the crisis of 1929, unemployment, and the rise of Nazism" (116-117).¹² Passing through all of this, Brechtian theater is consecrated throughout the world after the author's death in 1956. Roberto witnessed its acclimation to the stages of São Paulo, where it was initially a somewhat uncomfortable part of the cultural updating undertaken by good professional companies. Next, national-developmentalism would facilitate a more creative appropriation of Brecht that was extremely revelatory, since it was actually undergirded by a socio-cultural formation quite different from the framework of European classes — a disjunction which brought about artistic results that were less incisive than their model, though advanced for Brazilian stages. After the coup of 1964, "the aesthetic-political turn to the people was reduced to the condition of a glorious and interrupted experiment, which would continue to feed the imagination of many, while at the same time, on another plane, it was transformed into successful material for the cultural market" (124).¹³

Throughout the world, in spite of the Chinese and Cuban revolutions, the course of history froze the possibility of overcoming of capitalism, a possibility on which Brecht's art had wagered. Capitalism, in a partnership with science, gave an unprecedented leap and got the best of the socialist world, increasingly dispensing with the direct exploitation of labor. "The questioning of capital now no longer seems to be the business of the workers, but rather of its own contradictions, which evolved unchecked by a worthy opponent. The innovative impulse — blindly enough, and following the rhythms of a technology expo, in which denaturalization acquires a somewhat excessive quality, like that of a natural catastrophe — resides with money" (129). As if this were not enough, many of Brecht's methods are used widely today by advertising and by the media, making their innocent use impossible.

Yet the essay does not only follow the disconcerting high and low points of the Brechtian attitude throughout the century. Following Adorno, and without forgetting earlier objections, Roberto moves beyond them and prefers to bet on a formal analysis of the plays, whose truth "would not lie in the lessons passed on, in the theorems concerning class conflict, but rather in the objective dynamic of the whole, in which they and the didactic attitude itself would be a part of what is interpreted, and not the last instance" (133). Note here that, apart from the Adornian inspiration, Roberto's analysis of *Saint Joan of the Stockyards* is stylistically very similar to Antonio Candido's analysis of *O cortiço*. The Brecht that emerges from it, precisely from his masterfully satirical use of the best German lyric poetry, does not cease to be complex, to pose enigmas and to make one think, despite the passage of time.

Within the field of social theory, *Seqüências brasileiras* demonstrates that Marxism suffered damage but did not die. Several months before the coup that would mark the end of the Soviet Union, a debate at Cebrap [The Brazilian Center for Analysis and Planning] brought together various intellectuals in order to discuss the fate of socialism.¹⁴ Roberto had then pointed out that for the last twenty years the objections to capitalism, however well-founded they might have been, had become figures of fun, since the limitations of the socialist world were worse. However, he noted that in the "quasi-absence of socialism, with capitalism occupying the entire field, I think that the tendency to analyze societies separately — this capitalist society worked out, that one did not — will find itself in trouble. This tendency might dissolve, in favor of a once again global explanatory project. Not that it will be the same as classical analyses, but there will be reasons for seeing capital once more as a global form, as the global nexus of the contemporary world, of which societies that have gone horribly wrong are just as

much a part as those that have succeeded. We will go back to a totalizing vision of this process, which, as far as I can tell, is a more real way of confronting the present."

During the same period a book published in Germany, *The Collapse of Modernization*,¹⁵ took up Marx once again (including the inspiration of his writing style), the Frankfurt School's pessimism, and globalizing analysis, all in line with a project that Roberto had been putting into practice on the periphery since 1970. Without having known each other's work, but allied via materialism, Robert Kurz and Roberto Schwarz have each contributed to the necessarily global critical constellation that capitalism requires. A comparison of their work would require its own study. Yet it is interesting to note that their fidelity to the most critical tradition of Marx's legacy gives them both the power to look at the experiences and alienations of the capitalist center and its periphery, as well as those of the socialist bloc, in a disabused and realistic manner. Although many people have turned up their noses at Kurz's book, today's world — including Brazil — has in many ways confirmed its diagnosis.

In Roberto's impressive array of observations, the stress falls on the hollowing out of the critical mood in practically every ambit, on a growing scale of complexity, a hollowing out whose counterpart would be the mobilization promoted/granted by conservatism. The contemporary world resounds in this book.

As with the great modern writers, Roberto's essayistic performance is anchored in and reveals an underlying broad historical movement. Whoever follows the changes in style between his first book and the most recent will certainly notice the considerable difference. A pedestrian explanation would mention the force of age, the mature man of letters succeeding the brilliant youth. Another possible explanation would say that Roberto's prose was becoming more like that of the master Antonio Candido, even though the prose of the latter, clear and light like some mineral waters, has a touch of orality that is not found in that of the former, which is more taut. In each case, however, the clarity and simplicity achieved, acquiring new attributes by the light of the present, are not merely matters of style. They seem to confront with maximum lucidity the enormous range of obstacles and alienations that the peripheral situation imposes on the intellectual of the Left.

In *A sereia e o desconfiado* [*The Siren and the Suspicious Person*], from 1965, the busy, nervous prose echoes the stridency typical of those years, in addition to the combative tone of the best texts of the Left. In these extraordinary analyses, which set out to demonstrate rationally the importance of art

as knowledge — a field which the Left could not consider its strong suit — the strictly literary dimension of the prose is foregrounded. The backlash of 1968 and the subsequent hollowing out changed everything (making Roberto more Adornian and less Lukácsian), requiring reflection, and seem to have schooled Roberto in another style of writing, different in tone and syntax. Equally applicable here is what Roberto himself wrote regarding Helena Morley's prose, which "brings together attributes that in our time have become incompatible: clear, without being arid; full of resonances, but foreign to diffuse or inaccurate connotations; pretty, without breaking contact with practical reality; further, refusing to gild the lily or poeticize the poem, so as to recall João Cabral's famous dictum: poeticizing and emphatic by the back door."¹⁶ In short, a prose that invites the most sober evaluation possible of the subsequent disillusionments and impasses, and of present barbarism, systematically practicing the requisite "open distance"¹⁷ in the lack of a material support for an historical turn that might have surpassed capitalism. In truth, Roberto's prose changed by historical necessity and, if I am not mistaken, it responds to the hollowing out it analyzes.

As if that were not enough, everything said above comes together in the sharp and concise analyses of two Brazilian novels that demonstrate predicament of our fin de siècle. The more than experienced critic casts light on *Estorvo* [Turbulence] (1991), by Chico Buarque, and *Cidade de Deus* [City of God] (1997), by Paulo Lins.

In these novels, each with its own dose of nightmare, we see or catch a glimpse of contemporary Brazil naked and raw: its ruling class, savage and always unpunished, drug trafficking taking hold of the favelas in a whirlwind of violence, the secular frustrations that seem to have no solution in sight, all under the sign of the media throwing confetti at the disaster. A historical periodization is presupposed in the characters' circular and blind trajectory, that of the cycle of promises of our failed developmentalism. "Thus, after the period in which ignorant poverty would be educated by the elite, and after another period in which the defects of the rich would be cured by the purity of the people, we arrive now at a quagmire from which no one wants to escape and in which everyone gets on badly" (180).

If Chico Buarque's book, which seems to describe the aleatory wanderings of a veteran of 1968 (with no place in today's Brazil), is literarily more "polished" than Paulo Lins' book *Cidade de Deus*, the latter is original in conception and point of view. Its point of departure being a university-based research project on "Crime and Criminality in Rio de Janeiro," the book avoids current fashions and brings to fiction "original artistic energies, which do not fit within the accepted notion of creative imagination that the majority

of our writers cultivate" (168). Hence its peculiar tone, which clashes a great deal with our criteria of what might be considered "well-made prose." Some pages read like a naturalist survey — some others scientific report — yet others pun like gangsterized concrete poetry — all in a tremendously agile prose. "With its burden of degraded and alienated modernity, the mixture is very thick and makes up a real part, as everyone knows, of the universe of its victims, who despite neglect have long lived within a territory worked, not to say improved, by progress" (169).¹⁸

The discursive material without a last word makes one think of the intimacy shared by the points of view in *O cortiço* (whose analysis by Candido is here taken up again and updated by Roberto), and attempts to predict new relations presently in progress, forcibly waiting for us in the near future. "Thus, the worker, the rogue, the fugitive "wild beast," the wealthy drug user, cool kids, and the police are not defined forever, each on his or her own; they are elements, partly old, of a structure in formation, to be investigated and deciphered" (169).

