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Art's Complicity

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ABSTRACT

In the course of its history, the artistic culture fashioned in Brazil has rebuffed direct observation. In the country's domain of the visual arts and literature, artists, intellectuals and writers tend to cloister in an imaginary world, without seeing their own surroundings. Some of the significant works in the history of Brazilian art and culture have been taken into account in this paper. The works described here in a synthetic and simplified manner reiterated myths, arranged hierarchies, established preconceptions and concealed perceptions for the benefit of imaginaries that were not all that innocent.

One can easily see that, in the course of its history, the artistic culture fashioned in Brazil has rebuffed direct observation. In the country's domain of the visual arts and literature, artists, intellectuals and writers tend to cloister in an imaginary world, with no eyes for their own surroundings.

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Although rather generic and simplified, this initial comment sheds light on certain fundamental characteristics that historically have been associated with Brazil's art history and production. These characteristics are linked to ideological tenets involving national identity and original roots. They comprise fictions, constructs and fantasies that definitively affect not only individual and group perceptions and expectations, but also ways of thinking and conceiving the world. For the history of art, this condition has led to a markedly nationalist stance that replaced the scrutiny and close examination of the subjects in question.

Assuming that art production may be divided into two categories – one that draws on imagination and the other, on observation – culture in Brazil has evidently failed to develop a tradition around what might be called "realism".

This situation was particularly stressed in the country's colonial period (1500-1822), thanks to the short-lived 17th-century Dutch occupation of northeastern Brazil[1]. Contrary to the abovementioned practices, Dutch artists in Brazil worked from direct observation, which requires personal involvement and constitutes one of the most fruitful characteristics of these artists who are at once Protestant, modern and also scientific in many ways. Take Franz Post, for example: even when painting his Brazilian scenes from memory, after returning to Holland, he always did it from an eye-witness point of view.

Despite Brazil's 300-year history as a Portuguese colony, all extant visual documents depicting life at that time hark back to Maurice of Nassau's eight-year rule over its northeastern region.

An interesting contrast with Dutch works done in Brazil appears in a unique painting in the holdings of the Museu Nacional de Belas Artes do Rio de Janeiro. One of the rare colonial paintings that did not depict canonical religious themes, *A morte do Padre Philippe Bourel*[i] (Death of Father Philippe Bourel) was listed in the museum's catalogue as 'painter unknown' from the 18th-century "Portuguese School"[2]. Some scholars believe the work was done 'circa 1730'.

[1] In 1624, the Dutch took the city of Salvador da Bahia and held it for a year. In 1630, they conquered Pernambuco and retained control of northeastern Brazil for almost 24 years. Count Maurice of Nassau came to Pernambuco in 1637 to govern this territory and others yet to be conquered by the Dutch West Indies Company. He returned to Europe in 1644. Nassau was not only an accomplished administrator, but also a humanist who developed scientific-artistic initiatives in Brazil. To this end, he brought over scholars and artists, founded a natural history museum, botanical gardens, a zoo and an astronomical observatory.

[2] *Morte do Padre Philippe Bourel* / 18th century / oil on canvas / unsigned / 110.5 x 133.5 cm / listed ref. 10 523. In: SOUZA, Alcídio Mafra – O Museu Nacional de Belas Artes, Banco Safra, São Paulo, 1985, p. 238.

Every aspect of the image's iconographic interpretation is fascinating[3], from its remote location beyond the walls of two fortified cities (for which there are no equivalents in Brazilian architecture) to its exotic palm trees, which are date palms – a non-native species – laden with iconographic resonances (tree of paradise, flight to Egypt, metaphor for the cross). From the parrot – an exotic bird actually found in Brazil in great numbers and previously used to symbolize missionary language, as in Andrea Pozzo's fresco *Allegory of the Missionary Work of the Jesuits*[4] on the ceiling of Rome's St. Ignatius Church – to the flimsy hut sheltering a missionary in his agony, its fragility so sharply contrasting with robust cities in the distance. All these aspects particularly evince the foundations of the erudite humanist culture that supports the image. From the painter's point of view, it was not a matter of empirically depicting a cabin or shack of the type then found in Brazil, much less an indigenous tribal hut. From the very first prints illustrating Hans Staden's adventures in Brazil, the huts shown in engravings with their semi-cylindrical roofs bore absolutely no similarity to actual dwellings. Rather than look to a local reference, the painter assumed a humanistic and classic rationale on the lines of "I have to show a primitive hut, so I look for an authority to provide a model. This authority is none other than Vitruvius himself". The selected hut model was clearly taken from illustrations in Renaissance editions of *De Architectura*.

