

Political Languages and Rights: the Brazilian Experience.

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In its way of life, in its texts, in its dreams, in its planetary ambitions, Brazil always appears as a nation without a father, laments Eduardo Lourenço, one of the greatest Portuguese intellectuals. Since crossing Portugal out of their history, the Brazilians have lived as if they were their own children, committing a trite phenomenon of repression, a naive parricide (Lourenço, 2001). This comment by Lourenço is perfectly valid, and possibly more meaningful than he imagined. Although it may not be perceived as a classical revolution, the independence of Brazil, in 1822, involved a drastic change of direction of the elite who were pledged to the adventure of building a new nation: the criticism or the oblivion of the past and the adoption of a practical and theoretical imagination directed towards the future. This has been one of the characteristics, albeit frequently renovated, of the political and intellectual life of Brazil in the last two centuries.

I wish to argue that this change of attitude had wider impacts than simply the obliteration of Portugal from our history. While it meant an effective opening for the westernization and modernization of Brazil, it was not capable of materializing a democratic and sympathetic model of life that could be embraced and upheld by society as its way of life. On the contrary, the attempt to *synchronize* Brazil with the modern-day West, perceived as the *telos* of a process of evolution, came about from the always inconclusive and unbalanced association of what I call the three languages of modernity: the language of reason, the language of interest, and the language of affections. One of the causes of the tortuous and tortured nature of this association was the blindness of the political elites, to the democratic potential of a tradition that specifically tied Brazilian society to the West, founded in a special version of the language of affections, and which somehow remained as a prospect for the poorer layers of society in the 19th and 20th centuries. I would like to develop this hypothesis, revisiting the thoughts of certain key authors from the period immediately after the independence of Brazil and the main streams of interpretation of the process of modernization of Brazil, fitting them into a specific conception of the West. To conclude, I hope to show that, far from only having reactionary readings, the possible Brazilian tradition – understood as a sub language of the affections – can be explored as a repository of profoundly democratic elements.

1. Institutional synchronization with the West.

“Brazil has no people”. This devastating diagnosis was given by a French doctor, Louis Couty, who lives in Rio de Janeiro at the end of the 19th Century (1988). This represented a complete contrast with the classical analysis of another Frenchman – Alexis de Tocqueville – regarding the United States in that same period. Couty was clearly not referring to a lack of population, which for him was the result of a casual fusion of different races. What Brazil did not have was a mass of force, productive individuals, moved by material interests and involved in the growing production of social wealth. Nor did it have a mass of votes – citizens, capable of guaranteeing the political control of society. The freeing of slaves was not enough to overcome the “mental failings” of a society that was irreversibly poisoned and addicted by nearly four centuries of slavery. Brazil had to start again, with a new policy of peopling, bringing to its geographical vastness European immigrants, the “healthy elements” of the European

civilization, recreating a true people, made up of productive individuals and active citizens. The redemption of Brazil was overseas, in Europe and in the ships which could bring from there the hope of wealth and democracy to the country, and, of course, the “whitening” of the Brazilian population, a theme which almost became a political programme at the end of the first century of Brazil’s existence.

Couty’s diagnosis became well-known because it expressed, albeit somewhat radically, the thoughts of a good part of Brazil’s political elite at the end of the Empire (1822-1891), disenchanted with the results of the strategy, which was sparked off with independence, of inventing and building a modern country. This strategy consisted of bringing to the independent Brazil institutions catered for in Liberalism, especially those tested and developed in experiments carried out in France, England and the USA, which drained the spectrum of possibilities of a future for the Brazilian elites. The premise of this operation was the belief in the pedagogical and transforming power of these institutions, placed at the disposal of a society which was a stranger to the codes of Liberalism. The disenchantment with the fruits of this experience was exemplarily formulated in the interpretation of Brazil made by the Visconde do Uruguai, one of the main political leaders responsible for the integration of Brazilian territory during a period of veritable civil war, from 1831 to 1840. Influenced by the French Liberal Doctrinaires, the Visconde attempts to translate, in his *Ensaio de Direito Administrativo* (2002), the imagination of Guizot about France to our reality. According to Guizot, France and Europe had been disputed, over the last millennium, by two opposing forces: the forces of freedom, brought by the Germans, messengers of a wild, anarchical freedom, which in the French Revolution found an exceptional moment of expression, and the forces of order, inherited from the Roman Empire and its institutions, such as the Church. His strategy to solve this conflict once and for all consisted of the organization of a state based on Reason and sustained by the middle class, which would allow the amalgamation of order with freedom by means of the supremacy of law and the control of class conflict (Vélez Rodrigues, 2004).

Guizot’s imagination seduced our Visconde do Uruguai. According to him, the 1824 Constitution, Brazil’s first, was understood as an authorization to replicate, in Brazilian territory, the North American experience of self-government, with a people’s jury, the election of judges, delegates, and local councillors, and the decentralization of politics and administration (Coser, 2008). However, continues the Visconde, the constitutional freedoms were anarchically appropriated by our “barbarians”, that is, by a population that was unprepared to enjoy them in a rational way. This savage movement of the “people” ended up creating a vicious circle: so that they would not be dominated, invaded, and pillaged, the landowners were obliged to recruit these savage, violent masses, becoming caudillos and causers of a permanent political and social turbulence. This caudillo rule by the owners was the mechanical, Hobbesian response to the barbarian of the masses of uncultured, savage mestizos, but not the solution for Brazil. This was only to be found in a strong State, endowed with Reason, immune to the patrimonialism of the elites, to the caudillo rule of the landowners, to the barbarian of the population, and capable of guaranteeing a stable social order so that individual interest could materialize in a dynamic market and freedom could find its natural outlet in political participation disciplined by the law.

I am not interested here in an analysis of all of the Visconde do Uruguai’s thought, but rather in highlighting this central aspect of his diagnosis – the people’s barbarism as the origin of the failure of the institutional synchronization of Brazil with

the West – and in stressing his emphasis on reason, deposited in the State, as a premise of this conception of a modern Brazil. This solution was similar to that of another liberal, Tavares Bastos, who was guided more by the North American experience than by the French drama. An important journalist in the Imperial period, Tavares Bastos was enchanted particularly by the federalism of the United States, without greater concessions to the idea of self-government of small towns. He harshly criticized the Emperor's "despotism" and that of the Brazilian central state, advocating the establishment of an effective federalism, which would allow the different provinces of Brazil to identify and achieve their own interests. In the end, however, he confessed that, without the transformation of society and the people carried out by the State – by means of the Law and widespread education – his project could never achieve its hoped-for success (Werneck Vianna, 1997). Without the existence of something above society, of a state marked by constructivist and westernizing ambition, the spontaneous movement of Brazilian society – of its people – would not be capable of creating the conditions for a modern nation, in the optics of the liberals of the Brazilian empire.

In other words, the solution was not simply to offer liberal institutions for the expression of the interests and ideas present in Brazilian society. It had to be another movement more decisive, that is, the creation of a people for the Constitution and the liberal institutions. The modern and contemporary debate has always contemplated two foundations for a modern democratic or public: either *demos* or *ethnos* (Habermas, 2007). The republic would be the result, either of a contract celebrated between parties that are free and have equal rights – *demos* – or of the movement of a natural or cultural pre-existing people, which takes on the democratic way of life and endows fundamental rights with ethics. The remedy proposed by our authors opened up a third unexpected alternative in the debate about a modern democratic society: the existence of a state which creates for itself a people, or in the best or most optimistic hypothesis, a politically active *demos*. None of them were under any illusions as to the complexity and the magnitude of this project.

If it is the case that this early experience of Brazil tormented its actors, in the future it will also continue to challenge the Brazilian social sciences, which are interested in discovering the real nature of this experiment of founding a new nation. Without doubt, the historical circumstances of Brazil's independence are well-known: the Portuguese Court's flight to Brazil in 1808, the Liberal Revolution of Oporto in 1820, the proclamation of independence in 1822, by the son of the king who had returned to Portugal, the adoption of the model of constitutional monarchy by the Brazilian Empire - under pressure from the Holy Alliance and from Palmela, England's representative, England being the guarantor of Brazil's political autonomy -, and the presence of Liberalism as the utopian prospect of the young nation. The challenge for the social sciences, however, is to unravel the meaning that the process before and after independence took on. Let us attempt to recover, with broad strokes, the main streams of interpretation regarding the independence and the Empire.

The first of these, whose origins can be found in *Raízes do Brasil* (1988), one of the founding works of the social sciences in Brazil, by Sérgio Buarque de Holanda, is more clearly outlined in Raymundo Faoro (1975) and Simon Schartzmann (1988). Looking at the first three centuries of the life of Brazil, Sérgio Buarque didn't discover the existence of typical elements of an agrarian civilization, finding a society that was merely rural and predatory, marked by rusticity, by slavery, by adventure and immobilized by the hegemony of the Iberian and Portuguese culture, centred on

personalism. This concept of personalism is a key one in his analysis, and through it Holanda attempts to capture an oscillation that is typical of the Hispanics, including the Portuguese: the idea of the value of a man as non-dependence on others and its counterpart, total submission to someone. The immediate consequence of personalism is the lack of capacity to create effective means of cooperation and sympathetic association, with the exception of the family. Here there is an approximation to the Visconde do Uruguai: personalism is the basis not only for an anarchical conception of freedom but also absolute subservience to the caudillo. This Iberian trait could not found a civilization in the tropics, generating only a rural and family-based society, without the slightest capacity of organizing themselves through a modern comprehension of work or democratic life. Thus, Sérgio Buarque's stance is the opposite of that of Gilberto Freyre (2000), emphasising the purely predatory character of the Portuguese colonizing enterprise, carried out by plundering the land and exploiting the people. In a type of summary, for Sérgio Buarque there are no modern elites nor is there a democratic people in this Brazilian colonial world and, without doubt, there is no original Brazilian civilization in formation, as Freyre thought.

