

Brazilian Civilization's Missing Link

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O trato dos viventes: Formação do Brasil no Atlântico Sul [Mortal Traffic: The Formation of Brazil in the South Atlantic], by Luiz Felipe de Alencastro. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2000, 526 pp., R\$62.50, ISBN 85359000X. An English translation is being prepared by the University of Texas Press.

Brazil is always ignorant of Brazil, but from time to time we are introduced to ourselves thanks to books that go directly from the press to the classics shelf. In this rare lineage, the last comprehensive interpretation of our history was Fernando Novais's *Portugal e Brasil na crise do antigo sistema colonial [Portugal and Brazil in the Crisis of the Old Colonial System], 1777-1808*, published just over twenty years ago (which in turn builds on Caio Prado, Jr.'s analyses in *Formação do Brasil contemporâneo*): modern colonization, of which Brazil is a product, has a specific significance: it is a means of leveraging primitive accumulation for capitalism. *O trato dos viventes* continues Novais's work while modifying it at the same time. In each, the uncommon vision characteristic of great works was nurtured by many years of reflection and research. The starting point, however, is relatively simple, and yet full of consequences: in the history of Portuguese America, the whole is not the sum of its parts. That is, it is not enough to gather together the histories of the various colonial territories — a fact which also applies, incidentally, to national history. Thus, local history is interpreted in light of *real connections*, in reciprocal determination, with the history of capitalism — which is not, as a majority of studies in the field conceive it, merely an external frame. This assemblage formed a transcontinental, structured

system, characterized by accumulation carried out as quickly and profitably as possible on behalf of the metropolis. Slave trafficking was indispensable to it since, besides being a lucrative branch of colonial commerce (and therefore a source of revenue), it guaranteed the labor required for the production or extraction of export commodities. On the social plane, it is the slave trade that explains slavery, and not the reverse. With regard to this point Alencastro's work shows — with stunning erudition — the full import of a bilateral flow of native commodities, illnesses, words, combat techniques, and eating habits between Brazil and Angola, the principal African slave port. It periodizes, multiplies and gives body to the theories articulated by Master Novais.

This is the purpose of the opening chapter, in which the author, seeking to cover the entire map of the Portuguese Empire, demonstrates that *the significance of colonization was undergirded by different colonial apprenticeships*. The history the book narrates takes place in the discord between this significance and these various apprenticeships, since the colonial system was not born all at once. Rubbing up against widely varying realities on three continents, Lusitanian interests sniff out, find strange, take advantage of, or lose commercial opportunities in the race for capitalist expansion. Thus, “possessing or controlling natives did not assure the transformation of their extorted labor into commodities annexed to metropolitan flows, nor did it guarantee the emergence of tributary economies overseas. A second set of circumstances arises, now on the political plane. Even if the eventual economic surplus gathered from the conquests was captured by Iberian networks, mercantile expansion did not necessarily lead to the reinforcement of monarchical power. ...Thus overseas control does not always lead to colonial exploitation, just as it does not immediately bring about the colonists' and merchants' obedience to the metropolis” (12).

Such a dynamic emerged within a very precise historical context, indelibly marked by the decline of the Iberian monarchies and by the ascendancy of the other European powers, especially by the ascendancy of the first of the modern economies, that of the Low Countries (which did not correspond entirely to the political territory of the present-day Netherlands). The complicating factor was the so-called Iberian Union between Spain and Portugal, which beginning in 1581 made the Lusitanian possessions one of the key pieces in world geopolitics. The economic rise of the Netherlands occurred in the course of a long process of political independence in relation to Madrid. Throughout all of the 17th century, Iberian trading posts and colonies were threatened or seized by the Dutch. Lacking the forces to resist such a large wave, Portugal gradually lost its commercial space in Asia. It is in the ebb tide of the Eastern Empire that the Lusitanian foreign posts and colonies of

the Atlantic came to gain importance. The preservation of the small European kingdom would then depend on the economic space constituted by a zone of slave reproduction, in Africa, and a zone of slave production, in Brazil. Joining them was the slave trade, in which the Portuguese had come to accumulate an experience that predated the discovery of America and that, over time, will consist of more than trade alone. “Carrying out the reproduction of colonial production, the slave trade is introduced as a leveraging instrument for the Western Empire. Little by little this activity transcends the economic frame to join the metropolitan political arsenal. ...The exercise of imperial power in the Atlantic — as well as the exchanges between the Kingdom and the colonies — becomes coextensive with the reach of the slave trade” (28).

In this sense, the cohesive force of the trade would have greater weight than the “colonial pact” itself, since the flow of sugar production depended on maritime trade, which was also the source of indispensable labor. I think with regard to this point the author owes us a more thorough analysis of the connection between the purchasing of sugar and the slave trade.¹ For seventeenth-century Rio de Janeiro, Charles Boxer and Vivaldo Coaracy had already pointed out such a relationship, established long ago by the oligarchy of Correia de Sá. Alencastro seems to generalize this fact, extending it to the rest of the areas of sugar production. In any case, the reasoning is fundamental for the book, since “in allowing for the colonization of the colonists, that is, their entanglement in metropolitan meshes, the dynamic of the slave trade modifies the colonial system in a contradictory way. Since the seventeenth century, the interests of Luso-Brazilians, or, better said, *Brasillicos* — according to the noun that began to be used during the period to characterize the settlers of Portuguese America — are condensed in slaveholding areas of South America and in African trade ports. In counterpoint to the direct exchange between the colonies and the metropolis, bilateral flows directly link Brazil to Western Africa” (28).

A second fact, also stemming from the Iberian Union, also favors the advent of the system that constitutes the book's subject. It has to do with the activity of Portuguese or Luso-Brasilic merchants in the commercial flows of the silver mines in Potosí (today La Plata, in Bolivia). The most important region of the New World at the time, its centripetal force was so great that it attracted merchants from Spanish possessions in the Philippines, on the other side of the Pacific. Cornered in the Eastern Empire, Portuguese capital is gradually displaced to the Atlantic economy, also directing the slave trade toward Spanish America. For years, the supply contracts for the Spanish colonies were bid out to Portuguese bankers and merchants. On the other side, and under the blind eye of local authorities, Buenos Aires became the

subsidiary port of Potosí, receiving on the sly a growing number of African slaves until 1623, the year in which slave smuggling is banned (the trick had consisted in nullifying the declaration to sell the slaves in Brazil, thus paying lower taxes). The pivot of that trade was in Rio de Janeiro — we shall see that this fact is far from anecdotal — and one of the few vestiges of its significance was engraved on the beach that in our century was and is the marketing image of Rio throughout the world. Near Posto Seis, where the Fort is today, a small church housed an image of the Virgin with Amerindian features, sent from Potosí: Our Lady of Copacabana. In Quechua, the name means “illuminated place”; the church survived until 1918, when it was demolished.