The action of both *Estorvo* and *Cidade de Deus* take place in Rio de Janeiro. Perhaps not coincidentally, since the significance of this city lives on (how and why?) for the imaginary of a democratic Brazil. Far from a São Paulo that has always flaunted its monstrous economic importance, or from Brasília, an island of politics in the open country of an economically and culturally peripheral Central Plateau. In relative contrast to these two emphatic figures of our failed modernization, São Sebastião do Rio de Janeiro was, from 1763 to 1960, the seat of the Viceroy, the capital of the Brazilian Empire and then of the Republic — and for this reason the center of Brazilian economic, political and, with its cafes and taverns, cultural life. In it, Brazil was thought of as Brazil. Perfect for postcards, the city set in an amazing landscape has always been praised by travelers, by traditionalist and modernist poets alike, by popular music, and by Brazilians from every province who have chosen to live in it. But in Machado de Assis's time Rio also harbored the largest urban concentration of slaves since the end of the Roman Empire. Today its predicaments, violence and poverty are endemic. Last stop, Rio: the best portrait of the Brazil that could have been and never was.

Notes

¹ Roberto Schwarz, “Culture and Politics in Brazil, 1964-1969,” *Misplaced Ideas: Essays on Brazilian Culture*, ed. and trans. John Gledson (London: Verso, 1992) 136.

² Paulo E. Arantes, *Sentimento da dialética na experiência intelectual brasileira* (São Paulo: Paz e Terra, 1992) 89. Although the diagnosis was correct, Robert was mistaken regarding the conclusions to be made from it (as he himself admitted soon thereafter), foreseeing a revolutionary outcome for the impasses at that time.

³ In *Seqüências brasileiras* the analysis of Machado de Assis’s oeuvre are taken up explicitly again in “A contribuição de John Gledson,” “A nota específica,” “*Um mestre na periferia do capitalismo* (entrevista)” and “Conversa sobre Duas Meninas.”

⁴ The essay “Orelha para Francisco Alvim” has been translated as “In the Land of *Elefante*” by John Gledson for *New Left Review* 22 (July-August 2003) 93-118.

⁵ We can sense something of this in the beautiful invocation “Pensando em Cacaso” [“Thinking about Cacaso”]. Should the firepower of modern art and its derivatives also be included in this hollowing out? The question can be found in the challenge extended to Otília Arantes (204). [Cacaso is the nom de plume of Brazilian poet Antônio Carlos de Brito. — Trans.]

⁶ Of or related to the University of São Paulo. [Trans.]

⁷ The Jesuit priest José de Anchieta is considered one of the founders of Brazilian national literature and is thought to have converted more than a million Indians in the region of present-day São Paulo. Getúlio (Dorneles) Vargas, president of Brazil from 1930-1945 and 1951-1954, laid the foundations for modern, industrial Brazil. [Trans.]

⁸ Cardoso was, until elected president of Brazil in 1994 (serving from 1995-2002), best known for his pathbreaking work on dependency theory in political economy, particularly *Dependencia y desarrollo en América Latina* (1971, with Enzo Faletto; *Dependency and Development in Latin America* [Berkeley: U of California P, 1979]). During his presidency he was referred to in the press as FHC. [Trans.]

⁹ “Providências de um crítico literário na periferia do capitalismo,” *Dentro do texto, dentro da vida* [“A Literary Critic’s Providence on the Periphery of Capitalism,” *Inside the Text, Inside Life*], ed. Maria Ângel D’Incao (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1992). Later published in Otília Arantes and Paulo Arantes, *Sentido da formação* [The Meaning of Formation] (São Paulo: Paz e Terra, 1997).

¹⁰ “National Adequation and Critical Originality” has appeared in English translation in a special issue of *Cultural Critique*: see Roberto Schwarz, trans. R. Kelly Washborne and Neil Larsen, “National Adequation and Critical Originality,” *Cultural Critique* 49 (Autumn 2001). We have tended to use Washborne and Larsen’s translation of this chapter where Ohata cites the original. [Trans.]

¹¹ As regards political radicalism in Brazil, see “Nunca fomos tão engajados” [“We Have Never Been So Committed”] 172-77.

¹² The essay referred to here appears in the present issue of *Mediations*: “The Relevance of Brecht: High Points and Low” *Mediations* 23.1, 27-61.

¹³ This period is also analyzed in “Pelo prisma do teatro” [“Through the Prism of Theater”], a commentary on *A hora do teatro épico no Brasil* [Epic Theater’s Moment in Brazil], by Iná Carmargo Costa.

¹⁴ See “Adeus ao socialismo” [“Farewell to Socialism”], *Novos estudos* 30 July (1991).

¹⁵ Robert Kurz, *Der Kollaps der Modernisierung: Vom Zusammenbruch des Kasernsozialismus zur Krise der Weltökonomie* (Frankfurt am Main: Eichborn Verlag, 1991). Selections translated from this work will appear in *Mediations* 25.1

¹⁶ “Outra Capitu,” *Duas meninas* [“Another Capitu,” *Two Girls*] (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1997) 132.

¹⁷ A good example can be found in the analysis of the episode describing the theft of eggs in *Minha vida de menina* [My Life as a Girl]; Schwarz, *Duas meninas* 117-121.

¹⁸ The essay “*City of God*” was translated by John Gledson for *New Left Review* 12 (November-December 2001) 102-112.

Brazilian Civilization's Missing Link

Milton Ohata

Translated by Nicholas Brown and Emilio Sauri

O trato dos viventes: Formação do Brasil no Atlântico Sul [Mortal Traffic: The Formation of Brazil in the South Atlantic], by Luiz Felipe de Alencastro. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2000, 526 pp., R\$62.50, ISBN 85359000X. An English translation is being prepared by the University of Texas Press.

Brazil is always ignorant of Brazil, but from time to time we are introduced to ourselves thanks to books that go directly from the press to the classics shelf. In this rare lineage, the last comprehensive interpretation of our history was Fernando Novais's *Portugal e Brasil na crise do antigo sistema colonial [Portugal and Brazil in the Crisis of the Old Colonial System]*, 1777-1808, published just over twenty years ago (which in turn builds on Caio Prado, Jr.'s analyses in *Formação do Brasil contemporâneo*): modern colonization, of which Brazil is a product, has a specific significance: it is a means of leveraging primitive accumulation for capitalism. *O trato dos viventes* continues Novais's work while modifying it at the same time. In each, the uncommon vision characteristic of great works was nurtured by many years of reflection and research. The starting point, however, is relatively simple, and yet full of consequences: in the history of Portuguese America, the whole is not the sum of its parts. That is, it is not enough to gather together the histories of the various colonial territories — a fact which also applies, incidentally, to national history. Thus, local history is interpreted in light of *real connections*, in reciprocal determination, with the history of capitalism — which is not, as a majority of studies in the field conceive it, merely an external frame. This assemblage formed a transcontinental, structured

system, characterized by accumulation carried out as quickly and profitably as possible on behalf of the metropolis. Slave trafficking was indispensable to it since, besides being a lucrative branch of colonial commerce (and therefore a source of revenue), it guaranteed the labor required for the production or extraction of export commodities. On the social plane, it is the slave trade that explains slavery, and not the reverse. With regard to this point Alencastro's work shows — with stunning erudition — the full import of a bilateral flow of native commodities, illnesses, words, combat techniques, and eating habits between Brazil and Angola, the principal African slave port. It periodizes, multiplies and gives body to the theories articulated by Master Novais.

This is the purpose of the opening chapter, in which the author, seeking to cover the entire map of the Portuguese Empire, demonstrates that *the significance of colonization was undergirded by different colonial apprenticeships*. The history the book narrates takes place in the discord between this significance and these various apprenticeships, since the colonial system was not born all at once. Rubbing up against widely varying realities on three continents, Lusitanian interests sniff out, find strange, take advantage of, or lose commercial opportunities in the race for capitalist expansion. Thus, “possessing or controlling natives did not assure the transformation of their extorted labor into commodities annexed to metropolitan flows, nor did it guarantee the emergence of tributary economies overseas. A second set of circumstances arises, now on the political plane. Even if the eventual economic surplus gathered from the conquests was captured by Iberian networks, mercantile expansion did not necessarily lead to the reinforcement of monarchical power. ...Thus overseas control does not always lead to colonial exploitation, just as it does not immediately bring about the colonists' and merchants' obedience to the metropolis” (12).

Such a dynamic emerged within a very precise historical context, indelibly marked by the decline of the Iberian monarchies and by the ascendancy of the other European powers, especially by the ascendancy of the first of the modern economies, that of the Low Countries (which did not correspond entirely to the political territory of the present-day Netherlands). The complicating factor was the so-called Iberian Union between Spain and Portugal, which beginning in 1581 made the Lusitanian possessions one of the key pieces in world geopolitics. The economic rise of the Netherlands occurred in the course of a long process of political independence in relation to Madrid. Throughout all of the 17th century, Iberian trading posts and colonies were threatened or seized by the Dutch. Lacking the forces to resist such a large wave, Portugal gradually lost its commercial space in Asia. It is in the ebb tide of the Eastern Empire that the Lusitanian foreign posts and colonies of

the Atlantic came to gain importance. The preservation of the small European kingdom would then depend on the economic space constituted by a zone of slave reproduction, in Africa, and a zone of slave production, in Brazil. Joining them was the slave trade, in which the Portuguese had come to accumulate an experience that predated the discovery of America and that, over time, will consist of more than trade alone. “Carrying out the reproduction of colonial production, the slave trade is introduced as a leveraging instrument for the Western Empire. Little by little this activity transcends the economic frame to join the metropolitan political arsenal. ...The exercise of imperial power in the Atlantic — as well as the exchanges between the Kingdom and the colonies — becomes coextensive with the reach of the slave trade” (28).

