



***Mata Virgem Brasileira* Language: a perspectivism of the transverse knowledge**

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ABSTRACT – *Mata Virgem Brasileira* Language: a perspectivism of transverse knowledge – A discursive recurrences set around problem of American exteriority, evinces power lines of an imagery and a language that constitute colonials dispositive. As methodological strategy, it signs the modes by which image of Immaculate Conception is given in a figurative fulguration, breaking empirical historical status to entice the transversality of a perspectivist appreciation. Such a course comes together with the thinking of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari and the animist perspectives studied by Eduardo Viveiros de Castro in order to discuss the anthropological tensions of what in our poetics we call iconoclastic idolatry.

Keywords: **Colonial Dispositive. Marian Imaginary. Perspectivism. Language. Cannibal.**

RÉSUMÉ – Langage Vierge Forêt Brésililic: un perspectivisme des savoirs transversaux – On présente un ensemble de récurrences discursives autour du problème de l'extériorité américaine, en soulignant les lignes de force d'un imaginaire et d'un langage qui constituent les dispositifs coloniaux. En tant qu'une stratégie méthodologique, on signale les modes par lesquels l'image de l'Immaculée Conception se donne à voir par force d'une fulguration figurative, brisent le statut empirique du fait historique pour permettre la transversalité d'une appréciation perspectiviste. Ce parcours suit la philosophie de Gilles Deleuze et Félix Guattari et les perspectives animistes étudiées par Eduardo Viveiros de Castro à fin de discuter les tensions anthropologiques de ce que, dans nos poétiques, on appelle l'idolâtrie iconoclaste.

Mots-clés: **Dispositif Colonial. Imaginaire Mariana. Perspectivisme. Langage. Cannibale.**

RESUMO – Língua Mata Virgem Brasileira: um perspectivismo dos saberes transversos – Apresenta-se um conjunto de recorrências discursivas em torno do problema da exterioridade americana, evidenciando linhas de força de um imaginário e de uma linguagem que constituem dispositivos coloniais. Como estratégia metodológica, assinala-se modos pelos quais a imagem da Imaculada Conceição é dada numa fulguração figurativa, rompendo o estatuto empírico do dado histórico para ensejar a transversalidade de uma apreciação perspectivista. Tal percurso se dá junto ao pensamento de Gilles Deleuze e Félix Guattari e das perspectivas animistas estudadas por Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, a fim de discutir as tensões antropológicas do que, em nossas poéticas, chamamos de idolatria iconoclasta.

Palavras-chave: **Dispositivo Colonial. Imaginária Mariana. Perspectivismo. Linguagem. Canibal.**

Introduction



Figure 1 – Cover of the *Tesoro de la Lengua Guarani*, 1639 edition. Source: online¹.

Considering the images and the discourses that constitute Brazil since the 16th century, especially those that since the 17th century are still present in what is known as colonial baroque, this paper starts from two points: 1) the contrasting binomials of the old and the new; good and evil (in face of the Christian indoctrination); savage and civilized; innocent and insightful; 2) the figural transversality of the imaginary and its variations, paying special attention to the role of the Church. These two lines of events can be seen in the device of Colonial Brazil, being its consequences basic aspects in the understanding of the constitution of the Brazilian people. Without entering into current Brazil, we will deal with the colonial device so that future studies can make the due relations. From the 17th century epistemology, with Leibniz project for a General Science (2014) and the imagetic archive obtained in a fieldwork by the artistic production involved in it, it is thought the lust for the inventory of the “pieces” (Leibniz, 2014, p. 262) of the knowledge and its possible systematizations. The inventory, although comprising dictionaries, the *thesaurus*, is a wider catalogue of “facts and circumstances” that can serve as “grounds for the reasoning” (Leibniz, 2014, p. 262), even though, with Leibniz, the discussion on the vagueness of the logic, and its application for organization of the

knowledge, is kept in the horizon of the problem here discussed. The considerations developed by us stem from bibliographical findings, especially from searches to the *Curt Nimuendajú* Digital Library², and in the fieldworks with colonial monuments in the cities of the cycle of the gold, in Minas Gerais and Salvador (Bahia), Brazil. In 2017 it was inventoried in these places and in other sites engravings and paintings of the *Virgem da Conceição*³, an image highlighted here due to its appearance in public historical documents, next to which we think the relations between language, cult, culture and colonization.

We have articulated, within a poetical research, traces of these elements to tension the colonial imaginary (in its hermeneutic effects) and, in thesis, the language and the colonized noetic (in its epistemic and semiotic effects), with the purpose of showing the possible transitions of a decolonizing poetics⁴. Based on Foucault, we have evoked historiography in order to think the issues of the language and the force of certain figures in the colonial devices. We start from the assumption that the heteroclitite device of the Brazilian baroque defines the bases of a way of life in which neither the language nor the idols – and not even the nation itself – have steady models. Within a myriad of objects of analysis, the case evoked here is especially focused on the image and the discursivity related to *Virgem da Conceição*, which allows us to show that the differences produced by the negative, in terms both of lectures and beliefs, give place to a relation not defined in dual terms, but rather delineated, in a rich syncretic disposition, by *affects*, which, in a poetical exercise in the searched archives, we call *Virgem Brasília Language*, inserting the term *mata* [forest], basic in the constitution of the country, to twist to pressure the term *virgem* [virgin].

Colo and laps

In the initial pages of his already classic *Brazil and the dialectic of colonization*, Alfredo Bosi defines the semantic specificity of the words culture, cult and colonization from their root in common: the Latin verb *colo*. “*Colo* is the matrix of *colony* as a space that is being occupied, land or people that we can work on and subject” (Bosi, 2009, p. 11). Also: *colo* “in the so-called verbal system of the present, always denotes something incomplete and transitive” (Bosi, 2009, p. 11). The colonial situation, in the semantic body of the word itself, indicates a sign of incompleteness, or

still the particularity of the transitive condition associated with a verbal state. Therefore, *colo* denotes the uniqueness of a space occupied and the ontological lack of a state that demands a nominal complement. Without a complement, the word is also related to the lap, synonym of breast. The lap, more than the space between the chest to the belly, implying the breasts, that both welcome and feed, also states the act, never disentailed of this specific space in the body, both the hideout of the heart and an organ-surface, that welcomes, that embraces.