Between the two great combined movements that delimit the periodization of the book — the ebb of Asian commerce and the consequent ascendancy of Atlantic commerce — an activity begins structure itself on a grand scale, an activity to which the Portuguese had been dedicating themselves since the 15th century in their first forays through Africa, and which will go on to become an unavoidable necessity of the overseas economy. The process is described in Chapter 2. The slave trade, that is, has to make its way into the far from contemptible roster of exports from native societies; it is only with the beginning of the 18th century that it will constitute the main slice of the African economy. It never hurts to recall that the trade in captives was a reality already well established in some regions. Nevertheless, when the flow towards the Americas grows, interior routes are altered, modifying and invigorating local economies. Despite various obstacles at the level of epidemiology, geography, etc., Lusitanian slaving activity descends the Western coast, in competition with slavers from other European nations, past Cape Verde, past São Tomé, in a crescendo that finds its most favorable conditions in Luanda, Angola, a port where slaves captured inland will converge. At the same time, the dynamic proper to this kind of trade causes new social categories to appear within the African societies that practice it. In this way, for example, “whites and mulattos called *lançados* or *tangomaus* cross the rivers of Upper Guinea bartering native and foreign goods. Adventurers, disgraced men, or deported *cristãos-novos*,¹ the *lançados* — skirting the metropolitan monopoly — cause the European impact to reverberate beyond the seashores. Dressing as natives, carving out the marks of local societies on their faces, the *lançados* were the first Portuguese — the first Europeans — to adapt themselves to the tropics” (48).

The fast rhythms of business gave rise to new creatures within the folds of the old African societies, but its greatest feat, the creation of a completely original society in America, was powerfully nurtured by the slow and recurrent tempo of nature. The Lusitanian slave ports were situated in

latitudes that circumscribe a system of maritime currents favorable for the other side of the Atlantic, nearly without risk for the navigation of the time. A disciple of Fernand Braudel and of Frédéric Mauro, thoughtful practitioners of the best geographic materialism, Alencastro christens these winds “slave winds.” In fact, unconnected to the Brazil-Portugal route’s calendar (clockwise), the Angola-Brazil itinerary possessed its own navigational calendar. Moving counterclockwise, “the impetus of the circular movements of winds and currents comes from a gigantic pulley of high pressures, a hidden gear of the history of the South Atlantic — the anticyclone of the Tropic of Capricorn — fixed in the ocean between 15° and 20° south latitude” (63). In this sense, in the 17th century the ocean does not separate continents, as a territorial conception of colonial history assumes, but, on the contrary, brings them together.

With its long experience on the African coast and the generous impetus of maritime geography, Portugal became the European nation most caught up in the slave trade, and Lisbon “The Slave Capital of the West” (Chapter 3). During the Iberian Union, Portuguese capital was recycled from Asian commerce to the Atlantic and bought, among other things, all the *asientos*² auctioned off by Madrid, taking advantage of the limits that characterized Hispano-American commerce, which needed African captives but did not have enough flexibility to meet demand. The revenues resulting from the trade contribute to a strengthening of Lisbon’s control over its African possessions, in a certain way restraining disorganized pillaging and disciplining commercial activity. On the other hand, these same revenues catalyzed scattered interests in search of good profits. “Bringing together family consortiums and businesses from the Madrilenian court all the way to the ports of the overseas periphery, such cosmopolitan networks derive from the segmented form assumed by the crystallization of merchant capitalism on the Iberian Peninsula. From then on, from generation to generation, making use of matrimonies, wills, and partnerships, major figures of Iberian finance and politics become involved in the Angolan slave trade, rendering transparent the globalizing dimension of the slave business during the period of the *asientos*” (83). The restoration of Portugal’s sovereignty in 1640 finds the *slave machine, incubated during the preceding period, ready to converge on Brazil*. In regard to this point we can see one of the many new insights produced by Alencastro’s original vision. Shackled to a strictly territorial conception of our history and accustomed to considering the Dutch occupation of Pernambuco as the most important fact to result from the Iberian Union, we can only be surprised by the fact that “paradoxically, the transformation of the Philippine period [i.e. the period of the Iberian Union under Philip I, II, and III, 1580-1640. Trans.] that will have the greatest

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impact on Portuguese America occurs outside of the American territory, on the other side of the ocean, in the Angolan appendix to the Brazilian economy” (80).

In the shadow of big business and court politics, the exchanges between Brazil and Angola gained density within the ambit of the slave trade. From America, manioc, maize, shells, dry and salt fish, *cachaça*, earthenware, tobacco, horses and quince jam found a demand in Africa; from Africa came, among other products, the banana and a vocabulary that we innocently use today but that is in no way innocent. In the bilateral network, these were nevertheless *ancillary* commodities, because “the exchange of slaves links together the availability of a series of other African products. Even with camel transport in the Sahel, canoes in the fluvial networks of Upper Guinea and inland from the Bight of Benin, and barges on the Angolan rivers, the captive presented himself as a commodity capable of carrying other commodities. ...The activity of the Angolan rural markets (the Kimbundu word *kitanda* provides Brazil with its word for any and every small business) was intense. Consignments of ivory, beeswax (valued highly for candle production), skins, musk, copper, gold, gum arabic, palm oil, etc. flowed into ports of trade, rounding out the profits obtained in the transportation of slaves” (114).

The consolidating character of the slave-commodity in Africa gave the slave trade an extraordinary push towards the economy of the Americas, since it implied an advantage over the capture of Amerindians — an advantage analyzed in Chapter 4. On one hand, a socio-cultural organization “contrary to the wide-spread exchange of slaves,” the absence of a regular trade of captives throughout the interior, susceptibility (that in part no longer existed in Africa) to the microbial and viral shock brought about by contact with the colonizers, and the geographic dispersal of tribes were all factors that acted together so as to weaken the historical possibilities of the Amerindian slave trade. Nevertheless, even here the logic of the slave traders was decisive. “Excluded from the Atlantic commerce in tropical goods, which was controlled by merchants connected to metropolitan concerns, traffickers of Indians could not export the products from the plantations which — in the absence of monetary circulation — would serve as payment for native slaves by the plantation owners. They would, therefore, have to turn to the businessmen of the maritime marketplace in order to handle their exports. The latter now presented themselves, equally, as sellers of slaves — African slaves” (126). It is not a question, however, of opposing two business models, but instead of placing them in reciprocal interaction within the structures of the old colonial system. (This relationship had previously been pointed out by Afonso Taunay and Fernando Novais). The capture of

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Amerindians was possible but in the end incompatible with the orientation of colonization, so that it only develops at the point at which the African slave trade stagnates, during the wartime situation that marks the history of the Atlantic during the first half of the 17th century. Another comparative disadvantage was of more interest within the sphere of production: the de-socialization that transformed people into slaves was not the same in each of the models, with a clear advantage for that of African slave traders. “Black slaves escaping and recaptured, already familiarized [like Indians] with the American tropics, dropped in value on the domestic market, because they became considered instigators of rebellions and *quilombos*.³ In judicial sales, the law incorporated, for reasons of public safety, the observance of the standards of de-socialization. Black ‘sons of the bush’ — born free — over twelve years old, living in Palmares⁴ and captured by Domingos Jorge Velho’s band, could no longer be sold in the territories where they had roots. They had to be shipped to Rio de Janeiro and Buenos Aires” (146). Along these same lines, see the remarkable analysis of the legend of the speechless monkeys, illustrating the trauma of the process of de-socialization (151-152).