In this sense, the cohesive force of the trade would have greater weight than the “colonial pact” itself, since the flow of sugar production depended on maritime trade, which was also the source of indispensable labor. I think with regard to this point the author owes us a more thorough analysis of the connection between the purchasing of sugar and the slave trade.¹ For seveneenth-century Rio de Janeiro, Charles Boxer and Vivaldo Coaracy had already pointed out such a relationship, established long ago by the oligarchy of Correia de Sá. Alencastro seems to generalize this fact, extending it to the rest of the areas of sugar production. In any case, the reasoning is fundamental for the book, since “in allowing for the colonization of the colonists, that is, their entanglement in metropolitan meshes, the dynamic of the slave trade modifies the colonial system in a contradictory way. Since the seventeenth century, the interests of Luso-Brazilians, or, better said, *Brasillicos* — according to the noun that began to be used during the period to characterize the settlers of Portuguese America — are condensed in slaveholding areas of South America and in African trade ports. In counterpoint to the direct exchange between the colonies and the metropolis, bilateral flows directly link Brazil to Western Africa” (28).

A second fact, also stemming from the Iberian Union, also favors the advent of the system that constitutes the book's subject. It has to do with the activity of Portuguese or Luso-Brasilic merchants in the commercial flows of the silver mines in Potosí (today La Plata, in Bolivia). The most important region of the New World at the time, its centripetal force was so great that it attracted merchants from Spanish possessions in the Philippines, on the other side of the Pacific. Cornered in the Eastern Empire, Portuguese capital is gradually displaced to the Atlantic economy, also directing the slave trade toward Spanish America. For years, the supply contracts for the Spanish colonies were bid out to Portuguese bankers and merchants. On the other side, and under the blind eye of local authorities, Buenos Aires became the

subsidiary port of Potosí, receiving on the sly a growing number of African slaves until 1623, the year in which slave smuggling is banned (the trick had consisted in nullifying the declaration to sell the slaves in Brazil, thus paying lower taxes). The pivot of that trade was in Rio de Janeiro — we shall see that this fact is far from anecdotal — and one of the few vestiges of its significance was engraved on the beach that in our century was and is the marketing image of Rio throughout the world. Near Posto Seis, where the Fort is today, a small church housed an image of the Virgin with Amerindian features, sent from Potosí: Our Lady of Copacabana. In Quechua, the name means “illuminated place”; the church survived until 1918, when it was demolished.

Between the two great combined movements that delimit the periodization of the book — the ebb of Asian commerce and the consequent ascendancy of Atlantic commerce — an activity begins structure itself on a grand scale, an activity to which the Portuguese had been dedicating themselves since the 15th century in their first forays through Africa, and which will go on to become an unavoidable necessity of the overseas economy. The process is described in Chapter 2. The slave trade, that is, has to make its way into the far from contemptible roster of exports from native societies; it is only with the beginning of the 18th century that it will constitute the main slice of the African economy. It never hurts to recall that the trade in captives was a reality already well established in some regions. Nevertheless, when the flow towards the Americas grows, interior routes are altered, modifying and invigorating local economies. Despite various obstacles at the level of epidemiology, geography, etc., Lusitanian slaving activity descends the Western coast, in competition with slavers from other European nations, past Cape Verde, past São Tomé, in a crescendo that finds its most favorable conditions in Luanda, Angola, a port where slaves captured inland will converge. At the same time, the dynamic proper to this kind of trade causes new social categories to appear within the African societies that practice it. In this way, for example, “whites and mulattos called *lançados* or *tangomaus* cross the rivers of Upper Guinea bartering native and foreign goods. Adventurers, disgraced men, or deported *cristãos-novos*,¹ the *lançados* — skirting the metropolitan monopoly — cause the European impact to reverberate beyond the seashores. Dressing as natives, carving out the marks of local societies on their faces, the *lançados* were the first Portuguese — the first Europeans — to adapt themselves to the tropics” (48).

The fast rhythms of business gave rise to new creatures within the folds of the old African societies, but its greatest feat, the creation of a completely original society in America, was powerfully nurtured by the slow and recurrent tempo of nature. The Lusitanian slave ports were situated in

latitudes that circumscribe a system of maritime currents favorable for the other side of the Atlantic, nearly without risk for the navigation of the time. A disciple of Fernand Braudel and of Frédéric Mauro, thoughtful practitioners of the best geographic materialism, Alencastro christens these winds “slave winds.” In fact, unconnected to the Brazil-Portugal route’s calendar (clockwise), the Angola-Brazil itinerary possessed its own navigational calendar. Moving counterclockwise, “the impetus of the circular movements of winds and currents comes from a gigantic pulley of high pressures, a hidden gear of the history of the South Atlantic — the anticyclone of the Tropic of Capricorn — fixed in the ocean between 15° and 20° south latitude” (63). In this sense, in the 17th century the ocean does not separate continents, as a territorial conception of colonial history assumes, but, on the contrary, brings them together.

With its long experience on the African coast and the generous impetus of maritime geography, Portugal became the European nation most caught up in the slave trade, and Lisbon “The Slave Capital of the West” (Chapter 3). During the Iberian Union, Portuguese capital was recycled from Asian commerce to the Atlantic and bought, among other things, all the *asientos*² auctioned off by Madrid, taking advantage of the limits that characterized Hispano-American commerce, which needed African captives but did not have enough flexibility to meet demand. The revenues resulting from the trade contribute to a strengthening of Lisbon’s control over its African possessions, in a certain way restraining disorganized pillaging and disciplining commercial activity. On the other hand, these same revenues catalyzed scattered interests in search of good profits. “Bringing together family consortiums and businesses from the Madrilénian court all the way to the ports of the overseas periphery, such cosmopolitan networks derive from the segmented form assumed by the crystallization of merchant capitalism on the Iberian Peninsula. From then on, from generation to generation, making use of matrimonies, wills, and partnerships, major figures of Iberian finance and politics become involved in the Angolan slave trade, rendering transparent the globalizing dimension of the slave business during the period of the *asientos*” (83). The restoration of Portugal’s sovereignty in 1640 finds the slave machine, incubated during the preceding period, ready to converge on Brazil. In regard to this point we can see one of the many new insights produced by Alencastro’s original vision. Shackled to a strictly territorial conception of our history and accustomed to considering the Dutch occupation of Pernambuco as the most important fact to result from the Iberian Union, we can only be surprised by the fact that “paradoxically, the transformation of the Philippine period [i.e. the period of the Iberian Union under Philip I, II, and III, 1580-1640. Trans.] that will have the greatest

impact on Portuguese America occurs outside of the American territory, on the other side of the ocean, in the Angolan appendix to the Brazilian economy” (80).

In the shadow of big business and court politics, the exchanges between Brazil and Angola gained density within the ambit of the slave trade. From America, manioc, maize, shells, dry and salt fish, *cachaça*, earthenware, tobacco, horses and quince jam found a demand in Africa; from Africa came, among other products, the banana and a vocabulary that we innocently use today but that is in no way innocent. In the bilateral network, these were nevertheless *ancillary* commodities, because “the exchange of slaves links together the availability of a series of other African products. Even with camel transport in the Sahel, canoes in the fluvial networks of Upper Guinea and inland from the Bight of Benin, and barges on the Angolan rivers, the captive presented himself as a commodity capable of carrying other commodities. ...The activity of the Angolan rural markets (the Kimbundu word *kitanda* provides Brazil with its word for any and every small business) was intense. Consignments of ivory, beeswax (valued highly for candle production), skins, musk, copper, gold, gum arabic, palm oil, etc. flowed into ports of trade, rounding out the profits obtained in the transportation of slaves” (114).