This condemnation of the colonial past does not lead him to admire the best on modernization placed by the Empire, under the auspices of Liberalism. In his views, our liberalism is nothing but a "superfetation" of the elites, derived from the belief in the powers inherent to a harmonious, coherent set of ideas, in the capacity of the dead word of the law to transfigure reality, without it actually being revolutionized, but rather just masked. As in the view of Robert Schwarz (2000), Brazilian liberalism was simply an "out-of-place" idea, the basis of an "ideological comedy" made for the consumption of oligarchies unprepared to transform it into an effective practical prospect. When he denies that the independence of Brazil had the nature of a classical revolution, Holanda suggests that the new country is a prolongation of the Iberian colonial world, now dressed up with the ornaments of liberalism and modernity. This is the same theme that we see in Faoro and Schwartzmann, who identify in the patrimonialism of the Iberian tradition a trans-historic background, or a non-historic one, which is replicated in the way the imperial power is organized, annulling the possibilities of development that Liberalism offered and of real synchronization of Brazil with the modern-day West. The liberals themselves, put into power and faced with the disjunctive order and freedom, opted for the former, reveals Faoro. Liberalism stands still faced with power, and the latter renews its neo-patrimonial nature, its way of dominating with its own dynamics, and which nips in the bud the possibility of developing a veritable civil society, a rational-legal representative state, and a dynamic economic make.

Florestan Fernandes, in *A Revolução Burguesa no Brasil* (2000), attempts to get away from this ill-fated negotiation between the modern and backwardness. Expanding on another idea of Sérgio Buarque de Holanda, that of a long-term revolution in Brazil, Fernandes points out that, in the circumstances of this elastic process, the Liberalism of the time of Brazil's independence and national organization was not a mere ornament without any practical effectiveness. He acknowledges the interest of the Brazilian elites in preserving the traditional sources of power, especially slavery and landowning. But he remarks that these same elites took up the challenge of building a nation, which was perceived as a way of legitimizing their own power after the breakdown of colonial order. Thus they were incongruously involved by the forces of conservation and innovation, the latter present particularly in the task of organizing politics and the legal system in the country. Merely to maintain the *status quo* with its values and means of power did not satisfy the requirements of a nation that needed consolidation of its

institutions. It was in Liberalism that these elites would find the store of legal and institutional techniques for the generalization of their own power. It was there that they would seek the inspiration to implant a “legal order”, within which they bound themselves to the role of “citizens”, going beyond the mere condition of “lords” of lands and slaves. On the other hand, besides this technical and institutional role, liberal utopia became, according to Florestan Fernandes, a social-dynamic condition for the formation and consolidation of society in Brazil, that is, a prospect for the elites themselves and for society, or a cause that he calls a “hooded revolution” in Brazil.

The awareness of this tortuous interplay between conservation and innovation values Liberalism not for its immediate effectiveness, but for its capacity to project a future for the nation and for the dynamic effects that it actually has. In the light of this, the elites were not expected to have the brilliance of a revolutionary bourgeoisie, nor is reality given a profile of something masked by an ideological comedy. On the contrary, consideration is given to the conflictive dense trajectory of a traditional society in a slow transition to a “competitive bourgeois order”. Luiz Werneck Vianna’s reflection gives us a similar hypothesis when he identifies at that time a preponderance of ideas over reality and of politics directed to public rights as a precursor of modernity (1988). Independence and the Empire, whilst encompassing dialectics of ambiguity, would mean the beginning of a veritable revolution, within which Liberalism, far from being restricted to the private world, was enlisted as a project for the nation, as an ideal of progress and public vocation. Brazilian Liberalism sheds the ambition of molding reality immediately, to set itself up as the aim and the objective, the future and the utopia of society. Like the axis of a “passive revolution”, an idea of Gramsci that Werneck uses to reveal the nature of our long-term modernization.

My intention here was not to explore the entire wealth of each author, but rather to establish two dominant streams of interpretation of independence and Empire in Brazilian social science. The former gives less value to the meaning of political autonomy and Liberalism, and stresses the continuance of the traditional sources of power – slavery, landowning and patrimonialism – and the Iberian heritage at the time of Independence and in life in the Empire. The conclusion is, then, that backwardness and immobility continued to make a mark on the history of Brazil at that moment. The latter, without denying the presence of the past, emphasizes the dynamic role of Liberalism, which gradually worms its way into our way of life and our utopian expectations, functioning as a fuel for change or as the aim of a “hooded revolution” or a “passive revolution”. In this way, independence and Empire take on the meaning of the starting point of a revolutionary change which unfolds over time, marked by special forms of association between backwardness and modernity.

This recuperation of the thought of political and intellectual actors of the Empire, and of the main streams of interpretation in the social sciences as regards the birth of Brazil, has a purpose: that of offering evidence as to how the tradition prior to independence inhabits the imagination not only of our contemporaries, but also that of the Brazilian social sciences. The remedy proposed by Tavares Bastos and Couty is that of more modernity and more liberalism on the assumption that only thus will Brazil be redeemed of its political and economic backwardness, which has its origins in the colonial tradition, centred on slavery and landowning. Without doubt, the formulations of the political actors are clearly marked by normative intentions, guided by the aim of modernization and distancing from the past. In the same way, the streams of interpretation of the social sciences move in the same space: either independence should

have put an end to backwardness or modernity is obliged to join up with it in the tortuous process of modernization. Here there is, more or less submerged, a teleological premise in operation, as if there were a higher destiny – a bourgeois order, a modern society – which has to be attained. More than this, a bourgeois or modern order imagined from the point of view of a hegemonic West, which coincides with the Anglo-Saxon or French experience, except for the thought of Werneck Vianna, heedful of the Iberian traits. The history of Brazil, therefore, is necessarily the transition from a traditional world to modernity, and the basic challenge is to discover the dynamics of this movement which progressively takes us closer to this postulated *telos*.

This attitude towards the past has strong reasons for being sustained, but unfortunately incorporates a reductive form of understanding of the possible Brazilian tradition, derived from a teleological and specific conception of the West and modernity. The next step in this study is to present a model for the recuperation of the modern-day West, through the concept of languages of modernization. I believe that the idea of different languages of modernization can help us to understand not only the plurality of the West, but also the lack of resolution or the lack of existence of a hegemonic model of life in Brazil, at the start of its history and throughout it.

The well understood languages of modernity.

We may begin the second movement of this text taking as a starting point the following hypothesis: post-traditional societies found, when leaving tradition as the basis for social action behind, a number of languages for the creation of new social norms. What we call Western modernity, which appeared in the 16th and 17th centuries, may be understood as a huge process of subjectivisation of life (Ferry, 1990), once theological principles, which had made sense of everything, had been eroded, together with the destruction of objectivistic and traditionalistic presuppositions of the medieval world itself (Habermas, 2000; Taylor, 2007). Modern Western society grows searching, in human subjectivity, for the normative foundations of his life and Utopian expectations, progressively ridding itself of models of the past.

The invention of subjectivity, however, does not unfold in similar or homogeneous ways in the West, producing different traditions of subjectivising life and modernising society, and diverse ways of organising the new moral or ethical fields. This inventive plurality can be captured by the notion of language and for the unveiling of the seminal languages of modernity. Taking a close look at the period of the corrosion of medieval society and the first centuries of the modern world, Padgen (2002) finds four great languages commanding this decisive process of change: political Aristotelism, classic republicanism, political economy and the language of political science. The cast of languages proposed by Padgen may be polemically altered for our own ends, by transferring the distinguishing focus from the field of the history of ideas to that of social theory. Thus, the proposition of this text is that the plurality of Western modernity is anchored in three great languages of subjectivisation, namely, the language of interest, the language of reason and the language of sentiment – or affects, and in the ways of articulating and creating a hierarchy for these languages in the reconstruction of new forms of life in society. The various traditions and political cultures of the West may be understood through these languages and their articulations, which tend to assume a “transcendental” or normative nature in concrete historic experiences.

We will try to understand the structure of these languages from the perspective of ideal types. This reference to Weber brings forth two objectives. Firstly, it expresses the aim of establishing more clearly a field of reflection of sociology, or of the social theory. It is, therefore, an approach structured to seek the basic elements – by means of reflective reduction – of social languages, in the Weberian manner. Secondly, this attempt does not entirely conform to Weber's point of view, which also finds three mobile fundamentals in subjectively orientated human acts: tradition, affects (charisma) and reason. Weber's wide investigation, however, aims to compare East and West, for which reason action based on tradition, attributed to the past and characteristic of the East, must be taken into consideration. In our case, dealing with post-traditional societies, or societies which are no longer determined by beliefs and immemorial customs, we are authorised to abandon a possible language of tradition, in the terms written by Weber. On the other hand, from a Weberian perspective, modern Western societies are fundamentally understood through the use of the conceptual pair of reason / charisma (affects), and by the fecund hypothesis of the association between the West and rationalisation. Actually, one of the objectives of this reflection is to weaken Weber's totalizing hypothesis, emphasising the permanency and efficiency of the languages of reason and affects – which, in some way he recognises – associating them to the language of interest, which he does not accept as a kind of a subjectively oriented action (Bendix, 1986).

Having established this, it is still necessary to emphasise a preliminary and historical ingredient regarding the typical – ideal sketch of these three languages. All of them were born from a common perception in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries: of human desire – the *cupiditas* – as the basic, founding potency of subjectivity, as a force which acts creatively and constructively in the world (Ansaldi, 2001). It becomes the radical element, original and propeller of the subjectivity, and all the languages develop aiming to offer some sense to the immanent potency of desire, now the lord of an endless ontological fruitfulness. This recognition of the autonomy and productiveness of human desire marks the beginning of modernity, in the Renaissance of Machiavelli, the Reformation of Luther, Shakespeare's Baroque background, Quevedo, Gracian, Cervantes, Hobbes, Descartes, Spinoza, in the myth of Don Juan, in Locke's astute reflection and in the inflated production of catalogues of passions and ways in which to dominate them. Faced with the restless infinity of desire, languages for subjectivizing the world rehearse and affirm their differences and possibilities in an attempt to dominate or preserve it. Modern man (Chauí, 1990), or more precisely, the various types and manners of human subjectivity were born from this very confrontation with the desire.

As in the case of the language of interest, based in the premise of individual as the fundamental agency of society. The notion of an individual is a specific form of appropriating human subjectivity and of anthropological foundation for a particular type of society (Arendt, 1972). This notion emerges when, beyond the consideration of each man being a unique example of the species, every man is now considered a moral being, autonomous and independent of others (Dumont, 1985). In the "individual", there

would co-exist an “inside” – that makes him autonomous – and an “outside”, i.e., other individuals and the society, germinated from the external relations among everyone, a point found also in Elias (1994). This man/individual is transcendental and formally defined by the possession of negative rights, guaranteeing him equality in relation to others and the highest possible degree of freedom to pursue his own interests, his private objectives. These rights protect the “inside” from the invasion of society and of others, thus transforming the individual in society’s original element.

