

The construction of the Rio De Janeiro in the nineteenth century travel literature

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A construção do Rio De Janeiro na literatura de viagem oitocentista

Vinícius Craneck Gagliardo

Universidade Estadual Paulista –
UNESP, Franca, SP, Brasil.

viniciusgagliardo@yahoo.com.br

Abstract

This paper aims to map the construction of the Rio de Janeiro in the nineteenth century travel literature. Starting by the analysis of what are the travel accounts and how such descriptions allow the formulation of a certain idea of Brazil that began to circulate in the Atlantic World, I intend to scan which image of the Rio de Janeiro was built in the narratives of those foreigners. For this, I tried to leave the quotes “speak for themselves”, other words, I tried to restore the voice to these individuals, with the expectation to rebuild - even partially - and question what foreign travelers, after all, had to say about the events that they were involved.

Resumo

Este artigo tem por objetivo mapear a construção do Rio de Janeiro na literatura de viagem oitocentista. Partindo da análise sobre o que são os relatos de viagem e como tais descrições permitiram a formulação de uma certa ideia de Brasil que passou a circular no Mundo Atlântico, pretendo esquadrihar que imagem do Rio de Janeiro foi construída nas narrativas desses estrangeiros. Para isso, procurei deixar as citações “falarem por si próprias”, ou seja, procurei restituir a voz a estes indivíduos, com a expectativa de reconstituir – ainda que parcialmente – e interrogar o que os viajantes estrangeiros, afinal, tinham a dizer sobre os acontecimentos em que estavam envolvidos.

Keywords

Travel Literature; Rio de Janeiro; Nineteenth Century.

Palavras-chave

Literatura de Viagem; Rio de Janeiro; Século XIX.

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HOLANDA, Sérgio Buarque de. "A herança colonial - sua desagregação". In: _____. (dir.). História geral da civilização brasileira: o Brasil monárquico. São Paulo: Difusão Européia do Livro, tomo II, v. 1, 1965, p. 12-13. [Our Translation]

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CARELLI, Mario. Culturas cruzadas: intercâmbios culturais ente França e Brasil. Campinas: Papirus, 1994, p. 31. [Our Translation]

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DENIS, Ferdinand. Brasil. Belo Horizonte: Ed. Itatiaia/São Paulo: Ed. da Universidade de São Paulo, 1980, p. 66. [Our Translation]

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BICALHO, Maria Fernanda. A cidade e o Império: o Rio de Janeiro no século XVIII. Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 2003, p. 112.

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MARTINS, Luciana de Lima. O Rio de Janeiro dos viajantes: o olhar britânico (1800-1850). Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar Editor, 2001, p. 14. [Our Translation]

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FRANÇA, Jean Marcel Carvalho. Viajantes estrangeiros no Rio de Janeiro joanino: antologia de textos (1809-1818). Rio de Janeiro: José Olympio, 2013, p. 7-8.

The transfer of Dom João to the New World resulted in major impact on life in Rio de Janeiro. Accompanied by his court, the monarch arrived in the Brazilian capital, on March 8, 1808, consolidating it as the most important city of nineteenth-century Brazil. With the opening of the ports, decreed by Lusitanian prince on the first days after his arrival in the tropics, the movement and residence of foreigners in Brazil has considerably expanded, which increased the disclosure of Brazil pictures in Europe, due to growing amount of travel reports on the country published there. This is because, after the opening of the ports, foreign travelers promoted a "new discovery"¹ of Brazil, since, until 1808, Portugal restricted the entry and stay of foreigners in their colonial domains, using the so-called "secrecy policy"² as way to protect its possessions, leading to some isolation from the rest of the world. In this sense, until the opening of the ports, Portugal sought, on the one hand, prohibit the entry of foreigners in Portuguese America and, on the other, prevent the disclosure of any information about its overseas territory in order to ensure its domination over the colony. The French Ferdinand Denis, who arrived in Brazil in 1816, highlights the transformation in the influx of visitors and in the propagation of news of Brazil occurred after the end of the so-called "secrecy policy" of colonial times and the beginning of the "new discovery", result of the opening of the ports:

Moreover, in space of one hundred and fifty years, only Pison, Barléu and ancient travelers of the sixteenth century can be consulted on its commercial status, its geography and productions: an absurd policy prohibits foreigners to approach the Brazil, and only remains about it the brief references that reaching us from performing travels around the world, as vague as the information of the more hidden Eastern Empire. [...] In a few years, things have changed a lot, no doubt, and the Brazilians are the first to apply for the lights, which were denied them by a government that sought leave them in ignorance. From the beginning of the present century [XIX], Brazil has been visited in all directions by the most active and educated travelers: [...] we seek to make known the present state of so beautiful region.³

However, despite the metropolitan "secrecy policy" be considered by Portugal one of the main conservation strategies of its overseas territory, it was constant, during the first three centuries of colonization, the landing of foreign vessels in ports of the main Brazilian coastal cities.⁴ Indeed, as stated by Luciana de Lima Martins, "at a time when sailing boats were the only means of transport to travel overseas, the scale in Rio de Janeiro made up almost mandatory"⁵ Passing by the South American ports, the foreigners who arrived in Brazil watched and recorded it in their diaries, correspondences, notes and travel books. With the publication of these descriptions of their experiences and impressions in the tropics, the visitors presented on the European continent pictures of what was supposed to be the Portuguese America, its people and customs, forming a territory until then very unknown for the Old World.

Before the coming of Dom João, the descriptions of Brazil built in travel narratives were usually brief, about one or two cities, considering that the circulation and residence foreign here were restricted.⁶ Ac-

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FRANÇA, Jean Marcel Carvalho. A construção do Brasil na literatura de viagem nos séculos XVI, XVII e XVIII. Rio de Janeiro: José Olympio Editora; São Paulo: Editora da UNESP, 2012, p. 242. [Our Translation]

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Ibidem, p. 242. [Our Translation]

ording to Jean Marcel Carvalho França, who analyzes the descriptions of Rio de Janeiro, Salvador and Recife made by travelers between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, the reports of these adventurers about the colonial Brazil “curiously do not vary much, and this in two ways: do not change when we compare the descriptions of the three cities and do not vary when we put side by side descriptions of the same city produced at different times”.⁷ In general, in travel books, the images of these three major Brazilian cities presents them:

[...] with many fortresses, with good ports, with a reasonable trade, with straight streets, but unpaved - or poorly paved - and dirty, with a few and modest public buildings, with many and adorned churches, with small and little showy houses with 2 or 3 floors, with a prodigious number of monasteries and, above all, picturesque and fertile surroundings.⁸

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In the sense that there was a certain social place that should be occupied by white settlers.

Moreover, the contours of this narrative about Brazil built up until 1808 delimiting the Portuguese colony as a land of extremes: on the one hand, there is nature, lush and wonderful, consisting of a green sharp vegetation, a number of rivers which provides abundant amount of fresh water, a abundantly fertile soil and a climate that, while hot, was considered less demanding than European; on the other side, however, there is the settler, marked by laziness, ignorance, jealousy, dishonesty, vanity and libidinous behavior, whose characteristics would be a hindrance to the potential of the territory. Added to this image, referring to culturally white settlers,⁹ the large number of slaves who were transiting in the cities, cities that often considered mediocre and timid, gave an even more barbaric aspect to the daily life of colony.¹⁰

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FRANÇA, Jean Marcel Carvalho. Op. Cit., p. 283-284.

However, after the Court landing, that pattern of brevity of the narratives changes during the nineteenth century, due to the greater freedom that travelers started to have after the opening of the ports: with the suspension of laws that prohibiting the foreign presence, Europeans were able to land without major problems, staying for a longer time in tropical lands. This is because, as pointed out by Karen Macknow Lisboa, “with the arrival of the Portuguese court to Brazil, in 1808, not only the ports opened to the ‘friendly nations’, but also the door to the admission of foreigners”.¹¹ Staying longer in Brazil, foreigners could describe it in more details, making longer reports about their impressions in the New World; as stated by Sérgio Buarque de Holanda:

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LISBOA, Karen Macknow. A nova Atlântida de Spix e Martius: natureza e civilização na Viagem pelo Brasil (1817-1820). São Paulo: Hucitec, 1997, p. 29. [Our Translation]

[...] the curiosity so long repressed can now expand without hindrance and, not infrequently, with the caring support of the authorities. In those few years it was as if Brazil had dawned again in the eyes of outsiders, full of miraculous grace and superb promises that it was exhibited to its older visitors.¹²

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HOLANDA, Sérgio Buarque de. “A herança colonial - sua desagregação”. In: _____. (dir.). História geral da civilização brasileira, p. 12-13. [Our Translation]

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LIMA, Oliveira. D. João VI no Brasil. Rio de Janeiro: Topbooks, 1996, p. 85.

This “new discovery” promoted by “outsiders” to which Sérgio Buarque refers was facilitated by one of the first steps taken by Dom João after landing: beyond the opening of the ports, the monarch encouraged the entry of foreigners in Brazil by granting them the right to land dates, just as it was given to Portuguese subjects.¹³ In addition

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FALCÓN, Francisco; MATTOS, Ilmar Rohloff de. “O processo de independência no Rio de Janeiro”. In: MOTA, Carlos Guilherme (Org.). 1822: Dimensões. São Paulo: Perspectiva, 1972, p. 304-305.

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MOTA, Carlos Guilherme. "Europeus no Brasil à época da Independência: um estudo". In: *Ibidem*, p. 60.

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MARTINS, Luciana de Lima. *O Rio de Janeiro dos viajantes*, p. 12.

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MINDLIN, José. "Viajantes no Brasil: viagem em torno de meus livros". In: *Revista de Estudos Históricos*, Rio de Janeiro, v. 4, n. 7, 1991, p. 35.

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MARTINS, Luciana de Lima. *O Rio de Janeiro dos viajantes*, p. 23. [Our Translation]

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TORRÃO FILHO, Almicar. *A arquitetura da alteridade: a cidade luso-brasileira na literatura de viagem (1783-1845)*. 2008. Tese (Doutorado em História). Instituto de Filosofia e Ciências Humanas, Universidade Estadual de Campinas, Campinas, SP, 2008, p. 42.