This situation continued in the 19th century. Brazil's independence from Portugal, in 1822, led to its becoming the 'Empire of Brazil' and fabricating a historical project – the construction of a new history for a new nation – based on scientific institutions (Brazil's Historical and Geographical Institute was founded in 1838) and other more diffuse forms of culture.

At that time, an artistic-literary trend flourished with consequences beyond the cultural context and exerted a marked ideological influence on historical and historiographical fields. The trend known as 'indigenism' or 'Indianism'[5] celebrated traits such as nobility of character, heroic strength and proud stance attributed to the native peoples of Brazil. Obviously, these idealized

[3] Cf. COLI, Jorge. "Episódio e alegoria". Anuário do Museu Nacional de Belas Artes., v. 1, p. 105-128, 2009.
[4]See also: [4] PANOFSKY, Erwin: *Problems in Titian, Mostly Iconographic*, New York University Press, New York, 1969, p. 28-29.
[5] A few key figures may be selected from the literary crowd. In prose, José de Alencar (1829-1877) for his novels *O Guarani*, *Iracema* and *Ubirajara*. In poetry, Gonçalves Dias (1823-1864) for his epic poems *Juca-Pirama* and *Os Timbiras*, or Gonçalves de Magalhães (1811-1882) for the epic poem *A confederação dos Tamoios*. In painting, somewhat later, key figures were Victor Meirelles (1832-1903), Rodolfo Amoedo (1857-1941), and Antônio Parreiras (1860-1937). Also of importance was the composer Antonio Carlos Gomes, whose opera *Il Guarany*, based on Alencar's novel, was staged at Milan's Teatro alla Scala while *Lo Schiavo* opened in Rio de Janeiro in 1889.

'Indians' were purely imaginary. Concomitantly with their cultural exaltation, Brazil's native peoples were being exterminated, starting a cycle that extended throughout the 20th century.

Nevertheless, the imaginary Indian as symbol embodied the noble ancestry invoked by Brazilians and offset their colonial past by bestowing an edifying autochthone origin on them. This was seen in official symbols too: Emperor Pedro I's coronation cloak was covered in toucan feathers that evoked indigenous costumes, as if the emperor were being given this insignia of power by local ancestors, thus doing away with centuries of existence as a colony. An anonymous painting shown at Museu Padre Toledo, in Tiradentes MG (Fundação Rodrigo Mello Franco de Andrade)[ii], shows the institutional character of these allegorical processes: a native Indian embodying the Brazilian empire is kneeling before the emperor. The autonomous character of the newly organized empire thus reinforced expression of the country's independence from the former colonial power. Many 19th-century newspaper cartoons featured an Indian as '*Mr. Brazil*', a personification of the people of Brazil involved in different political situations.

But another facet of this celebration of indigenous peoples as a supreme ancestral entity was that it enabled local culture to sideline blacks. Unlike the native peoples, who remained in their natural habitat, African blacks had been taken to Brazil as slaves. By this time, they were a visible presence in rural and urban communities, and perceived as inferior, a banal manifestation of an archaism that became increasingly unbearable since slavery was not abolished until 1888. Thanks to native Indians, Africans could be left out of the imaginary. In fact, save for exceptions, local literature and visual arts mostly ignored blacks, whereas foreign artists – the French, in particular – portrayed all types of peoples and behaviors in 19th-century Brazilian society.