The consolidating character of the slave-commodity in Africa gave the slave trade an extraordinary push towards the economy of the Americas, since it implied an advantage over the capture of Amerindians — an advantage analyzed in Chapter 4. On one hand, a socio-cultural organization “contrary to the wide-spread exchange of slaves,” the absence of a regular trade of captives throughout the interior, susceptibility (that in part no longer existed in Africa) to the microbial and viral shock brought about by contact with the colonizers, and the geographic dispersal of tribes were all factors that acted together so as to weaken the historical possibilities of the Amerindian slave trade. Nevertheless, even here the logic of the slave traders was decisive. “Excluded from the Atlantic commerce in tropical goods, which was controlled by merchants connected to metropolitan concerns, traffickers of Indians could not export the products from the plantations which — in the absence of monetary circulation — would serve as payment for native slaves by the plantation owners. They would, therefore, have to turn to the businessmen of the maritime marketplace in order to handle their exports. The latter now presented themselves, equally, as sellers of slaves — African slaves” (126). It is not a question, however, of opposing two business models, but instead of placing them in reciprocal interaction within the structures of the old colonial system. (This relationship had previously been pointed out by Afonso Taunay and Fernando Novais). The capture of

Amerindians was possible but in the end incompatible with the orientation of colonization, so that it only develops at the point at which the African slave trade stagnates, during the wartime situation that marks the history of the Atlantic during the first half of the 17th century. Another comparative disadvantage was of more interest within the sphere of production: the de-socialization that transformed people into slaves was not the same in each of the models, with a clear advantage for that of African slave traders. “Black slaves escaping and recaptured, already familiarized [like Indians] with the American tropics, dropped in value on the domestic market, because they became considered instigators of rebellions and *quilombos*.³ In judicial sales, the law incorporated, for reasons of public safety, the observance of the standards of de-socialization. Black ‘sons of the bush’ — born free — over twelve years old, living in Palmares⁴ and captured by Domingos Jorge Velho’s band, could no longer be sold in the territories where they had roots. They had to be shipped to Rio de Janeiro and Buenos Aires” (146). Along these same lines, see the remarkable analysis of the legend of the speechless monkeys, illustrating the trauma of the process of de-socialization (151-152).

Another obstacle to the enslavement of Amerindians resulted from the evangelizing dimension of the colonial undertaking, in which the priests of the Companhia de Jesus [i.e. Jesuits. Trans.] had played a significant role, which is the object of analysis in Chapter 5. To a degree initially as large as that of capitalist expansion, Jesuit preaching suffers, and badly, in the East. In the Atlantic, it will have to come to terms with the logic of the slave trade. Without forgetting the strictly doctrinal aspects of Catholicism, Alencastro lays bare its contortions and, in the end, its compatibility with the interests of slave traders — even in questions of material survival (the Jesuit plantations, generally the largest in the colony, possessed many slaves). “Without rhetoric, with neither renowned *autos-da-fé* nor esteemed professors, crucial problems concerning the orientation of colonization were solved by the clergy overseas in the valley of the shadow of death. As in the Indian and Pacific Oceans, the priests zigzag across the seas of the Atlantic. After going into a skid in the Congo, they descend hesitantly in Angola and, finally, mount an impetuous attack on Brazil” (157). This movement as a whole, “evangelization in a single colony,” presupposed: a) the doctrinal justification of slave trafficking (in which stands out the figure of Father Baltazar Barreira, who dies in Cape Verde in 1612 after fifty years of service and who, in spite of being known as “Old Saint,” never entered the hagiography of the Companhia de Jesus) and b) the priority given to the catechesis of Amerindians, founding a pro-indigenous policy in Brazil, in conflict with the colonists from areas not supplied by slave trafficking. This policy demanded the relocation of Indians from the backlands onto settlements around colonial

centers, which then constituted a military barrier to escaping Africans. It is in this equation, sorted out by his predecessors, that the performance of the book's main character (along with Salvador Correia de Sá) takes shape and gains meaning. Born in Lisbon and raised in Bahia, citizen of the world and "possessor of the greatest strategic intelligence in the Portuguese Empire," Father Antônio Vieira also glosses in his sermons the drama of the missionaries: to justify the enslavement of Africans in order to save them from paganism. In the analysis of *sermão XIV do Rosário* [Sermon of the Rosary XIV], preached in 1633 to Blacks in a chapel on a Bahian sugar plantation ("Oh if Black people taken from the dense woods of their Ethiopia, and sent to Brazil, had known how much they owed to God and to His most sainted Mother for this which can seem like exile, captivity, and misfortune, but is rather nothing but a miracle, and a great miracle?"), Alencastro concludes, against the grain of Vieira scholarship, that there is no contradiction but rather a complementarity between the defense of the slave trade and the master's obligation to treat the slave humanely.

From the first chapter to the fifth, the exposition synchronically describes the organization of a system endowed with its own logic and therefore with its own demands. From Chapter 6 we pass on to the second half of the book, marked by a diachronic exposition that privileges that analysis of historical events (*temps court*) which reveals the density of the structural plot (*longue durée*) described in detail in the first half. Between events and structures lies the rhythm, neither short nor long, of the troubled situation in the Atlantic, a peripheral extension of the Thirty Years War (1618-48) that was then devastating Europe. Alencastro studies the movement as a whole and the reciprocal mirroring of what until today has been studied piecemeal in regional histories: the Dutch occupation of the northeast, the cycle of Amerindian subjugation in São Paulo, and the assertion of slaving interests in Rio de Janeiro.

In the book's widest, aterritorial scope, the Dutch West India Company's occupation of Pernambuco gains a far more nuanced periodization, which "should include two more phases: at the beginning, the privateers' war in the Atlantic (1621-30), and, at the end, the Lusitanian and *Brasilico* counter-attack in Angola (1648-65). In between these phases, the battle for control of the Brazilian zones of slave production and of the African zones of slave reproduction reveals polarized objectives within the slave trade" (190). In fact, the logic of the slave trade already had enough force during this period to bring the Netherlands' modern colonial project into its orbit. The best example is the behavior of João Maurício de Nassau, governor of Dutch Brazil, who "takes possession of a Portuguese colonial base, whose method

of exploitation induces him to sweep away the 'useless scruples' of his countrymen and incorporate slavery into the economic calculus of the bourgeoisie in Amsterdam. In the social regression that the overseas periphery imposes on the metropolis of advanced capitalism, primitive accumulation carves out its niche" (212). From 1641 to 1648 Dutch troops occupy Luanda, the principal slave port, without which there would be no point in maintaining the Pernambucan enclave. We will see below that the success of the Pernambucan restoration (1645-54, a long war), in which the local contribution was decisive (as Evaldo Cabral de Mello demonstrated), also depended on a mobilization outside the boundaries of the territory: a contingent which left Rio de Janeiro in 1648 and, in a short battle, restored Luanda.

Alencastro also reassesses the history of São Paulo, located on the margins of the colonial system. The cycle of Amerindian subjugation, which gave the region its own political and economic status, is analyzed in light of Atlantic slave trafficking and is emphasized by contrast to Rio de Janeiro's interventions in the Atlantic. On this other side, the role of colonists from Rio in the recapture of Luanda, headed by the extraordinary figure Salvador Correia de Sá, will be crucial. Tied up in its border war against Spain, Lisbon has no resources available for the war overseas. Luanda will have to be restored by a taskforce from Rio. "A memorandum submitted to the Crown defines the purpose of the offensive: unlike the tactical battles carried out in Pernambuco, the African war had a strategic value — it was essential first to expel the Dutch from Luanda, in order to make them leave Brazil. Otherwise, the Netherlands would form an alliance with the Spanish in order to secure Angola. And Portugal would have no way of defending itself, neither in Africa, nor in Brazil" (226).

I think that Chapter 7, "Angola Brasília," is the most original and perhaps the highlight of the book. In it, we feel the force of the schema created by the author in the earlier chapters. There is nothing like it in Brazilian historiography. Straight away, the iron logic of the slave trade emerges in a revealing episode, in which "Diogo Gomes Carneiro is given the duty of writing a 'History of Brazil.' This 'History,' bringing together years of documentary research, was lost, leaving subsequent generations of historians bereft even today. But its only remaining reference gains meaning when Brazil's formation is studied within the frame of the South Atlantic. By royal order, the annual salary of 200,000 réis⁵ allocated to the chronicler for the execution of his task would be paid, in equal parts, by four municipal councils: those of Bahia, Recife, Rio de Janeiro and Luanda. The colony of Angola, incorporated into the fate of Brazil — that is, of slave Brazil, excluding the Indian-hunting municipal councils of São Paulo and Maranhão

— was required to help finance the writing of this lost ‘History of Brazil’” (248). How did *Brasilico* interests affirm themselves in Angola, to the point of establishing a bilateral trade that escaped the Portugal-Brazil axis? In a first moment, between 1590 and 1630, Brazilian manioc constituted an important factor for advancing on the African markets. “The high proportion of American consumables, and in particular of manioc, in slave rations cuts the price of transport between Brazil and African ports ... and facilitates the African’s adaptation to *Brasilico* slavery” (252). Manioc will go on to penetrate Africa and to constitute the food base of native societies. Another important product in the bilateral trade was the cowrie, used as currency in Africa.⁶ “Exported through Salvador or Rio de Janeiro, Bahian cowries left the country without being taxed — for this reason the quantities exported cannot be assessed — circumventing Portuguese metropolitan control” (252). More important than anything else, however, was Brazilian *cachaça*, the distillate that beat out competition from Portuguese wine and spirits. “In fact, the export of *cachaça* illustrates the manner in which South Atlantic inter-colonial trade begins to supersede — from the end of the 17th century on — the interests of metropolitan groups” (307).