Another obstacle to the enslavement of Amerindians resulted from the evangelizing dimension of the colonial undertaking, in which the priests of the Companhia de Jesus [i.e. Jesuits. Trans.] had played a significant role, which is the object of analysis in Chapter 5. To a degree initially as large as that of capitalist expansion, Jesuit preaching suffers, and badly, in the East. In the Atlantic, it will have to come to terms with the logic of the slave trade. Without forgetting the strictly doctrinal aspects of Catholicism, Alencastro lays bare its contortions and, in the end, its compatibility with the interests of slave traders — even in questions of material survival (the Jesuit plantations, generally the largest in the colony, possessed many slaves). “Without rhetoric, with neither renowned *autos-da-fé* nor esteemed professors, crucial problems concerning the orientation of colonization were solved by the clergy overseas in the valley of the shadow of death. As in the Indian and Pacific Oceans, the priests zigzag across the seas of the Atlantic. After going into a skid in the Congo, they descend hesitantly in Angola and, finally, mount an impetuous attack on Brazil” (157). This movement as a whole, “evangelization in a single colony,” presupposed: a) the doctrinal justification of slave trafficking (in which stands out the figure of Father Baltazar Barreira, who dies in Cape Verde in 1612 after fifty years of service and who, in spite of being known as “Old Saint,” never entered the hagiography of the Companhia de Jesus) and b) the priority given to the catechesis of Amerindians, founding a pro-indigenous policy in Brazil, in conflict with the colonists from areas not supplied by slave trafficking. This policy demanded the relocation of Indians from the backlands onto settlements around colonial

centers, which then constituted a military barrier to escaping Africans. It is in this equation, sorted out by his predecessors, that the performance of the book's main character (along with Salvador Correia de Sá) takes shape and gains meaning. Born in Lisbon and raised in Bahia, citizen of the world and "possessor of the greatest strategic intelligence in the Portuguese Empire," Father Antônio Vieira also glosses in his sermons the drama of the missionaries: to justify the enslavement of Africans in order to save them from paganism. In the analysis of *sermão XIV do Rosário* [Sermon of the Rosary XIV], preached in 1633 to Blacks in a chapel on a Bahian sugar plantation ("Oh if Black people taken from the dense woods of their Ethiopia, and sent to Brazil, had known how much they owed to God and to His most sainted Mother for this which can seem like exile, captivity, and misfortune, but is rather nothing but a miracle, and a great miracle?"), Alencastro concludes, against the grain of Vieira scholarship, that there is no contradiction but rather a complementarity between the defense of the slave trade and the master's obligation to treat the slave humanely.

From the first chapter to the fifth, the exposition synchronically describes the organization of a system endowed with its own logic and therefore with its own demands. From Chapter 6 we pass on to the second half of the book, marked by a diachronic exposition that privileges that analysis of historical events (*temps court*) which reveals the density of the structural plot (*longue durée*) described in detail in the first half. Between events and structures lies the rhythm, neither short nor long, of the troubled situation in the Atlantic, a peripheral extension of the Thirty Years War (1618-48) that was then devastating Europe. Alencastro studies the movement as a whole and the reciprocal mirroring of what until today has been studied piecemeal in regional histories: the Dutch occupation of the northeast, the cycle of Amerindian subjugation in São Paulo, and the assertion of slaving interests in Rio de Janeiro.

In the book's widest, aterritorial scope, the Dutch West India Company's occupation of Pernambuco gains a far more nuanced periodization, which "should include two more phases: at the beginning, the privateers' war in the Atlantic (1621-30), and, at the end, the Lusitanian and *Brasilico* counter-attack in Angola (1648-65). In between these phases, the battle for control of the Brazilian zones of slave production and of the African zones of slave reproduction reveals polarized objectives within the slave trade" (190). In fact, the logic of the slave trade already had enough force during this period to bring the Netherlands' modern colonial project into its orbit. The best example is the behavior of João Maurício de Nassau, governor of Dutch Brazil, who "takes possession of a Portuguese colonial base, whose method

of exploitation induces him to sweep away the 'useless scruples' of his countrymen and incorporate slavery into the economic calculus of the bourgeoisie in Amsterdam. In the social regression that the overseas periphery imposes on the metropolis of advanced capitalism, primitive accumulation carves out its niche" (212). From 1641 to 1648 Dutch troops occupy Luanda, the principal slave port, without which there would be no point in maintaining the Pernambucan enclave. We will see below that the success of the Pernambucan restoration (1645-54, a long war), in which the local contribution was decisive (as Evaldo Cabral de Mello demonstrated), also depended on a mobilization outside the boundaries of the territory: a contingent which left Rio de Janeiro in 1648 and, in a short battle, restored Luanda.

Alencastro also reassesses the history of São Paulo, located on the margins of the colonial system. The cycle of Amerindian subjugation, which gave the region its own political and economic status, is analyzed in light of Atlantic slave trafficking and is emphasized by contrast to Rio de Janeiro's interventions in the Atlantic. On this other side, the role of colonists from Rio in the recapture of Luanda, headed by the extraordinary figure Salvador Correia de Sá, will be crucial. Tied up in its border war against Spain, Lisbon has no resources available for the war overseas. Luanda will have to be restored by a taskforce from Rio. "A memorandum submitted to the Crown defines the purpose of the offensive: unlike the tactical battles carried out in Pernambuco, the African war had a strategic value — it was essential first to expel the Dutch from Luanda, in order to make them leave Brazil. Otherwise, the Netherlands would form an alliance with the Spanish in order to secure Angola. And Portugal would have no way of defending itself, neither in Africa, nor in Brazil" (226).