After the fall of Napoleon, the Portuguese court that had fled Lisbon when Junot's army invaded Portugal remained in Brazil, thus extending the so-called "metropolitan inversion" (Rio de Janeiro had become the capital of the kingdom of Portugal). Previously closed to foreigners, the former colony now allowed them in and so the French Artistic Mission – a group of artists organized by Joachim Lebreton – landed in Rio de Janeiro in 1816.

Two of these artists played a key role in portraying Brazil as it actually was at the time: Nicolas-Antoine Taunay and Jean-Baptiste Debret, both of whom had trained under Jacques-Louis David – in fact, Debret was the latter's cousin.

Going back to painting the landscapes that had been out of favor since the time of Frans Post, Taunay painted wonderful views of Rio de Janeiro[iii]. Debret produced 153 lithographed

plates and numerous drawings and watercolors following an anthropological approach for *Voyage Pittoresque et Historique au Brésil, ou séjour d´un artiste française au Brésil, depuis 1816 jusqu´en 1831 inclusivement* (Picturesque and Historical Voyage to Brazil). There was nothing euphemistic in his depiction of everyday life in Rio, visually documenting the terrifying plight of black slaves and their atrocious punishments. Ironically, the very French artists who brought neoclassical practices to Brazil were later labelled "enemies" by modernists who saw them as introducing spurious art to a national culture, claiming that the artistic past of "truly" Brazilian characteristics would have been "authentic" Baroque – as if Baroque itself were not a great international form of expression.

Among the steady influx of foreign artists portraying Brazil were Landseer and Chamberlain from England, Ender from Austria, Rugendas from Bavaria, and Hildebrandt from Prussia – all of whom produced images of real artistic quality and great documentary interest. Without them, history would not have retained any visual records of Brazil or its native peoples and their behaviors during much of the 19th century.

Brazilian artists, on the other hand, were engaged in the noble pursuit of composing a fine history in which the native Indian as representation of sublime character and sublime sacrifice was featured in grandiose images such as Victor Meirelles' *Moema*[iv] (1866, Museu de Arte de São Paulo, São Paulo) based on Santa Rita Durão's epic poem *Caramuru*; the same female Indian character was revisited by Rodolpho Bernardelli's major sculpture *Moema*[v] (1895, Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo, São Paulo); Rodolpho Amoedo's *Marabá*[vi] drew on both, Gonçalves Dias' poem of the same name and *O último Tamoio*[vii] (1883, Museu Nacional de Belas Artes, Rio de Janeiro, after Gonçalves de Magalhães' epic poem *A confederação dos Tamoios*); José Maria Medeiros' *Iracema*[viii] (1884, Museu Nacional de Belas Artes, Rio de Janeiro) reflected José de Alencar's novel of the same name, itself an anagram for 'America'), or Chaves Pinheiro's great terracotta sculpture titled *Alegoria do Império Brasileiro*[ix] (1871, Museu Nacional de Belas Artes, Rio de Janeiro). Not until the latter years of the 19th century did Almeida Junior, a painter from São Paulo, tap his own experience and observation to paint rustic or backland figures[x].

The exaltation of the indigenous peoples was concomitant with the construction of another ideological myth: the 'fusion of three races'. Arguably, native Indians were firmly cast as great ancestral protagonists, but eventually they were joined with Portuguese whites and African blacks in harmonious miscegenation. The myth was to be strengthened by the emergence of the 'cordial

man' (*homem cordial*), a notion that informed a positive Brazilian psychological trait, described by Sérgio Buarque de Holanda in 1936 amid the rampant nationalist ideology of that period[6]. Darci Ribeiro's *O povo brasileiro* (The Brazilian people) forcefully revisited this myth not too long ago, in 1995, to pose a dramatic version of this miscegenation without however demystifying the outcome, in which the three basic matrices are mixed together to comprise "the Brazilian". This synthesis, of course, excludes "foreigners" in general, i.e., – all the immigrants from Italy, Japan, Germany, Korea etc. who reshaped Brazil in the 20th century.