The Marian iconography shows the Church, figured by the crowned woman, with several small figures to the breast or lap. Dated of 1152, this image is one of the illustrations of the *Liber Scivias*, from the Benedictine nun Hildegard de Bingen (Pernoud, 1996). From the medieval device, the *Mater*, which, next to what we understand as device from the beginning of the mercantilism, is what welcomes all the peoples and races in common exchanges and capitals. Since the reorganization of the Roman Empire in Christian Rome, this matrix structure, which especially after the 13th century is legally and hierarchically organized, is able to *dar colo* [to comfort] and to colonize, consequently the strengthening of the Crowns and their maritime companies, which had used all a whole range of commercial and extractivist adventures, which the European assumed as discovery and conquest.

Addressing the conquered peoples as children was vital for the image on which the catechizing ideals of education and missions was founded. This spiritual motherhood, liable of being associated with the diasporas and assimilation of Jewish elements in the Christina mystic and imaginary, acquires a remarkable strength in the 17th century, especially in the counter-reform reactions and the evangelizing missions. It is in this context that the baroque style develops in plate cuts and woodwork that remember wombs, bellies, Fallopian tubes and ovaries. The term *estilo* [style], deriving from the act of *entalhar* [carving], begins to be used in this century. The Manueline and Johannine style observed in the colonial churches in Brazil has, as an indispensable element, in the imaginary of the temples and rites, the *Nossas Senhoras* [Our Ladies]. Since the 16th century the pictorial production of Madonnas in the colonies and in Europe becomes countless, indicating a strong reaction to the new and reformist Christian church, lacking the due impressiveness due to a matricial cult.

In the landmarks of the conquest of America, the incomplete and the transitive start to function as motor reasons of an optic-sonorous regimen (which henceforth we will explain as a topical; an agency), which recreates the images of the difference as counterfigures of the identity by means of a colonial writing already differentiated from the European Portuguese and from an imaginary that reiterates the white and Christian matrix, despite darkening and presenting variations⁵. Based on a detailed analysis of Pero Magalhães Gandavo's writing, Andrea Daher states that "[...] the indigenous ways of life only exist, for Gandavo, in opposition to the ways of life of those who occupy a place, by definition, in the hierarchy of the Portuguese imperial mystic body: the Portuguese settlers" (Daher, 2014, p. 396). Gandavo's writing presents the intertwining of the two meanings glimpsed by Bosi in the word *colony*: the economic interest involved in occupying and working a space; the introduction of the "political-theological model of the Catholic doctrine" as supplement to the ontological incompleteness of the natives. "The scriptural machine is, itself, a conversion machine" (Daher, 2014, p. 398). It is also by means of the writing, more precisely the epistolary art, that the Company of Jesus constructs the terms of its global project around three interconnected aspects: the circulation of information; the reinforcement to the corporative spirit; e the transmission of mystic and devotional experiences. The Jesuitical project is non-separable from a "duty of writing" that is not only a spontaneous way of expression or communication of an exterior reality, but also a "rhetorical map" that is functional and consubstantial to the evangelizing politics itself, whose formalism of structure leads to the old tradition of the *ars dictaminis* (Pécora, 2001, p. 18-19).

The conversion is not only evangelical, but rather, above all, pictorial, set to poetry in verses, songs and images. And "the traces of the several Brazils were being found proportionally to the much walking in the letters" (Pécora, 2001, p. 68). Such functioning evidences the terms of a problematic that leads to the issue that Foucault brings from Blanchot: the relation between the language and its exterior, allegorized, in this case, by the hermeneutic confrontation between the Europe of the Renaissance and the unknown, the outside, that is constituted, still without image and proper word, as the American culture. What does not have an image, what does not find a word, creates from the images and from the words already

stratified. This type of clash and the need to conjure allegorically the outside can be shown with the appearance of Our Lady of Guadalupe or *Tonantzin Coatlxopeuh*, in Mexico, in 1531, whose cult expresses the junction between pre-Columbian deities and the Great Christian Mother.

It is like at the same time in which it prepares a philosophical interiority, sewing the dramatic thickness of its own historical conscience and projecting its reflexes through the identity of the subject and the world, the Western culture were disturbed by the simultaneous irruption of a movement that undoes the universality of the sewing and exposes the drama of the conscience and the identity to the enigma of its own taking apart. To this second movement, Michel Foucault calls *thought from the exterior*, and, while the first movement has its exponents in the figures of Kant and Hegel, the second is related to the unique experiences of Sade, Holderlin, Nietzsche, Mallarmé, Artaud, Bataille and, finally, its contemporary epigone: Maurice Blanchot. While, in the first movement, the consortium between the law of History, the unity of the Subject and the intelligibility of the World operates, formalizing the weave from which the characters accommodate well or badly to a teleologic order of the civilizer discourse, in the second what is seen are the convulsions of the desire, presenting the pure materiality of an instance whose only law is its own neutral nullity and of a poetry that despairs and tears into pieces the subject and the sense in the ruins of an obstructed transcendence.

It is about a type of experience that cannot be interiorized, deciphered or interpreted in the macroscopic level of the culture, but that keeps in a certain way strange, distant, exterior. According to Foucault (2009, p. 223), it is possibly due to Sade and Holderlin the discovery of an infinite grumble that covers “a language in the process of being lost”. This grumble functions as a type of inside-out sign, invincible and untranslatable, stuck to the thickness of the language as a *continuum* of opening and dispossession that annuls the first degree naivety of the representative nexus. The thought from the exterior, also called *outside*, assigns, therefore, the impossibility of the sign systems to close themselves in an instrumental universality, linking the experience of the language with an origin paradox, according to which the one who speaks does not need to manifest, but to disappear, allowing to twinkle, as a track of its own absence, the emptiness consubstantial to the gesture.

In a theoretical essay on the discovery of the New World, written in 1974, the Italian writer Ítalo Calvino (2010, p. 24, author's italics) explicit the specific schematism that rules the correlation between the allegory and the unknown:

The allegory corresponds to the need that Europe has to think America according to its own schemas, to make conceptually definable what was and continues being the *difference*, perhaps the American irreducibility, that is, the fact of always having something to say to Europe – from the first landing of Columbus until today – that Europe does not know.

