

Theorising the Ibero-American Atlantic

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LITERARY EXCHANGE IN THE PORTUGUESE-BRAZILIAN ATLANTIC
BEFORE 1822

Vanda Anastácio

In her work *A Cultura Luso-Brasileira (Portuguese-Brazilian Culture, 1999)*, the Brazilian historian Maria Beatriz Nizza da Silva drew attention to the relative homogeneity of the educated elite of the imperial Luso-Brazilian space.¹ According to Silva, from 1500 until Brazil's independence in 1822, educated individuals born in different parts of the Portuguese empire shared a common cultural background. Her explanation of the elite captures the Atlantic character of the Luso-Brazilian ruling class:

After Pombal's Reform of the University of Coimbra, even more members of the cultivated elite circulated across the Atlantic, and this elite read the same material and received the same education. Little did it matter whether someone like D. Francisco de Lemos, the reformer of the University, was born in Brazil, or whether José Clemente Pereira, who was one of the supporters of D. Pedro in the independence process, was originally from the bishopric of Guarda. If we read what they wrote ignoring their birth places, we will find it difficult to detect whether they were natives of the colony or of the continent.²

In 2007, another Brazilian historian, Guilherme Pereira das Neves, defended a similar view.³ He confirms the idea of a "people of the empire" through the study of individual biographies. Miguel António Vasconcelos Guedes is the example at the heart of Pereira das Neves's argument. Guedes lived at the turn of the nineteenth century, held crown-appointed administrative posts in Lisbon, Bahia, Angola and the Azores, and served as the President of the Royal Treasury (*Real Erário*) and as a magistrate before eventually being chosen by king D. João VI to write the first constitution of the Portuguese monarchy in 1820. In studying this man of the empire, Neves considers of "little importance" the attribution of a "national theoretical framework" (*recortes nacionais*) to the period prior

¹ Maria Beatriz Nizza da Silva, *A Cultura Luso-Brasileira. Da reforma da Universidade à Independência do Brasil* (Lisbon: Editorial Estampa, 1999).

² Silva, 11.

³ Guilherme Pereira das Neves, "Em Busca de um ilustrado: Miguel António de Melo (1766–1836)", *Convergência Lusíada* 24.2 (2007): 25–41.

to Brazilian independence. In his words, such individuals were “more than Portuguese, Brazilian, or African”. Part of a broader pan-Atlantic diaspora, the “people of the empire”—the many individuals whose life and career followed a similar trajectory through the eighteenth century Lusophone world—cannot easily be subsumed into distinct national identities allegedly preceding the establishment of Brazil as a political nation.

The remarks of these two influential historians grow directly out of a perspective that transcends national borders and instead looks at the circulation of people, ideas, and cultural objects across the South Atlantic before and during the eighteenth century. Their insistence on the Atlantic flavor of the cultural and educational aspects of Luso-Brazilian history in the modern period can be used as a starting point for a reflection on the formation of Brazilian and Portuguese literatures.

The work of Silva and Neves contrasts with established Lusophone literary history. Romantic criteria for the evaluation of literature—*originality* and *nationality*—persist among Lusophone literary historians of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This might help explain the traditional approach on both sides of the Atlantic; namely, that certain authors who lived before the political separation are claimed for each of the distinct *national* literatures (Portuguese or Brazilian). This approach persists in spite of the fact that such authors shared a similar academic and literary education (they all studied at the University of Coimbra, the only university of the Portuguese Empire); that most of them did not live to see the independence of Brazil; and that those who were born on American territory were integrated into the same social networks, participated in the same clientele system, and glorified the same patrons as their European-born peers.⁴

If we are to believe the traditional Lusophone historiographical discourse concerning Brazilian Literature, from Ferdinand Denis to Almeida Garrett,⁵ and including Afrânio Coutinho and Ant3nio C3ndido,⁶ this

⁴ See the discussion on the challenges of researching Luso-brazilian Culture of the Enlightenment in Vanda Anast3cio, “Pensar para al3m das etiquetas”, *Converg3ncia Lus3ada* 24.2 (2007): 17–24.

⁵ I refer to Ferdinand Denis, *R3sum3 de l’Histoire litt3raire du Portugal suivi du r3sum3 de l’Histoire litt3raire du Br3sil* (Paris: Leconte et Durey, 1826); and Almeida Garrett, “Bosquejo da Historia da poesia e lingua portuguesa. Parnaso lusitano, ou poesias selectas dos autores portugueses antigos e modernos, ilustradas com notas”, *O Berço do C3none*, ed. Regina Zilberman and Eunice Moreira (Porto Alegre: Mercado Aberto, 1998), 26–73.