I think that Chapter 7, "Angola Brasília," is the most original and perhaps the highlight of the book. In it, we feel the force of the schema created by the author in the earlier chapters. There is nothing like it in Brazilian historiography. Straight away, the iron logic of the slave trade emerges in a revealing episode, in which "Diogo Gomes Carneiro is given the duty of writing a 'History of Brazil.'" This "History," bringing together years of documentary research, was lost, leaving subsequent generations of historians bereft even today. But its only remaining reference gains meaning when Brazil's formation is studied within the frame of the South Atlantic. By royal order, the annual salary of 200,000 réis⁵ allocated to the chronicler for the execution of his task would be paid, in equal parts, by four municipal councils: those of Bahia, Recife, Rio de Janeiro and Luanda. The colony of Angola, incorporated into the fate of Brazil — that is, of slave Brazil, excluding the Indian-hunting municipal councils of São Paulo and Maranhão

— was required to help finance the writing of this lost ‘History of Brazil’ (248). How did *Brasilico* interests affirm themselves in Angola, to the point of establishing a bilateral trade that escaped the Portugal-Brazil axis? In a first moment, between 1590 and 1630, Brazilian manioc constituted an important factor for advancing on the African markets. “The high proportion of American consumables, and in particular of manioc, in slave rations cuts the price of transport between Brazil and African ports ... and facilitates the African’s adaptation to *Brasilico* slavery” (252). Manioc will go on to penetrate Africa and to constitute the food base of native societies. Another important product in the bilateral trade was the cowrie, used as currency in Africa.⁶ “Exported through Salvador or Rio de Janeiro, Bahian cowries left the country without being taxed — for this reason the quantities exported cannot be assessed — circumventing Portuguese metropolitan control” (252). More important than anything else, however, was Brazilian *cachaça*, the distillate that beat out competition from Portuguese wine and spirits. “In fact, the export of *cachaça* illustrates the manner in which South Atlantic inter-colonial trade begins to supersede — from the end of the 17th century on — the interests of metropolitan groups” (307).

During a century in which war and trade are almost indistinguishable, the definitive conquest of African markets also came about by means of the predatory action of governors, generally *Brasilicos*, appointed in Angola — beginning with Salvador Correia de Sá. Later will come João Fernandes Vieira and André Vidal de Negreiros, both champions in the fight against the Dutch. Two battles, at Ambuíla (1665) and at Pungo-Andongo (1671), were decisive in the Luso-Brasilic ascendancy in Angola. In each, the favorable outcome for the Luso-Brasilics was largely due to tactics, food, and armaments suitable for the tropics — in short, “for *Brasilico* warfare” (294), perfected during the struggle against the Dutch in the Northeast. The result was that “in Angola, Portugal occupied a wide territory supplied by a network of hinterland outposts for the purchasing and capture of slaves. The only European nation that undertakes direct, official operations for the hunting of slaves, Portugal — economically and militarily assisted by the Portuguese colony in the Americas — obtains in Central Africa its biggest African domain, its largest reserve of slaves, which it uses to develop its territories on the other side of the Atlantic. The steady destruction of Angola presents itself as the counterpart of the continual construction of Brazil” (325).

“Brazilian Singularity,” the book’s closing chapter, sketches out a broad panorama of the period that follows the war configuration. The normalization of commercial flows creates Brazil as it will function until the end of the old colonial system, with all of the elements in place. The coupling of the slave

trade with the Brazilian economy seals the fate of Amerindian subjugation. Indigenous populations become “a mere obstacle to the expansion of the agro-pastoral frontier; the road to their extermination had been opened up” (337). Such is the meaning of the so-called “War of the Barbarians” (1651-1704). The process opens the way for cattle farming and the repopulation of Portuguese America. “While extending the colonial territory, ranching brings about the profoundest changes in Luso-Brasilic society. Meat production in the back country swells the supply of food on coastal sugar plantations, facilitating the concentration of slave labor in export agriculture” (341).

As the Indians were being exterminated, the anti-quilombo doctrine was being formulated. Inured to Brazilian realities, unlike voices that preached tolerance regarding Palmares, “it is Antônio Vieira who, once again, states the implacable law of Brazilian slavery. No forgiveness, no amnesty should be accorded to the denizens of Palmares. Otherwise, from the top to the bottom of colonial society, in every city, every town, every place, every plantation, other such *quilombos* would proliferate. If Palmares continued to exist Brazil would be done for.” (344). Escaped slaves begin to be penalized legally. The consequences will be decisive for the forced cohesion of colonial society, especially in regard to free Blacks. “For such persons, such families, the best guarantee of the preservation of freedom consisted in accepting it as a relative freedom, loaning services to the planter that recognized and guaranteed his status as non-slave. Brought together by voluntary subjugation, the closeness of free Blacks to Brazilian patriarchal society favors biological interbreeding; that is, miscegenation between the two groups” (345-46). At one stroke, two Brazilian phenomena are invented: both the mulatto, whose possibility of ascending colonial society functioned as a safety valve, and the practice of personal dependency (which later, in Roberto Schwarz’s words, becomes “our quasi-universal mediation”).

The discovery of gold in Minas Gerais at the end of the 17th century transforms the colony from head to tail, drawing together the relatively isolated regions via the economy. “But the emergence of the domestic market hides its Angolan supplement and, to a certain extent, the bilateral relations that link Bahia to West Africa. The splendor of eighteenth-century gold hides the colors of the 17th century and blurs the contours of the 19th. In fact, Independence once again brings evidence of slave trafficking and of the deterritorialization of the slave labor market. ...The continuity of colonial history does not coincide with the continuity of colonial territory. The intermittent transparency of a colonial matrix that is distinct from Brazilian national unity inverts the chronology and suggests an alternate historical sequence: the 19th century is closer to the 17th century than to the 18th” (354).

Establishing filiations is not enough to explain the force of a work. Nonetheless, a book such as this presupposes intellectual accumulation on a large scale, sifted through the schemata that lie at the heart of Luiz Felipe's formation. In 1966, he was driven into exile. It was in France that he steeped himself in the style of this century's best school of historiography, *Annales*. A student of Georges Duby in Aix-en-Provence, and later guided by Frédéric Mauro, Felipe made his choices under the long shadow of Fernand Braudel. Also decisive was his intimacy with Brazilian exiles in Paris, especially the daily lunches with Roberto Schwarz, his reading companion at the National Library.

From Braudel we turn to his students, disciples scattered throughout the world, whose works had left their mark on Felipe: to Mauro, author of the best set of studies on the seventeenth-century Luso-Brazilian Atlantic economy; to Alice Canabrava, author of the first Braudelian book written in Brazil, *O comércio português no rio da Prata [Portuguese Trade on the River Plate]*, (1580-1640); to Vitorino Magalhães Godinho and his monumental work; as well as to Pierre Verger, who in 1968 published in French his dissertation on the slave trade between Bahia and Africa. This book, *Fluxo e refluxo [Trade Relations between the Bight of Benin and Bahia from the 17th to 19th Century]*, is the nearest relation to Luiz Felipe's, since it demonstrated for the first time that the Brazilian slave trade was characterized by bipolarity and dominated by the unswerving politics of the Brazilian colony. These four works combine the characteristic elements of the second phase of *Annales*: the expansive and incorporative force of commercial capitalism, different levels of temporality each with its own rhythms, the considerable importance of positive and negative geographic constraints, all within an aterritorial economic space.