This vision is already found in Hobbes (1974), with his special way of characterising the “inside” which makes man an individual. For him, man’s first internal element is desire, *cupiditas*, which preserves both his movement and his life. The desire to appropriate the world and all that exists in it – power, wealth, knowledge and honour – materialised in the form of interest. The potency of each individual corresponds to his capacity to realise his desires throughout his lifetime, and continued success in obtaining what men desire constitutes human happiness. However, if the perpetual restlessness of the spirit provoked by desire can bring us happiness, it can also threaten life, individual or social, by creating a state of war where everyone is pitted against everybody else. In these circumstances, a man’s life becomes solitary, poor, sordid, brutal and short, to use Hobbes own words. The risk of social disintegration and misery can, however, be eliminated by a rationally constructed contract, which institutes an external agent of control for the orbit of individuals and the movement of their desires. Fear – a form of feeling – is the driving force behind the rational contract which creates and sustains the Leviathan. It is this state which, by the power of the sword, guarantees the very existence of society, of what is just or unjust, of what is good or bad for the preservation of mankind, and obliges everyone to respect established contracts and pacts. There is, in this step, a decisive, theoretical inflection that cannot be lost in Hobbes: the transformation of moral philosophy into the science of what is good and bad, and no longer of good and evil. Consequently, he leaves aside the demand for perfection, in the perspective of a traditional moral model, demanding only that each man respects good and bad for the preservation of all mankind.

In complaining of a need for external control, desire disguised as interest is still incapable of organizing a complete language for the purposes of subjetivising life. This step can only be taken when interest transforms itself into an autonomous source of morality which controls desire and associates it with a model of a good life. This operation is carried out by Locke, according to Taylor (1997). The Lockean perspective adds to the competitive individual, the irrational bearer of desire, the Protestant rationale for self-improvement and self-control, laying the groundwork for a particular economy of body and feeling, in order to construct the individual as a “moral being”, going back to Dumont. Centuries later, Weber would emphasise the fruits of this secularization process of Puritanism, based on the idea of exercising a vocation in the world (Weber, 1974). Protestant self-discipline becomes instilled in subjectivity itself, a movement which is characteristic of this immanent world waiting to be explored, and, progressively moving away from its religious origins, authorises the definition of the individual as both the site of desire and of the capacity to tame and control it. Interest

establishes itself as the constituent element of both the individual and a society of individuals, now able to control itself and to co-exist with other interests.

Furthermore, in Locke we may find the *medium* of the language of interests, or rather, the mediation that allows interest to shape and morally justify the social world and individual destiny: labour. The theme of labour is crucial in Locke, just as in Protestantism. It is the vehicle through which the desire to appropriate the world and all its possibilities is justified. In this way, interest materialises itself as legitimate property, and humanity increases its means of earning a living and achieving material progress (Macpherson, 1979). The puritan exercising of a vocation in the world, as Weber emphasises, gives rise to a labour ethic, understood as a regular, systematic activity and a legitimate means by which individuals obtain what interests them (Weber, 1974). The traditional forms of accumulating wealth – looting, war, speculation, slave-labour, founded on the use of violence – give way to calculated, permanent activity, based on the individuals' internal and corporal discipline.

For Locke, appetitive and competitive individuals endowed with internal discipline are capable of establishing the base of both social and market order through the invention of money (Locke, 1978). More than this, money, or currency, expands the productive capacity of work, and represents it in increasingly generalised trading processes. The contract that institutes the State does not simultaneously create the society, as in Hobbes, inventing only special means to guarantee ownership and life. That is, the state is not an original pact, but an agreement of a second order which was put together for the protection of something pre-existent to it: the individual, his interests, his assets and a society of individuals. Host to both desire and self-discipline, this individual no longer requires external controls, but seeks only instruments that foster the fulfilment of his desires redefined as interests. Consequently, the State and Law assume only a formal, instrumental nature, their evolution in a material direction having been sealed. The theme of justice migrates from the realm of the State – of the old crowns – to the territory of the market, or rather, to the web resulting from the simultaneous actions of individuals taking care of their own interests. The legal world is merely an external, positive way of expressing the rights and controls that individuals in permanent movement possess.

The view of the market as a distributor of justice, already present in Locke, will give rise to one of the pre-supposed principles of the theory of political economy, or rather, market morality, which should be totally protected from any other moral source. In other words, the common good would be a convergent good produced by interests in movement, yet incapable of providing the basis for or the legitimacy of society, which always rests on the materiality of individual interest and on the formal, legal instruments for the social control of human appetites (Goldsmith, 2002). In this sense, the utopia of the language of interests foresees the perfection of a society, hinged on this society's recognition of the power of desire, in the form of interest, which both preserves its freedom and stimulates the exercising of it, the basis of justice and material progression, impacting everyone.

Neither affects nor reason are dispensed with in this language, but are subordinated to interest. The language of reason is evoked in three forms. Firstly, all justification of a world founded on interest should occur rationally, without any need to resort to any transcendent foundation, sustained by an immanent vision of mankind. This rational justification of interest involves a contradiction which, later on, Kant would see clearly, trying to resolve it: if interest justifies itself rationally, then reason must be the fundamental element of the new norm. Secondly, reason is evoked to manifest itself in formal and legal reason, that of institutions. And finally, it is reduced to utilitarian reason, the territory of individual calculation which instrumentally submits the world and feelings to interests. The transference of reason out of Galilean territory, clearly inspired by Hobbes, is due to its fragmentation and instrumentalization, an operation which does not seem capable of the complete legitimacy or consolidation of the language of interest.

Having been insinuated in Hobbes, the necessity for conscious and instrumental mobilisation of affects is clearly expressed in Locke, when dealing with religion. The language of interests admits the fracturing of society, between those who are rewarded by the market and the losers, and religion is evoked for the internal control of the latter. In its most developed and generous form, what orients this language is the idea of well-understood interest, capable of guaranteeing individuals' freedom of movement and the possibility of co-operation among them. This is what Tocqueville expects to find in the United States, or rather, the correction of the predominance of pure interest by the presence of social co-operation, even though the idea of the public good does not acquire any particular substance. Moreover, and still from Tocqueville comes the astute observation that the legitimacy of this society of interest, when well-understood, is deeply rooted in a "civil religion", or rather, in the dimension of sentiments. He manages to surprise and reveal the mythical self-representation of the United States, which sees itself as a society in perfect accord with God's will, and the permanent willingness of the American people to mobilise the biblical paradigm as the inspiration for their celebrations, liturgies and representations, aiming to stimulate the development of a republican virtue which is capable of correcting the purely competitive character of interest (Bellah et al, 1985; Catroga, 2005). The movement of interest simultaneously requires and repels the integrative power of the languages of sentiment and reason, always putting forms of social solidarity at risk.

The language of reason alters this hierarchy founded on interest, even becoming the dominant language in relation to the language of feelings. We are able to follow the birth of this modern reason in Foucault (1967), by catching in the act, in detail, the separation between words and things and the invention of an autonomous territory of words, and in Koyré (2005, 1991), who shows the growing destruction of the cosmos and the transformation of space as an object of geometry, base of a new "science" postulated – not always coherently (Feyrabend, 1989) – by Galileo. The destruction of the cosmos does not mean denying the existence of an order in the universe, but the assertion of an order that could be deductively known by our mathematical reasoning. Mathematical realism substitutes the old, hileomorphic physics, linked to the perception

of a finite universe composed of hierarchically disposed places, and launches the foundations for a new conception of reason and science.

Hobbes had already incorporated Galileo's contribution, but it was Descartes who decisively widened the field of this new reason beyond the limits of science. By means of methodical doubt, the thinking "I" becomes the irreducible nucleus of human subjectivity. Or rather, human subjectivity is redefined as an "I" who thinks (Descartes, 2005) and which, through thought can arrive at clear and distinct ideas, deductively and truly reconstructing the order of the world. This power of reason does not only apply to the physical and external world, but to subjectivity itself and the body, feeding a rational morality aimed at our perfection and at controlling our passions and our body. Taylor (1997) is right when pointing out that, in Descartes, it is as if reason were broken away from us, and placed above us, to completely command our lives, our passions and our bodies. Even though in a strangely incoherent book (2005), Descartes does not hesitate to submit our passions and sentiments to our reason, presenting it as a universal norm, a moral source based on "right", to the detriment of "good", finalistically conceived. A Cartesian doubt waives the descriptive and realistic character of the Hobbesian perspective, founded on the recognition of desire, making the thinking "I" responsible for the rational reconstitution of the world and reality. Reason becomes the foundation of the subjective reinvention of life, already endowed with the power to control the interests and passions of the body, from where our mistakes originate.

Due to its ambition of universalism, the language of reason will always be picking the fruit of the two other languages, re-organising them in order to re-affirm its own universality. For our purposes, we will take Rousseau and Kant as exemplary references of reason's totalising ambition, while preserving the differences between them. In an inverse movement to that carried out by Hobbes and by liberal contractualists, in the Lockean style, Rousseau does not see in the individual the site of sociability or the alpha and omega of living in society (Starobinsky, 1991). In fact, Rousseau does not appear to associate human nature to any specific trait or characteristic, other than its plasticity. The natural man, as he appears in the *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality Among Men*, is neither acquisitive nor gregarious, displaying a unique and original virtue or passion: pity. This natural man is pure potency and his virtues and faculties arose only "*due to the fortunate meeting of various causes of which he knew nothing, which may have never arisen and without which he would remain eternally in his primitive condition [...]*" (Rousseau, 1989). However, Rousseau does not see in human history a trajectory of moral progress. Quite the contrary, he sees precisely this man affected, over centuries, by events he has no control over, by norms born of interest or of passions that transform him from a free being into a prisoner of these conventions and coincidences frozen in civilisation. In these circumstances of degeneration, social contract acquires all its revolutionary luminosity. It is conceived of as the interruption of this movement of decadence or permanent chaos. It is a rational act, a new beginning of our history, ridding it of the condition of a mere succession of disasters – a perception shared by Voltaire – to rise up as the result of our rational, autonomous and free deliberations. Social contract not only redeems history, but

transforms this shackled man in a free being, or rather, a free and rational citizen. The act of founding a republic de-naturalises man (Catroga, 2005), re-creating him as a truly, social man, or rather, as a man marked by true sociability invented by reason.