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LISBOA, Karen Macknow. *A nova Atlântida de Spix e Martius*, p. 47. [Our Translation]

to these incentives, the fact is that the opening of the ports and the suspension of laws that prohibiting the stay of foreigners in its territory made the outside world turned its attention to Brazil and internationalize its territory.¹⁴ With the increase of business transactions and the market invasion by foreign products and traders, especially the British, it has also grown, in various other levels, exchanges with the rest of the world: Brazil was invaded not only by traders, but was also explored everywhere by artists and scientists looking for new elements to their works and theories, as well as visitors of all kinds and of different nationalities, motivated by the possibility of knowing a reality idealized with an air of exoticism.¹⁵ Foreigners also came to Brazil as members of expeditions designed to uncover the territory and as participants of around the world travels, which combine commercial, scientific and colonialists interests with theological, moral and aesthetic reasons.¹⁶ Just like that, what can be verify is that were many reasons that brought visitors to the tropics: some came out of curiosity, others to do business; there are those who remained here for longer or shorter periods, such as scientists, pirates, adventurers, artists, missionaries, politicians, diplomats, soldiers, mercenaries, naturalists, merchants and those who just passed through Brazil on their way to the East or Africa, publishing, after, in their native lands, what they found remarkable or exotic.¹⁷

Reflecting on the works of these foreigners who visited Brazil in the first half of the nineteenth century, Luciana de Lima Martins points out that whoever makes the witnessed scene in landscape - understood as an object capable of description - is the observer himself, who selects, lights and shades the elements that comprise it, giving it meaning. In view of this, the author states that the act of assigning meaning to describe, both in words and by the iconography, "can be, itself, understood as a transcultural process, and not merely as a translation of field experiences".¹⁸ In this sense, the encounter with the unknown New World and the consequent construction of this landscape in travel literature by Europeans take form through a continuous process of transculturation, in which transform and resignify both peoples. The attribution of senses, thus, assumes that the perception of the unknown, of otherness, of other assumes the existence of the known, of itself, of myself as a reference point. Thus, the European commitment to exploring other worlds, especially from the eighteenth century with travels and scientific expeditions, which intensified during the nineteenth century, would be the result of an awareness that the understanding of itself would require an understanding of the other, in other words, that the formation of its identity would derive from the otherness in the encounter with other people.¹⁹ According to Karen Macknow Lisboa:

[...] the account of the traveler, although it is structured around the observation of a declared foreign culture, turns out to provide ample evidence of the origin culture. [...] Therefore, while the traveler speaks of the place visited, reworks his own place of origin, remaining in constant dialogue with his references, which can be reviewed, denied or repeated. The narrative about the "other" is also, after all, the narrative about "himself".²⁰

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PAGDEN, Anthony. *European Encounters with the New World: from Renaissance to Romanticism*. New Heaven/London: Yale University Press, 1993, p. 21.

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PAGDEN, Anthony. *European Encounters with the New World*, p. 26.

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TORRÃO FILHO, Almicar. *A arquitetura da alteridade*, p. 43.

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LEITE, Miriam Lifchitz Moreira. *Livros de viagem (1803-1900)*. Rio de Janeiro: UFRJ, 1997, p. 17.

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SÜSSEKIND, Flora. *O Brasil não é longe daqui: o narrador a viagem*. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1990, p. 114. [Our Translation]

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LEITE, Miriam Lifchitz Moreira. *Livros de viagem*, p. 10. [Our Translation]

That is what stands out Anthony Pagden, in *European encounters with the New World*, when he analyzes the intellectual consequences and the European sensibility resulting from the encounter with the Americas. From what Pagden calls the “principle of attachment”, the author states that “what is familiar [...] is used to attach an unknown action to another familiar”. Also according to the author, “what follows from an attachment act is an act of recognition”.²¹ Therefore, to reflect on the journey to Americas of the naturalist Alexander von Humboldt, between 1799 and 1804, Anthony Pagden states “our eyes and our scientific understanding move from the known to the unknown, not the opposite. Having made the attachment, we name the unknown due to the known”. In the case of Humboldt, Pagden asserts that he immediately identifies that the rocks of the Venezuelan coast are recognizably the same as from his homeland. Humboldt, then, “attach to an entirely unknown vegetation family names”.²² Thus, the Rio de Janeiro in travel literature must be understood inside a dynamic in which the European’s understanding on the New World is directly intertwined with the image they concurrently build on themselves and on their homelands.

The travel literature, in view of this, would not reflect or describe only the diversity, but seeks to encode it at the point to make it intelligible to approach the other to the European world. Much more than settling in the distinctive features of the differences, the traveler could give intelligibility to otherness to describing the different in similar ways as himself, either through comparisons, metaphors or allegories. Thus, the otherness becomes translated, reorganized and adapted according to the specificities of the traveler’s world.²³ Which means that the descriptions of Rio de Janeiro in these travelers’ narratives, besides formulate an idea of the New World, refer also, and too much, to the own European territory, building, concomitantly, the image that foreigners had about the Old Europe. Thus, from the objective of analyzing the Rio de Janeiro in the nineteenth-century travel literature derives also, in a sense, a reflection on the construction of Europe itself in these writings.

Despite the experiences lived in their countries of origin, experiences that drove the foreigners’ eyes to attribute senses to the New World, travelers saw themselves as attentive observers of the local reality, those who should exercise the art of thinking it detaching from their imaginary world and directing their attention to the world of the other that there was. However, they did so from a planning, objectives and steps that should be systematized in a final memoir.²⁴ According to Flora Süssekind, “on these reports, the look which usually desires itself as impartial, dispassionate, waiting for what comes, [...] becomes, from the early of the expeditions, in an interested observation with itinerary, objectives and ways to see known by heart”.²⁵

The visitors, as foreigners, since they were not part of the visited social group, they might have better conditions to see the contradictions and inconsistencies of everyday life than a local inhabitant, who took them for granted and, therefore, had more difficulty to perceiving them. As indicated by the researcher Miriam Lifchitz Moreira Leite, “for being someone who is ‘outsider’ and is there ‘in passing’, without the intention of being accepted by the group and in order to report to his countrymen what he could realize, the traveler becomes

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FRANÇA, Jean Marcel Carvalho. A construção do Brasil na literatura de viagem nos séculos XVI, XVII e XVIII, p. 45.

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Ibidem, p. 85-86.

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LEITE, Miriam Lifchitz Moreira. Op. Cit., p. 21-22.

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FRANÇA, Jean Marcel Carvalho. A construção do Brasil na literatura de viagem nos séculos XVI, XVII e XVIII, p. 286. [Our Translation]

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The notion of discourse used here holds up on the theoretical framework raised by the reflections of the French philosopher Michel Foucault, who understands the discourse, roughly speaking, as “practices that systematically form the objects that speak of”. FOUCAULT, Michel. A arqueologia do saber. Rio de Janeiro: Forense Universitária, 2007, p. 55. [Our Translation]

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It is necessary here a methodological explanation to the reader: let the quotes “speak for themselves” does not mean that the documents have been used uncritically. Instead, the selection, the snipping and the organizing of numerous epoch testimonials are the result of a careful methodological work, whose aim is to reconstruct – even if partially - and examine what foreign travelers, after all, had to say about the events they were involved. This is a methodological option very specific, which resulted in the choice of an exhaustive description of the landscape painted by these visitors, even if this description may appear to have been accomplished without criticism or interpretation, since the quotes of the documentation are not often accompanied by a subsequent analysis. It is worth to alert, however, that the criticism of the documentation and the interpretations and analyzes take place in how I organize the documentation throughout the text, in other words, in the order and the choice of what to present and how to present to the reader.

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What is still means that I tried to analyze the travel literature not as a series of information that, properly interpreted by the historian, would enable rebuilding, both in fullness and accuracy, the aspects of the time to which they refer. That’s because I believe in a partial and incomplete history, where it would be possible only to evaluate, through the selected documentation - travel narratives - a small portion of what we still can know about how particular groups - in this case, the foreign travelers - built the reality for themselves. VEYNE, Paul. Como se escreve a história; Foucault revoluciona a história. Brasília: Editora Universidade de Brasília, 1998, p. 26-27.

an alert and privileged observer of the visited group”²⁶

Among the travel books, some are correspondence sent to family or friends; others are travel journeys, with no intention of a later publication or that would become the basis for the narrative that would be written about the trip; there are also memoirs, commercial and tourist guides, scientific reports and drawings and prints albums. It can be said, indeed, that this travel literature dialogued with the readership of the Old World; more than that, it was the primary source for the development of vocabulary about America and the reformulation of what own Europe said about itself.²⁷ Such stories have become a major contributor in the construction process of America in the imaginary of the European continent, since, from the mid-sixteenth and early seventeenth century, drastically increased the production and publication of travel books in several European languages, reports that found an increasingly receptive audience, anxious for information about the still incognito New World. The travel literature have become, even, quite appreciated by European intellectuals, who started to spread in their writings ideas of travel literature.²⁸

In addition to the European public, the reports also gained readers, especially during the nineteenth century, among Brazilians. Circulating in the press and among the literates, who had the narratives in high esteem, the travel books worked - first in relation to Europe, but then in relation to Brazil - as an educational and a cultural diffusion vehicle.²⁹ In Brazil, it is worth remembering:

[...] how that counterpoint, marked in xenon narratives, between the lush and lavish nature of the tropics and the low quality of its inhabitants marked, deep and persistent, the image that Brazilians, from the first decades of the nineteenth century, began to build about themselves and their country. Remind, also, that such “pictures of Brazil” that we have seen, a little uplifting, can be found here, contemporaneously, a little everywhere, sometimes with inverted signals – the negative of narratives, read as positivity - as in the work of Oswald de Andrade, sometimes with hints of naive exoticism, as in the novels of Jorge Amado, sometimes, also, as indication of a singular society, like in the famous studies of Gilberto Freyre. In short, remember as the Brazilian culture itself is still imbued with these images, or rather, these “truths” slowly built by Europeans in the sometime extremely popular travel narratives, and that the actions and expectations of Brazilians in relation to themselves and the country resent until today of their power.³⁰

In this sense, the aim here is to describe the image of Rio de Janeiro and its population built by foreign travelers in travel literature produced during the nineteenth century, specifically in relation to the supposed Europeanizing transformations that have or not took place in the city after Dom João arrival. However, to restore the voice to these people – even if very partially - it is necessary that the reader keeps in mind that I try not to investigate any possibility of likelihood of events and ideas narrated, in the sense that which changes have been effectively felt in Rio de Janeiro, or even reconstruct the vision of a supposed ideal observer - foreign travelers. My intention here is certainly another: what I propose is to describe the production of a worldview with a legitimate claim, made by a significant number of

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WILCKEN, Patrick. Império à deriva: a corte portuguesa no Rio de Janeiro, 1808-1821. Rio de Janeiro: Objetiva, 2005, p. 198.

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FRANÇA, Jean Marcel Carvalho. Viajantes estrangeiros no Rio de Janeiro joanino, p. 8-9.

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LEITE, Miriam Lifchitz Moreira. Livros de viagem, p. 15.