I think that the criticisms that a Marxist might suggest to a Braudelian might also be made of Luiz Felipe's book. Without forgetting the many points of contact, Marxism would demand of Braudelian schemas *more mediations between the different levels of historical temporality*, which often are merely arranged in overlapping layers lacking contact with each other.² (In 1951, shortly after the publication of *La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II*, a then-young American historian, Bernard Bailyn, noted this problem).⁷ Something like this, for example, occurs with the *colonial pact*, nonexistent in the book; or with the importance of direct taxation of the slave trade *on behalf of the Crown*, which would deserve its own chapter. In each case, mediations proper, which render the colony a colony, are rubbed out by an account that only privileges the "autonomy" of bilateral trade, and of the *Brasilico* colony. With this choice, Luiz Felipe responds to many questions except one (perhaps the crux of the

problem): being "autonomous" in that which was indispensable to it, why did the Colony remain connected to the metropolis for such a long time? In my opinion, it is the notion of colonial pact that helps one to understand the objective limits of the trajectories of Salvador de Sá, João Fernandes Vieira and André Vidal de Negreiros. In Salvador de Sá's case, his direct connection with Spanish interests in Prata and his excessive repression of the revolt of 1660 flow from his role as vassal of the Portuguese Crown, his notable roster of services rendered notwithstanding. The explanation of Salvador de Sá's metamorphosis from "colonial man" to "overseas man" (103), then, perhaps will not suffice.

O trato dos viventes is also an offshoot of the best Anglo historiography; indebted, above all, to the extraordinary work of Charles Boxer, the great English-language expert on the Portuguese Empire, especially his 1952 study on *Salvador de Sá and the Struggle for Brazil and Angola, 1602-1686*; and also to the vast bibliography on the slave trade (see the recent survey by Herbert Klein, *The Atlantic Slave Trade*), which in 1969 underwent an interpretive inversion, decisive for Felipe, thanks to Philip Curtin's *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census*. In line with these quantitative works on the slave trade, a glance through Brazilian historiography might lead us to Maurício Goulart's 1949 study, *Escravidão Africana no Brasil — das origens à extinção do tráfico [African Slavery in Brazil: From the Origins to the End of the Slave Trade]*, whose solitary trailblazing provides the measure of the influence exerted by a territorial conception of colonial history, to the exclusion of books with a more inclusive scope, such as Luiz Felipe's.

It is in this sense that *O trato dos viventes* — discerning in the past its own historiographic genealogy, as in the case of Antonio de Oliveira de Cadornega's *História geral das guerras angolanas [General History of the Angolan Wars]* (1680); unearthing extraordinary sets of documents, in particular the *Monumenta missionaria africana*, assembled for years by Father Antonio Brásio; and, finally, advancing a real airing out of musty regional histories — represents a gain for Brazilian social sciences as a whole. One need only see the new meaning that the book confers to heavyweights like Evaldo Cabral de Mello (in the discussion concerning the contingency of Luso-Brazilian victories in Pernambuco, or even concerning the second acts of the Luandan restorers' lives in Angola), Stuart Schwartz (in the clarification of the role of *cachaça* in setting the prices for Bahian slaves) and John Monteiro (in the historical delimitation of São Paulo's political and economic autonomism).

So much new observation collected in one book alone stems, clearly, from Luiz Felipe's original vision, and allows one to compare it not only to Caio

Prado Jr. and Fernando Novais but also to other authors that, particularly beginning in the 1930s, had made explanations of the nation, framed by colonial legacies, into a veritable genre. The author is preparing two more books that will continue *O trato dos viventes*, and therefore a full comparison will only be possible in a few years. Meanwhile, what we have in hand is substantial and allows a retrospective and critical look at the works through which we are accustomed to think Brazil. If I am not mistaken, these belong to an optimistic moment in Brazilian history, that of the developmentalist period, which was characterized by a broad social mobilization coming from below, and whose point of departure would be a socially integrated nation. This process was aborted in 1964. Today times have changed and the questions we ask of the past tend to be different. In the stark light of the slave trade, the sweet racial mixing that constitutes the very peculiar climate of Gilberto Freyre's *Casa-grande e senzala* [*The Masters and the Slaves*], changes meaning, and the resulting ideology of "Luso-Tropicalism" definitively situates itself in history, in Brazil, since in Africa it had no way of surviving. In his studies from the 1940s and 1950s (*Monções* [*Monsoons*], *Caminhos e fronteiras* [*Roads and Borders*] and, up to a certain point, *Visão do Paraíso* [*Vision of Paradise*]), heavily influenced by modernism, Sérgio Buarque de Holanda privileged the analysis of periods and situations in which the weak presence of the colonial apparatus gave the colonists considerable room to maneuver, shedding European traditions of little use in a new environment, and inventing social forms on the basis of their contact with the survival techniques of natives. Luiz Felipe's book demonstrates the other side of the process — amplifying the meaning given to it by Evaldo Cabral de Mello in *Olinda restaurada* [*Olinda Restored*] — since during this same period the inventive contact, properly American, between colonists and natives (the techniques of "Brasílico warfare") was used to successfully pillage the other side of the Atlantic, in Angola. One of the best moments in *Formação econômica do Brasil* [*The Economic Growth of Brazil*] is the analysis of regional integration through the mining economy in the 18th century. In Celso Furtado's classic, such integration prefigures a future domestic market which, once fully formed, would make Brazil master of its own destiny. Luiz Felipe notes that the gold century conceals the fundamental fact that allows one to understand the impasses of the 17th and 19th century, since the heart of the Brazilian economy was to be found outside of the country.

The differences I just ventured to point out are not comprehensive, since there always remains the commitment of the intellectual, engaged with the nation's development, who does not bet on barbarity. Luiz Felipe is no exception to the rule — or better, is only an exception by virtue of the

conclusions that might be drawn from his book. On the other hand, in his articles in the press, which together could provide a remarkable panorama of this Brazilian fin-de-siècle, another Luiz Felipe dominates, imbued with very French republican values, determined to give historical density to the process — today out in the open — of transforming our social majority into a political majority through the vote. Felipe's historiographic work seems to point in the opposite direction: since the 16th century the *Brasílico*, and later Brazilian, dominant class thoroughly committed itself to the slave trade. As a result, Brazil was the colony and later the nation that received the most slaves. We nearly entered the 20th century with slavery comprising a part of our day-to-day. A structural fact unlike any other, slavery penetrated deeply into or inscribed itself brutally upon Brazilian political consciousness and culture alike. The reader will not fail to notice that this book is essential for our understanding of the exposed fracture that astonishes us even today. Luiz Felipe demonstrates essentially that, *with the reproduction of the labor force guaranteed by the slave trade — in Angola, outside of Brazil — there was no reason for our dominant class to concern itself with the social reproduction of those on the bottom within the colony and within the nation*. Hence the "absence" of bourgeois revolution, the inorganic character of Brazilian civil society, and the slowness of our political processes of rupture.