During a century in which war and trade are almost indistinguishable, the definitive conquest of African markets also came about by means of the predatory action of governors, generally *Brasilicos*, appointed in Angola — beginning with Salvador Correia de Sá. Later will come João Fernandes Vieira and André Vidal de Negreiros, both champions in the fight against the Dutch. Two battles, at Ambuíla (1665) and at Pungo-Andongo (1671), were decisive in the Luso-Brasilic ascendancy in Angola. In each, the favorable outcome for the Luso-Brasilics was largely due to tactics, food, and armaments suitable for the tropics — in short, “for *Brasilico* warfare” (294), perfected during the struggle against the Dutch in the Northeast. The result was that “in Angola, Portugal occupied a wide territory supplied by a network of hinterland outposts for the purchasing and capture of slaves. The only European nation that undertakes direct, official operations for the hunting of slaves, Portugal — economically and militarily assisted by the Portuguese colony in the Americas — obtains in Central Africa its biggest African domain, its largest reserve of slaves, which it uses to develop its territories on the other side of the Atlantic. The steady destruction of Angola presents itself as the counterpart of the continual construction of Brazil” (325).

“Brazilian Singularity,” the book’s closing chapter, sketches out a broad panorama of the period that follows the war configuration. The normalization of commercial flows creates Brazil as it will function until the end of the old colonial system, with all of the elements in place. The coupling of the slave

trade with the Brazilian economy seals the fate of Amerindian subjugation. Indigenous populations become “a mere obstacle to the expansion of the agro-pastoral frontier; the road to their extermination had been opened up” (337). Such is the meaning of the so-called “War of the Barbarians” (1651-1704). The process opens the way for cattle farming and the repopulation of Portuguese America. “While extending the colonial territory, ranching brings about the profoundest changes in Luso-Brasilic society. Meat production in the back country swells the supply of food on coastal sugar plantations, facilitating the concentration of slave labor in export agriculture” (341).

As the Indians were being exterminated, the anti-quilombo doctrine was being formulated. Inured to Brazilian realities, unlike voices that preached tolerance regarding Palmares, “it is Antônio Vieira who, once again, states the implacable law of Brazilian slavery. No forgiveness, no amnesty should be accorded to the denizens of Palmares. Otherwise, from the top to the bottom of colonial society, in every city, every town, every place, every plantation, other such *quilombos* would proliferate. If Palmares continued to exist Brazil would be done for.” (344). Escaped slaves begin to be penalized legally. The consequences will be decisive for the forced cohesion of colonial society, especially in regard to free Blacks. “For such persons, such families, the best guarantee of the preservation of freedom consisted in accepting it as a relative freedom, loaning services to the planter that recognized and guaranteed his status as non-slave. Brought together by voluntary subjugation, the closeness of free Blacks to Brazilian patriarchal society favors biological interbreeding; that is, miscegenation between the two groups” (345-46). At one stroke, two Brazilian phenomena are invented: both the mulatto, whose possibility of ascending colonial society functioned as a safety valve, and the practice of personal dependency (which later, in Roberto Schwarz’s words, becomes “our quasi-universal mediation”).

The discovery of gold in Minas Gerais at the end of the 17th century transforms the colony from head to tail, drawing together the relatively isolated regions via the economy. “But the emergence of the domestic market hides its Angolan supplement and, to a certain extent, the bilateral relations that link Bahia to West Africa. The splendor of eighteenth-century gold hides the colors of the 17th century and blurs the contours of the 19th. In fact, Independence once again brings evidence of slave trafficking and of the deterritorialization of the slave labor market. ...The continuity of colonial history does not coincide with the continuity of colonial territory. The intermittent transparency of a colonial matrix that is distinct from Brazilian national unity inverts the chronology and suggests an alternate historical sequence: the 19th century is closer to the 17th century than to the 18th” (354).

Establishing filiations is not enough to explain the force of a work. Nonetheless, a book such as this presupposes intellectual accumulation on a large scale, sifted through the schemata that lie at the heart of Luiz Felipe's formation. In 1966, he was driven into exile. It was in France that he steeped himself in the style of this century's best school of historiography, Annales. A student of Georges Duby in Aix-en-Provence, and later guided by Frédéric Mauro, Felipe made his choices under the long shadow of Fernand Braudel. Also decisive was his intimacy with Brazilian exiles in Paris, especially the daily lunches with Roberto Schwarz, his reading companion at the National Library.

From Braudel we turn to his students, disciples scattered throughout the world, whose works had left their mark on Felipe: to Mauro, author of the best set of studies on the seventeenth-century Luso-Brazilian Atlantic economy; to Alice Canabrava, author of the first Braudelian book written in Brazil, *O comércio português no rio da Prata [Portuguese Trade on the River Plate]*, (1580-1640); to Vitorino Magalhães Godinho and his monumental work; as well as to Pierre Verger, who in 1968 published in French his dissertation on the slave trade between Bahia and Africa. This book, *Fluxo e refluxo [Trade Relations between the Bight of Benin and Bahia from the 17th to 19th Century]*, is the nearest relation to Luiz Felipe's, since it demonstrated for the first time that the Brazilian slave trade was characterized by bipolarity and dominated by the unswerving politics of the Brazilian colony. These four works combine the characteristic elements of the second phase of Annales: the expansive and incorporative force of commercial capitalism, different levels of temporality each with its own rhythms, the considerable importance of positive and negative geographic constraints, all within an aterritorial economic space.

I think that the criticisms that a Marxist might suggest to a Braudelian might also be made of Luiz Felipe's book. Without forgetting the many points of contact, Marxism would demand of Braudelian schemas *more mediations between the different levels of historical temporality*, which often are merely arranged in overlapping layers lacking contact with each other.² (In 1951, shortly after the publication of *La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II*, a then-young American historian, Bernard Bailyn, noted this problem).⁷ Something like this, for example, occurs with the *colonial pact*, nonexistent in the book; or with the importance of direct taxation of the slave trade *on behalf of the Crown*, which would deserve its own chapter. In each case, mediations proper, which render the colony a colony, are rubbed out by an account that only privileges the "autonomy" of bilateral trade, and of the *Brasilico* colony. With this choice, Luiz Felipe responds to many questions except one (perhaps the crux of the

problem): being "autonomous" in that which was indispensable to it, why did the Colony remain connected to the metropolis for such a long time? In my opinion, it is the notion of colonial pact that helps one to understand the objective limits of the trajectories of Salvador de Sá, João Fernandes Vieira and André Vidal de Negreiros. In Salvador de Sá's case, his direct connection with Spanish interests in Prata and his excessive repression of the revolt of 1660 flow from his role as vassal of the Portuguese Crown, his notable roster of services rendered notwithstanding. The explanation of Salvador de Sá's metamorphosis from "colonial man" to "overseas man" (103), then, perhaps will not suffice.

O trato dos viventes is also an offshoot of the best Anglo historiography; indebted, above all, to the extraordinary work of Charles Boxer, the great English-language expert on the Portuguese Empire, especially his 1952 study on *Salvador de Sá and the Struggle for Brazil and Angola, 1602-1686*; and also to the vast bibliography on the slave trade (see the recent survey by Herbert Klein, *The Atlantic Slave Trade*), which in 1969 underwent an interpretive inversion, decisive for Felipe, thanks to Philip Curtin's *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census*. In line with these quantitative works on the slave trade, a glance through Brazilian historiography might lead us to Maurício Goulart's 1949 study, *Escravidão Africana no Brasil — das origens à extinção do tráfico [African Slavery in Brazil: From the Origins to the End of the Slave Trade]*, whose solitary trailblazing provides the measure of the influence exerted by a territorial conception of colonial history, to the exclusion of books with a more inclusive scope, such as Luiz Felipe's.

It is in this sense that *O trato dos viventes* — discerning in the past its own historiographic genealogy, as in the case of Antonio de Oliveira de Cadornega's *História geral das guerras angolanas [General History of the Angolan Wars]* (1680); unearthing extraordinary sets of documents, in particular the *Monumenta missionaria africana*, assembled for years by Father Antonio Brásio; and, finally, advancing a real airing out of musty regional histories — represents a gain for Brazilian social sciences as a whole. One need only see the new meaning that the book confers to heavyweights like Evaldo Cabral de Mello (in the discussion concerning the contingency of Luso-Brasilic victories in Pernambuco, or even concerning the second acts of the Luandan restorers' lives in Angola), Stuart Schwartz (in the clarification of the role of *cachaça* in setting the prices for Bahian slaves) and John Monteiro (in the historical delimitation of São Paulo's political and economic autonomism).