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MINDLIN, José. "Viajantes no Brasil: viagem em torno de meus livros". In: Revista de Estudos Históricos, p. 48.

38
Cf. LUCCOCK, John. Notas sobre o Rio de Janeiro e partes meridionais do Brasil. Belo Horizonte: Itatiaia, 1975.

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Cf. WIED-NEUWIED, Maximiliano de. Viagem ao Brasil nos anos de 1815 a 1817. São Paulo: Companhia Editora Nacional, 1940.

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Cf. DENIS, Ferdinand. Brasil.

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Cf. SAINT-HILAIRE, Auguste de. Viagem pelo distrito dos Diamantes e litoral do Brasil. Belo Horizonte: Itatiaia, 1974. SAINT-HILAIRE, Auguste de. Viagem pelas províncias do Rio de Janeiro e Minas Gerais. Belo Horizonte: Itatiaia, 2000.

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Cf. DEBRET, Jean Baptiste. Viagem pitoresca e histórica ao Brasil. São Paulo: Martins, 1972, 3 v.

43
Cf. SPIX, Johann Baptist von; MARTIUS, Carl Friedrich Philipp von. Viagem pelo Brasil. São Paulo: Melhoramentos, 1976, 3 v.

44
Cf. GRAHAM, Maria. Diário de uma viagem ao Brasil. Belo Horizonte: Itatiaia, 1990.

45
Cf. RUGENDAS, Johann Moritz. Viagem pitoresca através do Brasil. São Paulo: Martins, 1976.

46
Cf. WALSH, Robert. Notices of Brazil in 1828 and 1829. London: Frederick Westley and A.H. Davis, Stationers' Hall Court, v. 1, 1830.

47
SAINT-HILAIRE, Auguste de. Viagem pelas províncias do Rio de Janeiro e Minas Gerais, p. 37. [Our Translation]

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WIED-NEUWIED, Maximiliano de. Op. Cit., p. 23. [Our Translation]

individuals who passed through Rio de Janeiro, in other words, map a discourse³¹ that was intended true in a social game match with another series of discourses - sometimes similar, sometimes different. For this, I tried to leave the quotes "speak for themselves",³² in other words, I tried to restore the voice of these individuals from the belief that the document is able to show how a particular season socially defined what was true or not for itself.³³

The travelers, as I said, driven by the suspension of laws that prohibited their presence, began to land more easily and stay for a longer time on Brazilian soil, becoming to describe in a thoroughly way the Rio de Janeiro. There was a sort of flood of foreigners in Brazil: travelers came to spend weeks, months and, sometimes, years in Brazilian cities, especially in Rio de Janeiro, which quickly grew in importance in the international scenery.³⁴ So, with the increasing of number of visitors and the time of their stay in the New World, starts a period of publications of works with extensive descriptions of the country, much richer in details. In fact, such a change in the format of travel literature, short for longer, should be perceived as a process with an interaction between the two types, not just as an immediate rupture between the pattern of reports from the colonial period and the descriptions more vast.³⁵ Beside these long and detailed models of narratives that gained ground in the nineteenth century, still lived short narratives, fruit of fast passages by Brazil and which, almost always, kept the same topical of reports published before the transfer of Dom João, namely: exuberance of the natural landscape, the deficiency of urban contours and the poor quality of the settlers. However, despite these formal differences, all travelers are concerned with describing Brazil, observing the fauna, the flora and the social life, both rural and urban, and reflecting, by comparison to their native lands, on the visited group's everyday.³⁶

If during the first three centuries of colonization the common theme of the accounts of the Rio de Janeiro was, on the one hand, the prodigality of natural scenery, prodigality that contrasted, on the other hand, with the precariousness of the urban landscape and the decay of the settler, the nineteenth century opened a new descriptive standard built in travel books, which started to exalt the Europeanization of the city from the moment it has sheltered the prince Dom João and his court. These travel descriptions were designed by "apologists"³⁷ visitors, which, usually, also were those who stayed longer in Brazil and, therefore, built long and detailed accounts of the years that they were under the tropical sun. Among them, stands out John Luccock (1808-1818),³⁸ Maximiliano de Wied-Neuwied (1815-1817),³⁹ Ferdinand Denis (1816-1821),⁴⁰ Auguste de Saint-Hilaire (1816-1822),⁴¹ Jean Baptiste Debret (1816-1831),⁴² Johann Baptist von Spix e Carl Friedrich Philipp von Martius (1817-1820),⁴³ Maria Graham (1821-1823),⁴⁴ Johann Moritz Rugendas (1821-1824)⁴⁵ and Robert Walsh (1828-1829).⁴⁶ All described a Brazil, and specifically the city of Rio de Janeiro, as a territory that Europeanize from the arrival of the Portuguese court, as a "Paris of the tropics", as it was said at the time.

The French naturalist Auguste de Saint-Hilaire, in 1816, writes: "next to Rio de Janeiro we can judge ourselves in the vicinity of one of the largest cities in Europe".⁴⁷ A year before, in 1815, Prince Maximilian said:

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SPIX, Johann Baptist von; MARTIUS, Carl Friedrich Philipp von. Viagem pelo Brasil, v. 1, 1976, p. 41-42. [Our Translation]

[...] About twenty thousand Europeans, who came from Portugal with the king, settled in the city, then naturally resulting that the customs of Brazil were replaced by Europeans. Improvements of every kind were accomplished in the capital. It lost much of its originality, becoming today more like European cities.⁴⁸

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DEBRET, Jean Baptiste. Viagem pitoresca e histórica ao Brasil, v. 3, 1972, p. 4. [Our Translation]

A little later, the “apologists” visitors Johann Baptist von Spix and Carl Friedrich Philipp von Martius build, in their writings, the image of a Rio de Janeiro that modernized with the arrival of the royal family:

[...] who gets here convinced to find this part of the world, discovered only since three centuries, with an entirely rude, violent and unbeaten nature, might judge, at least here in the capital of Brazil, out of it; the influence of civilization and culture of the polite and Old Europe did so much to remove from this point of the colony the characteristics of American savagery and give advanced civilization imprint. Language, customs, architecture and influx of industrial products from all over the world give to the square of Rio de Janeiro an European aspect.⁴⁹

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MAWE, John. Viagens ao interior do Brasil. Belo Horizonte: Itatiaia, 1978, p. 82. [Our Translation]

The French visitor Jean-Baptiste Debret, who remained in Brazil for fifteen years, also highlights a territory where “the presence of the Court provoked major improvements.”⁵⁰

However, point out that the “apologists” travelers presented a Rio de Janeiro who walked in the direction of civilization does not necessarily means that many exotic aspects and nothing similar to the modernization standards of cities such as Paris and London, European epicenters of civilization at that time, were no longer highlighted in their accounts of the capital of Brazil. Instead, these references are also common, as in the narrative of John Mawe, who lived in Brazil between 1807 and 1811. Mawe says that “as a result of its low status and the filth of the streets, the Rio de Janeiro cannot be considered healthy.”⁵¹ Despite this view of the delay of Rio de Janeiro, the adventurer also adds that some improvements were being made, noting that:

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Ibidem, p. 86. [Our Translation]

[...] since the arrival of the court, measures were taken to make a complete renovation in seminars and other public education institutions; and the prince regent, in his solicitude for the welfare of his subjects, zealously sponsored all projects, to develop in them the taste for useful knowledge.⁵²

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LUCCOCK, John. Notas sobre o Rio de Janeiro e partes meridionais do Brasil, p. 90. [Our Translation]

The English merchant John Luccock, during the years he was in Brazil, between 1808 and 1818, recorded that:

[...] it is not surprising that there are foreigners who, moved by the irrefutable testimony of their different senses, consider Rio as the filthiest gathering of human beings under heaven. No wonder they fear that [...] will become a center of pestilence.⁵³

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Ibidem, p. 381-382. [Our Translation]

However, the same Luccock also highlights “the government’s wisdom to move from Portugal to Brazil [...]”. The transformation, as we

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MINDLIN, José. "Viajantes no Brasil: viagem em torno de meus livros". In: Revista de Estudos Históricos, p. 48.

56

LUCCOCK, John. Notas sobre o Rio de Janeiro e partes meridionais do Brasil, p. 24-25. [Our Translation]

57

FRANÇA, Jean Marcel Carvalho. Viajantes estrangeiros no Rio de Janeiro joanino, p. 104-105. [Our Translation]

58

SAINT-HILAIRE, Auguste de. Viagem pelo distrito dos Diamantes e litoral do Brasil, p. 125. [Our Translation]

59

KIDDER, Daniel Parish. Reminiscências de viagens e permanências no Brasil, compreendendo notícias históricas e geográficas do Império e das diversas províncias. São Paulo: Martins, v. 2, 1972, p. 3. [Our Translation]

60

LUCCOCK, John. Notas sobre o Rio de Janeiro e partes meridionais do Brasil, p. 177.

have said repeatedly, brought a wonderful effect on Brazil".⁵⁴

Likewise it is possible to identify "apologists" visitors as those who usually remained for a long time in Brazil and wrote more extensive travel books on the Rio de Janeiro, it also possible to detect certain descriptive standard in those shorter narratives about the carioca city: most of the time, it highlight a city with predominantly exotic, backward and narrow aspects, extending to the nineteenth century the topical of reports written during the colonial period. Thus, during the nineteenth century, two views of the Rio de Janeiro were built by two types of travelers who have coexisted: on the one hand, the "apologists", whose descriptions, resulted of an extensive observation practiced for years in Brazil, presented in details a city in constant progress and civilization; on the other hand, the "critical" travelers, who, after a quick visit to the New World, described, in a few lines, a Rio de Janeiro linked to the world of disorder and barbarity.⁵⁵ However, the "apologists" travelers visited Brazil, in the first half of the nineteenth century, fewer than the "critical" and, consequently, bequeathed a smaller amount of travel narratives. Still, the "apologists" visitors, such as those mentioned above, are the authors of the reports most quoted by historiography that studies the period, besides having the largest number of translations and editions of their works in Portuguese.