Thus the history of the city that is undoubtedly most significant for *O trato dos viventes* and the books that will follow acquires its full meaning. It was from Rio de Janeiro — slave capital of the tropics — that in 1648 the taskforce led by Salvador de Sá left in order to take the port of Luanda from the Dutch. The city's crucial role expands with the gold cycle, and from 1763 to 1960 it would successively constitute the seat of the Viceroy, the capital of the Portuguese empire, and the center of independent Brazil. As Luiz Felipe states in the volume that he organized for *História da vida privada no Brasil* [*The History of Private Life in Brazil*],³ no other Brazilian city had or will have the political, economic, and cultural importance of Rio. For our democratic imaginary, formed in abolitionist struggles and afterwards in the realm of the Vargas era, the city was, and perhaps continues to be, Brazilian civilization's laboratory. But in the time of Machado de Assis, Rio also harbored the largest urban concentration of slaves since the end of the Roman Empire. Today, the great-grandchildren of these same slaves threaten to come down from the slums — in the worst sense of the expression. In the meantime, new phenomena within the universe of the poor are revelatory of the process's worldwide dimension. Published in the *Jornal do Brasil* (05/02/2000): in a war for control of drug trafficking in the *favela* New Holland, in Bonsucesso, one of the rival groups made use of Angolan mercenaries, armed with AK-47 rifles. The impasses of Rio are those of a

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Brazil that could have been and but never was. At a time when the disintegrating forces of globalized capital seem so threateningly disproportional in relation to the integrating idea of the word “nation,” even to the point of bringing about the reemergence of the traffic in human beings, the book’s closing sentences sound cruelly realistic: “The history of the Brazilian market, crafted by means of pillaging and trade, is long, but the history of the Brazilian nation, founded on violence and on consent, is short” (355).

Alencastro Responds

Milton Ohata’s astute and generous review of my book requires no commentary on my part. However, since its author, a former fellow at the Brazilian Center for Analysis and Planning [CEBRAP], is a member of the group of researchers who have motivated my own work, I will take advantage of this opportunity to continue the dialogue.

With much benevolence, Milton situates the book in a prestigious line of historians. But he also believes that it lacks reference to other authors and debates within the São Paulo university scene. To be sure, there are many implicit and diffuse influences in a work developed in two countries. Although I had commented on a good part of the bibliography mentioned, I should have pointed out, in particular, the intellectual significance that Celso Furtado had and still has for me.

As regards the periodization of the book, the central fact is not the well-known turnabout at the beginning of the 1600s that marks the ebbing of the Asian market and the rise of Atlantic trade. The division I followed privileges a less conspicuous characteristic of American colonial history. In fact, by limiting the study to the 16th and 17th century I considered — in the sequence conceptualized by Celso Furtado and Antonio Candido — the radical change generated in the 18th century by the discovery of gold and the formation of an internal territorial market. Before this, as I tried to demonstrate, the idea of Brazil, and of Portuguese America alike, makes no sense. Up the coast from Rio Grande do Norte, isolated and linked to Lisbon alone, was the state of Grão-Pará e Maranhão. Below, beyond the state of Brazil, was the what I have elsewhere called the Archipelago of Capricorn: the Brazil-Angola slave system linked by maritime currents and the winds of the anticyclone of the Tropic of Capricorn. At the beginning of the last quarter of the 1600s, the subsystem linking Bahia with West Africa completes the picture.

Radicalizing Caio Prado Jr.’s formulation, I think that the “significance of colonization” was neither that of forming a nation, nor even of forming a colony populated by proto-Brazilians (the idea of writing “Colony” with a

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capital *C*, which I let pass in my book, now seems bizarre to me). The institution created by the Crown in 1642 for managing overseas dominions took the generic name of the *Overseas Council*, and not the “Colonial” Council or Council “of the Colonies,” which appear only later. As I have written elsewhere, the typology distinguishing “settler colony” and “exploitation colony,” elaborated by Leroy-Beaulieu in 1874, refers to the problematic of the Second European Expansion (the 19th and 20th centuries). Its transposition into the field of the First European Expansion (15th to 18th centuries) is anachronistic and mistaken.⁸ For all practical purposes, what exists in the 16th and 17th centuries are “colonial spaces” in Africa, Asia, and the Americas. Colonies in the modern sense exist only in the islands of the Atlantic. Hence the subtitle “The Formation of Brazil in [the Colonial Space] of the South Atlantic.” Hence, moreover, the title of the book’s closing chapter: “Brazilian Singularity [within the Lusitanian Overseas Empire].”

In order to isolate the problem, it was necessary to define the historical agents that played a role in the period and the transatlantic space under consideration. On the African side appear native societies affected by the Atlantic trade and the “*Angolistas*,” Angolan colonists who are neither native Angolans nor newly arrived Portuguese. On the other side of the ocean, the “*Brasilicos*” are the Portuguese residents of Brazil who had interests and cultural characteristics distinct from those of the kingdom (in 1654 André Vidal de Negreiros was mocked in Lisbon because he did not speak Portuguese correctly), but did not think of themselves as belonging to a unified cultural and territorial community. These were not “Brazilians” endowed with a presentiment of nationality, but rather disparate categories of colonists (from Pernambuco, São Paulo, Bahia, Rio de Janeiro, Maranhão), whose aims are divergent and often opposed. In short, the division within the arena of European expansion of the modern period separates the “overseas man” from the “colonial man.” The former plays his cards overseas in order to obtain social and economic recompense in the metropolis, while the latter chooses to fix his destiny in a particular colonial enclave.

All of these characterizations refer to seventeenth-century historical processes anterior to the constitution of an internal and inter-regional market, of a colonial territory and, consequently, of any nativist sentiment on the frontiers of Portuguese America.

At the end of the review, after deciding that the book presents an “an account that only privileges the ‘autonomy’ of bilateral trade, and of the *Brasilico* colony,” Milton Ohata poses a question which I did not address and which he considers, perhaps, decisive: “being ‘autonomous’ in that which was indispensable to it, why did the Colony remain connected to the metropolis for such a long time?”

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I believe I have given the bilateral slave trade the importance it deserves. The fact that it appears to have been privileged in the book is perhaps due to the persistence with which the majority of authors have spoken about the triangular trade, despite the fact that other historians had long ago demonstrated the reality of direct exchanges between Brazilian ports and Central and West Africa.⁹ As mentioned above, and as I presume to have presented clearly throughout the book, the seventeenth-century colonist from Portuguese America does not represent a collectivity with a single orientation. This is why I used the word “*Brasilico*” and not Luso-Brazilian, much less Brazilian.

In his question, Milton writes “autonomy” and “autonomous” between quotation marks. The reader might think that these terms come from my own work. They do not; quite the opposite. I speak of different agents who constitute the “Lusitanian and *Brasilico* co-administration of the South Atlantic” (76, 223, 354) and I include the Jesuits in this “co-administration” (266); one of the subsections of the book is entitled “Lusitanian, *Angolista* and *Brasilico* Joint Control in Central Africa” (259). I am here referring to a “*Pax Lusitana*” brought about by slave trafficking — an idea I reiterate throughout (41, 234, 294, 318, 338). “*Pax Lusitana*” in the South Atlantic (and not “*Pax Brasiliensis*”) was also the title of my doctoral dissertation, which covers the period 1550-1850. The decisions of the Overseas Council concerning the transformations underway in Africa and in America are contextualized. In brief, I define the military operations of colonists from Brazil in Angola “as contributions of the *Brasilico lumpencolonialism* to the establishment of the ‘*Pax Lusitana*’ in Central Africa” (294).