⁶ Afrânio Coutinho, *Noç3es de hist3ria da literatura brasileira* (Rio de Janeiro: Livraria Francisco Alves, 1931); and *Panorama da literatura brasileira* (S3o Paulo: Companhia

separation came into existence *after* Brazilian independence (which took place in 1822, at the height of Romanticism). This claim is commonly supported by means of two main characteristics: an author's birthplace and the presence of Brazilian elements (such as references to landscape, flora, and fauna) in his work. These characteristics are considered sufficient to establish a specifically Brazilian literary identity. Curiously, even when texts glorified the colonial apparatus, scholars nonetheless deemed these characteristics sufficient to claim an author for Brazil.⁷ This conceptualisation of post-colonial Portuguese and Brazilian literary and cultural identity was firmly rooted in the Romantic concepts of originality and nationality.

As the observations of Silva and Neves suggest, the application of this conceptual framework to Lusophone literature of the colonial period raises a number of questions. We would like to focus on two of them. The first issue centres on the difficulty of defining a starting point for Brazilian literature. The question "when did Brazilian literature begin?" has been answered by historians in a number of quite different ways.⁸ In analyses that valued the use of Portuguese more than other defining features, the birth of Brazilian literature was located in the Middle Ages. In this scenario, Galician-Portuguese lyric poems of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries were defined as the foundational texts. This was the approach, for instance, of Sérgio Buarque de Holanda and Afrânio Coutinho.⁹ A more common interpretation sets the start of Brazilian literature in 1500, thus making its appearance coincide with the discovery of Brazil by Pedro Álvares Cabral. In this case, the first known written document on the territory, the *Carta do Achamento do Brasil* (*Letter of the Discovery of Brazil*) by Pero Vaz de Caminha marks the founding text of Brazilian literature and is imbued with the symbolic value of a literary birth certificate.

Editora Nacional, 1940); and António Cândido, *Formação da Literatura Brasileira: momentos decisivos*, 2 volumes, 2nd. edition (São Paulo: Livraria Martins Editora, 1964).

⁷ Maybe the clearest example is the epic poem *Uruguay* by José Basílio da Gama, written in 1769, and praising the colonial policies enforced by the Marquês de Pombal as well as the Guaranic war fought by General Gomes Freire de Andrade.

⁸ On the search for the origins of Brazilian literature by Romanticist historians see Flora Sussekind, "Da sensação de não estar no todo", in *O Brasil não é longe daqui* (Rio de Janeiro: Companhia das Letras, 1990), 1–34.

⁹ For a recent discussion of the question of periodisation see Sílvio Castro, "A literatura portuguesa medieval como literatura brasileira", *Historia da Literatura Brasileira*, vol. 1 (Lisbon: Alfa, 1999), 21–48.

At the same time, it is difficult to find a historian linking the appearance of Brazilian literature to the date of Brazilian independence—which would be, at first sight, the more obvious logic of applying Romantic criteria to the Brazilian case of the “birth” of a national literature. If we take a step back, though, we can see why this is the case. We also can see why the approach of Buarque de Holanda and Coutinho is an exception from the rule with regard to the application of the criterium of nationality by Brazilian and Portuguese literary scholars. Insofar as literary historiography is concerned, Brazil figures as a country whose literary history and cultural identity in fact preceded the emergence of the political nation, as a country that owned a national literature before emerging as a nation. This is the position, for instance, of one of the first Brazilian literary historians, Joaquim Norberto de Sousa e Silva, who wrote in 1841:

We were not yet a nation and still we already had historians recording the glories of our fatherland, and poets celebrating the victories of their fellow-citizens, recommending their names to posterity; we were not yet a nation [...] and already we had a literature.¹⁰

Norberto de Sousa e Silva takes us to the second issue we would like to raise here, which can be defined as the difficulty in building a Brazilian literary canon distinct from the Portuguese canon of the same period. This difficulty of distinguishing between the texts allegedly belonging to Brazilian literature from those to be included in Portuguese literature before 1822 (usually referred to as “literature of the colonial period”¹¹) and to classify works in national terms, is evident when one realises that there are authors who are claimed for the literatures of both Portugal and Brazil. The cases of Pero Vaz de Caminha (1450–1500) and the Jesuit Antonio Vieira (1608–1697) are particularly representative, for they can be found regularly in the literary history manuals of both nations. However, the difficulty of distinguishing between a colonial and a national literary canon also becomes clear when one takes into account the significant number of exceptions to the rule of using the place of birth of an author, the presence or absence of allusions to Brazilian landscape or the inclusion or not of “typical” Brazilian elements as a means of defining and dividing the two literatures on either side of the Atlantic between 1500 and 1822.

¹⁰ Joaquim Norberto de Sousa e Silva, “Bosquejo de História da Poesia Brasileira. I-Introdução”, Zilberman and Moreira, 89–142, 100.