But even among these two descriptive models of narratives, where the city features conflict with each other, an image remains unshaken since the publication of the first travel report after the passage of Cabral: the beauty of the natural scenery of the tropics. By the pen of practically each and every foreigner who turned to writing about Brazil, Brazilian natural landscape is the first instigation object, which is shown as a charming, magnificent and majestic, composed by exuberant, wild and wonderful vegetation. So says the English visitor John Luccock, in 1808, when he directed his look for the first time to the Guanabara Bay:

[...] as the Sugarloaf moves away to the north of the ship, the throat opens, and through it appears the calm immensity of what generally is regarded as the most beautiful bay in the world. [...] But it is in vain to attempt to describe; the feather cannot imitating the pencil, neither the pencil the nature, in sceneries such as this. The competent judges think, however, that it forms a picture of magnificence and beauty almost matchless.⁵⁶

The beauties of the natural world would be such large that describe them was not considered very easy task. The doctor Clarke Abel, who was in Rio de Janeiro in 1816, also report, as Luccock, pencil inability to imitate nature: "even the brush of a passionate and talented painter could not transmit for those who have never seen with their own eyes the grandeur of the place".⁵⁷ The French naturalist Auguste de Saint-Hilaire describes, with the same pleasure and admiration, his entry into the port at March 17, 1818, when returned from a stay in Minas Gerais:

[...] After a 15-month journey, I was finally fortunate to review the Rio de Janeiro; this town, whose position is always to the foreign object of the most lively admiration, and whose port, to avail myself of the expressions of Southey, is one

of the largest, most comfortable and most beautiful in the world.⁵⁸

In 1837, Daniel Parish Kidder reiterates the grandeur of nature, pointing out the generosity of the Creator with the Brazilian soil, another constant theme in the narratives:

61
FRANÇA, Jean Marcel Carvalho. Op. cit., p. 104. [Our Translation]

62
Ibidem, p. 106. [Our Translation]

[...] The first time you enter a port as the Rio de Janeiro, brand undoubtedly a new era in our existence; therefore it is necessary to be very little fond of nature so that thereafter not go to pay homage to the beauty and diversity of creation, as well as the highest manifestations of the power and greatness of the Creator.⁵⁹

The admiration and fascination for nature correspond to the landscape novelty in the eyes of adventurers, since the tropical beauties are described as unprecedented and incomparable to the European landscape.⁶⁰ Similarly, the expectation for the meeting with the South American land encompasses the whole imagination of travelers, who design into the unknown tropical territory images of an exotic world. Clarke Abel, by the way, points out: “we found ourselves in front of the Cabo Frio, and all those who had never been in a South American port stood to imagine what they would find in the New World”.⁶¹ Abel still concludes saying that “when entering into the port of Rio de Janeiro, [the traveler] experiences an indescribable pleasure, because he notes that there is no possibility of their expectations being contradicted”.⁶²

63
GARDNER, George. Viagem ao interior do Brasil, principalmente nas províncias do Norte e nos distritos do ouro e do diamante durante os anos de 1836-1841. Belo Horizonte: Itatiaia, 1975, p. 20. [Our Translation]

However, it is not only in comparison with Europe that Brazilian landscapes would be more beautiful and admirable. This is what reports the Scottish naturalist George Gardner, who lived in Brazil between 1836 and 1841:

64
ADALBERTO, Príncipe da Prússia. Brasil: Amazônia-Xingu. Brasília: Senado Federal, 2002, p. 19. [Our Translation]

[...] Impossible to express the feelings that dominate the observer while his eyes behold the beautifully varied scenery that shows the entrance to the harbor, scenery perhaps unrivaled on earth, and where nature seems to have exhausted all their energies. I have visited since then many famous places of beauty and magnificence, but none of them left me in mind equal impression.⁶³

65
CONDER, Josiah. The modern traveller. A popular description, geographical, historical, and topographical, of the various countries of the globe. Brazil and Buenos Aires. London: Printed for James Duncan; Oliver and Boyd, Edinburgh; M. Ogle, Glasgow; and R. M. Tims, Dublin, 1825, vol. 1, p. 100.

Prince Adalberto of Prussia complements, in 1842, which Gardner claimed a few years ago about the incomparable Bay magnificence:

66
CONDER, Josiah. The modern traveller. A popular description, geographical, historical, and topographical, of the various countries of the globe. Brazil and Buenos Aires. London: Printed for James Duncan; Oliver and Boyd, Edinburgh; M. Ogle, Glasgow; and R. M. Tims, Dublin, 1825, vol. 1, p. 100.

[...] Even Constantinople entranced me as the first impression of Rio de Janeiro! Neither Naples, or Istanbul or any other place on earth that I know, not even the Alhambra can be measured in magical and fantastic charm to the mouth of the bay of Rio de Janeiro! Unveil before our eyes wonders that we did not know there was on Earth. Now it was clear to us that once the discoverers of these lands gave them the name “New World!”⁶⁴

67
KOTZEBUE, Otto von. A new voyage round the world, in the years 1823, 24, 25 and 26. London: Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley, New Burlington Street, v. 1, 1830, p. 33.

The natural beauty of Rio de Janeiro, image by which European and American adventurers have shown themselves fully in love, “is represented by all travellers to be extremely picturesque”.⁶⁵ After all, as Otto von Kotzebue tells, in 1823, “beautiful as this country always appears to na European eye, it has perhaps no scene so strikingly splen-

68
WIED-NEUWIED, Maximiliano de. Viagem ao Brasil nos anos de 1815 a 1817, p. 19. [Our Translation]

69

ARAGO, Jacques Étienne Victor. Narrative of a voyage round the world, in the Uranie and Physicienne corvettes, commanded by Captain Freycinet, during the years 1817, 1818, 1819 and 1820; on a scientific expedition undertaken by order of the French Government. London: Treuttel and Wruetz, Treuttel, Jun. and Richter, 30, Soho-Square, 1823, p. 55.

70

SCHLICHTHORST, Carl. O Rio de Janeiro como é: uma vez e nunca mais. Contribuições de um diário para a história atual, os costumes e especialmente a situação da tropa estrangeira na capital do Brasil. Brasília: Senado Federal, 2000, p. 26. [Our Translation]

71

Ibidem, p. 27. [Our Translation]

72

WIED-NEUWIED, Maximiliano de. Viagem ao Brasil nos anos de 1815 a 1817, p. 23. [Our Translation]

73

FRANÇA, Jean Marcel Carvalho. A construção do Brasil na literatura de viagem nos séculos XVI, XVII e XVIII, p. 242. [Our Translation]

74

Idem. Viajantes estrangeiros no Rio de Janeiro joanino, p. 61. [Our Translation]

did and pituresque as that which presentes itself within this Bay".⁶⁶ Upon entering the bay of Rio de Janeiro, on October 16, 1812, the English surgeon James Prior also describes the picturesque of natural landscape:

[...] is only after passing this point that the beautiful local landscape shows all to the visitor's eye: a huge expanse of water, dotted here and there with arms that look like rivers, groups of green islands, variously mountains and valleys able to delight the most demanding imagination, composing a scene of varied and picturesque beauty.⁶⁷

As Prior and many other European visitors, Prince Maximilian of Wied-Neuwied reports the picturesque of nature as soon as he sees the bay of Rio de Janeiro for the first time, in 1815:

[...] we are near the bar which leading to the royal city of Rio de Janeiro; a portion of small islands, some surprising by their strange shapes, rise from the water surface, joining the mass of mountains in the distance, which is a very picturesque view.⁶⁸

The mountain ranges are often one of the points of greatest admiration by travelers. Frenchman Jacques Étienne Victor Arago, who arrived in Rio de Janeiro on December 6, 1817, points out that "the Sugar-Loaf, an enormous giant, contracts it, and by its nakedness forms an admirable contrast with the rich scenery of the neighbouring mountains".⁶⁹ The mountain of Órgãos was also another place that caught the attention of Europeans, as pointed out by Carl Schlichthorst, who was in Brazil between 1824 and 1826, saying that such mountain "stands in fantastic shapes, with green islands at its feet".⁷⁰

But as stated by the same Schlichthorst, the beauty of nature didn't have as her only objective to serve for the admiration and contemplation by those privileged to had the opportunity to watch her, but also charmed by the amenities provided to the residents of São Sebastião:

[...] I think there is not in the world another place where nature adapt so well to the needs of a dense population like here. Vast port protected from storms by high frame of mountains; the regular change of the winds, which makes the entry of ships easily and without danger; granite rocks in the middle of the city, forming great and inexhaustible treasure of construction materials; plenty of clear water, downing from the close mountains to the valleys, through which the city winds with its giant arms; and those hills covered with virgin forests, which provide abundant supply of wood for centuries, having in between fertile fields and such a power productive soil that the common products of European gardens can be planted and harvested six to eight times a year.⁷¹

For most of the travel narratives of the first half of the nineteenth century, made by cited "critical" travelers, the perfection of the natural world that surrounded São Sebastião did not extend to the town built by men. Except those "apologists" descriptions that refer to "improvements of every kind [that] were carried out in the capital";⁷² the Rio de Janeiro of the first half of the nineteenth century was described by travelers as a territory of characteristics very similar to the Rio de

75
ROBERTSON, John Parish; ROBERTSON, William Parish. *Letters on Paraguay: comprising an account of a four years' residence in that republic, under the government of the dictator Francia*. London: John Murray, Albemarle Street, v. 1, 1838, p. 170.

76
POHL, Johann Emanuel. *Viagem no interior do Brasil: empreendida nos anos de 1817 à 1821 e publicada por ordem de sua majestade o imperador da Áustria Francisco Primeiro*. Rio de Janeiro: INL, v. 1, 1951, p. 76. [Our Translation]

77
TEMPLE, Edmond. *Travels in various parts of Peru, including a year's residence in Potosi*. London: Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley, New Burlington Street, v. 2, 1830, p. 502.