I employ the words “autonomy,” “autonomist,” and “autonomism” elsewhere, to express something different. Not in order to refer to the Brazilian colony in general, but rather with the aim of describing overseas communities stuck in the semi-autarchy that resulted from the use of indigenous labor, which — for this reason precisely — were shut out by the market and the metropolis: communities in São Paulo, Amazônia, Peru, Angola, and Mozambique (Ch. 1, *passim*; 139; Ch. 6, *passim*; 266).

I consider the concept “colonial pact” partially inoperative in the 1600s. Coined by French encyclopedists in the second half of the 18th century — in the movement to critique colonialism — the notion is interpreted by Brazilian historiography as a carapace fixed since 1500. I would like to think that the limits of this interpretation are manifest in the analysis of the Atlantic *cachaça* trade in the 1600s. With the guarantee of the Crown, which was interested in the advantage to the treasury, *cachaça* overcomes the competition of Portuguese wine and brandy in Angola. Thus, *cachaça* was perhaps the first American manufactured product and, without question, the first

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Brazilian colonial product to surpass its European counterparts on the international market. As regards the fiscal system, the taxation of the slave trade carried out by the Crown is calculated as a percentage of the price of the slave [and thus the Crown profits by encouraging the bilateral trade, even to the detriment of a metropolitan industry]; this is noted at the beginning of the book as one of fundamental instruments of metropolitan control. I also attribute a key role to this taxation in the legitimation and legalization of the Atlantic slave trade, which precedes and justifies slavery in the Americas (35-36, Ch. 5, *passim*).

Chapter 7 is entitled “Angola *brasílica*” in order to mark the emergence of interests proper to oligarchies from diverse Brazilian territories in the Angolan colonial theater. This emergence, which takes place in the colonial and international context specific to the second half of the 1600s, had already been pointed out by Portuguese historians. Still, for the colonists of Portuguese America, access to the African market does not alone guarantee the conditions necessary for independence from the metropolis. The book shows the process of interaction between the interests of big *assentista* capital, of the Crown, of Portuguese merchants, of missionaries, of *Brasilicos*, of *Angolistas*, and of Africans, circulating throughout the seventeenth-century Atlantic. Nothing suggests that Brazil could have sidestepped Portugal in order to place its exports directly on the European market in the 17th and 18th century. Or that it could do without a hegemonic ruling class, capable of integrating the country into the concert of nations. For this reason, there is nothing in the book to suggest that during that period the colony was already “‘autonomous’ in that which was indispensable to it.”

Having begun my investigations with the examination of the conflicts produced by the slave trade in the period of the Brazilian Empire [1822-1889], I have always situated the political, economic and cultural implications of the deterritorialization of the labor market at the center of my thinking.¹⁰ Milton agrees with the idea that between the 17th and 19th centuries “the heart of the Brazilian economy was to be found outside of the country,” that is, in Africa: in Angola, in Central and West Africa, but also, during the first half of the 19th century, in Mozambique. This is, precisely, the essence of all of my work. The impossibility, for the Brazilian economy, of emancipating itself from African markets and from the Portuguese colonial space in the Atlantic until 1850 — that is, *before and after Independence* [1822] — led me to reconsider the idea of the “crisis of the colonial system”; the centrality of 1808 [when the Portuguese court, fleeing Napoleonic conquest, reestablished itself in Rio; at this time Brazilian ports were opened up to foreign trade] in Brazilian political and economic history; the origins of the Brazilian nation-state; and the periodization of the 19th

century, as indicated in the final pages of the book. And as it had already been explained in the review of the book by Fernando Novais that I wrote twenty years ago, reproduced below.

A Marriage of Convenience

Fernando Novais's *Portugal e Brasil na crise do antigo sistema colonial [Portugal and Brazil in the Crisis of the Old Colonial System]* will constitute an important milestone in contemporary Brazilian historiography. His meticulous study of the period 1777-1808 wholly achieves the objectives it proposes: to delimit Brazilian specificity in relation both to the European situation and to the internal crisis of Portuguese colonialism. The simultaneous examination of these two circumstances requires a fair dose of talent, obstinacy, and patience, and few are the authors who, like Novais, can carry out such an arduous task. A work like his demands detailed and extended reflection, but here we will limit ourselves to questioning the way certain problems are posed and the causal relationships established between certain of the facts analyzed.

Chapter 1 outlines the European political and diplomatic panorama into which the eighteenth-century Portuguese state and economy are inserted. It is a dense and modernized synthesis. But it is possible that the changes that occurred within the principal European metropolises might be a bit understated. Here one notes the influence of an "integrationist" interpretation of mercantilism, too attached to Eli F. Heckscher's classic *Mercantilism* (1935), which produced an excessively uniform account of a quite complex process. The differences that distinguish England from Holland, where capitalism was more advanced than in Portugal, demonstrate with greater clarity that not every kind of development leads to the Industrial Revolution.

The following chapters grapple directly with the Luso-Brazilian conjuncture. Although the author makes it clear that the central theme of his study is politics and not the economy, we should take a closer look at the magnificent analysis of Portuguese colonial commerce elaborated in the final part of the book.

Novais points out that the trade tables he uses do not distinguish the sum generated by slave trafficking. But the value of slave imports is considerable, representing close to a third of all imports to Rio de Janeiro between 1795 and 1811. Having brilliantly characterized the role of the slave trade in Portuguese colonialism, Novais fails to take his analysis to its logical conclusion. The "colonial monopoly" is in fact articulated twice over: the Portuguese monopoly exerts itself over the commodities trade between Brazil and Europe, but also in slave trade between Brazil and the African trafficking

zones, above all in Angola, the source of 70% of the slaves imported in the 18th century. From this perspective, the process of breaking with the metropolis involves a double disassociation: on the one hand, England's absorption of the commodities trade; on the other, the autonomization of the slave trade, which beginning in the last quarter of the 18th century gradually comes under the control of Luso-Brazilian businessmen from Rio de Janeiro and from Bahia. For this reason, the time of the Brazilian economy is told on two hands: the first points toward Europe, the second toward Africa.

Thus, when it directly penetrates the Brazilian market, England controls only two-thirds of Atlantic exchanges, while the other portion will remain in the hands of Luso-Brazilian businessmen until 1850. Note that the decree of 1808 [opening Brazilian ports to English ships] is not such a distinct parting of the waters as it appears: Brazilian foreign trade is not incorporated into North American and European trade until 1850. In other words, in 1808 the Brazilian economy becomes an tributary economy of the English economy, but only in 1850 is it transformed into a peripheral economy of the industrialized center.