The experience of not-knowing and the effort of the thought in thinking the unthought – the irreducible American – coexist since the beginning of the colonization with the allegoric and denegative framing of what is presented as new to a preexisting vocabulary. “The colonial look, that counts the bodies, the assets and the souls, allows to perpetually perceive the encounter, the clash between a limitless will of control and groups that (voluntarily or not) agree to bending to it” (Gruzinski, 2003, p. 16). That is, “[...] discovering the New World was quite a difficult endeavor, as we all know. However, once the New World was discovered, it was even more difficult to *see it*, to understand that it was *new*, all *new*, different from anything what one has always expected to find as *new*” (Calvino, 2010, p. 17, author's italics). And, as personification of novelty, no image could be more precise than a deity linked to a conception ideal.

Calvino notes converge with a meaning especially evidenced by the contemporary historiography: throughout the 16th century, the hermeneutic circle closes on America (Todorov, 2003). The American irreducibility, however, is not circulated by a monolithic discourse capable of opposing identity and difference in absolute terms; it provides an opportunity for a polyphonic proliferation, whose complexity is expressed by the coexistence/concurrence between different systems of representation (Daher, 2014). Portuguese, Spanish, French, Jesuitical, Huguenots, cosmographic, pictographic scriptural machines concur to scrutinize a slippery matter in multiple modulations. *Thesaurus* try to circumvent the meaning of words that, from trip to trip, from people to people, assume diverse meanings and uses, hardly having fixed contours. These only are possible when transcribed in linear treaties, which try to state the meaning of the sayings, such as *Tesoro de La Lengua Guarani*, composed by the Jesuit

Antonio Ruiz de Montoya (1639), from which we bring here a reproduction of the cover (Figure 1) as demonstration.

In the case of the Brazilian colonization, the classic approach consisted of opposing the Portuguese (ou Iberic) reading model to the French one, whose *Livre du Trésor*, written in the exile by Bruno Latini, between 1260 and 1267, becomes a model to the subsequent compendiums of what science comes to be, that is, the enlightened knowledge that in the 1700s will be so dear to the colonial world. A pragmatic and derogatory look was associated with the strategic mercantile bias of the Portuguese settler, while the register of the French traveler corresponded to curiosity and tolerance, associated with the emergence of a pre-ethnographic attitude consubstantial to the creation of the myth of the noble savage, that will emerge in the educated French circles. Confronted with the theoretical approach of new research perspectives and with the expansion of the documental archives available, such approach tends to try the challenge of a double test. On one hand, the proliferation of reports, which we will not address in this text, that escape the limits of the Portuguese Spanish and French language and provenance, reinforcing here and there a set of unique perceptions that interest us. On the other, the reiteration, no matter the diversity of the sources, of a standard on “[...] the opposition between a rich, prodigious and pretty land and a people since early corrupt, sluggish, uncultured, in short, not worthy of being the lord of such an auspicious land” (França; Raminelli, 2009, p. 13). Our research brings as evidence the paradoxically cohesive split of these opposites in the complex relations between cults, languages and the limitless proliferation between sacred and profane, being this liable to be observed in the Marian popular imaginary. The Iberic relation with the West, with the Arabic images and standards, distinguishes the Portuguese culture of what time keeps in more continental areas.

Erro! Indicador não definido. The difference of the Other is reduced by the insistence of the Same, an axiom that already became trivial the contemporary academic discourse, especially inside the culturalist paradigms. What interests to highlight, however, is the polyhedral character that, even in the lexical and iconographic reductions, is possible of being analyzed in several sources, as well as the way of the analytical efforts directed to the opposite direction. For the first case, the perspectivism of the contemporary historiography contributes with a set of angulations that

complicate the traditional binomial, mentioned especially in terms of East-West, Europe-America, but also transposed to the savage-civilized. For the second one, an empiric and conceptual multiplicity situated between the Philosophy of Difference of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari and the anthropology of Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, that makes it possible for us to keep epistemologically close to the irreducibility of the *outside*, especially assuming what would be a historical source as poetical surface. The goal of such path is to tension the limits between an order of the discourse advocated by the model of the figures and the content of the writings coming from the colonial device and its framings, bringing the passing of knowledge that converge to a poetical exercise, beyond an ethical and aesthetic decolonization of the thought. In this scope, the golden frames, a baroque invention and mark, acquire prominence not only as contortion of a style, but, above all, as a pictorial need for a world that epistemologically is being classified, delineated and, mainly, framed in specific fields.

Of the Differences in Negative and the Surfaces of Register

From the Foucauldian device, based on lines whose contexts we see in its actuality, we deal with the problematic field, *topos* given by the colonizing process, as agency. Indeed, the devices have agency lines (Deleuze, 1996); however, instead of the layers of visibility and enunciability liable to analysis in a device (Deleuze, 1996), the agency operates between bodies and enunciations, tracing its lines in relations based on encounters and *affects* not always liable to be analyzed with precision. These polygons formulated after Guattari had lessons with Lacan, almost traced like mathematical functions, are called agencies. The agencies follow the principles of the Spinozian *Ethics*, that is, their relations and enunciative forms articulate by them are composed and decomposed in accordance with the nature of the *affects*. Both the device and its agencies are expressed in a topical whose points, lines and interstices can be transcribed to a diverse, however never steady, surface of analysis. In this, some elements, when pointed, bring us indication for an analytical always open, in which visible and enunciable forces are addressed.