Compared with Hobbes and Locke, the social contract in Rousseau demands the total handing-over of the power of each individual to the community, thereby acquiring his own life and general will, or rather, the need for self-preservation as a community. Without it, man could not subsist in freedom. And this rationally self-aware community bestows on each man the status of citizen, enabling him to participate in public and social life by means of positive rights. Only by means of positive rights can the citizen, this new model of man, achieve fulfilment and perfection, making his forms of sociability increasingly transparent and rational. In other words, it is only by means of public rights that the community itself may remain and evolve as the permanent work of rational consensus among its components. Habermas (1995) points out the fundamental *medium* of this language of reason: the communication among the autonomous citizens of a political community. In this sense, the social contract is not something which happened in the past or seen as fiction, but the object of permanent reiteration through the participation of citizens, who achieve fulfilment in this permanent reinvention of the republic.

Coherently, law loses its purely instrumental nature. The production of rational laws by free and rational citizens, destined to preserve, reproduce and perfect the political community, updates and expresses a new civic sociability and maintains the community itself. Hegel had already perceived the novelty of this reinvention of citizenship, identifying in it the supplantation of religion as a form of self-manifestation of the spirit in his historic novel (Hegel, 1985). Men discover that they can formulate their own law, and the transcendent and religious norm forgets itself as a figure of the odyssey of the spirit. The nature of law, at the same time pedagogical and communicative, replicates itself in the state itself, to the extent that it is the state's task to enforce laws that preserve society and the general will. The relevance attributed to law permits reevaluation of Habermas's statement regarding the effective *medium* of the language of reason. In the same way that labour demands prior conception of a product – and of the work process itself – to establish itself as the *medium* of the language of interest, law cannot fail to consider the discussion underpinning its formulation, but in fact it is law that sustains, produces and reproduces this new world of the republic. The language of reason does not deplete itself in the discussion – in the public use of reason, as Habermas wants for our present -, but completes itself, in the circumstances of the modern language of reason, in a material law capable of regulating everything. Reason's ambition is not the discussion, but the norm - legal or moral - that molds the world, in the name of a community which is understood as a subject.

The inseparability between free citizen and free community has repercussions on the position of interest. The general interest – general will, common interest – regulates individual interest and even prescribes the conditions and legitimacy of property. The labour ethic acquires a different content in Rousseau, unwilling to accept conflict – individual and social – of the emergent bourgeois society and its inherent discipline.

Merquior (1980) stresses Rousseau's modern love of liberty and his contempt for anything close to market economy, the reason for his agrarian utopia of the citizen who works with his own hands and his program of return to nature and to its élan, as Taylor (1997) points out. The citizen does not cancel or eliminate self-interest, but this cannot acquire the virulence of the individual of the language of interests. Similarly, the citizen does not eliminate the individual, or rather, the singular man from the republic. The assumption is that each man enjoys autonomy in relation to others and the State, or otherwise, the republic is not self-maintaining and virtues do not bloom.

In the version of Rousseau and the French Revolution, however, the language of reason does not seem to be self-sufficient. The question may be posed thus: why continually enter into a social contract and why obey the law and its purposes? Undoubtedly, the immediate response of the language of reason would be that the contract and obedience are rational – because we would be obeying ourselves – it is a condition of our common liberty. But this seems insufficient. Rousseau as well as the French Revolution – the revolution of reason, the solar revolution – do not seem willing to give up the language of sentiments, resorting to the idea of a “civil religion” similar to that of The United States, to sanctify the terms of the social contract. As well as being rational, it should also be a sentimental contract, as only our passions and feelings could consolidate true republican virtue (Catroga, 2006). The language of sentiment, in the form of a civil religion, would be necessary to socialise and internalise republican discipline, for the creation of patriotism, and even to justify the death of a citizen for the political community.

To the sub-language of reason, strongly republican, another is joined, formulated by Kant in reaction to the French Revolution itself. A confessed reader of Rousseau, Kant attempts to solve some of his paradoxes – and various other challenges inherited from the past – by the explicit development of “a well-understood reason”. Kant takes up Descartes, refuting his mathematical realism and the equivalence between the “thinking I” and the nature of man, by promoting a “Copernican revolution” in the field of reason and science. The old concept of science, as an adequacy of my reason and things just as they are, is inverted: things should submit to my reason, deriving from this revolution the need to investigate what our subjectivity can legitimately affirm about things. *The Critic of Pure Reason* (Kant, 1989) is this monumental effort to determine our subjective, transcendental structure – constituted by sensibility, by understanding and by pure reason -, which precedes and determines our experience with the world. Kant does not merely leave behind traditional metaphysics – always in search of the *noúmenon* of things -, but also mathematical realism, expressing science as a collection of statements produced by the rigorous exercise of our internal, subjective faculties, whose validity depends entirely on the possibilities and very limits of our subjective, transcendental structure. Precisely because this subjective structure would be common among humans, or rather, the base of our anthropological unit, science redefines itself as this complex of rigorous and shared statements, having forgotten the ancient ambition of homology between our reason and the world, that inhabits Descartes' thinking and leads him to find in God the guarantee of this unity between reason and the world. For

Kant, the soul, the world and God are merely regulatory and unifying ideas of knowledge, produced by our sensibility and understanding, without us being able to affirm their objective existence.

The conclusion of *The Critic of Practical Reason* is begun by one of the most beautiful and well-known phrases of philosophy: “Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and awe, the oftener and the more steadily we reflect on them: the starry heavens above and the moral law within” (2002). The starry sky, the world outside my being, is the plastic receptacle for exercising my transcendental reason. However, besides this external world, there exists man’s inner world, and it is this which shelters the possibility of liberty and moral law, material to be examined after pure reason. Moreover, our subjectivity would still be informed by a pure will, or rather, by the capacity for self-determination of our actions. Unlike the world outside of me, of which I am not a subject for not having created it, my inner world is the territory of my autonomous actions and of my perfection as a moral subject. For this, however, the autonomous production of my actions may only be determined by a principle which is uncontaminated by any contingency, by a universal principle, which is rational and adapted to the maximum autonomy and spontaneity of my pure will. This principle is Kant’s celebrated, incisive imperative: “Act according to a maxim which can at the same time hold good as a universal law”, followed by the practical imperative, which demands our respect for the humanity which resides in ourselves and others. These imperatives materialise the link between theoretical reason and moral reason, in such a way that this link becomes self-aware of its exclusive connection to itself, making pure will become its own universal norm, as Cassirer (1992) observes. The individual now redefines himself according to his moral and rational autonomy, and not by his desires and interests.

It is in these rational and moral imperatives that a deductive chain, which is capable of establishing the principles of life in society and individual life, is begun. The free subject is what makes this universal norm an absolute reference, designed to preside over the eternal apprenticeship of the individual – endowed in *The Critic of Practical Reason* with an immortal soul and, therefore, capable of learning infinitely – and of humanity. On the other hand, it is the categorical imperative which determines the Principle of Law, or rather, our external relations with others. By this principle, we are compelled to enter a social contract and draw up a constitution which, structurally, should only contain universal norms deduced from categorical imperative and the principle of law. At this point, the following observation is inevitable: for Kant, Rousseau’s enigmatic general will, should be seen as the fruit of this permanent exercise of the imperative and the principle of law, both anchored in the transcendental and universal subjectivity of men. In other terms, Kant’s general will coincides with the updating of the categorical imperative and the principle of law, rationally determined. The constitution should not express a consensus among men – of the few who can take part in the drawing up, by Kantian restrictions – but express a deductive and rational sequence based on the imperatives and the principle of law. The transcendental nature

of our subjectivity be it on a theoretical level or moral dimension, would be the foundation of general (common) will, necessarily rational and universal.

This new version of the general will draws Kant away from Rousseau. If in the republican version, the language of reason becomes closely associated with the language of sentiment, in Kant reason more quickly draws closer to the language of interest. In the fourth principle of his *Idea of a Universal History in a Cosmopolitan Sense* (1985), Kant recognises antagonism as nature's chosen strategy for the development of all our natural strengths and dispositions. Contrary to Rousseau, human "unsocial sociability" would be responsible for the material progress of humanity, without which we would be immersed in a poor, Arcadian lifestyle. Consequently, humanity's most difficult task would be the constitution of a civil society which could articulate and harmonise the antagonism, autonomy and life in common among men, by means of law, or rather, reason materialised in law. In this step, Kant profiles the most generous tradition of liberalism, taking it to its philosophical plenitude, seeking to relate the language of reason to that of interests. Whether it be in a Rousseau or Kant-like construction, reason assumes normative precedence over the other languages, of interest and sentiment, while creating distinct rational sub-languages. Sentiments and interests are always understood to be incapable of producing a demanding model of good life. Reason is what redeems them from its limitations and from accidentalness, involving them in the ambition of universality and of liberty. Redemption which comes about fundamentally through norms – interior or exterior -, which translate this dominance of reason and the affirmation of its universality.

The language of sentiments does not merge with the emotionalism, denounced by MacIntyre (2001). Its first characteristic is a clear Aristotelian presupposition, and updated to the new circumstances: the social nature of men (Aristotle, 2002, 1973). A presupposition that refuses the anthropological images of the other two languages, redefining man as a desire-being which exists only in his social relations and mediations (Chauí, 1990), and radicalised in modern times by civil humanism, by Machiavelli, by Neothomism and by the Iberian Baroque, by Spinoza and, later on, by Marx, among others. While in the language of interests the anthropological model sees man as an individual **before** considering social relations and in the language of reason he exists as a citizen only **after** the social contract, in the language of affects, man is seen as a person **in** social relations. Each man is *cupiditas* in action, is pure strength and the desiring knot in a complex and changing network of relations with other men and nature. Desire is put forward as our strength, which refuses and bends the efficiency of models of pure discipline and repression, and which can only be exercised in our social relations. It is a force which overthrows the world, and introduces mutation as the mark of human history, as in Machiavelli and Spinoza (Negri, 2002) or in Quevedo and in the Baroque (Ansaldi, 2001).