Among the works affording recognition to this fusion, two paintings were crucially important: Victor Meireles' *A primeira missa no Brasil* (The First Mass in Brazil)[xi] and *A batalha dos Guararapes* (The Battle of Guararapes).

Painted in Paris and shown at the 1861 Salon, *The First Mass in Brazil* drew inspiration from a historical account in which the Portuguese fleet's scribe Pero Vaz de Caminha advised his king of the discovery of Brazil. This letter with its wonderful live-narrative effect remained unpublished until 1817 – precisely when it was needed as cornerstone of a new history. In the words of one historian, the letter stood for "the baptism of the Nation". The selection of *First Mass* for the Paris Salon was a significant instance: for the first time, a Brazilian painter – in this case, an artist who had been awarded an imperial government scholarship – was recognized by a prestigious European institution. In this context, Meireles proceeded to show a peaceful interaction between the newly arrived Portuguese explorers and local indigenous peoples attending an open-air Christian ceremony, to which the whole of nature bore witness.

The other painting was *A batalha dos Guararapes,* a huge 494.5 x 923 cm canvas depicting a battle scene in which Portuguese whites, native Indians and blacks joined forces against the invaders in the decisive clash that put an end to Dutch occupation in 1654. This conjoining was the first expression of actual Brazilianness, as proclaimed by the nation's historical account and by the grand spectacle of Meireles' painting.

The modernists did not introduce major changes in this scenario, apart from lending new forms to certain works and an entertaining air of irreverence to their language. The modernist Oswald de Andrade's[7] *Manifesto Antropofágico* (Anthropophagic Manifesto) was published in

[6] HOLANDA, Sérgio Buarque de - *Raízes do Brasil,* Livraria José Olympio Editora, São Paulo, 1936 (1st edition)
[7] Oswald de Andrade (1890 - 1954) was a poet, novelist, essayist and polemicist. He was one of the first modernists and a major participant and instigator of the movement known as 1922 Week of Modern Art in São Paulo. In both his

1928. In the same year, Mário de Andrade[8] wrote the novel *Macunaíma.* Both authors reiterated the glorification of the indigenous heritage, while the latter (the novel) also reaffirmed the matrix of the 'three-races' myth.

Tarsila do Amaral provides a typically modernist solution in an exceptional picture restoring the African presence in *A negra* (Black Woman), painted in Paris in 1923[xii] during the heyday of *Art Nègre* primitivism. *A negra* has occupied an iconic position in Brazilian arts as the authentic expression of the nation's own version of *negritude*, or black consciousness and pride. However, the emblematic character of her awesome and powerful image clearly obliterates any reference to individual or social realism while projecting the character into a fantastic realm.

African presence in the visual arts, I might add, was not going to supplant indigenous symbolism during the first half of the century or even later. Emiliano Di Cavalcanti was a case apart: his use of the erotic mythology of the mixed-race *mulatto* woman as the object of emblematic Brazilian sexual desire took on a modernist slant. His celebrated *mulatto* girls that have been held in such high esteem by collectors amount to an instance of "Brazilian" spirit reincorporating black (African) presence.

The history of art was quite obviously not unscathed in the context of this nationalism. In the late 19th century, Gonzaga Duque[9], as the first truly powerful presence of art history in Brazil, published *Arte Brasileira*, an essential historical assessment of local artistic production, which he reproached as conventional, archaic, and outdated, thus evincing his modern approach. This type of art lacked originality and repeated worn formulas, he said. It had aged even as it emerged and ought to be replaced by a renewed spirit based on the principle of truly Brazilian expression. The artificial world shown by those artists was incapable of founding an "authentically national" school, as he put it. He therefore aspired to an art that, reaching beyond these themes, would find a

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1928 book *Manifesto Antropofágico* and the review *Revista de Antropofagia,* which he founded, he argued that cultural cannibalism – drawing on indigenous practices – absorbed all forms of international culture and digested them to produce a "Brazilian" culture as a means for the nation to hold its own against Europe's.