It is not possible to point the ways of functioning of a colonial agency without, at the same time, evidencing its consubstantial coextension to the surface of register, either imagetic or grammatical. The written letter, as

well the image corresponding to it, do not communicate merely a visible empiricism, but simultaneously create the conditions of the reportable, establishing the limit of the contours and a certain order of the regulations (Daher, 2014; Gruzinski, 2003; Pécora, 2001). There is an inherent fetishism to the scripture machines and colonial engravings, a mystic accountable for making a miracle of the meaning of the writing and the imaginary. The machines, in the case of the 17th century presses that are connected either to the *full body* of the mercantile desire (Deleuze; Guattari, 2010), or to the doctrinal specter of the “judgment of God” (Deleuze, 2011), engrave and sculpt in the available surfaces the images of the cannibal becoming. This ends up giving place to the bookish cannibal, personified in the devourer of books and styles, with which Brazilian artists and intellectuals operate since the beginning of the 20th century. This cannibalism absorbs the German counterculture, the French vanguards and the English pragmatism, recovering the indigenous and African forces in a bourgeois, scholar and, even though transformed in a popular Brazilianness, extremely elitist production. Against this anthropophagy for a few, another type of fantasy, caught up in the virgin forests and the popular idolatry, a cannibal becoming aimed to blur the language in the vision, brings possibilities that are non-market aimed, non-canonically and non-devoted to the bookish writing of European origin.

The miraculating elocutionary functions of God, the Mother and the Capital operate as universals that make infinite the meaning of the baroque colonial productions, getting them out of the finite thickness of the bodies and situating the foundation of the judgment on the bodies and their acts in the transcendence of a supra-sensitive zone, moved away from the contingency of the affects. For Bosi (2009, p. 34), “[...] the colonial writing is not a uniform whole: it not only performs a practical knowledge gesture, similar to the hard requirements of the Western market, but also its counterpoint where obscure dreams of a *naturaliter christiana* are fused”. A reverse anthropological look launched on the Western practices allows to see in this oniric-market ambiguousness the animistic substance that runs the body of the colonizing discourse. This did not escape even to the indigenous people, who occasionally accused the coefficient of witchcraft and prestidigitation present in the speaking papers manipulated by the Europeans (Ginzburg, 2007).

In a recent text on the Portuguese-Brazilian narratives from the 16th century, Andrea Daher insists that there is no coincidence in the simultaneous character of the catechesis and the Tupi language register in grammar and in the dictionary (2014). Writing and conversion correspond in the Colony landmarks. In his classic *The conquest of America: The question of the other*, Todorov (2003) pointed the close functional interdependence between the verbs comprehending, communicating and colonizing. Although the approach of the French-Bulgarian semiologist is nowadays liable to several considerations, the historic-semiologic look opened ways and constructed basic beacons for the course of deepening of contemporary researches concerning the issue of alterity. Alcir Pécora (2001), in turn, understands that the writing is not merely a propaedeutic means of interchange or an inert support of informational content, but the surface in which the regulation and the control of the possible operate, according to a performative metric which is authorized or disapproved by the tradition. When challenging the other (Todorov, 2003), or not even recognizing him as another one and rather configuring him as “fellow” (Daher, 2014, p. 399), what is in play is a type of reduction of the matter liable to be told to the limits of the expression. In landmarks of the colonization, the colonial writing is magnetized by the empire of the Christian god, as well as by the semiotic influxes of the market, what is clearly certified by the image of the Virgin, allegory of the Matrix of the Church, coupled to the *Tesoro de La Lengua Guarani*. The relations between writing, books that register births, baptisms, marriages and deaths, property deeds, wills, gold extraction land, among other documents, represent not only licensing circumscribed to certain orders and access to supplies and assets, but also the power of the capital in the individual life and the social segments where, in the colonial context, somebody exists.

According to Deleuze and Guattari (2010, p. 22-24), the capital functions as an “element of anti-production”, “body without organs”, unproductive *socius* or “enchanted surface of inscription” that attracts to itself “all the productive forces and the agencies of production”. From this perspective, the capital is the amorphous and fluid headquarters that concentrates in its full body the plastic force of a miraculous, uterine power, anchored in the imaginary and in the body of the church (owner of register documents). This is both the abstract organization that regulates the birth

and the dying and the central building in the colonial communities, places where they all meet. The capital builds to temple-monuments of a spiritual poignancy, that shines in the gold applied in the scrolls of an aggregating and sublime expression, with room for all those dedicated to it, which is the baroque church. The miracle, however, always depends on the encounter of the machines, of the uncertain game between couplings, cuts and connections, producer of meanings, and dynamizing the desire. “The desire and its object constitute one and only same thing: the machine, while machine of machine” (Deleuze; Guattari, 2010, p. 43).

Everywhere, organ-machines connect to energy-machines to extract from there a flow effect, a rhythm of breath. “The machine only produces a flow if it is connected to another machine that is assumed to produce the flow” (Deleuze; Guattari, 2010, p. 55). We argue here that the *Conquest of America*, marked by the sign of the Jesuit martyrdom and the appearance of a comforter and aggregating Lady Mother, can be read as a great historical substratum of one of these couplings. The colonial encounter as encounter of machines: European merchant machine (ecclesiastic matrix, figured by the Sovereign Mother) and American metallic machine (the nails of the martyrdom, being the martyrdom of the Jesuits remarkable). Gregório de Matos, in a sonnet dedicated to Bahia in the 17th century, “[...] spoke about a *merchant machine*, to the letter, vessel of goods, an expression that could, by metonymy, be extended to the whole commercial gear in force in the Colony” (Bosi, 2009, p. 26).

In this co(a)llision of machines, the course of the sonorous noise and the visual adjustments produces an ambiguous situation: on one hand, a colonizing topical is formed, redistributing the conditions that preside over seeing and saying according to a new model of agency; on the other, the dynamics of the sound and visual clichés that denote the formation of a new agency coexisting intensely with the possibility of a generalized atopia of the Christian mystic and the commerce in ways of being globalized. In the landmarks of the colonial writing there is a game of forces between the allegory and the irreducibility. Between the reliefs delineated by a figural topical (the allegoric resource) and the excessive intensity of a disfiguring atopia (the exteriority, or the irreducible American) entangle the terrors of a trembling language that feels around jerking the bottom-less of the meaning. Such language is supported in the forms and images of devotion,

actual escapes hooked to the in-form without justice and mercy from the capital. Praying to Our Lady, worshiping her maternal aspect, asking for her strength and protection, is to conjure both the servile precariousness and the constant risks of a life in unknown land, which is discovered in search of wealth and comfort perhaps unreachable.