So much new observation collected in one book alone stems, clearly, from Luiz Felipe's original vision, and allows one to compare it not only to Caio

Prado Jr. and Fernando Novais but also to other authors that, particularly beginning in the 1930s, had made explanations of the nation, framed by colonial legacies, into a veritable genre. The author is preparing two more books that will continue *O trato dos viventes*, and therefore a full comparison will only be possible in a few years. Meanwhile, what we have in hand is substantial and allows a retrospective and critical look at the works through which we are accustomed to think Brazil. If I am not mistaken, these belong to an optimistic moment in Brazilian history, that of the developmentalist period, which was characterized by a broad social mobilization coming from below, and whose point of departure would be a socially integrated nation. This process was aborted in 1964. Today times have changed and the questions we ask of the past tend to be different. In the stark light of the slave trade, the sweet racial mixing that constitutes the very peculiar climate of Gilberto Freyre's *Casa-grande e senzala* [*The Masters and the Slaves*], changes meaning, and the resulting ideology of "Luso-Tropicalism" definitively situates itself in history, in Brazil, since in Africa it had no way of surviving. In his studies from the 1940s and 1950s (*Monções* [*Monsoons*], *Caminhos e fronteiras* [*Roads and Borders*] and, up to a certain point, *Visão do Paraíso* [*Vision of Paradise*]), heavily influenced by modernism, Sérgio Buarque de Holanda privileged the analysis of periods and situations in which the weak presence of the colonial apparatus gave the colonists considerable room to maneuver, shedding European traditions of little use in a new environment, and inventing social forms on the basis of their contact with the survival techniques of natives. Luiz Felipe's book demonstrates the other side of the process — amplifying the meaning given to it by Evaldo Cabral de Mello in *Olinda restaurada* [*Olinda Restored*] — since during this same period the inventive contact, properly American, between colonists and natives (the techniques of "*Brasílico* warfare") was used to successfully pillage the other side of the Atlantic, in Angola. One of the best moments in *Formação econômica do Brasil* [*The Economic Growth of Brazil*] is the analysis of regional integration through the mining economy in the 18th century. In Celso Furtado's classic, such integration prefigures a future domestic market which, once fully formed, would make Brazil master of its own destiny. Luiz Felipe notes that the gold century conceals the fundamental fact that allows one to understand the impasses of the 17th and 19th century, since the heart of the Brazilian economy was to be found outside of the country.

The differences I just ventured to point out are not comprehensive, since there always remains the commitment of the intellectual, engaged with the nation's development, who does not bet on barbarity. Luiz Felipe is no exception to the rule — or better, is only an exception by virtue of the

conclusions that might be drawn from his book. On the other hand, in his articles in the press, which together could provide a remarkable panorama of this Brazilian fin-de-siècle, another Luiz Felipe dominates, imbued with very French republican values, determined to give historical density to the process — today out in the open — of transforming our social majority into a political majority through the vote. Felipe's historiographic work seems to point in the opposite direction: since the 16th century the *Brasílico*, and later Brazilian, dominant class thoroughly committed itself to the slave trade. As a result, Brazil was the colony and later the nation that received the most slaves. We nearly entered the 20th century with slavery comprising a part of our day-to-day. A structural fact unlike any other, slavery penetrated deeply into or inscribed itself brutally upon Brazilian political consciousness and culture alike. The reader will not fail to notice that this book is essential for our understanding of the exposed fracture that astonishes us even today. Luiz Felipe demonstrates essentially that, *with the reproduction of the labor force guaranteed by the slave trade — in Angola, outside of Brazil — there was no reason for our dominant class to concern itself with the social reproduction of those on the bottom within the colony and within the nation*. Hence the "absence" of bourgeois revolution, the inorganic character of Brazilian civil society, and the slowness of our political processes of rupture.

Thus the history of the city that is undoubtedly most significant for *O trato dos viventes* and the books that will follow acquires its full meaning. It was from Rio de Janeiro — slave capital of the tropics — that in 1648 the taskforce led by Salvador de Sá left in order to take the port of Luanda from the Dutch. The city's crucial role expands with the gold cycle, and from 1763 to 1960 it would successively constitute the seat of the Viceroy, the capital of the Portuguese empire, and the center of independent Brazil. As Luiz Felipe states in the volume that he organized for *História da vida privada no Brasil* [*The History of Private Life in Brazil*],³ no other Brazilian city had or will have the political, economic, and cultural importance of Rio. For our democratic imaginary, formed in abolitionist struggles and afterwards in the realm of the Vargas era, the city was, and perhaps continues to be, Brazilian civilization's laboratory. But in the time of Machado de Assis, Rio also harbored the largest urban concentration of slaves since the end of the Roman Empire. Today, the great-grandchildren of these same slaves threaten to come down from the slums — in the worst sense of the expression. In the meantime, new phenomena within the universe of the poor are revelatory of the process's worldwide dimension. Published in the *Jornal do Brasil* (05/02/2000): in a war for control of drug trafficking in the *favela* New Holland, in Bonsucesso, one of the rival groups made use of Angolan mercenaries, armed with AK-47 rifles. The impasses of Rio are those of a

210 Milton Ohata

Brazil that could have been and but never was. At a time when the disintegrating forces of globalized capital seem so threateningly disproportional in relation to the integrating idea of the word “nation,” even to the point of bringing about the reemergence of the traffic in human beings, the book’s closing sentences sound cruelly realistic: “The history of the Brazilian market, crafted by means of pillaging and trade, is long, but the history of the Brazilian nation, founded on violence and on consent, is short” (355).

Alencastro Responds

Milton Ohata’s astute and generous review of my book requires no commentary on my part. However, since its author, a former fellow at the Brazilian Center for Analysis and Planning [CEBRAP], is a member of the group of researchers who have motivated my own work, I will take advantage of this opportunity to continue the dialogue.

With much benevolence, Milton situates the book in a prestigious line of historians. But he also believes that it lacks reference to other authors and debates within the São Paulo university scene. To be sure, there are many implicit and diffuse influences in a work developed in two countries. Although I had commented on a good part of the bibliography mentioned, I should have pointed out, in particular, the intellectual significance that Celso Furtado had and still has for me.

As regards the periodization of the book, the central fact is not the well-known turnabout at the beginning of the 1600s that marks the ebbing of the Asian market and the rise of Atlantic trade. The division I followed privileges a less conspicuous characteristic of American colonial history. In fact, by limiting the study to the 16th and 17th century I considered — in the sequence conceptualized by Celso Furtado and Antonio Candido — the radical change generated in the 18th century by the discovery of gold and the formation of an internal territorial market. Before this, as I tried to demonstrate, the idea of Brazil, and of Portuguese America alike, makes no sense. Up the coast from Rio Grande do Norte, isolated and linked to Lisbon alone, was the state of Grão-Pará e Maranhão. Below, beyond the state of Brazil, was the what I have elsewhere called the Archipelago of Capricorn: the Brazil-Angola slave system linked by maritime currents and the winds of the anticyclone of the Tropic of Capricorn. At the beginning of the last quarter of the 1600s, the subsystem linking Bahia with West Africa completes the picture.

Radicalizing Caio Prado Jr.’s formulation, I think that the “significance of colonization” was neither that of forming a nation, nor even of forming a colony populated by proto-Brazilians (the idea of writing “Colony” with a

Brazilian Civilization’s Missing Link 211

capital C, which I let pass in my book, now seems bizarre to me). The institution created by the Crown in 1642 for managing overseas dominions took the generic name of the *Overseas Council*, and not the “Colonial” Council or Council “of the Colonies,” which appear only later. As I have written elsewhere, the typology distinguishing “settler colony” and “exploitation colony,” elaborated by Leroy-Beaulieu in 1874, refers to the problematic of the Second European Expansion (the 19th and 20th centuries). Its transposition into the field of the First European Expansion (15th to 18th centuries) is anachronistic and mistaken.⁸ For all practical purposes, what exists in the 16th and 17th centuries are “colonial spaces” in Africa, Asia, and the Americas. Colonies in the modern sense exist only in the islands of the Atlantic. Hence the subtitle “The Formation of Brazil in [the Colonial Space] of the South Atlantic.” Hence, moreover, the title of the book’s closing chapter: “Brazilian Singularity [within the Lusitanian Overseas Empire].”

In order to isolate the problem, it was necessary to define the historical agents that played a role in the period and the transatlantic space under consideration. On the African side appear native societies affected by the Atlantic trade and the “*Angolistas*,” Angolan colonists who are neither native Angolans nor newly arrived Portuguese. On the other side of the ocean, the “*Brasílicos*” are the Portuguese residents of Brazil who had interests and cultural characteristics distinct from those of the kingdom (in 1654 André Vidal de Negreiros was mocked in Lisbon because he did not speak Portuguese correctly), but did not think of themselves as belonging to a unified cultural and territorial community. These were not “Brazilians” endowed with a presentiment of nationality, but rather disparate categories of colonists (from Pernambuco, São Paulo, Bahia, Rio de Janeiro, Maranhão), whose aims are divergent and often opposed. In short, the division within the arena of European expansion of the modern period separates the “overseas man” from the “colonial man.” The former plays his cards overseas in order to obtain social and economic recompense in the metropolis, while the latter chooses to fix his destiny in a particular colonial enclave.