[8] Mário de Andrade (1893 - 1945): poet, novelist, musicologist, professor at São Paulo's conservatory, art critic and historian, founding theorist of Brazilian modernism and one of the leading lights among the organizers of the 1922 Week of Modern Art. An acclaimed scholar, his interventions were definitive for Brazilians in all spheres of art. His *Macunaíma* novel – he calls it a "rhapsody" – features unreal situations largely based on native Indian mythology and sets out to provide a synthesis of what might be called "Brazilianness".

[9] Luiz Gonzaga Duque Estrada (1863 - 1911): Rio de Janeiro art critic, published *Arte brasileira* in 1888. Not only writing on art, in 1899 he also published *Mocidade morta* a *roman à clef* depicting Rio's fin de siècle art circles.

form both modern and Brazilian. He surely augured the modernist approaches that were to emerge in the 20th century.

Brazil's cultural history dates the emergence of its artistic modernism to 1922. Obviously, there were modernist experiences before that year, but the Week of Modern Art held at São Paulo's opera house provoked a scandal because the city was still a provincial one. Immigrants swelled São Paulo's population from 65,000 in 1890 to 580,000 in 1920, but its urban intellectual and cultural core remained few in number. Although the event's musical, literary and visual works were not posing avant-garde extremism, their newness or novelty sufficed to provoke outright scandal. Amid the ensuing commotion, Mario de Andrade's incisive personality made its mark.

As a founding theorist of modern nationalism in Brazil, de Andrade advocated art that would be "authentically Brazilian" in the sense of being based on the nation's deepest roots rather than romantic exoticism. It was also to be modern, up-to-date art.

Just as it had been during the period of romantic 'Indianism', this nationalist approach emerged in response to international stimuli. In other words, demand for barbaric primitiveness avidly sampled in Europe led to Brazilian culture producing the barbarism that was expected of it. Furthermore, it was seen as an essential characteristic to be incorporated by Brazilians, who saw it as their own natural legacy.

The novel or rhapsody titled *Macunaíma* was published in 1927 as was a theoretical essay on Brazilian music (*Ensaio sobre a música brasileira*) that laid foundations reaching far beyond music to pose normative bases for general practice of the arts. Together with *Macunaíma* and its fiction combining mythological elements and cultural traits from all over Brazil, these books posed de Andrade's theoretical project and practical example.

In both cases, regionalism was replaced by synthesis (which de Andrade certainly believed to be an integral part of his own constitution), not to mention its effect of erasing class differences to benefit a national identity, which it shares with all cases of nationalism.

The timing of these developments coincided with a surge of ascendant totalitarian forces in Europe and Latin America. Needless to say, their beliefs evinced shared affinities with the dictatorial Getúlio Vargas regime in the 1930s, which succeeded in rallying nationalisms from differing origins in the service of its authoritarian agenda. Villa-Lobos, for example, had been actively involved in the Week of Modern Art in São Paulo. On returning to Brazil from a European sojourn working on his *choros*, scoring music that had been freer and more audaciously

experimental, he went on to become the regime's flagship composer. In this position, he regimented huge choirs of schoolchildren and youths while composing patriotic works and posing a significant return to 'order' with his *Bachianas*, in which he blended master Leipzig's inspiration with themes drawn from Brazilian folklore. Mário de Andrade himself was asked to take a position in Rio de Janeiro to act as a sort of advisor for Gustavo Capanema, the then Minister of Education who was also in charge of cultural affairs. Another example was Cândido Portinari, a member of the Brazilian Communist Party, who was asked to work on the decoration for the new Ministry of Education building in Rio de Janeiro. The building, which drew on a Le Corbusier design implemented by Lucio Costa's team that included Oscar Niemeyer, was built between 1937 and 1944. Sculptors of the high standing of Bruno Giorgi and Jacques Lipschitz joined forces with the landscape designer Roberto Burle Marx for this endeavor which confirmed the official nature of the modernists in Brazil.

De Andrade's theoretical and nationalist positions presupposed two main enemies. One was the prestige of international culture, particularly European and French, the latter having major presence in Brazil. Protection was needed against any undesirable influences that would betray what he saw as a national "essence".