Matrix, Conception, Proliferation

Throughout the 16th century, the allegoric power of the tuning between the order of God and the signs of the market produced a schematic matrix from which the different articulations of the American irreducibility proceed. No matter which side we look from, the scriptural machines, operators of ways of seeing and saying the difference, seem to keep with this matrix source a determinative relation that bisects, however, in different enunciates. Such enunciates evidence the force of standards of reading, common places that little by little become the specificity of a topical, especially in the case of the Brazilian topical, where the extraction of gold and *pau-brasil* is directly related with the politics exerted by force of the architectural ornament.

The colonial topical, by means of its obsessive negative thematic recurrences (the cannibalism, the anthropophagy, the nakedness, the polygamy, the presence of the demon, the inconstance and the social acephalia of the indigenous people), denotes that the colonial encounter functions, initially, as an ontological disturbance. The arbitrary metaphysics concerning to the Western classicism experiences a face to face encounter with the historicity of its own condition. A set of extraordinary circumstances exposes the structural character of the meaning, raising the cover of the naturalness and displaying the foundations of the European civilization to the non-basic character of its own elaboration. On the other hand, the multivocal turbulence is appeased, especially in Brazil, by the figure of the Virgin, Our Lady of Conceição, declared Sovereign Queen of Portugal when D. João IV was crowned in 1646. Even before the recognition by the Vatican, its dogma, originating from archaic Breton cults, had been defended in Coimbra. It is observed that *virgo*, in Latin, means autonomy. In the antiquity, the virgins were women responsible for the temples; they lived, in a certain extent, outside the patriarchal rules, as they were not linked to men. The meaning of the word can be interpreted

as self-sufficient, not having, originally, any relation with the lack of sexual relations or keeping the hymen.

From there a dogma is born as mythicizing of an immaterial, solemnly recognized by the Church only in 1854, by the bull *Ineffabilis Deus* from Pio IX. The *Virgem da Conceição*, from the Victorian Age assumed as the permanence of a perpetual immaterial hymen, welcomes under the hemline of her immaculate mantle the monsters and the aberrations listed in Natural History, appeasing the terrors of the acephalia and the obsession for the demon and for the beings of the bushes and unexplored grottos that crossed the land of the cannibals. The vertigo of the not-foundation in the heteroclitite composition of an *affective* Brazilian thought is replaced and/or completed by the implacable reiteration of axiomatizing: the unitarian image overcomes the several sayings in thousands of sounds, allowing that, in the Acrean Amazonia of the beginning of the 20th century, Our Lady of Conceição is also the Queen of the Forest. We situate this, under the light of the shamanic syncretism always in reinvention, as quite close to the Lady of the Beasts, one of facets of the Great Mother of the Romans, called, henceforth the Christianity, Venus. All this overlapping myriad presents the polyhedral drama that ramifies under the apparent placidness of the unitarian images. A course, however, is confirmed. There is the interchange or initial amazement of the visions; next, the kidnapping of the disjunctive perspectives by an imaginary influx of totalization. The inhuman, imperceptible and multiform becoming that covers the Brazilian virgin forest is replaced by the ghosts of the absence; and in the absent ghosts it is engraved the axioms of the civilization via the iconography validated by the official hagiology, despite the fact that these many saints escape from the accepted and recognized versions all the time.

This unbearable becoming, impossible to be inscribed in the secular images and the written word, converts little by little into a recurrent procession of grotesque and/or mythologic forms, assumed as folklore and haunting, as they cannot appear in the altarpieces to which the people dedicate care, ask, thank and dedicate prays. The anthropocentric rationalism and the ontologic border between the human and the animal is repeated, as well as the idyllic resource to the memory of the origins. It is the “monstrous disorder” pointed in *História da província de Santa Cruz* by Pero Magalhães Gandavo (Daher, 2014, p. 395). Or, also, the “native

ferocity” and the abominable habits of these “human monsters”, as described by the Spanish Jesuit José de Acosta during his stay in colonial Peru (Pécora, 2001, p. 58-59)⁶. Situated in this line of discursive modulation, the American indigenous oscillates between the bestiary and the metaphor of the blank paper – “double qualification of good virtuality and bad habit” (Pécora, 2001, p. 46); “without faith, law or king”: the sign interface that recovers the American irreducibility assumes the form of the primitive disorder or the innocent lack of social norms (Giucci, 1993).

Under the radically disjunctive impact of the foreigner cosmos, the mental vocabulary of the settler effects a transcendental blocking of the difference, neutralizing the risk of the destruction of his own mythologic foundations for a cynical new outbreak of the pedagogical meaning and the missionary task. “The letters propose a state of things that is, also, justification of a movement to print itself in them, so that they find the way of effecting of their power” (Pécora, 2001, p. 47). The threat of the non-meaning strengthens an opposite influx, whose effects, locally managed by the Jesuitical order and the European artillery, assure the survival of the order of God and of the Word in the land of the devil and the naked bodies (Souza, 1986).

However, there is another model of framing that starts to be shaped in the 16th century. It is the humanist discourse, supplied especially by reports from the Huguenots and French travelers and whose emphasis on the natural freedom of the inhabitants of the tropics contrasts with the artificiality of the European society. The essay on the Brazilian cannibals written by Michel de Montaigne in the mid-16th century is one of the main examples of this gender. Here, the idealized image of the American savage is dynamized by the “strong literary conscience” of the writer and by the live desire “to violate the laws of the classic symmetry” (Ginzburg, 2007, p. 64-65). In Montaigne’s writing, the monstrous associated to the New World acquires mannerism aspects, being incorporated to the movements of a scriptural machine dedicated to disarranging the Apollonian pallor of the classic register. In this case, the value scale is inverted and the image that is offered in negative is the one of the civilized (rude, ambitious, cruel) European.

It does not seem to me extreme to judge such acts of cruelty as barbaric, but rather the fact of condemning such defects does not lead us to the blindness

concerning our fellows. I believe that it is more barbaric eating a live man than eating him dead; and it is worse to butcher a body among torture acts and torment and slowly burn it, or give it to the dogs and pigs, with the excuse of devotion and faith, as, not only we have read but saw it happening between countrymen neighbors; and indeed, this is much more serious than baking and eating a previously executed man (Montaigne, 1987, p. 262).