78
GARDNER, George. *Viagem ao interior do Brasil*, p. 20. [Our Translation]

79
Conder publicou seu relato em 1824, a partir da compilação de narrativas de outros viajantes.

80
LEITHOLD, Theodor von; RANGO, Ludwig von. *O Rio de Janeiro visto por dois prussianos em 1819*. São Paulo: Companhia Editora Nacional, 1966, p. 26. [Our Translation]

81
LEITHOLD, Theodor von; RANGO, Ludwig von. *O Rio de Janeiro visto por dois prussianos em 1819*. São Paulo: Companhia Editora Nacional, 1966, p. 26. [Our Translation]

82
Ibidem, p. 137. [Our Translation]

83
FRANÇA, Jean Marcel Carvalho. *Viajantes estrangeiros no Rio de Janeiro joanino*, p. 74. [Our Translation]

84
SCHLICHTHORST, Carl. *O Rio de Janeiro como é*, p. 27. [Our Translation]

85

Janeiro of colonial times, in other words, a town with a very precarious contours, which meant that “for an European, the intervention that the settler was promoting on the nature of the tropics, modest and mediocre intervention, mattered less than the great work that nature had done alone”.⁷³ Which means that in the eyes of foreigners, the city would never be comparable to the natural beauty of the region; it was, on the contrary, a nasty spot in the middle of the splendor of the tropical landscape. So says James Prior during his visit to Rio de Janeiro in the year 1812, concluding that “the nature and the Portuguese acted in the opposite way: all that did is gorgeous and grand, while the works of these are poor and petty”. Still states, the same English, that the magnificent outline of the natural landscape could not count on worst possible city finish, but “luckily, that is the redemptive power of the natural scenery, [...] of countless romantic landscapes, [...] that we tend to forget the neglect and bad taste of the Portuguese works of art”.⁷⁴ Such contrast between the work of nature and of man was subject to several travel relations, as in the writings of John Parish Robertson and William Parish Robertson, who arrived in Rio de Janeiro in October 1808:

I liked neither the climate nor the people of that place; and I soon found, that all fertile and beautiful as Nature had made the country, there was something more than that required to counterbalance the many *désagréments* connected with the unattractive town, and its unsocial citizens.⁷⁵

In 1817, Johann Emanuel Pohl also states that “the inner city does not correspond to the picturesque impression that its panorama causes. The building style of the houses is uniform, the pavement is poor and the street lighting is poor”.⁷⁶

In addition to establishing the contrast between the natural landscape and the city, the impressions mentioned just above are beginning to submit the reasons of the dissatisfaction with the town. However, before detailing these reasons, let us look at some other statements of the same kind that will help make up the framework of the problems mentioned by travelers. The first of them came from the pen of English Edmond Temple in 1826:

The magnificent scenery of this noble harbour fully equalled all that I had ever heard in its praise, and far surpassed any thing that print or panorama is capable of representing. On landing, however, I was not much surprised at finding na ultra-marine Portuguese city to be a mean, dirty town, with bad hotels, and bad accommodation.⁷⁷

Ten years later, the Scot George Gardner added:

[...] viewed on board in the morning, the city had an imposing appearance by its position and the numerous houses and whitewashed churches; but, looked at closely, fading the illusion. The narrow and squalid streets, the song of thousands of Negroes, the emanations of the provisions stores, gave an impression that could be anything but pleasant.⁷⁸

Thus, as stated by Josiah Conder,⁷⁹ what is clear is that “far more

86
PFEIFFER, Ida Laura. A woman's journey round the world, from Vienna to Brazil, Chili, Tahiti, China, Hindostan, Persia, and Asia Minor. London: Printed by Petter, Duff, and Co. Playhouse Yard, Blackfriars, s/d, p. 24.

87
CONDER, Josiah. The modern traveller, v. 1, 1825, p. 125-126.

88
Ibidem, p. 126-127.

89
FRANÇA, Jean Marcel Carvalho. Viajantes estrangeiros no Rio de Janeiro joanino, p. 62. [Our Translation]

90
COLTON, Walter. Deck and port; or incidents of a cruise in the United States frigate Congress to California: with sketches of Rio de Janeiro, Valparaiso, Lima, Honolulu, and San Francisco. London: Partridge & Oakey, Paternoster Row, 1851, p. 118.

91
SCHLICHTHORST, Carl. O Rio de Janeiro como é, p. 45. [Our Translation]

92
PFEIFFER, Ida Laura. A woman's journey round the world, p. 19.

has been done for this beautiful portion of the new world by nature, than by man".⁸⁰

Among the many reasons given by travelers to compose the image of so discredited city, some of them set out just before, there is the tropical climate of Rio de Janeiro. Cavalry Captain Theodor von Leithold, in 1819, is categorical: "the heat is unbearable".⁸¹ His nephew, also a Prussian named Ludwig von Rango, who accompanied Leithold traveling to Brazil, said in a letter of December 15, 1819, that "the heat was so strong during the day that I spent it in a kind of daze. The night is a little better; but I was not enjoy a single day that you could say cool. I live to sweat and do not know the most satisfaction to breathe a truly comforting breeze".⁸²

Already Lt. John Shillibeer, which passed through the city of Rio de Janeiro in March 1816, points out that the port of Rio de Janeiro, if "was not the oppressive heat, it would be considered one of the best in the world. There is, indeed, a sea breeze, that begins to blow around midday, enough to cool a bit the atmosphere and make the heat bearable".⁸³ But even with this "breeze that cools the heat of the atmosphere",⁸⁴ as also referred to her Schlichthorst in 1824, visitors who come to Rio de Janeiro constantly emphasized the evils caused by rising thermometers. It is what tells Johann Emanuel Pohl in 1817: "the heat, although slowed, here, by the showers and winds, raises, however, a wide variety of disease states in the human body, for example, frequent headaches, inflammation in the brain, liver and ears, and heat stroke".⁸⁵ Reiterates the same opinion the Austrian Ida Laura Pfeiffer, in 1846, to emphasize that she found "the climate and the air exceedingly oppressive".⁸⁶

The climate of São Sebastião was not unpleasant to the traveler only by the high heat granted by the tropics. Another feature constantly referenced by the European and North American visitors was the excessive moisture found in Rio atmosphere: and it was this combination of moisture with heat, plus the location of the city, that would result in an extremely unhealthy climate; as stated by Josiah Conder:

Rio de Janeiro has the reputation of being one of the more unhealthy cities of Brazil. [...] The climate is hot and moist: high and thickly-wooded mountains, the narrow entrance of the bay, and the numerous islands, impede the free passage of the wind.⁸⁷

The same English still adds:

Among the causes which have been thought to render Rio unhealthy, are, its low situation, which is scarcely above the level of the sea, and the filthiness of its streets, while the waters that descend from the mountains behind it, encompass it with stagnant marshes. The marshy flats on the seaside difuse, during the time of the ebb, na intolerable stench.⁸⁸

In 1812, another Englishman, James Prior, presents an overview of the unsanitary conditions of the city:

[...] the people do not see and cannot be seen: the houses are surrounded by mountains, rain ruthless and abundantly, which makes the streets filthy, the air has poor circulation and impure vapors continuously accumulate over the city,

POHL, Johann Emanuel. Viagem no interior do Brasil, v. 1, 1951, p. 81. [Our Translation] <?>
ARAGO, Jacques Étienne Victor. Narrative of a
93
ARAGO, Jacques Étienne Victor. Narrative of a
voyage round the world, p. 54.

94
PFEIFFER, Ida Laura. A woman's journey
round the world, p. 19.

95
EWBANK, Thomas. A vida no Brasil. Belo
Horizonte: Itatiaia, 1976, p. 163. [Our
Translation]

96
Bingley publicou sua narrativa em 1820,
por meio da compilação de outros relatos de
viagem.

97
BINGLEY, William. Travels in South America
from modern writers, with remarks and
observations; exhibiting a connected view
of the geography and present state of that
quarter of the globe. London: Printed for John
Sharpe, at Haile's Juvenile Library, London
Museum, Piccadilly by C. Whittingham,
Chiswick, 1820, p. 309.

98
EWBANK, Thomas. Op. Cit., p. 75-76. [Our
Translation]

99
MALERBA. A corte no exílio: civilização e
poder no Brasil às vésperas da independência
(1808 a 1821). São Paulo: Companhia das
Letras, 2000, p. 129-130.a

100
SEIDLER, Carl. Dez anos no Brasil: eleições sob
Dom Pedro I, dissolução do Legislativo, que
redundou no destino das tropas estrangeiras e
das colônias alemãs no Brasil. Brasília: Senado
Federal, 2003, p. 62-63. [Our Translation]

in the form of a cloud of brown color. In addition to all this, there is the fact that the soil is swampy and the people are often affected by intermittent fevers and senders.⁸⁹

The map of the unhealthiness of Rio de Janeiro, referenced by travelers, consists, therefore, of the following points: heat, humidity, improper location of the city and the accumulation of water and filth in the streets and surroundings.

The stagnant water accumulation in Rio's ways, by the way, is one of the points that most concerned travelers. Walter Colton, who arrived in Rio de Janeiro in December 1845, talks about a time he was in the Ouvidor Street "when a black cloud, sailing down from the Corcovada peak, rolled out the lake, which lay in its bosom. The street was immediately filled with a flood of suficiente depth to float a family canoe".⁹⁰

According to foreigners, the floods were due, among other reasons, by the fact that the city is situated in a "very irregular space".⁹¹ Besides the location, the Austrian Ida Pfeiffer, in 1846, warns another reason for the floods that affected the town: "one of the most disagreeable things in Rio de Janeiro is the total absence of sewers. In a heavy shower, every street becomes a regular stream, which it is impossible to pass on foot".⁹² Such difficulty for moving through the streets because of the floods is constantly referenced by European adventurers in their narratives, as also are mentioned some ways to overcome this obstacle. This is what describes Jacques Arago, in 1817:

In wet weather there are absolute pools in the public places; and unless a person have na itinerary of the paths that are not inundated, I doubt whether he would be able to extricate himself from the sloughs that cover the other passages. Officious Negroes post themselves on such occasions at the corners of the streets, and for the moderate sum of eight or tem sous, carry you across in their arms, which are as black with mud as their natural colour, and set you down on the other side.⁹³

Besides, because of flooding, "it is requisite to be carried over by Negroes",⁹⁴ as reaffirms Ida Pfeiffer in 1846, the American Thomas Ewbank, passing through Brazil in the same year the Austrian, says otherwise to disengage such annoyance:

[...] this afternoon, three water showers overflow the streets. Men and boys, with umbrellas, rode in Negroes shoulders, and, behind the Francisco de Paula church, a horse was used to carry pedestrians across the street; to not wet their legs, they went to their knees on the saddle.⁹⁵

Floods that Rio de Janeiro's streets were subjected brought direct implications for the city's unsanitary. It is what counts William Bingley:⁹⁶ "in wet weather also numerous puddles were formed in the streets, which, in consequence of the heat, emitted the most putrid exhalations".⁹⁷

In addition to the combination of the accumulation of water on roads and high temperatures, a lot of dirt from the streets was considered another huge problem for the health of the city. The concentration of waste was a result of an old habit of the population, as previ-

101
EBEL, Ernst. O Rio de Janeiro e seus arredores em 1824. São Paulo: Editora Nacional, 1972, p. 75. [Our Translation]

102
WILKES, Charles. Voyage round the world, embracing the principal events of the narrative of the United States exploring expedition. Philadelphia: Geo. W. Gorton, 1849, p. 31.