The other enemy, more sensitive and complex in terms of social inflections, was the inflow of hundreds of thousands of Italian, Japanese, German, Syrian-Lebanese and other immigrants, most of whom preferred to settle in the state of São Paulo, or in its capital city, which was precisely the geographic universe of Mário de Andrade and the other 1922 modernists. The myth of the organic 'fusion of three races' was deployed to exclude, because it was not Brazilian, the cultures ushered in by these immigrants. These foreigners had to be assimilated into this national ideology, which meant sacrificing their own contributions.

These theoretical and ideological principles were always based on the foundations of a Brazilian culture cast in the 19th-century and revisited by 20th century modernity. Despite being an ideological construct, it was – and largely still is – collectively experienced as an organic and ontogenetic reality. The 'three-races' myth – in which Africans were suffering and passive individuals, somewhat a folklore burden – was deployed to exclude the culture of immigrants, who on top of everything else were handicapped. They were manual laborers or small traders, unlike the members of the local elite who would haughtily brag about their Portuguese-Indian

origins (never mentioning blacks) and gave patronage to modernists. This mindset was also a persistent way of reiterating a collective sentimental strategy.

In this context, de Andrade made up a teleological history of the arts as part of an ingenious revision of the past, in *Ensaio sobre a música brasileira* (Essay on Brazilian Music). With this essay, the author sought to consolidate that which he called *espírito de raça* (literally, a racial spirit) and outlined three historical stages for artistic creation in Brazil. Firstly, what we might call an "unconscious" period. In the course of Brazil's history, although not aware of the process, creative artists were being imbued with Brazilian spirit. As a corollary, scholars ought to attempt to find traces of Brazilianness in figures such as Padre José Maurício, composer to the Portuguese court in Rio de Janeiro. This is precisely the role of an art historian: to detect 'Brazilian' characteristics.

The second period was one of "voluntarism" or "willfulness" in which Mário de Andrade and his contemporaries were active. They had to "want to be" Brazilian, be disciplined and make use of local examples, preferably taken from an anthropological perspective.

De Andrade therefore looked to a fully 'national' future in which "[music and, implicitly, all arts] will have to ascend to the stage I shall call Cultural, a freely aesthetic stage, and in all cases understanding that for a culture to exist it must reflect the profound realities of the land in which it thrives. Therefore our music will be not be 'nationalist' but just 'national' in the sense that "a giant as talented as Monteverdi and a mollusk such as Leoncavallo are national"[10]. Therefore, contemporary artists had to make an effort to be 'national' rather than becoming 'naturally' national.

The history of the arts proposed by Mário de Andrade sought signs of this 'national' essence in works of the past. It was therefore a history of precursors; despite their own intention of following European models in many cases, artists had been incorporating Brazilian traits into their own characteristics and manners as unconscious agents of Brazilianness against major international references. De Andrade outlines a temporal vector too: Brazilianness attributes were dimmer in older artists. However, as Brazilian culture gradually became established, these traits grew increasingly more evident. Quality was not the point and de Andrade repeatedly showed

[10] ANDRADE, Mário de – *Ensaio sobre a música brasileira* (Martins, São Paulo, 1962, p. 33-34). This was to be revisited in 1941 with a more accentuated historical perspective in a study of the social evolution of music in Brazil (*Evolução Social da Música no Brasil*). Subsequently this study was included in the *Aspectos da música brasileira* volume of his complete works published by Livraria Martins Editora (São Paulo, 1965).

distrust of what he called "genius": an exceptionally creative personality with its idiosyncrasies would detract from the "average" collective development of artistic creation, so "average" became the main point at issue.

The truly significant works that a history of Brazilian art and culture should take into account were not the most innovative, elaborate, inventive or exceptional renditions. The key criterion for this history of art was the greater or lesser degree of Brazilianness of these pieces – in the sense that de Andrade understood it – tardier or earlier. The more these works deviated from international models, the better.

These simplifications were based on heavily ideological assumptions made to define what "Brazilian" would or would not consist of – with national distinctions for their underlying axiomatic foundations.