¹¹ For a discussion of the notion of “Colonial Literature” see António Cândido, “Colonial”, Graça Coutinho and Rita Mourinho (eds.), *Enciclopédia de Literatura Brasileira*, vol. 1 (São Paulo: Global, 2001), 504–05.

In order to grasp the implications of this conundrum, it is worth recalling that literary works of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries were governed by a poetics centred upon the concept of imitation and that, consequently, efforts to see manifestations of originality or the expression of local, national or nativist feelings in textual productions of this period is rarely successful. Even when there are allusions to Brazil in these works, they are subordinated to the more prestigious cultural models of the time (taken from antiquity or from alternative authorities) which were also circulating in Western Europe.¹² The so-called *nativist* allusions, for instance, are integrated into pre-existent repertoires appropriated, reproduced and disseminated by their authors. When the Brazilian critic Domingos J.G. de Magalhães, in 1842, protests against “the majority of Brazilian authors, who only know the waters of the rivers Tagus, Minho and Mondego and the shepherdesses of Beira, and mix everything with images of Greek mythology and Arcadian robes, without recognising this new world where they have seen the light, where they breathed the aura of liberty, and drank from the waters of the largest and richer rivers of the world”,¹³ he applies an anachronistic criteria to the production of these authors. This is the frequent mistake—denounced, among others, by Lucien Fèbvre and the *Annales* school of the mid-twentieth century—of transforming history into a court where the facts of the past are being judged according to the laws of the present.

Given their heterogeneity, the variety of audiences they wished to address, the kind of civic mission they pursued, and even the ways in which they related to political and ecclesiastical authorities, eighteenth-century works cannot easily be comprehended through the theoretical model put forward by a romantic historiography focusing its activity, just like the natural science at the time, upon the inventory and classification of authors, movements and texts. Dynamic models linking authors and their texts to other areas of cultural life and to the movements of attraction and rejection occurring between groups and individuals in a given society seem a more promising path of enquiry.

For instance, it is possible to analyse the literary and cultural identity of some eighteenth authors who were active in both Portugal and in Brazil

¹² Vanda Anastácio, “Da Historia Literária e de alguns dos seus Problemas”, *Brotéria* 157 (July 2003): 45–58.

¹³ João Manuel Pereira da Silva, “Literatura Brasileira do século XVIII”, Zilberman and Moreira, 143–181, 170.

by taking as a starting point the notion of “trajectory” in the sense that it has been defined by Bourdieu as “the succession of positions occupied by a given individual in the social space”,¹⁴ and defining as “social space” the imperial Lusophone society, extending from India to Brazil and including Angola and Mozambique. A fine entry point for consideration of these issues can be found in a group of eight authors considered canonical by Portugal and/or Brazil and who lived, wrote, and moved across the Portuguese-Brazilian space in the second half of the eighteenth century.

These authors can be divided into three groups, the first of which is comprised of authors born in Brazil in the first half of the eighteenth century and who studied and wrote in Portugal. They also established close ties with the Italian *Arcadia di Roma*—a learned society founded in 1690, sponsored by the Portuguese king D. João V from 1716 onwards, and again by his son D. José after 1750. In the cultural training of these men, Italian aesthetic models and elements of repertoire played an important role. This largely can be attributed to a trend set by the monarch himself, who employed most of his diplomacy skills upon a political strategy of affirmation before the Holy See. The poets Frei José de Santa Rita Durão (1722–1784) and Cláudio Manuel da Costa (1729–1789) are among those in this group. These two men share another biographical characteristic: they both hailed from families that held posts in the colonial administration.

Santa Rita Durão was the son of an army officer placed in Brazil. He left for Portugal when he was 11 years old and never went back. After studying at the college of the Oratorians in Lisbon, he joined the order of the Augustinian friars and left for Coimbra to attend University. He graduated in theology and eventually obtained a doctoral degree. In 1759, Frei José was involved in the events and the polemics surrounding the expulsion of the Jesuits. His ideological positions displeased the Marquis of Pombal, and he was forced to leave the country. He spent the next fourteen years in Italy and was only able to return to Portugal after the Marquis of Pombal was dismissed in 1777. Four years later he published *Caramuru*, a long epic poem formally modelled on Camões *Lusiads*, celebrating the discovery of Bahia. This text guaranteed his inclusion in the Brazilian literary canon. Frei José died in 1784.