The political and ideological implications of such a situation are considerable. The slave trade and slavery — important sectors of the old colonial system — gallantly cross the ideological barrage unleashed by Enlightenment philosophy, transforming themselves into two important buttresses of the nineteenth-century Brazilian state and society. Therefore, contrary to what certain parts of the book suggest, the colonial system was far being ideologically cornered. The incident that occurred in Bahia in 1794, with Brother José de Bolonha, the "Abolitionist Capuchin," is merely an epiphenomenon. It absolutely does not foreshadow a crisis between Church and State on the issue of slavery.

The philosophy of Enlightenment, diffused by "Frenchified" Iberian-American intellectuals, was potentially subversive in the colonies. But in regions where slavery predominated, the American *form* of the French Revolution is the Haitian Revolution. The fact that Toussaint Louverture had read the Abbé Raynal is beside the point. The novel element — genuinely revolutionary — introduced by the rebellious Haitian slaves is of a strategic and political order: the seizure of power on the island and the victory over the French and English troops sent to help the colonists.

If the other rebellious slaves of the continent were to go on to take cities where whites constituted a minority, instead of escaping to the forests and forming *quilombos*, the slave world would have rapidly disintegrated. This strategic inversion delimited the horizon of the slave system. And it is around this fact that the paranoia of the authorities and of the most conscious sectors of society would crystallize.

In this way, the comparison between Pina Manique, the superintendent of the kingdom's police force, and Paulo Fernandes Viana, his counterpart in Rio de Janeiro, is interesting. While the former chased after freemasonry and prohibited the sale of "subversive" books, the latter worried about the explosive situation created by the presence of slaves in the city of the Court, where captives comprised 49% of the population in 1821. Manique ran after the French influence in the metropolis, and Viana, assisted by the fierce Major Vidigal, tried to control the African presence in the colony.

In this context, the characterization of a "pre-revolutionary" situation in Brazil becomes somewhat complicated.

The extension of Novais' analysis points to the *Inconfidência Mineira* [Minas Conspiracy]¹¹, which appears like a beacon in the crepuscular atmosphere that surrounds the colonial order. Now, the Haitian Revolution would show its contemporaries that the "Minas road to independence" was a dead end. Like [the turn-of-the-century Brazilian historian] Capistrano de Abreu, we must consider the *Inconfidência* a minor phenomenon, entirely peripheral to the subjacent problematic of breaking with the Metropolis. Rather it is a conspiracy that had no possibility of equating the national problem (slavery) with the problem of the state (territorial unity). Either Independence would be supported by the bureaucracy, or it would end in impasse.

Comparison with Cuba is illustrative. During the 19th century the nationalist insurrections that shook the island were strangled by the threat of a slave uprising. The Spanish metropole limited itself to reminding colonists: "If Cuba does not continue to be Spanish, it will be African!" That argument was effective, and functioned until 1901.

This evidence places us face to face with the cold hard facts: the independence of Brazil is the product of a conservative pact and not of a national and popular movement. We were born of a marriage of convenience between old and cynical partners rather than of fireworks set off by the free union of young lovers. The metaphor is not gratuitous. Yesterday, like today, it was not easy being Brazilian. The first generations felt the weight of the anachronisms perpetuated within the young nation. Gonçalves de Magalhães wrote in 1835:

But, oh Fatherland, who wounds you?
Only yesterday did you lift yourself from your cradle;
Barely did you attempt one step
And it is unbelievable that tomorrow you will die
...

Ye, who seize the helm of state,
Ye, who had to keep watch, how long
Shall ye make of the Fatherland your patrimony
And impede its footsteps?

Despite everything, Brazilian nationality took root and is now a strong tree. This is not, for example, the case of Belgium, a nation born (in 1830) during the same period as Brazil and that might come apart at any moment.

These are some of the questions that can be raised when we cross the historical terrain carefully demarcated by Novais. These are issues for other investigations — investigations that will prove fruitful only if they are carried out in the same manner in which Novais wrote the book that we have just reviewed: with deep insight and intelligence. And not otherwise.

Notes

¹ The issue only appears at the edges of the specialized literature. See the essay by Jacob Price in *Slavery and the Rise of the Atlantic System* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), a volume edited by Barbara Solow and to which Alencastro himself contributes.

¹ Portuguese Jews converted to Christianity. [Trans.]

² Permission granted by the Spanish crown to sell slaves to Spanish colonies. The asiento system was in place from the early 16th to mid-18th centuries. [Trans.]

³ Settlements in Brazil founded and populated by Maroons, or fugitive slaves, and their descendants, as well as a small number of others, including some marginalized Portuguese. [Trans.]

⁴ The great Maroon kingdom in what is now Northeastern Brazil. Trans.

⁵ This sum is expressed in terms of the old Portuguese *real* (plural *réis*), not the modern Brazilian *real* (plural *reais*). [Trans.]

⁶ The shell, called *zimbo* or *jimbo*, provides Brazilian Portuguese with a slang word for money. [Trans.]

² A researcher at Cebrap [Brazilian Center for Analysis and Planning] from 1986 until recently, Luiz Felipe might have incorporated the line of Marxist thought particular to the University of São Paulo, which committed itself to identifying mediations between the nation's history and the history of capitalism. This is the case, beyond the work of Fernando Novais, with Fernando Henrique Cardoso's notion of dependency or with literary form in Roberto Schwarz. On a more abstract and general level, his analysis of slaving interests could have benefited from José Arthur Giannotti's considerations regarding social identities, which would not merely represent a positive given as it does in the majority of studies within the

humanities, and, insofar as they concern Brazilian historiography, studies of regional nativisms and identities.

⁷ See “Braudel’s Geohistory: A Reconsideration,” *Journal of Economic History* 11.3, Part 1 (Summer, 1951) 277-282.

³ *Império: a corte e a modernidade nacional* [*Empire: The Court and National Modernity*], vol. 2 (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1997).

⁸ Luiz Felipe de Alencastro, “A economia política dos descobrimentos portugueses” [“The Political Economy of Portuguese Exploration”], *A descoberta do homem e do mundo* [*The Discovery of Man and the World*], ed. Aduino Novaes (São Paulo, 1998) 193-208.

⁹ Luiz Vianna Filho, *O negro na Bahia* [*The Negro in Bahia*] (1946); Pierre Verger, *Fluxo e refluxo do tráfico de escravos entre o golfo do Benin e a Bahia de Todos os Santos*, [*Trade Relations between the Bight of Benin and Bahia from the 17th to 19th Century*], 1st ed. (1968); Corcino Medeiros dos Santos, “Relações de Angola com o Rio de Janeiro 1736-1808” [“Angolan Relations with Rio de Janeiro, 1736-1808”], *Estudos Históricos* 12 (1973): 7-68.

¹⁰ Luiz Felipe de Alencastro, “La traite négrière et l’unité nationale brésilienne 1825-1850,” *Revue Française d’Histoire d’Outre Mer*, LXVI (1979): 395-419.

¹¹ The *Inconfidência Mineira*, or Minas Conspiracy, was an insurrection against the Portuguese Crown that took place in Minas Gerais in 1789. [Trans.]