These theoretical formulations led to several important consequences. Firstly, rudimentary technique was appreciated since Brazilian artists might not be skilled in the practices of their craft. Defects or errors compared to foreign mastery and skills, in which Brazil lagged behind European practices, were deemed local solutions evincing the existence of a Brazilian artistic "soul" countering foreigners' claims to technical mastery. At the time, the internationally widespread taste for a generic primitivism naturally provided support for these beliefs.

Folklore was one of the best means for characterizing national traits. It was used as a source of artistic inspiration and a subject to be researched, starting with the polymorphous Mário de Andrade, who was also an ethnologist, anthropologist and folklore specialist. Brazilian modernity was certainly not the only one that looked to primitivism and archaism; yet, the extremely important role they played in this respect must be emphasized.

De Andrade's evolutionism was also accompanied by a paradoxical rejection of history, which he replaced by what might be called an 'atemporal anthropology'. The same informed the ideas of Lucio Costa, an architect and urban planner whose history in Brazilian architecture left their mark on interpretative practices and continue to do so: very early in his career, in *O Aleijadinho e a Arquitetura Tradicional*[11] [Aleijadinho and Traditional Architecture](1929); later,

[11] COSTA, Lucio - "O Aleijadinho e a arquitetura tradicional", in *O Jornal*, Rio de Janeiro, 1929. Reprinted in COSTA, Lucio - *Sobre arquitetura*, Porto Alegre, 1966, p. 12-16.

in *Documentação necessária*[12] [Required Documentation] (1937); and, finally, in *Considerações sobre a arte contemporânea*[13] [Considerations on Contemporary Art] (1952).

Costa's writings shared affinities with de Andrade's views. According to Costa, Aleijadinho's genius did not concur with "the general spirit of our architecture". For him, the center of reference for Brazilianness was the vernacular, anonymous, domestic architecture of houses in the colonial period. Marcelo Puppi provides a fine analysis of this stance in his call for a 'non-modern history of Brazilian architecture' *(Por uma história não moderna da arquitetura brasileira*[14]): "[Lucio Costa] ... aims to establish an anthropology of architecture. Not by accident, actual knowledge of history itself as a discipline would then be made redundant: anthropological 'history' would do away with 'historical' history. Pursuing tradition – i.e., going back to the nation's cultural roots – means finding our primitive architecture". Brazil's colonial past, which rejected the damaging foreign fads in the 19th century, should be a source of inspiration for architects today.

These notions have clearly informed heritage preservation, including cosmetic makeovers of so-called historical cities in Minas Gerais and their rules protecting architecture that ignored 19th- and 20th-century contributions while ordering new constructions to adopt the "18th century style".

With regard to studies of Brazilian Baroque, the most drastic consequence was their turning in on themselves to pursue internal evolutionary-genetic processes and reject international comparative practices. Germain Bazin came to Brazil in 1945, drawn by the élan of Capanema's cultural policy, and developed his work on Baroque art and architecture, which he aligned with the nationalist message. Yves Bruand did so too, at a much later date, for his book on contemporary architecture in Brazil[15], which was the first to provide a systematic and comprehensive coverage of Brazilian architecture. Regardless of the indisputable merits of these French authors, they remained within the purview of the local ideological circles that were shaken up in the 1950s by industrial development and economic prosperity prompting liberalization in relation to acceptance of international trends. On the strength of the latter, São Paulo gained its new art museum (MASP)

[12] COSTA, Lucio - "Documentação necessária", in *Revista do SPHAN*, Rio de Janeiro, 1937. Reprinted in COSTA, Lucio - *Sobre arquitetura*, op. cit. 202-229.
[13] COSTA, Lucio - *Considerações sobre a arte contemporânea*, col. *Os Cadernos de Cultura,* Ministério da Educação e Saúde, Rio de Janeiro, 1952. Reprinted in COSTA, Lucio - *Sobre arquitetura*, op. cit., p. 202-229.
[14] PUPPI, Marcelo - *Por uma história não moderna da arquitetura brasileira*, Pontes, Campinas, 1998.
[15] BRUAND, Yves - *Arquitetura contemporânea no Brasil*, Editora Perspectiva, Campinas, 1981.

with a collection of universal masterpieces acquired in just a few years, and the São Paulo International Biennial, which led Brazil to engage with artistic production worldwide. Although substantial, these developments lacked the impetus needed to prevail and saw setbacks when the 1964 military coup forcefully reintroduced the nationalist project.