103
FRANÇA, Jean Marcel Carvalho. Viajantes estrangeiros no Rio de Janeiro joanino, p. 122-123. [Our Translation]

104
FRANÇA, Jean Marcel Carvalho. Viajantes estrangeiros no Rio de Janeiro joanino, p. 40. [Our Translation]

105
SCHLICHTHORST, Carl. O Rio de Janeiro como é, p. 28. [Our Translation]

106
RUGENDAS, Johann Moritz. Viagem pitoresca através do Brasil, p. 110. [Our Translation]

107
PFEIFFER, Ida Laura. A woman's journey round the world, p. 16.

108
SEIDLER, Carl. Dez anos no Brasil, p. 67. [Our Translation]

ously announced, coming from colonial times: due to lack of sewers, the houses had a vat that was reserved to accommodate all the filth of the home, vats that should be emptied at specific points of the beaches. So says Thomas Ewbank, in 1846:

[...] here are no sewer or latrine - or toilet bowl - even when there are, attached to buildings, courtyards and spacious gardens. The use of closed barrels is universal, even in the rural suburbs. Carried on the heads of slaves, they are emptied every night in certain parts of the bay, in such a way that walking on the streets after ten o'clock at night is not safe or pleasant. In this matter the Rio is equals Lisbon and similar to what already was Edinburgh.⁹⁸

However, although it is expected that the garbage was dumped only in certain places, such practice was often not respected in Rio de Janeiro. The moment the rain fell, the slaves poured the contents of the tanks in the streets, letting the flood in charge of cleaning, waiting for the debris were sent to sea by rainwater.⁹⁹ Then, of course, the dirt was piled up in every corner of the city. Such is the impression reported by the German Carl Seidler, after stepping on Brazilian soil in 1826:

[...] with this I come to another great evil that, with great sorrow of the most important organs, anyone is exposed in all the streets, public squares and especially on the beach, at all hours of the day and night. It is that the residents of Rio are very indulgent and therefore do not like facilities to adequate distance [...]. However much one has spoken of this disorder, the police, here called imperial, but it cannot call commendable, failed to put stop to this disgusting habit. For example, it's nothing extraordinary that Negroes in charge of transporting from the houses to the beach all sorts of waste, in turn prove to be too indulgent to bring the overflowing vase on long walk to the sea, and at the first corner turn out all the crap and go away.¹⁰⁰

In addition to this disgusting habit of the population, which contributed so much to mucking the city, the streets of Rio de Janeiro had another problem: the ditch that ran in its middles. These trenches, which had the task of assisting the flow of water and filth out of the city territory, lived constantly blocked, interrupting the continuous flow of what should be expelled and, thus, incorporating even more junk. In 1824, Ernst Ebel points out that in the streets "runs through a ditch that collects the dirt, and only torrential and beneficent rain can wash them".¹⁰¹ Some time later, Charles Wilkes, American who arrived in Rio soil in November 1838, added: "the gutters are in the middle of the streets, with a stream of water which emits a smell by no means agreeable".¹⁰²

According to foreign visitors, the dirt of Rio de Janeiro also bothered by the fetid odors exhaled in every corner of the capital. In 1816, Clarke Abel highlights the dirt and the stench of Rio's streets to report that "when I assert that in large part of the city I regretted have a nose, I fear I did not give an exact idea of how nauseating is the smell that exudes from the filth of streets".¹⁰³ Another Englishman, James Justinian Morier in his brief stay of 15 days at Rio de Janeiro in 1810, also presents a filthy and deleterious city:

Pigs are in abundance, including those of a horrible race, like dogs without fur; [...] They are seen in groups, seemingly without owners, rummaging the

109
LEITHOLD, Theodor von; RANGO, Ludwig von.
O Rio de Janeiro visto por dois prussianos em
1819, p. 12. [Our Translation]

garbage from the streets.

For us, English, truth be told, the filth of São Sebastião and its inhabitants is quite unpleasant.¹⁰⁴

110
EBEL, Ernst. O Rio de Janeiro e seus arredores
em 1824, p. 59. [Our Translation]

111
SCHLICHTHORST, Carl. O Rio de Janeiro como
é, p. 28. [Our Translation]

112
ROBERTSON, John Parish; ROBERTSON,
William Parish. Letters on Paraguay, v. 1, 1838,
p. 140.

113
TOUSSAINT-SAMSON, Adèle. Uma parisiense
no Brasil. Rio de Janeiro: Editora Capivara,
2003, p. 74. [Our Translation]

114
REYNOLDS, Jeremiah. Voyage of the United
States frigate Potomac, under the command
of commodore John Downes, during the
circumnavigation of the globe, in the years
1831, 1832m 1833, and 1834; including a
particular account of the engagement at
Quallah-Battoo, on the coast of Sumatra; with
all the official documents relating to the same.
New York: Published by Harper & Brothers, n.
82 Cliff-Street, 1835, p. 38.

115
MATHISON, Gilbert Farquhar. Narrative of a
visit to Brazil, Chile, Peru, and the sandwich
Islands, during the years 1821 and 1822;
with miscellaneous remarks on the past and
present state, and political prospects of those
countries. London: Printed for Charles Knight,
Pall Mall East, 1825, p. 8.

116
EWBANK, Thomas. A vida no Brasil, p. 73. [Our
Translation]

117
Ibidem, p. 73. [Our Translation]

118
BRACKENRIDGE, Henry Marie. Voyage to
Buenos Ayres, performed in the years 1817 and
1818, by order of the American government.
London: Printed for Sir Richard Phillips and Co.
Bride-Court, Bridge-Street, 1820, p. 19-20.

119
WILKES, Charles. Voyage round the world, p.
31.

And it's not only live animals - like these pigs digging up the trash in Morier description - that disliked foreigners. Schlichthorst, in 1824, exposes another facet of an extremely noxious city, where "dead horses and dogs still stay where they fell".¹⁰⁵ Even the painter Johann Moritz Rugendas, who came to Rio de Janeiro in 1821 and described in his narrative some of the "upgrades" enabled by the arrival of the court, said that "streets cleaning is fall short of desired, at the point of to see in places most frequented, sometimes during fully days, dogs, cats and even other dead animals".¹⁰⁶

The town squares are also recurrently described as place where garbage and waste are accumulated, even those that would be main, as the Largo do Paço, where was located the Imperial Palace. The visitor Ida Pfeiffer said, in 1846:

The square before it (Largo do Paço), its only ornament a plain fountain, is extremely dirty, and serves at night as a sleeping-place for a number of poor free Negroes, who, on getting up in the morning, perform the various duties of their toilet in public with the most supreme indifference.¹⁰⁷

Carl Seidler shares the same opinion of Ida Pfeiffer on the main city square. He tells us, in 1826, that "even the Largo do Paço, although more or less paved, is covered with grass and, all the time, even in the strongest heat, so full of dirt of all kinds, which there just you could make a bad idea about the monarch's love of his subjects and vice versa".¹⁰⁸

The disenchantment with Rio squares was such that the German Theodor von Leithold said in 1819 that "in addition to these main squares [Largo do Paço and Rocio], there are others smaller that have nothing special, so it does not deserve, here, reference".¹⁰⁹ Another German, Ernest Ebel also demonstrates its dissatisfaction with local squares in his testimony, given in 1824:

[...] now we go along the beach or the pier. The square that we meet is filled to the walls of articles offered for sale, all kinds of wood, bananas, grains, cassava, beans, etc. There prevails an unbearable smell by such filth that in it accumulates, because in Rio there is no sewerage or latrines; everything that comes out of the houses here are partly discharged by Negroes in the sea, for the tides take away what they achieve.¹¹⁰

As reported above by Ebel, the beaches were, in the eyes of foreigners who visited Rio de Janeiro, another point of dissatisfaction, whose cause is attributed to those wastes that were released there. Thus, if the city was a place where "the sewers are dumped in beaches and public squares",¹¹¹ as Schlichthorst says, nothing more than expected to find in travel books the image of an extremely deleterious coast. Let us see two statements about it: the first, come from the pen of John

120
BRACKENRIDGE, Henry Marie. Op. cit., p. 19.

121
ARAGO, Jacques Étienne Victor. Narrative of a voyage round the world, p. 54.

122
GARDNER, George. Viagem ao interior do Brasil, p. 21. [Our Translation]

123
SEIDLER, Carl. Dez anos no Brasil, p. 58. [Our Translation]

124
FRANÇA, Jean Marcel Carvalho. Viajantes estrangeiros no Rio de Janeiro joanino, p. 112. [Our Translation]

125
EBEL, Ernst. O Rio de Janeiro e seus arredores em 1824, p. 12. [Our Translation]

126
FRANÇA, Jean Marcel Carvalho. Op. cit., p. 41. [Our Translation]

127
Ibidem, p. 129. [Our Translation]

128
Ibidem, p. 90. [Our Translation]

129
SCHLICHTHORST, Carl. O Rio de Janeiro como é, p. 138. [Our Translation]

Parish Robertson and William Parish Robertson, who came to Rio de Janeiro in 1808 ends:

The beach was covered with the offal of a huge city, in which there is literally no police, and where everything eatable turns to immediate putrefaction. This offal, with endless quantities of fish and vegetables which had become putrid before they could be sold in the market, was alternately laved up upon the beach, and drawn back again to the sea by the receding surge.¹¹²

The second statement, prepared by French Adele Toussaint-Samson, who arrived in São Sebastião in 1849 and lived under tropical heat for about twelve years, it is also very striking when it comes to the unhealthiness of Rio's waterfront:

[...] finally, the sailing vessel docks; here we come. Negroes jump into the water and raise me in his sturdy arms to put me on the ground, because the edges of the bay are nothing but infectious vessel, where debris of every kind rot exhaling nauseating emanations. This was our first disappointment. These beaches, which by far appears to us so beautiful and so fragrant, was the receptacle of the city's filth.¹¹³

But back to the streets of Rio de Janeiro, which travelers constantly referred to them as "dirty"¹¹⁴ or "filthy"¹¹⁵, case of Jeremiah N. Reynolds and Gilbert Farquhar Mathison, who visited the tropics in 1831 and 1821, respectively. However, the unhealthiness of public parks was not the only feature highlighted by foreigners, who still constantly complained that "the streets are narrow".¹¹⁶ The American Thomas Ewbank, in 1846, taking as an example the Rua da Alfândega, important route of Rio de Janeiro, said that it "has only five and a half meters from one wall to another, overall width in all other parts of the city. Some of the streets exceed this average, while others are simple alleys".¹¹⁷ Henry Brackenridge highlighted, in 1818, that the streets would be so narrow that two houses, situated one facing the other, "which approach so near, that two persons might almost shake hands across the street; probably the ancient Moorish taste".¹¹⁸ Besides narrow, the streets were also described as "badly paved"¹¹⁹ and "without side-walks"¹²⁰. That's what attest Jacques Arago, who arrived in Brazil in 1817, and George Gardner, who settled in the New World between 1836 and 1841, pointing out, respectively, that "many of the streets are not paved, and others so wretchedly, that it would be better if they had been left untouched"¹²¹, and that "beyond narrow and dirty, the roads are also too bad pavement and worse concreted, although the city is closely surrounded by mountains with the most beautiful granite".¹²²