Nevertheless, the presupposition of natural and human sociability is not the starting point of a chain of reasoning about how man is or should be. Man is pure desire, and his truth finds itself in pilgrimage, in action on the world and others. He acts to preserve his life and increase his potency, according to Spinoza (2006, *Traité de*

l'autorité politique). In other words, to be free. Hence the main question arises: what conditions are necessary for the perfect expression of this potency? In response, a new area of common ground among Aristotle, Machiavelli, Spinoza and Marx: in none of them can we find the defence of a set of norms aspiring to a universal morality, as in the other languages. For all of them, wide-spread, universal moral doctrines, justified by specific definitions of human nature, would always correspond to forms of violence on man and would diminish his potency. The well-understood language of sentiments, in radically assuming human immanence, refutes and explodes the “right” and those moral doctrines aspiring to transcendence, as in Kant and traditional, religious morality, or the result of a totally static anthropology, as in the case of the language of interest and its notion of the appetitive individual.

This does not mean to say that the language of sentiments has nothing to say regarding the meaning of our actions. The assumption of man as potency implies a certainty of his perfectibility, a movement which consists not of the realisation of a particular moral model of man, but in the preservation of his ontological productivity, in the permanent openness of his strength. In this sense, morality dissolves into ethics, guided by what is “good” or “bad” as in Hobbes, refuting the “right” of the language of reason and the individualism or the utilitarianism of the moral horizon of interest. But “good” and “bad” in relation to what? In relation to the possibilities of updating our human potency. Spinoza’s *Ethic* is, from this perspective, a typology of immanent modes of existence, founded on good or bad, which replaces a traditional conception of morality, and dissolves the Cartesian “geometry” derived from reason (Deleuze, 2002). As in Machiavelli, more interested in ways of organising the city and the exercise of power, than in the link between political life and a moral and transcendental horizon. In Marx, at least the young Marx, criticism of Hegel’s thoughts concerns the same point: if law and the Hegelian state make universal reason concrete, in Marx the increasingly free subject of history should free himself of the yoke of institutions and moral and legal prescriptions (Moore, 1980), continually updating his strength. The succession of modes of production, in historical Marxist materialism, dissolves goodness, badness and right in favour of “good” and “bad”, deepening the Spinozian meaning and adding to it empirical and historical elements.

If human potency is only realised through inter-human relations, seen as "good" or "bad", this means that the full realisation of human potential is only possible through free association among them, because this association increases the potency, and therefore the freedom, of all men. This association among men, the community, cannot be used to obtain private ends as in the language of interest. It is necessary for the realisation of the strength of all men, and it can only take the form of democracy. Nevertheless, democracy is no longer a rational “form” of government, capable of resisting time and acquiring stability, permanent, reflective temptation inspired by Platonism (Pocock, 1975; Negri, 2002) Democracy is the mutation, a narrative of liberty which refuses any kind of petrification and lives on its own movement. It is not a victory over time and change, but permanent change derived from the exercising of human desire, the desire of the masses. But wouldn’t the focus of this movement of the

masses, defending a collective subject, a totality, sacrifice each man's autonomy and individuality? If the theme of man considered in isolation is not emphasised in Machiavelli, it is clearly proposed in Spinoza: the multitude in democracy is not a uniform mass, but a group of men who can develop in freedom and in agreement with their potency, making use of reason in this process – by constant will – the reasonable legislation of the community (Spinoza, 2006 – *Political Treatise*). There is no general will which detaches from the masses and enigmatically becomes autonomous, at the cost of the weakening of the community's own strength, its disappearance, or substitution. In this sense the “moral personality” is the multitude, or rather, the group of men in their mutual relations and differences (Aurélio, 1998), which is the equivalent of sliding the old concept of morality to the world of modes.

In other words, the modal reflection of democracy no longer admits a structured conceptual field based on the moral conflict between individual and community, constructed by the other two languages. If Spinoza left behind the traces of the Baroque and discovered Dutch capitalism as a means of productive appropriation of the world, Marx progressively recognises the Faust-like spirit of industrial capitalism and a new openness in human potency provoked by him in comparison with the past. The materialistic perspective, rehearsed by Machiavelli and Spinoza, gains full force in Marx: the reflection on modes should begin to reveal the relations established among men in the production of life and the world. Critical, corrosive appropriation of how capitalism constructs its fetishism and produces its protagonists should precede the liberation of the multitude's effective action, repossessing its potency. Before this, there is no way to speak of the individual or the community. Or rather, the capitalist means of production impedes both the real universalisation of the individual and the democratic constitution of the community. Fracturing and exploitation are inherent in this means of production, as are its productivity and efficiency. Democracy can only be understood and impelled by thinking that visualises our trajectory through a succession of “modes” of social organisation which expand the possibilities of good, and reduce the existence of what is bad. Due to its internal dynamics, the well-understood language of sentiments enjoys a great ability to capture the operations of crystallisation and empowerment of the historical modalities of life in common, such as the ideas of the individual, the community, the constitution and the judicial community. At the same time, it is able to recognise the history of these modes and the historical superiority of some over others. The critical key here does not remain stuck to past models, nor to pre-determined Utopian horizons. The secret of its strength, of the language of affects, is this commitment to a permanent openness of the potency of all men in association with one another.

Just like the others, the language of sentiments does not exclude interest or reason from its field. Human desire, far from being repressed, is put forward as the essential element, able to be cultivated, as in Aristotle (MacIntyre, 2001). The wish to appropriate the world is the key to the language of sentiments, interested in freeing everyone to exercise this potency which produces and materially appropriates the world. The multitude has its material, concrete interest. In the same vein, it does not forget

reason, understanding it as an ally of desire more than repressing or directing, and for this redefined as criticism of the modes of organisation of life and as part of human potency. If it is suspicious of the great epiphanies of reason, its medium is human action, political action, capable of synthesising both the virtues of science and technique, for the production of the world, as those who incorporate art, making the world a desirable world.

These “well-understood” languages do not constitute incommensurable fields. Quite the contrary. There are wide intersecting zones, and various attempts at synthesis, in the style of Hegel. In Hegel, the full self-awareness of the Spirit, unfolds with the hierarchical formation and articulation of affect – which supports the family, through love –, of interest, which commands civil society, and of reason, materialised in the State and organises society as an ethical whole - and not moral -, the closure of a circle which, once again, reinstates sentiments (Hegel, 1985). Honneth understands this Hegelian synthesis as the articulation of the various forms of recognition which are necessary for the existence of modern, free societies (Honneth, 2007). It is impossible in the restricted space of an article to go into detail and widen even more this panorama, which has left aside thinkers such as Montaigne, Harrington, Hume, Montesquieu, and Saint-Simon, to name a few, and the polemical, corrosive figure of Nietzsche. It is also feasible associate to each language a characteristic epistemology, to the entire design of each one. For the purposes of this text, however, it is possible to pass onto the final movement, remembering that these languages are not only intellectual constructions, but ways of life that gains “prophetic” formulations in the authors we see.

Brazil and the languages.

My argument, in this final section, is that the Brazilian experience was not led by a harmonious association of these well-understood languages of reason, interest and affect, or by the hegemony of one of them in our forms of life. In the first three centuries, Brazil was oriented by a special version of the language of affects, inherited from Portugal. With independence, this already traditional language was confronted with the appearance of the two others, both carrying the ambitions of rebuilding the entire new nation’s life. As a result, in the last two centuries, the premises, institutions and utopian expectations embedded in these languages disputed and fragmented Brazil, thus anticipating the core of the post-modern thought on contemporary world, or the more precise diagnosis of the Social Theory about “fragmentation” as the main feature of Western society present-day life (Habermas, 2000; Luhmann, 1995). I would like to suggest that this absence of one-language hegemony, if it is the confused upshot of the instrumental use of these languages and their internal commands and demands, could also be a real opportunity for political, social, economic and cultural choices, reflectively based on the advantages of each language, towards a democratic society in Brazil.

Following this argument, we must recover, albeit briefly, the special version of the prevailing language of affects in Brazil before independence. Originating in Portugal, it acquires a new meaning in the Brazilian open tropics, as we shall see later. From the turn of the first millennium until the XIV century, the Iberian crowns and peoples were engaged in the “Reconquista”, or the ousting of the Muslims from European territory. Once this movement was over, the Iberians launched their ships and themselves into the oceans, just to become the main players and agents of an unexpected expansion of Europe throughout the world, and of the world itself. I have already tied this Iberian permanent territorialism, this renewed and systematic search for new spaces, to a particular form of social organization born in the centuries of the “Reconquista”: a combination between movement and permanence, between a tendency towards conquering new spaces and preserving a hierarchical, architectonic and aristocratic way of life from any veiled or manifest threat of change. Each piece of land captured from the Muslims was reorganized so as to replicate this social and cultural structure, and to throw into a moving frontier the tensions inherent to this social rigidity. The kings, anointed and blessed by the Church, were the political leaders of this adventure, also nourished by Christianity, vivid in a spontaneous, fresh and simple way, as a frontier religion supported by the faith in God’s providential will (Barboza Filho, 2000).

In the XVI and XVII centuries, a succession of crises and changes in all Europe, including the growth of the *orbis terrarum*, the spread of Protestant Reform, the destruction of the ancient conception of *kósmos* induced by the idea of a new and mathematical science, challenged the limits of the traditional and cultural horizons shared by the Spaniards and Portuguese. Using Habermas’s concept, we can understand the renewal of Thomism in Iberia, at that moment, as a reflective movement to restore the strength of a tradition – with its communicative action – wounded by internal and external processes of change. Neothomism offered a program to Spain and Portugal, then placed in the centre of a turbulent Europe, dealing with the American continent *recenter inventis*, and besieged by inner problems and crisis. Dominicans and Jesuits, such as Francisco Vitoria and Francisco Suarez, brought about not only an *imitatio* of an old theological-philosophical thought, but an authentic *renovatio* of the Aristotelian and Thomist conceptions, which were applied to new historical circumstances. In doing so, they displaced Humanism and Franciscan scatology from their dominant position in Iberia’s intellectual, political and cultural life.