All of these characterizations refer to seventeenth-century historical processes anterior to the constitution of a internal and inter-regional market, of a colonial territory and, consequently, of any nativist sentiment on the frontiers of Portuguese America.

At the end of the review, after deciding that the book presents an “an account that only privileges the ‘autonomy’ of bilateral trade, and of the *Brasílico* colony,” Milton Ohata poses a question which I did not address and which he considers, perhaps, decisive: “being ‘autonomous’ in that which was indispensable to it, why did the Colony remain connected to the metropolis for such a long time?”

I believe I have given the bilateral slave trade the importance it deserves. The fact that it appears to have been privileged in the book is perhaps due to the persistence with which the majority of authors have spoken about the triangular trade, despite the fact that other historians had long ago demonstrated the reality of direct exchanges between Brazilian ports and Central and West Africa.⁹ As mentioned above, and as I presume to have presented clearly throughout the book, the seventeenth-century colonist from Portuguese America does not represent a collectivity with a single orientation. This is why I used the word “*Brasílico*” and not Luso-Brazilian, much less Brazilian.

In his question, Milton writes “autonomy” and “autonomous” between quotation marks. The reader might think that these terms come from my own work. They do not; quite the opposite. I speak of different agents who constitute the “Lusitanian and *Brasílico* co-administration of the South Atlantic” (76, 223, 354) and I include the Jesuits in this “co-administration” (266); one of the subsections of the book is entitled “Lusitanian, *Angolista* and *Brasílico* Joint Control in Central Africa” (259). I am here referring to a “*Pax Lusitana*” brought about by slave trafficking — an idea I reiterate throughout (41, 234, 294, 318, 338). “*Pax Lusitana*” in the South Atlantic (and not “*Pax Brasiliensis*”) was also the title of my doctoral dissertation, which covers the period 1550-1850. The decisions of the Overseas Council concerning the transformations underway in Africa and in America are contextualized. In brief, I define the military operations of colonists from Brazil in Angola “as contributions of the *Brasílico lumpencolonialism* to the establishment of the ‘*Pax Lusitana*’ in Central Africa” (294).

I employ the words “autonomy,” “autonomist,” and “autonomism” elsewhere, to express something different. Not in order to refer to the Brazilian colony in general, but rather with the aim of describing overseas communities stuck in the semi-autarchy that resulted from the use of indigenous labor, which — for this reason precisely — were shut out by the market and the metropolis: communities in São Paulo, Amazônia, Peru, Angola, and Mozambique (Ch. 1, *passim*; 139; Ch. 6, *passim*; 266).

I consider the concept “colonial pact” partially inoperative in the 1600s. Coined by French encyclopedists in the second half of the 18th century — in the movement to critique colonialism — the notion is interpreted by Brazilian historiography as a carapace fixed since 1500. I would like to think that the limits of this interpretation are manifest in the analysis of the Atlantic *cachaça* trade in the 1600s. With the guarantee of the Crown, which was interested in the advantage to the treasury, *cachaça* overcomes the competition of Portuguese wine and brandy in Angola. Thus, *cachaça* was perhaps the first American manufactured product and, without question, the first

Brazilian colonial product to surpass its European counterparts on the international market. As regards the fiscal system, the taxation of the slave trade carried out by the Crown is calculated as a percentage of the price of the slave [and thus the Crown profits by encouraging the bilateral trade, even to the detriment of a metropolitan industry]; this is noted at the beginning of the book as one of fundamental instruments of metropolitan control. I also attribute a key role to this taxation in the legitimation and legalization of the Atlantic slave trade, which precedes and justifies slavery in the Americas (35-36, Ch. 5, *passim*).

Chapter 7 is entitled “Angola *brasílica*” in order to mark the emergence of interests proper to oligarchies from diverse Brazilian territories in the Angolan colonial theater. This emergence, which takes place in the colonial and international context specific to the second half of the 1600s, had already been pointed out by Portuguese historians. Still, for the colonists of Portuguese America, access to the African market does not alone guarantee the conditions necessary for independence from the metropolis. The book shows the process of interaction between the interests of big *assentista* capital, of the Crown, of Portuguese merchants, of missionaries, of *Brasílicos*, of *Angolistas*, and of Africans, circulating throughout the seventeenth-century Atlantic. Nothing suggests that Brazil could have sidestepped Portugal in order to place its exports directly on the European market in the 17th and 18th century. Or that it could do without a hegemonic ruling class, capable of integrating the country into the concert of nations. For this reason, there is nothing in the book to suggest that during that period the colony was already “‘autonomous’ in that which was indispensable to it.”

Having begun my investigations with the examination of the conflicts produced by the slave trade in the period of the Brazilian Empire [1822-1889], I have always situated the political, economic and cultural implications of the deterritorialization of the labor market at the center of my thinking.¹⁰ Milton agrees with the idea that between the 17th and 19th centuries “the heart of the Brazilian economy was to be found outside of the country,” that is, in Africa: in Angola, in Central and West Africa, but also, during the first half of the 19th century, in Mozambique. This is, precisely, the essence of all of my work. The impossibility, for the Brazilian economy, of emancipating itself from African markets and from the Portuguese colonial space in the Atlantic until 1850 — that is, *before* and *after Independence* [1822] — led me to reconsider the idea of the “crisis of the colonial system”; the centrality of 1808 [when the Portuguese court, fleeing Napoleonic conquest, reestablished itself in Rio; at this time Brazilian ports were opened up to foreign trade] in Brazilian political and economic history; the origins of the Brazilian nation-state; and the periodization of the 19th

century, as indicated in the final pages of the book. And as it had already been explained in the review of the book by Fernando Novais that I wrote twenty years ago, reproduced below.

A Marriage of Convenience

Fernando Novais's *Portugal e Brasil na crise do antigo sistema colonial [Portugal and Brazil in the Crisis of the Old Colonial System]* will constitute an important milestone in contemporary Brazilian historiography. His meticulous study of the period 1777-1808 wholly achieves the objectives it proposes: to delimit Brazilian specificity in relation both to the European situation and to the internal crisis of Portuguese colonialism. The simultaneous examination of these two circumstances requires a fair dose of talent, obstinacy, and patience, and few are the authors who, like Novais, can carry out such an arduous task. A work like his demands detailed and extended reflection, but here we will limit ourselves to questioning the way certain problems are posed and the causal relationships established between certain of the facts analyzed.

Chapter 1 outlines the European political and diplomatic panorama into which the eighteenth-century Portuguese state and economy are inserted. It is a dense and modernized synthesis. But it is possible that the changes that occurred within the principal European metropolises might be a bit understated. Here one notes the influence of an "integrationist" interpretation of mercantilism, too attached to Eli F. Heckscher's classic *Mercantilism* (1935), which produced an excessively uniform account of a quite complex process. The differences that distinguish England from Holland, where capitalism was more advanced than in Portugal, demonstrate with greater clarity that not every kind of development leads to the Industrial Revolution.

The following chapters grapple directly with the Luso-Brazilian conjuncture. Although the author makes it clear that the central theme of his study is politics and not the economy, we should take a closer look at the magnificent analysis of Portuguese colonial commerce elaborated in the final part of the book.

Novais points out that the trade tables he uses do not distinguish the sum generated by slave trafficking. But the value of slave imports is considerable, representing close to a third of all imports to Rio de Janeiro between 1795 and 1811. Having brilliantly characterized the role of the slave trade in Portuguese colonialism, Novais fails to take his analysis to its logical conclusion. The "colonial monopoly" is in fact articulated twice over: the Portuguese monopoly exerts itself over the commodities trade between Brazil and Europe, but also in slave trade between Brazil and the African trafficking

zones, above all in Angola, the source of 70% of the slaves imported in the 18th century. From this perspective, the process of breaking with the metropolis involves a double disassociation: on the one hand, England's absorption of the commodities trade; on the other, the autonomization of the slave trade, which beginning in the last quarter of the 18th century gradually comes under the control of Luso-Brazilian businessmen from Rio de Janeiro and from Bahia. For this reason, the time of the Brazilian economy is told on two hands: the first points toward Europe, the second toward Africa.

Thus, when it directly penetrates the Brazilian market, England controls only two-thirds of Atlantic exchanges, while the other portion will remain in the hands of Luso-Brazilian businessmen until 1850. Note that the decree of 1808 [opening Brazilian ports to English ships] is not such a distinct parting of the waters as it appears: Brazilian foreign trade is not incorporated into North American and European trade until 1850. In other words, in 1808 the Brazilian economy becomes an tributary economy of the English economy, but only in 1850 is it transformed into a peripheral economy of the industrialized center.

The political and ideological implications of such a situation are considerable. The slave trade and slavery — important sectors of the old colonial system — gallantly cross the ideological barrage unleashed by Enlightenment philosophy, transforming themselves into two important buttresses of the nineteenth-century Brazilian state and society. Therefore, contrary to what certain parts of the book suggest, the colonial system was far being ideologically cornered. The incident that occurred in Bahia in 1794, with Brother José de Bolonha, the "Abolitionist Capuchin," is merely an epiphenomenon. It absolutely does not foreshadow a crisis between Church and State on the issue of slavery.