However, almost nothing called more attention from foreigners in Rio's streets than the massive presence of slaves who transited through them, which in the eyes of visitors, further intensified the lack of European standards of manners and civility in the city. A large number of Negroes shocked adventurers who landed in Brazil, like the German Carl Seidler, who, in 1826, while he see a number of chained slaves, he did not hesitate to point out: "the first impression of life in Rio de Janeiro was highly unpleasant and revolting; It destroyed all idyllic dreams as rain of manna poured on our heart still seasick".¹²³ Slaves were so numerous in the city that, in the words of Clarke Abel,

130
EBEL, Ernst. O Rio de Janeiro e seus arredores em 1824, p. 98. [Our Translation]

131
Ibidem, p. 13-14. [Our Translation]

132
COLTON, Walter. Deck and port, p. 88.

133
CONDER, Josiah. The modern traveller, v. 1, 1825, p. 102.

134
FRANÇA, Jean Marcel Carvalho. Viajantes estrangeiros no Rio de Janeiro joanino, p. 88. [Our Translation]

135
SCHLICHTHORST, Carl. Op. Cit., p. 46. [Our Translation]

136
SEIDLER, Carl. Dez anos no Brasil, p. 67. [Our Translation]

137
SCHLICHTHORST, Carl. O Rio de Janeiro como é., p. 56-57. [Our Translation]

“one visitor unaware of the slave trade could be led to think that the city is inhabited by slaves and their masters are sporadic residents”.¹²⁴ Sharing the same opinion, Ernest Ebel, in 1824, eight years after the passage of Abel said: “stranger it feels landing. Instead of white, just saw black, half-naked, to make an infernal noise and exhale highly of-fensive odor to the smell”.¹²⁵

The “barbarism” related to the presence of slaves stretched to own physical aspects of the captives. Travelers said that the appearance of Africans was miserable, despite their treatment by lords not normally be described as to much cruel. They said, among them James Justinian Morier, who stayed for 15 days in Rio de Janeiro during the month of September 1810, the disgusting appearance of the slaves was due more to diseases that afflict them, both during the Atlantic crossing as in Brazilian lands, than to abuse foisted by the masters after landing.¹²⁶ However, as reported by the Englishman William Ellis in 1816:

In English and Portuguese families with whom we had some contact, even if the treatment of house slaves do not be rude, the whip is often used in a manner and in circumstances that go against any sense of humanity.¹²⁷

Besides being the majority of the population, Negroes occupied the streets because they performing almost all jobs and city services. Thus, as pointed out by Henry Ellis, it was a “habit here send the slave to the street in the morning, with the task of bringing home, at the end of the day, certain sum of money”.¹²⁸

The image of black people performing their daily tasks by public roads was too disturbing for foreigners, so there were numerous descriptions of this scene that they left us. This is what stands out the German Carl Schlichthorst in 1824:

[...] the strongest slaves working on the streets as loaders. Go naked with a simple loincloth tied at the waist, which barely covers her thighs. Take all loads to the head. Sometimes, it only takes six and even four to load quickly a sugar box of 2,200 pounds weight. These scamps deliver to their masters a certain daily rate and satisfice themselves their living needs. The same is true of the black youth women, selling fruits and other miscellaneous items, required to deliver 16-20 pennies or half thaler per day. What gain more belongs to them. As these women also practice other business, many have high capitals.¹²⁹

When they describe the day by day of Negroes by Rio streets, beyond the very presence of Africans, with their “uncivilized behaviors” and their “nauseating stench”, it was the noise that these people perpetrated what most bothered the foreign adventurers. Ernst Ebel, while visiting streets of Rio in 1824, comments: “my European ears cannot be reconciled with the noise of the streets. Very early, at five o’clock, the show begins”.¹³⁰ Later, the German added: “the noise is incessant [...]. It’s really to stun”.¹³¹

In addition to the unhealthiness of streets, the poor construction of public parks and the disappointment in relation to the daily life of people in the streets of Rio de Janeiro, foreigners often highlighted that anything interesting could be found in the urban landscape during a tour on the Rio de Janeiro roads, starting with the city architecture, usually described as bad taste, no beauty and rare notoriety, espe-

138
REYNOLDS, Jeremiah. *Voyage of the United States frigate Potomac*, p. 38.

139
CONDER, Josiah. *The modern traveller*, v. 1, 1825, p. 108.

140
Ibidem, p. 108.

141
MATHISON, Gilbert Farquhar. *Narrative of a visit to Brazil, Chile, Peru, and the sandwich Islands, during the years 1821 and 1822*, p. 8.

142
FRANÇA, Jean Marcel Carvalho. *Viajantes estrangeiros no Rio de Janeiro joanino*, p. 63-64. [Our Translation]

143
LEITHOLD, Theodor von; RANGO, Ludwig von. *O Rio de Janeiro visto por dois prussianos em 1819*, p. 11. [Our Translation]

144
HOLMAN, James. *A voyage round the world, including travels in Africa, Asia, Australasia, America, etc. etc. from MDCCCXXVII to MDCCCXXXII*. London: Smith, Elder, and Co., Cornhill Booksellers, by appointment, to their majesties, v. 2, 1834, p. 65.

145
FRANÇA, Jean Marcel Carvalho. *Op. Cit.*, p. 88. [Our Translation]

146
CONDER, Josiah. *The modern traveller*, v. 1, 1825, p. 107.

147
GRAHAM, Maria. *Diário de uma viagem ao Brasil*, p. 205. [Our Translation]

148
EBEL, Ernst. *O Rio de Janeiro e seus arredores em 1824*, p. 91. [Our Translation]

149
PFEIFFER, Ida Laura. *A woman's journey round the world*, p. 16.

150
LEITHOLD, Theodor von; RANGO, Ludwig von. *O Rio de Janeiro visto por dois prussianos em 1819*, p. 133. [Our Translation]

cially if compared to the beautiful natural scenery of the tropics. Such is the opinion of Walter Colton, who visited São Sebastião in December 1845, pointing out that “the architecture of man here is so inferior to that of nature, it ought to make an apology whenever it shows itself”.¹³² The Englishman Josiah Conder added: “The style of architecture in Rio is, in general, mean, resembling that of the old part of Lisbon”.¹³³

Much of the criticism directed at city buildings refer to public buildings, which, according to the British diplomat Henry Ellis, whose testimony dates of 1816, “are neither numerous nor noteworthy from an architectural point of view”.¹³⁴ Among the most recriminated buildings is the Imperial Palace which, according to Carl Schlichthorst, “does not differ much from other buildings in the city. Its interior is not stunning and there are hundreds of private homes better ornamented”.¹³⁵ Another German, Carl Seidler, twelve years later, still retains the same Schlichthorst’s opinion about that which should be the most sumptuous work of Brazil, the palace of the Emperor:

[...] with this detour, we lose sight of the Imperial Palace, but in fact we poorly missed anything. It is better face the residence of wealthy particular than the palace of the first potentate of the New World. Not discovered in it any embellishment, neither outside or inside; the furniture is modern, but in part inappropriate and used before been use; the rooms are delicate, but not comfortable.¹³⁶

Another building of the Emperor, the Quinta da Boa Vista, located on the outskirts of the city, was also criticized by the foreigners. Let us hear the German Carl Schlichthorst:

[...] Castle, called Imperial Quinta da Boa Vista, is in a pleasant hill, in the middle of beautiful valley, surrounded by poorly maintained gardens and yellow painted. Its shape is not likeable. It consists of a round tower in Moorish style and a few square pavilions, forming an irregular set. Internally it is like a large private house with narrow stairs and dark and tight corridors. Miserable back staircase leads to the rooms of the Empress, with uninviting view of the stables, which are beneath them. Kitchens and servants dirty rooms are spread around and have repellent aspect. In short, both in the Imperial Palace like any Brazilian home, always find traces of Negroes influence. The dirt, the lack of order, the most glaring contrast between stinginess and wastefulness, bad service despite the amount of black and white slaves, the scolding and the endless beat are unbearable things to the newcomer European, which only with time can get used to them.¹³⁷

Jeremiah N. Reynolds, visiting the city in 1831, presents the following overview of public buildings in the city:

The palace, which occupies the upper side of the square, though extensive in its dimensions, has nothing particularly magnificent in its appearance. The other public buildings, including the imperial chapel, a cathedral, churches, convents, nunneries, theatre, opera-house, &c., do not exhibit any imposing views of elegant architecture.¹³⁸

The Englishman Josiah Conder also gives his opinion on some of Rio’s public buildings. According to the English, the customhouse “is a miserable building”¹³⁹ and the Mint and the Arsenal of the Navy and Army “are called magnificent buildings [by the local population],

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SCARLETT, Peter Campbell. South America and the Pacific; comprising a journey across the Pampas and the Andes, from Buenos Ayres to Valparaiso, Lima, and Panamá; with remarks upon the Isthmus. London: Henry Colburn, Publisher, v. 1, 1838, p. 36-37.

152

SEEMANN, Berthold Carl. Narrative of the voyage of H M S Herald during the years 1845-51, under the command of Captain Henry Kellett, R. N., C. B.; being a circumnavigation of the globe, and three cruises to the Arctic regions in search of Sir John Franklin. London: Reeve and Co. Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, v. 1, 1853, p. 17.

153

BINGLEY, William. Travels in South America from modern writers, p. 309.

154

EWBANK, Thomas. A vida no Brasil, p. 52. [Our Translation]

155

SEIDLER, Carl. Dez anos no Brasil, p. 60. [Our Translation]

156

Ibidem, p. 62. [Our Translation]

157

FRANÇA, Jean Marcel Carvalho. Viajantes estrangeiros no Rio de Janeiro joanino, p. 88-89. [Our Translation]

158

SCHLICHTHORST, Carl. O Rio de Janeiro como é, p. 46. [Our Translation]

159

BRACKENRIDGE, Henry Marie. Voyage to Buenos Ayres, p. 19.

160

SCHLICHTHORST, Carl. Op. Cit., p. 46. [Our Translation]

161

CONDER, Josiah. The modern traveller, v. 1, 1825, p. 107.