We do not need a detailed exposition of Neothomism, already undertaken by Skinner and others (Skinner, 1993; Barboza Filho, 2000), but only to remember the general traits which authorizes its affiliation to the language of affect. The holistic perspective of Neothomism shapes the universe as an architectonic and harmonic whole – or ensemble - of places, each one governed by a specific law, and as a cascade of being which begins in God and spills over the world. In this way, Neothomism envisions the *kósmos* as a living organism, governed by a set of harmonic and necessary laws, in opposition to Ockham’s Nominalism, for example, inspired by the idea of a wilful God who can change his own laws or decisions. If the divine and the natural law are

necessarily and rationally intertwined, for Neothomism the duty of temporal order – ecclesiastic and civil – is to create forms of life which could express the intentions of God, found in natural law and in the revealed divine law. So, the economy of salvation could be conceived as the progressive learning, by men, of the true will and intentions of God, made accessible by the revelation and by the reflection on natural law, which was carved by him in the soul of every man and imprinted in the world's things.

Neothomism's firm stand on the necessity of natural law played a special role in the anthropological and ethical conceptions of the neothomist thinkers. It allowed a revitalization of the Thomistic metaphysical optimism inherited from Aristotle, in contrast with the Lutheran and Protestant theory of fallen man, emptied of any interior sense of justice, and also in opposition to the distinction between barbarous and civilized man as a qualitative difference held by Iberian humanists. Vitoria anticipated the protestant, pessimistic and Hobbesian vision of mankind, by stating that "*non enim homini homo lupus est, ut ait Ovidius, sed homo*" (1934). Involved and touched by natural law, every man had an innate sense of justice and the rights indispensable to achieve his perfection in the human and temporal world. But rights and perfection conceived in an Aristotelian perspective, i.e., man does exist only in the association with others, having a social and political nature, and his perfection being attained exclusively through community life and the search for common good. Founded in natural law and self-reaching its own ends, political society was defined, unlike the family or an isolated man, as a "perfect community". As a result, there could neither be any "individual" previous to society nor could the political community ever derive from a contract, but "God's will", according to Vitoria, or a "prior mystical union of men", as stated by Suarez. This anti-Hobbesian intent forbids the very notion of competition as the main source of social life and individual perfection, which ought to be sought in cooperation with the community's members, each one dedicated to pursuing his best in the place he/she occupied in the whole of society. The neothomist thinkers adapted the Aristotelian view of multiple elites in search of perfection (MacIntyre, 2001) to an organicist and hierarchical conception of society, imagined as a "human body" -- with head, heart, upper and lower limbs -- and supposed as a "whole" prevailing over the "parts".

The special power of the political community was the capacity to promulgate positive law understood as a historical and circumstantial translation of natural law, an act of *epiquía*, i.e., of casuistic interpretation of natural law in view of the common good. This community's power could be delegated to a king or to an assembly of few or even remain in the hands of the people, which was the least-considered alternative at that historical moment. Anyway, the legislator – especially the king - could never be seen as the "lord of society", but only its *rector* and its administrator. Even when the sovereign was protected by the idea of *legibus solutus* vis-a-vis the positive law, he had to obey natural law in any case. The end and purpose of government was justice, interpreted as the preservation of society's harmony, the well-being of *universitas* against the self interests of the "parts". Based on these premises, neothomism refused the *dominium* of

the Pope over the civil dimension of life, but preserved it in religious issues, thus establishing a practical horizon for Iberians who found themselves besieged by Europe, America and the East, in particular by the Osmanlis Muslims. For our purpose, it is important to note that the neothomistic thinkers, having to deal with America and its native dwellers, came out with the first modern statement of Human Rights in consequence of which a series of “rights” were bestowed upon native people such as political rights for the Indians to organize their communities, the right to autonomous religious organization, the right to own their lands and goods, the right to come and go freely, and the right to be protected by the Crown when injured or exploited by Iberians (Skinner, 1993; Carpeaux, 1943).

Surely, neothomism was an attempt to preserve Portugal’s and Spain’s traditional way of life, but an attempt that was conscious of the explosion of medieval world, trying to preserve an architectonic, hierarchical and objective conception of the world and of society in defiant times. For the Iberians, neothomism was a kind of “song” that could justify their role in a providential history, their fight against the Protestants and infidels (the Muslims), and their mission in the New World. This optimism, carried out by the revitalization of Aristotelian and Thomasian thought, collapsed at the end of XVI Century and was substituted by the particular *pathos* of Iberian Baroque. The Baroque is a European phenomenon, as pointed out by Wofflin (2000), which certainly encompasses a Protestant version of Baroque (Merquior, 1972) brought to America aboard the Mayflower by the famous pilgrims of the Bay of Boston, according to Carpeaux, who was seduced by the idea that the Baroque presided over the birth of all Americas (Carpeaux, 1943). But the Iberian Baroque had a special meaning; it was a simultaneous form of modernisation, of subjectivising life, and of preserving once again the spatial, architectural and hierarchical order that had oriented Iberia since the beginning of the Reconquest. The Crowns, with the help of the Iberian Church, specially the Jesuits, conducted this complex and risky operation, developed by gnosis and extra-rational means and no longer by Scholastic and Neothomist exegeses.

Spain and Portugal were not immune to the growth of uncertainty provoked by the erosion of the medieval world, with its cultural, political and religious background injured and opened by changes in all dimensions of European life. This opening of a common tradition brought about a consequence: the impossibility to live “naïvely” an ensemble of values, concepts, experiences and expectations granted by God, by traditional authorities or by simple habit (Taylor, 2007). The new languages of life’s subjectivisation were the appropriate answers to redress the possible cohesion of post-traditional societies. These languages have “reflectively” evolved in the modern age, and progressively taken distance from outdated patterns of good life. Iberia chose another path to become modern. It accepted the failure of traditions, but not the death of its tradition. The Baroque, imagined as the first program of the masses of the modern age, according to Maraval, had a great secret: the invention of a kind of subjectivity shaped to desire the society’s traditional order and its stability. All means were used, by the Crowns and Iberian Churches, to move the soul – or the interior - of Spaniards and

Portuguese, thus creating their special experience of subjectivising life as a wish to reconstruct, from the bottom up, what appeared before as a “cascade of being” welling up from God or a hierarchical political order empowered by tradition.

This movement explains the revival of mystical poetry in Spain, with its ambition to embrace God, to make him a prisoner of our souls – as in Tereza de Ávila -, thus forbidding him to be a *Deus Absconditus*, the Hidden God of the Protestants. And also the theatricalisation of the religious ceremonies, intended to make our suffering and solitude visible to God, to ourselves, and to reaffirm our faith in the harmonic order created by him. But this religious Baroque was deeply crossed by the doubt about the success of its ends, thus demanding a new and more exaggerated demonstration of men’s faith and sufferings, and so on. Despite human efforts, this escape of God, and the perception of the invincible distance of transcendence, produced something hated by the Baroque: emptiness. The king candidate to fill in this space, complaining about the condition of a *logos* above society, a kind of substitute of God, but without assuming the metaphysics of the French king supposed to be the actual body and the representation of the absolute power, as a *digiti Dei* (Marin, 1981). The theatre was also the means elected by the political Baroque to enforce this new position of the king, not only by the theatricalisation of political liturgies, but also through the development of dramaturgy imagined to stress the idea of life as *engaño* and *desengaño* – illusion and delusion -, to highlight the exploitation of society by the nobles and rich men, the sufferings of common people and the pessimism about the future of the empires. The only answer to all these miseries was the absolute power of the king, the only who could restore the social stability and redeem society’s historical and ethical meaning. The Crown becomes the agent responsible for injecting energy into the exhausted body of society, and recovering its substantive meaning.

This tortured and tragic movement was magnificently recorded by Cervantes in *Don Quixote*, the perfect representation of this Iberia giving in to a sublime madness: the voluntary resurrection of the past as an expressive form of life, redeeming the present. *Don Quixote*’s feature created an opportunity to explore the way that Iberia had mobilised, for its entry into modernity, the languages available for the organisation of society and to give meaning to life, constructing both its specificity and its profundity. It launches itself into the modern world by using the languages of affection and sentiment, decisively refusing the other two languages, already studied. It renewed its tradition, mobilising affection – sentiment – as a means of revitalising its past in the present. The result of this complex operation was the importance of the medium which allowed sentiment to create its own profundity: religion, and especially, art. In fact, art is the grand materialisation of the language of sentiments of the modern adventure in Iberia. It is its power of emotion and communication, its capacity to produce and deepen sentiments, to create feelings as modes of sharing sentiment, which played a special role in Iberia. It is the morphology of art and its possibilities – and not only art as such – that brought about the birth of a modern experience, alien to the codes of the languages of interest and of reason, which appear subordinate in the Iberian Baroque.

The artificialisation of tradition by the language of sentiment, or rather, the form of modernisation followed by Iberia in the 16th and 17th centuries, involved a price. It would be permanently bisected by what Unamuno (1992) called the tragic sentiment of life i.e., the terrible impossibility of resolving the conflict between antithetical values, an impossibility transformed into assimilation and life's overwhelming energy. What is important, however, is to note the weight that the language of sentiment is forced to bear in the Iberian experience: of making the old – tradition – fit into the new, and of making this “new” dress itself in the morphology of tradition. For this very reason, the Iberian Baroque consisted of a great operation of association between opposites – of the old and the new, of the apparent and the real, of the eternal and the ephemeral – which accentuated the perception of life as *engaño y desengaño*, an enigmatic “game of chess”. This Baroquism saw man as *cupiditas*, the universe as an endless weave constituted by a game of potencies, change as a condition of life and the world as a theatre, as an artifice that cancels the naturalness of life and demands the acting out of that which one wants to live. The modernising operation carried out by Iberia consisted of a violent movement of the subjectivisation of the beliefs that informed the Thomistic and Stoic conceptions of the world, shutting itself off from the possible developments of the language of sentiments. Spinoza accurately perceived the limits of the Iberian Baroque experience, and despite being nurtured by the Spanish classics of the Golden Age, is willing to make this leap into the future that Iberia cannot make (Ansaldi, 2001).