The philosophy of Enlightenment, diffused by "Frenchified" Iberian-American intellectuals, was potentially subversive in the colonies. But in regions where slavery predominated, the American *form* of the French Revolution is the Haitian Revolution. The fact that Toussaint Louverture had read the Abbé Raynal is beside the point. The novel element — genuinely revolutionary — introduced by the rebellious Haitian slaves is of a strategic and political order: the seizure of power on the island and the victory over the French and English troops sent to help the colonists.

If the other rebellious slaves of the continent were to go on to take cities where whites constituted a minority, instead of escaping to the forests and forming *quilombos*, the slave world would have rapidly disintegrated. This strategic inversion delimited the horizon of the slave system. And it is around this fact that the paranoia of the authorities and of the most conscious sectors of society would crystallize.

In this way, the comparison between Pina Manique, the superintendant of the kingdom's police force, and Paulo Fernandes Viana, his counterpart in Rio de Janeiro, is interesting. While the former chased after freemasonry and prohibited the sale of "subversive" books, the latter worried about the explosive situation created by the presence of slaves in the city of the Court, where captives comprised 49% of the population in 1821. Manique ran after the French influence in the metropolis, and Viana, assisted by the fierce Major Vidigal, tried to control the African presence in the colony.

In this context, the characterization of a "pre-revolutionary" situation in Brazil becomes somewhat complicated.

The extension of Novais' analysis points to the *Inconfidência Mineira* [Minas Conspiracy]¹, which appears like a beacon in the crepuscular atmosphere that surrounds the colonial order. Now, the Haitian Revolution would show its contemporaries that the "Minas road to independence" was a dead end. Like [the turn-of-the-century Brazilian historian] Capistrano de Abreu, we must consider the *Inconfidência* a minor phenomenon, entirely peripheral to the subjacent problematic of breaking with the Metropolis. Rather it is a conspiracy that had no possibility of equating the national problem (slavery) with the problem of the state (territorial unity). Either Independence would be supported by the bureaucracy, or it would end in impasse.

Comparison with Cuba is illustrative. During the 19th century the nationalist insurrections that shook the island were strangled by the threat of a slave uprising. The Spanish metropole limited itself to reminding colonists: "If Cuba does not continue to be Spanish, it will be African!" That argument was effective, and functioned until 1901.

This evidence places us face to face with the cold hard facts: the independence of Brazil is the product of a conservative pact and not of a national and popular movement. We were born of a marriage of convenience between old and cynical partners rather than of fireworks set off by the free union of young lovers. The metaphor is not gratuitous. Yesterday, like today, it was not easy being Brazilian. The first generations felt the weight of the anachronisms perpetuated within the young nation. Gonçalves de Magalhães wrote in 1835:

But, oh Fatherland, who wounds you?
Only yesterday did you lift yourself from your cradle;
Barely did you attempt one step
And it is unbelievable that tomorrow you will die
...

Ye, who seize the helm of state,
Ye, who had to keep watch, how long
Shall ye make of the Fatherland your patrimony
And impede its footsteps?

Despite everything, Brazilian nationality took root and is now a strong tree. This is not, for example, the case of Belgium, a nation born (in 1830) during the same period as Brazil and that might come apart at any moment.

These are some of the questions that can be raised when we cross the historical terrain carefully demarcated by Novais. These are issues for other investigations — investigations that will prove fruitful only if they are carried out in the same manner in which Novais wrote the book that we have just reviewed: with deep insight and intelligence. And not otherwise.

Notes

¹ The issue only appears at the edges of the specialized literature. See the essay by Jacob Price in *Slavery and the Rise of the Atlantic System* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), a volume edited by Barbara Solow and to which Alencastro himself contributes.

¹ Portuguese Jews converted to Christianity. [Trans.]

² Permission granted by the Spanish crown to sell slaves to Spanish colonies. The asiento system was in place from the early 16th to mid-18th centuries. [Trans.]

³ Settlements in Brazil founded and populated by Maroons, or fugitive slaves, and their descendants, as well as a small number of others, including some marginalized Portuguese. [Trans.]

⁴ The great Maroon kingdom in what is now Northeastern Brazil. Trans.

⁵ This sum is expressed in terms of the old Portuguese *real* (plural *réis*), not the modern Brazilian *real* (plural *reais*). [Trans.]

⁶ The shell, called *zimbo* or *jimbo*, provides Brazilian Portuguese with a slang word for money. [Trans.]

² A researcher at Cebrap [Brazilian Center for Analysis and Planning] from 1986 until recently, Luiz Felipe might have incorporated the line of Marxist thought particular to the University of São Paulo, which committed itself to identifying mediations between the nation's history and the history of capitalism. This is the case, beyond the work of Fernando Novais, with Fernando Henrique Cardoso's notion of dependency or with literary form in Roberto Schwarz. On a more abstract and general level, his analysis of slaving interests could have benefited from José Arthur Giannotti's considerations regarding social identities, which would not merely represent a positive given as it does in the majority of studies within the

humanities, and, insofar as they concern Brazilian historiography, studies of regional nativisms and identities.

⁷ See “Braudel’s Geohistory: A Reconsideration,” *Journal of Economic History* 11.3, Part 1 (Summer, 1951) 277-282.

³ *Império: a corte e a modernidade nacional* [*Empire: The Court and National Modernity*], vol. 2 (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1997).

⁸ Luiz Felipe de Alencastro, “A economia política dos descobrimentos portugueses” [“The Political Economy of Portuguese Exploration”], *A descoberta do homem e do mundo* [*The Discovery of Man and the World*], ed. Adauto Novaes (São Paulo, 1998) 193-208.

⁹ Luiz Vianna Filho, *O negro na Bahia* [*The Negro in Bahia*] (1946); Pierre Verger, *Fluxo e refluxo do tráfico de escravos entre o golfo do Benin e a Bahia de Todos os Santos*, [*Trade Relations between the Bight of Benin and Bahia from the 17th to 19th Century*], 1st ed. (1968); Corcino Medeiros dos Santos, “Relações de Angola com o Rio de Janeiro 1736-1808” [“Angolan Relations with Rio de Janeiro, 1736-1808”], *Estudos Históricos* 12 (1973): 7-68.

¹⁰ Luiz Felipe de Alencastro, “La traite négrière et l’unité nationale brésilienne 1825-1850,” *Revue Française d’Histoire d’Outre Mer*, LXVI (1979): 395-419.

¹¹ The *Inconfidência Mineira*, or Minas Conspiracy, was an insurrection against the Portuguese Crown that took place in Minas Gerais in 1789. [Trans.]

Luiz Felipe de Alencastro Professor of Brazilian History and director of the Centre d'Etudes du Brésil et de l'Atlantique Sud at the Sorbonne since 2001, Luiz Felipe de Alencastro has written extensively on Brazilian society and Portuguese colonial history. His recent *O trato dos viventes* won the Alceu de Amoroso Lima prize in 2000 and the José Ermírio de Morais prize from the Brazilian Academy of Letters in 2001.

Paulo Arantes Paulo Arantes has written several important books on the dialectic, including *Hegel: a ordem do tempo* and *Sentimento da dialética*. His more recent work has turned more directly to contemporary political, economic, and social history. His book *Extinção* was published in 2007.

Iná Camargo Costa Iná Camargo Costa is a central figure in the São Paulo theater scene. A professor of literary theory at the University of São Paulo, she has translated, among other works, *The Adding Machine*, by Elmer Rice. Her books on theater include *A Hora do teatro épico no Brasil* and *Sinta o drama*.

Milton Ohata Milton Ohata received his doctorate in History from the University of São Paulo in 2004. He co-edited, along with Maria Elisa Cevalco, the volume *Um crítico na periferia do capitalismo: reflexões sobre a obra de Roberto Schwarz*. He is a frequent contributor to *Le monde diplomatique – Brasil* and editor of the journal *Cultura e Pensamento*.

Francisco de Oliveira One of the founders of Brazil's Workers' Party, Francisco de Oliveira publicly broke with the party in 2003. Director of the Center for the Study of the Rights of Citizenship at the University of São Paulo, his books on the impact of economic and political issues on Brazilian working-class life include *O elo perdido: Classe e identidade de classe na Bahia*. His recent *Crítica à razão dualista / O Ornitorrinco* juxtaposes his 1972 text on developmentalism with new work on the current, platypus-like assemblage that the Brazilian economic and social structure has become.

Roberto Schwarz The author of a dozen influential books, Roberto Schwarz is considered by many to be Brazil's foremost literary critic, and is one of the most significant Marxist critics writing today. His works available in English include *A Master on the Periphery of Capitalism* and *Misplaced Ideas*, as well as dozens of essays.