The constructs described here in a synthetic and simplified manner reiterated myths, arranged hierarchies, established preconceptions and concealed perceptions for the benefit of imaginaries that were not all that innocent.

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Post, Frans. *Igreja de São Cosme e Damião em Igarassu*, (Church of Saints Cosmas and Damian in the Brazilian town of Igarassu), circa 1637/45, oil on wood, 33,4 x 41,4 cm. Museu Nacional de Belas Artes, Rio de Janeiro, RJ.

Taunay, Nicolas-Antoine. *Vista do Morro de Santo Antonio* (View from Santo Antonio Hill), 1816 oil on canvas 45 x 56,5 cm Museu Nacional de Belas Artes, Rio de Janeiro, RJ.

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[i] ANONYMOUS - *Morte do Padre Philippe Bourel*, (Death of Father Philippe Bourel), 18th century, oil on canvas, 110,5 x 133,5 cm, Museu Nacional de Belas Artes, Rio de Janeiro, RJ.

[ii] ANONYMOUS - *Alegoria: índio (o Brasil) oferece a coroa ao Imperador Pedro I* (Allegory: native Indian [Brazil] offers the crown to Emperor Pedro I), undated, tempera on canvas, 197 x 140 cm. Museu Padre Toledo, Fundação Rodrigo Mello Franco de Andrade, Tiradentes, MG.

[iii] TAUNAY, Nicolas-Antoine - *Vista do Morro de Santo Antonio* (View from Santo Antonio Hill), 1816 oil on canvas 45 x 56,5 cm Museu Nacional de Belas Artes, Rio de Janeiro, RJ.

[iv] MEIRELLES DE LIMA, Victor - *Moema*, 1866, oil on canvas, 129 x 190 cm, Museu de Arte de São Paulo Assis Chateaubriand, São Paulo, SP.

[v] BERNARDELLI, Rodolpho - *Moema*, 1895, bronze, 25 x 218 x 95 cm, Pinacoteca do Estado, São Paulo, SP.

[vi] AMOEDO, Rodolpho - *Marabá,* 1882, oil on canvas, 151,5 x 200, 5 cm. Museu Nacional de Belas Artes, Rio de Janeiro, RJ.

[vii] AMOEDO, Rodolpho - *O último Tamoio* (The Last of the Tamoios), 1883, oil on canvas, 190,3 x 261,3 cm, Museu Nacional de Belas Artes, Rio de Janeiro, RJ.

[viii] MEDEIROS, José Maria de - *Iracema*, 1881, oil on canvas, 168,3 x 255 cm, Museu Nacional de Belas Artes, Rio de Janeiro, RJ.

[ix] CHAVES PINHEIRO, Francisco Manuel, *Alegoria do Império Brasileiro* (Allegory of the Brazilian Empire), 1872, terracotta, 192 x 75 x 31 cm, Museu Nacional de Belas Artes, Rio de Janeiro, RJ.

[x] ALMEIDA JUNIOR, José Ferraz - *Caipira picando fumo* (Country peasant cutting tobacco), 1893, oil on canvas, 202 x 141 cm, Pinacoteca do Estado, São Paulo, SP.

[xi] MEIRELLES, Victor - *Primeira missa no Brasil* (The First Mass in Brazil), 1860, oil on canvas, 268 x 356 cm, Museu Nacional de Belas Artes, Rio de Janeiro, RJ.

[xii] AMARAL, Tarsila do - *A Negra* (The Black Woman), 1923, oil on canvas, 100 x 81,3 cm, Museu de Arte Contemporânea da Universidade de São Paulo, São Paulo, SP.

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