It is this Baroque, a special version of the language of sentiment, which crosses the Atlantic, becoming the dominant cultural element, the new society's *arché* in progress in The New World and especially in Brazil. Once transplanted to America, the Baroque acquired its own content, and cannot be viewed as mere continuity in relation to the Iberian or European form, as Claudio Véliz (1994) seems to have understood. In fact, as pointed out by Eduardo Lourenço, Brazil was not a case of classical colonization of a people by a foreign power as Portugal did in Africa, and Spain in Mexico (2001). Actually, the vast territory of the tropics was occupied by scattered and small tribes, without a political centre, and Portugal was not able to transfer part of its small population to the new land, converting it to a copy of itself. Thus, Brazil has always been the provisory upshot of a self-colonization process, where the past of Portuguese and Spaniards, Indians and Africans could not be experienced as traditions to be confirmed by the Baroque. These old traditions were taken as plastic horizons for looting, negotiation, the drawing up of agreements unexpected by the original matrixes, which give reason to Darcy Ribeiro's hypothesis about the birth of a new people in the initial centuries of Brazil (2006). The Brazilian Baroque lost the pathos of the Iberian Baroque, and substituted its conservative compromise by a constructive direction, appropriate to build a new society free of the weight's past. In these centuries, Brazil was a sort of social laboratory, mixing and blending peoples, cultures, idioms, faiths, gods, foods, dresses, liturgies and ceremonies, architecture, parties, bloods and utopian expectations, acquiring a new face in comparison to Portugal or Europe.

Of course, violence was a pervasive component of this continual blending. The violence against the Indians, the violence present in slavery, the violence that guarantees the plantation's existence, the violence of the crown's officers, the violence of the Inquisition and of the priests, and the violence against nature. This omnipresent violence was the clearest sign of a misunderstood language of interest, impotent, here and at that moment, to generalize a new conception of work as a continuous and systematic effort, or to universalize a labour's ethics, based on civil rights. This failure of the "interest well understood" wasn't compensated by the possible development of the language of reason, blocked by a set of limits. In the first place, the Portuguese crown prevented the creation of universities in Brazil, allowed in the American Spanish territories and responsible for the education of a *criollo* elite, thus blocking the birth of a possibly dangerous intellectual upper crust in Brazil. In second place, the Jesuits, the principal religious order in Brazilian society until 1750, when it was expelled from South America, claimed for itself a tribunate in defence of the Indians, but an addicted tribunate. Their protection of the natives was not extended to the slaves brought from Africa, under the argument that the first ones were sons of a paradisiacal nature and involved by unrestricted freedom of a primary natural right, also enjoyed by Adam before original sin, and the second ones were the sons of God's fury and objects of a secondary natural right that allows slavery. Certainly, the Jesuits and the Church never proclaimed a real defence of slavery in Brazilian lands – unlike the South of the United States, Brazil never produced any kind of intellectual and religious justification of slavery (Genovese, 1976) -, adopting a dissimulated silence about it and becoming perhaps the greatest slave owners in XVII and XVIII centuries. In any case, this strategy of negotiation adopted by the most powerful religious order in Brazil inhibited a radical appropriation of the Neothomism's potency to imagine and to build a democratic society, sterilising the only critical perspective available to Brazilians at that moment.

Octavio Paz, not only thinking about Mexico, said that for three centuries the Iberian American remained untouched by the Illuminist Reason's reconstructive power, updating Hegel's idea about Central and South America as a land of the *naturmensch* forgotten by the Spirit's history (1989). In the same way, is not difficult to see Spinoza's imagination of an unfree society - based on the sad passions and formed by the tyrant, the slave and the priest, charged to console the impotence of the first two - as a projection of Brazilian's cruel reality. Born in Portugal, Spinoza probably knew the state of affairs in Portuguese dominions. The fact is that reason, even a scholastic or neothomist one, did not claim for itself a hegemonic position in Brazil, controlling the interest and offering a clear vision of the future for the peoples here assembled. Reason and interest, so attached to reality, were not able to develop any ethical demanding language to guide a new society, or to perform a reflective and reconstructive movement in search of democratic foundations. That's because our political elites, and even the Brazilian social sciences, look at the past as succession of miseries and social diseases, without a people composed by individuals with their well understood interests or by citizens aware of their political power.

Despite this, Brazil carried on inventing itself, not according to tradition, to religion, or to the language of reason and interest. We certainly have an origin, a Baroque devoid of metaphysics, a mixture of ethical non-determination, real fragmentation and hunger for meaning. What we inherited from the Iberian Baroque were not the peninsular lifestyles and beliefs, but the language of sentiment, with its aesthetic nature, with its capacity to integrate antagonisms and differences, with its theatrical vehemence and voluntarism, with its power to assure the existence of a society in dangerous circumstances. Or rather, our *arché* is the language of sentiments and the true medium of art, without a tragic perception of life which is characteristic of the peninsular spirit. We were born free of this unsolvable confrontation of values, neither seeing ourselves as medieval nor modern, obliged by life and necessity to build a society. For this reason the force of the tropical Baroque is nourished by powerful constructivist pathos, associated with the integrating power of the language of sentiment. The Gnostic and creative capacity of the Baroque decidedly re-orientates itself in order to imagine and certify the possibilities of the construction of a new and specific society in relation to the original ones.

In *Words and Things*, Foucault pursues the separation between things and words, non-existent in the *epistémè* of the 16th century (1967). At this time, words correspond to the murmuring of things, and knowledge consists of making the world speak by its similarities, in trying to get the world to reveal its secrets, present in the marks which inhabit it. Another *epistémè* succeeds this, one which relatively separates things and words – the origin of the rational and ordering systems of the 17th century – but which still hangs onto the possibility that words could be the equivalent to the world's murmuring, through art, above all, the art of allegory. The first modern romance, *Don Quixote*, for Foucault, would be the character in this world where things do not find their equivalents in words, where the signs are already dissimilar to beings, leaving it up to the *hidalgo* the necessity to find the proof of this link, the duty of conferring reality on signs without narrative content. What he wants to find in his essentially Baroque and Iberian character, is the past, things that escape words, exposing the contradiction of the peninsular Baroque. In America, the Baroque wants something else: to find the marks of a reality that only unfolds by movement, by voluntary certification. The “aesthetisation” of life is the secret of its constitution in America.

In other words, the Brazilian and Iberian American baroque were nurtured by an *epistémè* based on similarities, with its four likenesses: *convenientia*, *aemulatio*, *analogia* and *simpatia*. If knowledge is to put a thing in the spaces of reason, as states Macdowell (2002), then knowing something for the Brazilians at these times was to place it in space of reasons based on similarities, in a reversible and unlimited order of likenesses. That is the reason why the missionaries could assimilate the Indians' deity to the Christian horizon, with an unexpected consequence: the Indians could go through these analogies in the opposite direction desired by the missionaries, considering the reversible movement proper to the similarities. The same happened with Africans, not only in religion, but in the way to understand the world. This operation of analogy and

assimilation, in all life's dimensions, was the main baroque strategy to synthesize different cultures and peoples, demanding a proliferation of signs, ceremonies and liturgies to confirm the approximation's possibilities and the reality of the upshots. In this sense, the theatricalisation and "aesthetisation" of life that do not serve to reaffirm the past, but the opening of distinct galaxies and traditions, the construction and exercise of emphatic signs of a runaway order and a new hierarchy.

Thus, a movement which does not affirm a pre-existent truth, but which produces its own truth, as in Spinoza's reflection. This process of assimilation destroyed the integrity of the old traditions, and its result was always and at same time the allegory and the confirmation of something new at birth. This unlimited world of analogies opened for everyone the transit through this voluntaristic construal, offering to all groups and races the exercise of negotiation and identity. It was this constant and wilful movement which created society, and the Brazilian Baroque was obliged to take to extremes the capacity to rebuild the world through theatrics, characteristic of the peninsular Baroque from whence it came: social and political life exist and reproduce only through the voluntary and exaggerated gestural quality of theatrical ceremonies, which periodically unite and question men. Society acquires reality by means of this theatrical movement of subjectivities, dispensing with the systematic work of *logos* in favour of the oscillating and binding force of *eros*, of sentiment and its languages. This explains the importance, among us, of the extensive and intense calendar of religious, political and civil liturgies, destined to certify something that does not exist naturally or spontaneously – society itself – an artifice which demanded this constant wilful reiteration.

So, the baroque confer social unity to Brazilian society, and offer to "the people" a practical strategy of democratization: the cancellation or the rescission of the cultural, religious and ethnical differences, and an experience of rights as absence of obstacles to action. In other words, the baroque preserves the energy of a multitude, driving it to an effective social democratization and to a veritable exercise of invention of new social institutions. It creates a kind of democratic sociability, present, for example, in the ethnic mixture, origin of a mulatto's society; in a religion reinvented by the mutual assimilation of Christians, Africans and Indians elements, and which demand from the Catholicism a kind of theatrics based in the mobilisation of affects and senses and always oriented by the idea of forgiveness; in a way of war which jointed Indians and Europeans tactics, able to defeat the powerful Dutch army; in the brotherhoods, an institution equally appropriated by free men and by slaves, the last ones interested in their protection and in the acquisition of freedom for the members of their brotherhoods; in the adaptation of the European architecture and style to the materials existing in Brazil, refounding originally the towns to be the expression, or the allegory, of this incorporation's *pathos* of the baroque; in the political and religious ceremonies and parties, which always ended by a very "inversion" of the hierarchy – as Bakhtin discovered in the medieval parties in Europe (2008) –; in a special experience of the

bodies and senses, untouched by the discipline supposed to be the axis of a civilisation's process, as state Norbert Elias (1994).

The desire to produce and take ownership of the world, sterilized by slavery and servitude, by plantations, by political subordination to Portugal and Europe, escapes to the world of art and of a primary sociability, and makes them a world appropriated by the multitude, in spite of everything. The potency of the multitude dribbles structural barriers and establishes itself as art that abandons the pure *mimesis* for the invention of a special territory, where everyone can interact. In the same way that the social and economic backwardness make Germany escape from itself into pure theory, carrying out a bourgeois revolution in thought, according to Marx, in America society first organised itself through the medium of art, which creates its space as the space of a potency persistently exercised by the common man. It is in the language of sentiments that architecture, sculpture, painting, music, celebration, rites and religious cults acquire the capacity to fabricate a society. For this very reason, aesthetisation did not mean the pure evasion or the gilding of misery and violence. It is an act of social construction, the material plan which announces the multitude's whole project, characteristic of the language of sentiments: the appropriation of the world which it is denied by power and exploration. The importance of popular culture, in all its various forms of expression in our Brazilian life until today, does not only register the "creativity" of the people: it is the privileged medium for the reproduction and reinvention of the language of sentiments, with its ambition of re-opening the world to the potency of the multitude.