162

LEITHOLD, Theodor von; RANGO, Ludwig von. O Rio de Janeiro visto por dois prussianos em 1819, p. 11. [Our Translation]

163

FRANÇA, Jean Marcel Carvalho. Op. Cit., p. 62. [Our Translation]

164

EWBANK, Thomas. A vida no Brasil, p. 73. [Our Translation]

but they present a very poor appearance to the eyes of a European".¹⁴⁰ Gilbert Mathison, who arrived in Rio de Janeiro in 1821, complements the framework of buildings stating that "the Bank, Exchange, Custom-house, and Arsenal, are all situated in the Rua Direita, along the water-side, but exhibit nothing remarkable".¹⁴¹

In general, public buildings cannot hide their restricted condition and, often, deplorable. According to travelers, there were clear signs of neglect, misery and decay. In 1812, James Prior warns that "this is all part of the national taste. Sometimes, it seems that, for the Portuguese, in the case of public buildings, elegance is an affront and cleaning, a sin". Also according to this visitor, "a deserted city or plunder victim could not have worse condition".¹⁴²

The Public Promenade also did not please the look of the visitors. In 1819, Theodor von Leithold asserts that he "looks more like a common garden".¹⁴³ James Holman, ten years later, says "one serious inconvenience, arising from a ditch, or a small gully, on one side, in which dead animals, and other offensive matter are deposited, occasioning such an intolerable stench, at times, that it is impossible to approach that part".¹⁴⁴

Only two kinds of buildings stand out a little more from the pen of foreigners: the churches and the aqueduct. As pointed out by Henry Ellis in 1816, "the little splendor that is in the city is due to the churches".¹⁴⁵ Josiah Conder also states that "churches and convents are almost the only public buildings in Rio, that deserve notice".¹⁴⁶ However, the reputation of the churches wasn't consensus on the observation of foreign visitors, many of those said, as Maria Graham - whose narrative belongs to that group of those who testify to the improvements received by the Rio de Janeiro after 1808 - that "even the churches have no architectural beauty and the good effects that they produce in the overview is because their size and placement".¹⁴⁷ Three years after Graham have landed in Rio de Janeiro, Ernst Ebel warns that "is large the number of churches, some for finishing, but already falling into ruins. Architecturally, they have no particular merit".¹⁴⁸ In 1846, Ida Pfeiffer also points out that "there is nothing remarkable in the appearance of the churches, either inside or out".¹⁴⁹

The aqueduct of the city was perhaps the public building that has more positively called the attention of travelers. This was affirmed in 1819 by German Ludwig von Rango: "among the things worthy of being seen in the vicinity, it is the aqueduct that runs down the mountain water and leads to the center of town".¹⁵⁰ Peter Campbell Scarlett, who visited Rio de Janeiro in September 1834, points to the existence of "a handsome aqueduct, in an elevated part of the city, [that] forms one of the principal objects worth remarking".¹⁵¹ During his stay of 10 days by the Brazilian capital in August 1845, Berthold Carl Seemann reiterates the views mentioned above, emphasizing that "the aqueduct is really a noble work [...] solidly built".¹⁵²

What first caught the attention of travelers in Rio's residences was the fact that "the houses of Rio are seldom more than one story high".¹⁵³ In 1846, Thomas Ewbank pointed out that "the houses are low, with colored plaster facades and covered with old red tiles. You do not see a single door with cushions, balconies, hoops or rings bells; it can be seen, however, many windows without panes of glass".¹⁵⁴ Twenty years earlier,

Carl Seidler had already stated that “the houses [were] almost all low, dirty and built in the vulgar style, without regard to matters of taste and convenience of social life, built over the will at the time and the urgency”.¹⁵⁵ The German also adds:

[...] Rio’s homes are, as I said, in general low, small, dirty, tasteless and uncomfortable; only in the richest carpets are seen and often the ground floor is not planked. Everywhere reigns baroque arrangement of the material, distribution and architectural ornaments - when such exist. In fact, sometimes I notice a kind of luxury, even ostentatious, but never elegance, symmetry and comfort in inside.¹⁵⁶

165
EWBANK, Thomas. *A vida no Brasil*, p. 320-321.
[Our Translation]

Even the homes of the most important figures and wealthy of the city did not please the foreigners who came to the tropics. As pointed out by Henry Ellis in 1816, “in general, the houses of the main persons of the city do not indicate any concern with the architectural beauty and not bring any adaptation to the climate of the country”.¹⁵⁷

On the main streets of the city, such as Rua Direita, the Rua do Ouvidor and the Rua dos Ourives, the houses already had more than one floor, usually occupying “the ground floor with warehouses and shops”.¹⁵⁸ According to Henry Brackenridge, who was in the city at the beginning of 1818, these houses “in general have a mean appearance, with projecting galleries on the second story”.¹⁵⁹ These terraces or balconies, which really drew attention was the situation of the windows, which in the opinion of Carl Schlichthorst, “unsightly any building”.¹⁶⁰ That’s because almost none of them had glass windows, but usually wood, the denominated lattices. Despite the order of Dom João to remove them already in the year 1808, local residents still kept them in some homes, especially those located on the outskirts of the city. According to Josiah Conder, “in the outskirts of the town the streets are unpaved, and the houses are of only one floor, low, small, and dirty, with the doors and windows of lattice-work, opening outward to the annoyance of passengers”.¹⁶¹ But even inside the city, the lattices were also found, as evidenced by Theodor von Leithold in 1819:

166
LEITHOLD, Theodor von; RANGO, Ludwig von.
O Rio de Janeiro visto por dois prussianos em 1819, p. 11. [Our Translation]

167
PFEIFFER, Ida Laura. *A woman’s journey round the world*, p. 16.

168
ALDCLUGH, Alexander. *Travels in South America, during the years 1819-20-21; containing an account of the present state of Brazil, Buenos Ayres, and Chile*. London: John Murray, Albemarle Street, v. 1, 1825, p. 9.

[...] Most of the houses is one floor and only one window, which, in many, is entirely of wood, this is closed by a tight truss grid as our chicken pen or pigeon houses. Also the outer door is provided with a similar grid, which also serves as a window. Through that door you enter in the unique and exiguous piece of home.¹⁶²

169
SUZANNET, Conde de. *O Brasil em 1845: semelhanças e diferenças após um século*. Rio de Janeiro: Casa do Estudante do Brasil, 1957, p. 27. [Our Translation]

Another problem related to homes is regard to its location, in a “few feet above the water level”,¹⁶³ as highlighted by James Prior, in 1812. For travelers, this would be extremely harmful to the construction of houses, since, as points Thomas Ewbank, in 1846, “the sidewalk is generally just above the bay level. Just digging a few feet anywhere to find water”.¹⁶⁴ With the proximity of water on the surface of the territory, when this was not already taken by the floodwaters, the Rio soil remained invariably wet, which caused, also adding up moisture from the atmosphere, a number of disorders and diseases in the local population. The same Ewbank reports the case of a woman who, due to humidity in her home, constantly suffer from rheumatism:

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MATHISON, Gilbert Farquhar. Narrative of a visit to Brazil, Chile, Peru, and the sandwich Islands, during the years 1821 and 1822, p. 8.
<?> HOLMAN, James. A voyage round the world, v. 2, 1834, p. 65.

[...] a lady of my acquaintance has spent years in these conditions. People, living in single-story houses, can hardly escape. The air is too moist, almost all the streets are low and flooded during the rainy season, while the soil is so saturated with water that digging to a depth of sixty to ninety centimeters, overflowing everywhere.¹⁶⁵

The problem of moisture was compounded by the very way the houses were built. The visitor Theodor von Leithold, in 1819, testifies about the inconveniences caused by poor construction of houses and the high moisture index:

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HOLMAN, James. A voyage round the world, v. 2, 1834, p. 65.

[...] Such houses does not have foundations. The floorboards are nailed on fixed sleepers, without the slightest protection, directly to the ground; It is easy to imagine, as a result, the harmful effects of moisture on health, especially in the rainy season. Aside from these single-story houses, there are other with two, three and four floors, with iron balconies or wood; but in them, it also prevails the same moisture, to the point of not being able to leave boots or shoes on the second floor without that cover in a few days of thick mold layer.¹⁶⁶

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PFEIFFER, Ida Laura. A woman's journey round the world, p. 26.

Thus, for most travelers who passed through Rio de Janeiro during the first half of the nineteenth century, namely the "critical" visitors, the city offered "very little in the way of squares, streets, and buildings, which, for a stranger, can prove in the last attractive".¹⁶⁷ This is because "the streets are in general straight, but narrow and confined. The squares are by no means numerous, and, as the houses are not regularly built, there is nothing to admire in them".¹⁶⁸ In general, the picture represented by Conde de Suzannet, in 1845, clearly expressed the view that foreign travelers had about the city:

[...] the city of Rio has the shape of an irregular square and it is situated on the bay shores. [...] The Emperor's palace is a large square building without architecture. Churches, many monuments for public services are built solidly, but without elegance. About the main squares of the city, they are irregular and poorly constructed, just having remarkable their size. A garden shaded by trees is the only ride in the city center, but thanks to the indolent habits of Brazilians, is always desert. Dirty narrow streets of houses that rarely has more than one floor, bad sidewalks and uneven, make any excursion, on foot or by car, difficult and tiring.¹⁶⁹

Final considerations

As stated earlier in this article, my aim here was to describe the image of Rio de Janeiro built by foreign travelers in travel literature produced during the nineteenth century, specifically in relation to the alleged Europeanizing transformations that have or not accomplished in the city after Dom João arrival. Once I leave the quotes "speak for themselves", in order to reconstruct - even partially - what foreign travelers, after all, had to say about the events in which they were involved, it can be seen that, for them, the Rio de Janeiro was just a place "where the common arts of civilized life are of late and still feeble growth".¹⁷⁰ In other words, a city that was in debt to the standards of civility and modernization of European cities, such as London and Paris. As reiterates Englishman James Holman, who came to Brazil in 1829:

There is not in the world, perhaps, a city of equal extent with less accommodation, less amusement, less satisfaction to be derived from the society of its inhabitants, or fewer interesting objects, than this celebrates city of Rio de Janeiro, the capital of the Brazils; and yet if this country were well governed, there are not many places more susceptible of embellishment, to harmonise with the splendid scenery by which it is surrounded; it is deficient in the useful, as well as the ornamental, and does not possess in its melancholy streets a single hackney-coach, or chair, conveniences which are of paramount service in a large city, particularly in a hot climate.¹⁷¹

Thus, the city of Rio de Janeiro drew attention of Europeans much more for its uniqueness than by his charm. English Ida Pfeiffer summarizes in a very good way the sensation that a foreigner felt after seeing the New World: "The Brazils is, perhaps, the most interesting country in the world for travellers; but for a place of permanent residence I should most decidedly prefer Europe".¹⁷²

This is the Rio de Janeiro built by foreign travelers during the first half of the nineteenth century: A Rio de Janeiro that, despite having been graced by so many natural beauties, is presented as a city of restricted contours and taken by slaves; a town of unpleasant and deleterious climate, with its filthy and smelly streets, squares and beaches; a city with its moist homes and pestilential churches; in one word: an unhealthy city. An unusual town to a foreigner, that identified it much more with a city still immersed in barbarism than, effectively, with a tropical Paris.

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