The picture, however, that was already complicated, for instance, by the uniqueness of a narrative like Andres Thevet's (França; Raminelli, 2009), begins to complicate even more from the 1580s, when the possibility of involvement in an effective colonial politics produces a split in the interior of the “Huguenot *corpus* on America”.

The positions assumed by Huguenots like Jean de Léry – expressed in his radical pessimism concerning the possibilities of conversion of the *Tupinambás* – or by Urbain Chauveton, Benzoni's translator – who denounces the atrocities committed on behalf of the Catholic cross in America without supplying an actual answer to the missionary urgency – tend to be revised and assumed, from now on, in the pro-colonialist argument (Daher, 2014, p. 398).

If the negative and positive charge of the polarity inverts between one case and the other, oscillating between the noble and the bad savage, the essentialist and simplifier homogeneity keeps polarized under the poles of the naivety and the perversion. The sign passes undisturbed from the primitive cannibal to the *noble savage*, remaining ontologically imprisoned to a platform where it is impossible to discern the opposites to an Archimedean axle of discursive homogenesis. Such discursive articulation is only split when the third term emerges, the smart Brazilian, the *amigo da onça*, the perspicacious *mestizo*, the *malandro*. We could assume that this oscillating term, this *Zé Pilintra*⁷, would hinder the totalitarianism and the logical-rhetorical homogenizations, except for the paradoxes of figures like the white-black, the mulatto, that reconstitute the totalitarian positions of good and evil. The history of the political idolatries and the Brazilian national heroes shows how much this country, formed by such a different people, needs unifying figures assumed as beneficial and, at the same time, maleficent. However, we cannot accept simplifications. Decolonizing, as a movement that hinders the subjugation of one people to another, implies fighting against type of discursive homogeneity and its consequent idolatries and polarizations.

The colonial framing operates in a way of analogical and homogeneous register, little by little resembling the image of the unknown either to the monstrous or to the child, lacking a Mother, producing the figural metaphysics of the West. Situated in the infancy of the humanity or the pure primitive bestiality, the American exteriority is being decoded by the rhetorical cleavage between sacred History and idolatry (Disney, 2010). The idolatry consists of the characters and practices resulting from the unawareness of the Book and indicates the situation corresponding to the (*gentios*) people stray from the Christian flock. It is necessary to mobilize a whole rhetorical-theological paraphernalia to convert the refusal of the civilized canons into the ghost of the philanthropic acceptance. When we understand idolatry as paradoxically iconoclast, in the extent that is subjects the believer to all kinds of invisible forces, such forces conjure. This can be especially observed in the recurring image of the Virgin Girl with Saint Anne. There is a certain axiomatic inversion, especially if we pay attention to the imaginary that shows the literacy power in the *Mater et Magistra* figure, while the Immaculate, either crowned or not, is always represented by a standing woman, in frontal pose, on the moon and clouds, surrounded by angels and, especially after the 17th century, without a veil on her head. Among *Oxum*, Lady of the Gold, *Conceição* and *Aparecida*, resulting from both entities, we have discursive scarcity, whose iconological leaps we detect in the absence of a figuration with typical African traces until the 20th century. These body-child-stars-clouds goddesses contrast with the imaginary of the girl and the mother, almost always seating, leaning side by side on a book.

We know how much the images can homogenize an ideal whose elements, without the imaginary colonial and the iconic propagation of the baroque, would not lead to unifications. For the definition and use of the words, as we see in the *Thesaurus*, there is, in every morphologic unit, the double register of a homogeneous meaning, whose lesson, for being inscribed in what is reproduced in terms of truth either in the writing or in the image of cult, proliferates globally. To the image not lexically described remains the devotion and the reproduction of a visage, within the canons and the attributes that had been secularly consecrated to it. The challenge to accede to the decolonized imaginary involves the suspension, the exit or the breaking of this double register. What happens to the visible and to the

liable to be said (and, consequently, to its substitutes in the image and the writing) when depolarizing the exercise of the enunciation and the pictorial gesture? Is it possible to escape the discursive homogenesis, both in verbal and visual terms, without incessantly reconfiguring the issue of the limits of the language and the ways of expression?



Figure 2 – Paola Zordan, *Conceição*, bricolage with print, satin and frame, 1994. Archive of the poetical productions of the research, 24 cm x 20 cm. Source: online⁸.

The Critique of the Negative Or the Influx of Transversal Knowledge

Even though here we will not address the issues of the limit of the language and its substances of expression, it can be highlighted, within a thesis that deals with this question, the exhaustion of the alterity in face of the cacophonies of the encounters and the insufficiency of the icons. Before that, we can assume the great encounter between the native of the Western continent with the navigator who considered himself the center of the world. This epicentric perception in relation to his language and culture makes that, initially, the social production of the American alterity by the colonizing discourse is marked by the omnipresence of the lack, on which we observe the need of the mother/matrix. The American savage is deprived of identifiable institutional marks and launched to the instinctive cenacle of the pure flow of the pulsions, in a clear mixture of styles. There is no apparent correspondence between the agglutinant majority of any signifier and the chaotic course of the American social relations. On the other hand, the discursive production of the ontological anarchy and the institutional lack strengths the narcissistic functioning of an identitarian axiomatic.

Under a heteroclit effect of astonishment, allure and terror, it is the European universalism that is strengthened, not without detours and disturbance, elaborating the images of the New World by means of artifices of negative projections, games of shades and figurations of absences. “The eye of the settler did not pardon, or hardly tolerated, the constitution of the different and his survival” (Bosi, 2009, p. 62). In the colonial encounter, the plurivocal and uprooting force of the pure difference is ontologically blocked and canalized (colonized) by a language device (audiovisual agency expressed in liturgical rites and the imaginary) that functions as a negative and phantasmatic receptacle. The “ideology of the lack” (Deleuze; Guattari, 2010, p. 85) twines minoritarian becomings that cover the American continent to the oppressed margins a teleologic model.