This is not an ingenuous and idyllic reinvention of Brazilian's history, but a way to stress the main characteristic of this special baroque: his incorporation's power. Even the plantations – the large properties with slaves and "agregados" (free poor people) – were ruled by the idea of a large family, a possible inheritance of the Arabian family's conception, which includes everyone in the middle of a group (Freyre, 2000). The vast space of America was not envisaged as territory to be occupied by Robinsons Crusoes – a character that never appeared in American Iberian literature -, but to be populated by men who felt themselves as a member of a society and of a whole, despite their possible isolation. All this investment in theatrics, in the allegory, is the way to confirm the man as a knot of a web of social relations and of a community, whose hierarchy and meaning were assured by the king. Thus, it is a mistake to understand the idea of "person" and "personalism" – with a large history in the West – as a metaphysical Iberian's "vice". The criticism of Sergio Buarque de Holanda was formulated from a confessed protestant and individual perspective, but the fruitful apprehension of the meaning of this idea can be realized only in the field of the language of affects. Like in Spinoza, a free man is one able to organize their encounters, acting to increase his potency, but never escaping from his social human nature. So, to be independent is not to be non-dependent, but autonomous to choose the favourable encounters or *conati*, in an inescapable web of social relationships. This was the anthropological ideal of the Brazilian baroque, free of the weight of the past and open to the future.

We can sum up the general features of this special language of affects in Brazil, remembering that the final horizon was the almost same of the Neothomism: an Aristotelian anthropological conception, which shapes man as a knot in a web of social relationship, as part of a community, and as a human being empowered by natural law with the proper rights to pursue his perfection and autonomy; a community experienced as a whole, made by the unity of its parts under the guidance of the king, the clearest representation of a common and meaningful destiny, to be accomplished by the voluntaristic cooperation of all; a community envisaged as a open hierarchy, updating for a new conquest the old Iberian tradition created in the Reconquest's times; a model which demands from all a special kind of will, not to confirm something previous, but to support an improbable new society born from the association of three different peoples and cultures; in this way, a new society whose building was founded in the possibilities opened by an *epistème* based in similarities, authorising the assimilation of all features of these different cultures in an large and elastic order of the world, able to incorporate even the unknown and the “maravilhoso”, the wonderful; a model which could not be “naïvely” lived, and which demand for its reality the persuasion's power of the art, with its capacity to produce the sharing of values, and lived as a special way of self-reflection by the society.

Considering this model, each opportunity offered to the people – the slaves, the poor men, the common persons – was embraced through this baroque spirit of incorporation, starting a very process of democratization of life. But the baroque could not lead this creative energy to the fields of economy and politics, dominated by slavery, by the large proprieties in the hands of few, and by the greediness and patrimonialism of the Crown's officers. That's because the *medium* of the labour, or the *medium* of laws, were not appropriated by the baroque spirit of incorporation. They were not available for the people. Thus, the morphology of art, with its power to produce and create feelings as ways of sharing a common destiny, was the only possibility open to creative action of the people. Independence should be, or could be, the opportunity to destroy these limits that prevented the potency of the language of affect in Brazil. Actually, some political movements, and key politicians like José Bonifácio de Andrada, one of our founding fathers, imagined the beginning of the new nation as a rupture with these obstacles to a real democratization of the Brazilian life. He, and others, defended the abolition of slavery and a kind of agrarian reform, opening the land to the people (1998). These were, in fact, the greatest challenges at that moment: the question of the land and of slavery, whose resolution could open new territories for this energy coming from the bottom of society. The presence of Liberalism and French republicanism could be the occasion for a practical and reflective process to unlock the movement of the multitude, changing the face of the new nation.

But soon this radical program was discarded, and Liberalism – with its formal rights – was transformed into an alibi to legitimate the property of lands and slaves, and Republicanism reduced to new people's dream, to be entirely recreated. We face here, apparently, something constitutive of the old baroque tradition: an association of forms

of life based on similarities which request and accept, for its success, the destruction of integrity of all coherent ethical and intellectual horizons. However, in the baroque of the previous centuries, this movement of assimilation corresponded to a creative one, while in the Empire it assumed the character of an operation restricted to rebuilding elite's political and economic power. In other words, while the process carried out by the baroque was a way to recreate a social unity, based on the free movement of the people through the channels offered by the similarities, in the Empire the adoption of liberal institutions created a resemblance of modernity entirely appropriated by the elite and closed to the people. The new nation was not, as pointed out by Fernandes and Werneck, just a mere survival of the past with the dresses of modernity. Liberalism opened to the imperial elite a way to legitimate its power vis-a-vis England and the West, establishes the mechanisms and protocols, not always effective, to control its possible internal conflicts, and given to it an horizon to guide the cautious process of modernisation of Brazil coming from above.

In fact, the Brazilian independence must be understood as a starting point of a long process of modernisation, although a process marked by a fracture: the distance between people and liberal institutions, a distance between the substantive and spontaneous way chosen by the people to produce democracy - always reassuring the anthropological conception of man as a naturally social and the idea of a community -, and the formal and liberal institutions, commanded by the languages of reason and interest. Liberalism and Republicanism brought to Brazil the ideas of Market and State, considered the two great pedagogical institutions of the modern West. But they did not bring to us, in the first century of our history, the civil and political rights as conditions to make the Market and the State the forms or instruments of democracy, for people's sake. Certainly, we begin to build a modern, rational-legal state in XIX century, and sure, the market was proclaimed as the best way to make and to allocate the material goods we produce. But, without the political rights, and without the access to land and properties, the state and the market remained until 1930, as spaces of power, and nothing more.

But Brazil was not motionless during the Empire, which ends in 1891. And the amazing fact is that this movement was assured partly by the past, by the figures of the old tradition, especially the king. The Portuguese kings always had an absolute power over the Brazilian territory, reinvented by them apart from the rigid corporative organization of the Iberian Peninsula. Of course, it was an absolute but discontinuous power, as Foucault explains (2000). The king was the political centre of the empire, the one responsible for its unity and historical meaning, and also the *Iustum Animatum*, charged to produce justice in his dominions. But, if his power was a "passive" one in Portugal, as showed by Hespanha (1994), in Brazil it was a very creative power, engaged with the foundation of a new society. The king's escape from Portugal, in 1808, and his coming to America reinforced this baroque, traditional and productive endowment of the king, i.e., the capacity to transform the substance of the reality, changing a colony into an associated kingdom. In 1822, the king's son took another step, and thus becoming a real king: he proclaimed the independence of Brazil. In doing so, he could sustain that Brazil

was born from his will, and not from the sovereignty of the people. The constitutional character of the monarchy, however, eliminated absolutism as an attribute of the Emperor, defined as a fourth power – a moderating one – side by side with the Legislative, the Executive and the Judiciary powers.

The active presence of the Emperor at that moment differentiates the Brazilian initial experience from that of South and Central America, which were engaged in an anti-colonial war against Madrid, with the loss of a political centre. The king held the integrity of the ancient Portuguese possessions until his return to Portugal in 1831, leaving Brazil in a real civil war which threatened its unity. Only the acclamation of a new Emperor, almost ten years later, re-stabilized the internal peace and preserved Brazil from territorial fragmentation. This was, undoubtedly, one of the most important inheritances of the Empire. But the Emperors did more, just because their royal character and nature were understood as prior to the birth of the nation and to the constitutional pact. They were “irresponsible” in the old sense of *legibus soluti*, and their constitutional power could not be ignored or disobeyed by the other institutional powers and by society. Having this force in hands, and inspired by the idea of substantive justice, the emperors tried to do what liberalism of the native elite carefully avoided: an agrarian reform and the abolition of slavery. If the historian José Murilo de Carvalho is right, and he seems to be, it was from the Crown the initiative to change the regime of lands in Brazil, proposing a project of law, to be approved by the Parliament, with the objective of limiting the size of the properties and of recovering for the state the unproductive land for late re-distribution. The representatives approved the project after an extended delay, but the law became a dead law, because of the weakness of the state apparatus (Carvalho, 1988).

The Crown was also responsible for the efforts to put an end to slavery, through a successive set of proposals aiming at freeing the sons of slaves, the slaves over 60 years old and, finally, the total abolition of slavery in 1888. Two years later, the Empire collapsed, and was replaced by the Republic. It disappeared not because it represented the regime of slavery, but for the reason that the landowners were afraid of an independent power supporting substantive changes in Brazilian society. In the name of Liberalism, the dominant elite dispensed the form of the Empire and the figure of the Emperor, and inaugurated one of the most sterile periods of our history, unhappily ending only in the 1930's of last century. The Crown, born in tradition, was the only power willing the congruency with the people's aspirations, and this was a danger for the dominant elite, which finally took over power alone.

I did not want to defend the Empire or a tradition, nor blame Liberalism for the miseries of Brazil in a conservative fashion. My objective was to make comprehensible the democratic dynamics of the first centuries of our history, a dynamics forgotten by the elites engaged in the building of a new nation in the terms of Liberalism and Republicanism. A dynamics blocked before independence and after it, and kept away from the rights of the languages of reason and interest. The process of assimilation of these two modern languages was not open to the people's democratic sociability,

without heightening it to a new and superior stage of self-consciousness. Quite the contrary, modernization “from above” permanently ignores the question of origins and foundations, captive as it is to the demands of bureaucracy and of the market, as pointed out by Richard Morse (1988). The price paid by this kind of process was the impossibility to bestow ethics foundations to liberal institutions in our life, or to the languages of reason and interest. Thus, none of these three languages have been able to manage hegemonically the Brazilian life until this moment. Today, we cannot make the opposite error of the imperial elites: ignore the force of the market or of the state in our reality. But, perhaps, we have now the chance to assimilate and assembly these well understood languages, doing well, and correctly, what we have done wrongly throughout our history: a new “democratic blend”, which recognizes the value and the democratic potential of our language of affects.

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