An aspect that the contemporary historiography did not stop registering and demonstrating by different methodological ways is the repressive and normalizing functioning of the imaginary strap that produces the image of the other under its identitarian and stylistic pressure in the context of the colonial encounter. It is exactly in this problematic level that the limit between the historical cut and the anthropological approach is drawn. The works of Pierre Clastres, for instance, insist on the point on which a thought of State neutralizes the immediately political immanence of regimes of the Amerindian seeing and saying, converting them into a simplified verse of negative variations. For the resonant effect of an epistemological trap, societies that keep, in their repertoire of political practices, particular ways to conjure the formation of the device of State, become the anachronistic figuration and the mode of survival potentially (conceptually) empty of a society *without* State (Clastres, 2003; 2004). Clastres saw in this trap a type of “neothology of the history” anchored in a fanatic continuism (Clastres, 2004, p. 150). From this register, it is formulated the historical-ethnographic variant of the “history of a long error”, through which the autarchic functioning or the “ontological self-determination” (Viveiros de Castro, 2015, p. 25) are confused and semantically interchanged for a precarious set of absences (economic, political, social, religious and, ultimately, ontological).

The usual narrative creates a model of discursive interface that makes the multiplicity of the conceptual imagination impervious to the disjunctive influx of the difference. Following the path opened by Pierre Clastres’s

work, against the narrative pettiness and the multiform reproduction of the “history of a long error”, we find the perspective of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari and the anthropology of Eduardo Viveiros de Castro. Situated in this anthropologic-philosophical perspectivist crossroad, thinking condenses and refracts in an exercise of permanent decolonization, refusing to make the “repertoire of the absences”, as Viveiros de Castro considers (2015, p. 26-27), and focusing on releasing the pure productivity of the desire from its social and psychic forms of subordination and repressive recontextualization, as Deleuze and Guattari wanted (2010).

Irreducible to the axiological vocabulary pertinent to the to “knowledge of the State” and to the “administrative sciences” of economy and sociology, the anthropology of Clastres and Viveiros de Castro, seconded by the political philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari, circumscribes the uniqueness of its intellectual procedure to an ethical dimension that consists of fighting in the genesis itself the issue of the inequality and the “epistemocentric reduction of the thought” (Viveiros de Castro, 2015, p. 25). In Clastres, fighting the inequality is to hinder the outbreak of the bad encounter, sad *affect* for Spinoza, that distributes the desire in a bifacial reality divided between the power and the submission, the command and the obedience, the tyranny and the servitude. The primitive territorial machine is characterized by the collective effort involved in the maintenance of an undivided social being that refuses and conjures the sectional experience of the State (Clastres, 2004). Clastres claims that the undivided being of the primitive societies is preexisting and first in relation to the unnameable encounter with the divisible foundation of the device of State (Clastres, 2004).

Although they follow closely the track opened by the anthropology of Clastres, Deleuze and Guattari see, in this postulation of an anteriority and in the configuration of the historical preexistence of the primitive social machine in relation to the State, a confusion carried through by the anthropologist between “actual independence” and “formal exteriority”.

Pierre Clastres, in order to deepen this issue, seemed to deprive himself of the means to solve it. He tended to make of primitive societies a hypostasis, a self-sufficient entity (he insisted a lot on this point). He converted the formal exteriority into actual independence (Deleuze; Guattari, 1997, p. 22).

Due to a different reading of the historical and ethnographic data (and perhaps even to a slight unevenness in the statement of the issue), Clastres claims the actual *preeminence* of the one and indivisible being of the primitive societies in relation to the State, while Deleuze and Guattari insist on the *coexistence* and on the *concurrency* between the two social formations in a “*perpetual field of interaction*” (Deleuze; Guattari, 1997, p. 24), retreating the advent of the State until the confines of pre-history. Instead of the anteriority and the actual ideality, Deleuze and Guattari claim the problematic coexistence between trends in regimen of formal exteriority. This allows us to claim that the animism persists even when over coded by the totalizing image of God. That is, the homogenizing discursivity is a coextensive effect to the precariousness of a derisory word. The State is nothing but a guardian of treasures, device *in situ*, that keeps supplies and written material. The exchanges, the currencies, the entities of cult and other traces that will compose the capital in its multiple and imprecise forms happen in the edges of the state apparatuses. The colonial world describes a territory in expansion, without clearly defined state domains and political limits, but with current commercial relations, exchanges, robberies and traffics. New types of agency, new languages and new enunciations are created next to this imprecise territoriality, of which what can be more highlighted as study object are written texts, images and architectural buildings whose importance inside a community allows them to resist to time. Images, texts and sentences that have proliferated and constituted layers of beliefs and knowledge, which, the poetics, when unpeeling all these plateaus that stratify them, takes off substance for the creation of languages. Languages not always liable to decoding, except for those who made the codes.



Figure 3 – Cover of *Arte da Lingua Brasilica*. Source: online⁹.

Art, Language and Future

What nowadays is called art is intricate in the perspectivation and fragmentation of multiple codex. Art marks the pace of a plan of consistency proper to it, without which the language could not be supported. An evident stylistic, imagetic and transductive miscegenation, lived today, shows that a decolonizing process seems to be irreversible, despite the fact that our culture remains colonized by secular codes and languages in becoming. As a list of procedures, art, used in the same sense as knowledge, in its colonial sense assigns a series of products, despite coming from productions whose results also intellectual demand more than technical domain and its rules. Long ago, when it illustrated representative discourses, art composed the contours of abstract deities: royal shields, the mother church, the death, the judgment and the eternal life. Art was the historicizing element through which knowledge and thought becomings were maintained. By *enSignar*, that is, when giving signs, art produces forces to try to educate the body and to canalize the desire in words and images. When imbricated in colonizing processes, art reproduces discourses, assumes fashions, promotes figures, articulates not necessarily monetary powers, colonizing in another way, out of the concept of colonization.

When visually demonstrating the signs of the issue via the cover sheet of *A arte da língua brasilica*, from the priest Luis Figueira, published in

1621 (Figure 3), as well as the already mentioned *Tesoro* dedicated to the Virgin Mary, to understand and use the *Guarani* language, dated of 1639, from the priest Antonio Ruiz, we have some clues of this agency of indigenous and Latin languages, catechizing missions and devotion to the one who welcomes, *dá colo* [comforts], feeds and colonizes. Among a series of other documents, these point to the discrepancy between the situation of a language and its codification in accordance with the semiotic norms and regimes of those who come from outside. And this type of welcoming happens in a new language being structured. Our Lady of Conceição, without veils, with the waxing moon to her feet and angels around her, engraved in the cover of *Tesoro de La Lengua Guarani*, allows to assume that the manual drawing, anonymous and mundane, apt to be transcribed in diverse matrices (wood, stone or metal), is similar to the paintings with the same subject, especially the series *Inmaculada Concepción* from the painter Bartolomé Esteban Murrillo (1617-1682), an exponent of the Spanish baroque. Such productions of the 17th century show the continuities and leaps between styles (expressed by the cuts of the engravings and reliefs carved in wood) and themes that haunt the colonial productions, especially in the imaginary reproduction and Chinese-like elements present in the building of the reign of Dom João V (1706-1750).

Situating the 18th century as the apex of the colonization, the landmark of the relation between the territory currently said Brazilian and the Crown of Portugal, we can understand the secular lapse as perpetuation and reconfiguration of the catechizing strategies of the beginning of the 17th century. The Johannine library of Coimbra surpasses, in *Tesoros*, the theater-temple of the popular liturgy. The 18th century creates divisions between the *enlightened* or educated and the uncultured, establishing a truth above all bookish, with separations of class and *status* never observed before. The correct language becomes based on the grammatical rule, not used anymore only amongst those who dealt with it, now becoming a hashmark of class and a passport to social ascension. A way of life based on books and texts, of which we cannot escape anymore, despite the capitalistic depreciation of the intellectual work demanded in this aspect, is established producing distinction marks. When erecting a temple, the art aggregates, promotes idols, communicates, creates the ordinary. When cracking the truths that the ordinary finds on the words and the images, the art,

iconoclastically, hinders a clear communication and creates discomforts: the Virgin, like the forest not yet explored by the man, is its Queen.

In a post-colonialist way of life, sensitive to the non-European signs, foreigner to the world of the scripture and its registers, the stability of the models is not perpetuated. The homogeneity of the discourse starts to be broken in face of the recognition of a morphologic unity between the bodies in a space that makes possible the actual relations of becomings. Jaguar, ounce, feathered bird, big snake: becomings also expressed in the female elusive figure on the moon, in her mantles and children, *anima mundi*. The becoming, in the condition of non-specific relation between beings, but between ontological, animal, vegetal, mineral states and forces, makes possible the translation of an allegory in power, a form both terrifying and comforting, in the typical tension of what the baroque, conceptually, comes to be both as pictorial and literary style. It is about thinking the relations between history and the present, between the image and its secular persistence. What Viveiros de Castro shows as “bigger displacement” in what, since *The Anti-Oedipus*, defines the concept of becoming, explains the transition of intraspecific personological horizons to the interspecific description-world-wide desire (Viveiros de Castro, 2015, p. 187). This transition happens in a trans-specific mixture, which is expressed in an economy of *affects* immanent to the inhuman force of the desire. Regarding this force, we can only see how it is made present in the imagetic discursivity, with allegories found both in literature and iconography, even though the relations are always imprecise, and our overlapping can only be founded on what is repeated. They are the symbioses between distinct scales and realms, which we can organize in a series of similar forms, fastened by sociopolitical alliances and marking ambiguousness of differences. In the establishment of continuities between words, images and meanings, out of the relations between only two terms, it is possible to open the alliance of its social, cultural setbacks and also of the intensive counter naturalness. What it is initiated in terms of alliance, when producing agencies more complex than those implying two variables, enables a series of functions whose variables can only be expressed in polyhedrons with several faces. Being a set to knowledge never separate and distinct of something carried through corporeally, the art is easily inferred from the limitations of the language and the mother tongues of a time when the language, with its

proper rules and structuration, imposes. When folding the language, the art makes of the words another one of its multiple matters, thus making a body from a language.

Notes

- ¹ Available at: <<https://archive.org/details/tesorodelalengua00ruiz>>. Accessed: 10 December 2017.
- ² The Curt Nimuendajú Digital Library – *línguas e culturas indígenas sul-americanas* [South-American languages and aboriginal cultures], has its collection of documents available at: <<http://www.etnolinguistica.org/>>. Accessed: 10 December 2017.
- ³ We will not address the specific studies of the Imaginary. We only highlight, in the scope of its research, the recurrence of the images of Our Lady of Conceição, being one of the files of the present research the finding of paintings resulting from the Spanish iconography and pictorial stylistic, observed in the sacristies of the Convent of Our Lady of Carmo, in Salvador/Bahia, the Church of the *Ordem Terceira de São Francisco* in São João Del Rey/Minas Gerais, and in the main altarpiece of the *Matriz of Santo Antônio* in Laguna/Santa Catarina, situated in the productions and repercussions of the Marian dogma in the 19th century.
- ⁴ Here we bring one of the images (Figure 2) of this poetic, shown in the collage that initiated the project *Idolatria Iconoclasta* [Iconoclastic Idolatry], which, besides the research that we assumed as pictorial and epistemological, relating the visual production to the systems of thought, presents a list of collages, paintings, sculptures and performances that have as matter the figures of saints. Some of the productions of the project, whose authorship converges to one from this text, can be visualized in: <<https://plus.google.com/collection/op9FCE>>. Accessed: 10 December 2017.
- ⁵ As it can be observed in the paintings of Mestre Manuel of Costa Athayde, especially in the Our Lady of Assunção with African traces, with bronze-skin color, in the ceiling of the dome of the main chancel of the Our Lady of Rosário Church in Mariana/Minas Gerais.
- ⁶ According to the author, it is in the writings of José de Acosta that the priest Manuel da Nóbrega searches inspiration for his stories and methods of conversion of the Brazilian *gentios*.

- ⁷ A popular male figure, represented in white suit and hat and a red shirt, an entity that remembers the *carioca malandros*, players, odd-jobbers and *samba* musicians. It is a type of *Exu* from the African-Brazilian pantheon, more specifically from the *Umbanda*, which syncretizes African gods with all types of disincarnate spirits.
- ⁸ Available at: <<https://www.paolazordan.xyz/cortes>>. Accessed: 10 December 2017.
- ⁹ Available at: <https://pt.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ficheiro:A_Arte_da_L%C3%ADngua_Bras%C3%ADlica.jpg>. Accessed: 10 December 2017.

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