Cláudio Manuel da Costa was the son of a wealthy landowner. Born in Minas Gerais, he moved to Rio de Janeiro in 1743 to study at the Jesuit College and left for Portugal in 1749 in order to go to the university. As a

¹⁴ Pierre Bourdieu, “L’illusion biographique”, *Raisons pratiques* (Paris: Seuil, 1994), 81–89.

student he sought to enter priesthood, but later abandoned the idea. He gained a reputation as a poet already at this stage of his life, and published three books of poetry in Coimbra (*Epicédio*, *Labirinto de Amor* and *Números Harmonicos*). After graduating in law, he went back to Brazil, where he followed a successful career, first as a lawyer, later as a magistrate. His social background and education seem to have contributed to his election for public office in his homeland as well as his admission into several learned societies like the *Arcadia di Roma* and the *Academia Brasílica dos Esquecidos*. His complete works were published in Coimbra in 1768. Manuel da Costa seemed to enjoy social and literary recognition until 1789, when he was denounced to the royal administration for the participation in the conspiracy known as *Inconfidência Mineira* and sent to prison. He killed himself in jail, but left the manuscript of an epic poem, *Vila Rica*, which was published posthumously. This text, whose action takes place in the mining region, guaranteed him the admiration of posterity and inclusion into the canon of Brazilian national literature.

The second group of intellectuals under consideration is formed by authors who were born in Portugal around the mid-eighteenth century and who were active both in Portugal and in Brazil. This is the case with Tomás António Gonzaga (1744–1810) and António Dinis da Cruz e Silva (1731–1799), although we should note that the latter is seldom included in Brazilian literary history manuals. Tomás António Gonzaga was born in Oporto, though he was the son of a Brazilian-born magistrate. His trajectory can be considered as exemplary given the fact that it can illustrate the organisation of the society he lived in. Since he was the son and the grandson of colonial magistrates, he pursued a career in public administration. He moved to Brazil when he was eleven as a consequence of his father's appointment as a judge in Pernambuco. In 1751 he entered the Jesuit College in Bahia, went to Portugal in 1761, and started University in 1762. He thought about becoming a university teacher (we wrote a *Tratado de Direito Natural* apparently for this purpose) but became a magistrate instead (in 1768). Tomás António went back to Brazil as a judge, initially to Vila Rica, and afterwards to Bahia. Around 1786 he wrote *Cartas Chilenas*, a collection of satirical letters against the local governor which enjoyed intense circulation as a manuscript. The fact that this text denounces some of the flaws of colonial administration was what granted it inclusion in Brazilian literary histories. Just as Cláudio Manuel da Costa, Tomás António Gonzaga was sent to prison in 1789 due to suspicions of his involvement with the *Inconfidência Mineira*. The close proximity of his family to elite circles as well as his own knowledge of the law contributed

to the commutation of his sentence into deportation to Mozambique in 1792 and to his resuming his career as a magistrate soon after his arrival there. In the same year, he published *Marília de Dirceu*, which, at the time, had a very warm reception from the reading public in Portugal but remained almost unknown in Brazil for more than a decade. When he died in 1810, he was the Customs Judge of the African colony.

António Dinis da Cruz e Silva was born in Lisbon, and he was also the son of an army officer. In spite of the financial crisis his family suffered after the early death of his father, António Dinis did not interrupt his studies in the Lisbon college of the Oratorians and made his way to Coimbra University. He graduated with a law degree in 1753 and returned to Lisbon to participate in the capital's intellectual life. In 1756, he became one of the founding members of the *Arcadia Lusitana*, a learned society aiming at the restoration of "taste", but his career as a magistrate forced him to leave Lisbon. Between 1760 and 1764, he served as a judge in Castelo de Vide, and again in Elvas in 1764. During his stay in Elvas, Cruz e Silva wrote a mock heroic poem called *O Hissope*, in which, adapting the model of Boileau's *Le lutrin*, he ridiculed a quarrel between the bishop and the dean of the episcopal see of Elvas. In spite of being forbidden (or maybe because it was), this text had a large manuscript circulation and was widely read. In 1776, António Dinis went to Rio de Janeiro to serve as *Desembargador* or judge at Rio's main court (*Tribunal da Relação*). The contact with Brazilian reality inspired an important *corpus* of poems celebrating South American landscape or attacking the devastation caused by mining in certain areas. He was to be posted to Oporto in 1787, but in 1791 he was sent back to Brazil in order to chair a group of twelve judges designated to the trial of those who had allegedly participated in the *Inconfidência Mineira* conspiracy. He died in Rio in 1799.

Authors in our third group were born in Brazil and were active both in Portugal and in Brazil: José Basílio da Gama (1741–1795), Inácio José de Alvarenga Peixoto (1744–1793), Manuel Inácio da Silva Alvarenga (1749–1814), and Domingos Caldas Barbosa (1738–1800). José Basílio da Gama was born in Brazil and his father was an army officer. He started studying at the Jesuits college in 1757, but in 1759, when the Jesuits were expelled from Portuguese domains, the college was closed and he decided to go to Rome, where he became a member of the *Arcadia di Roma*. In 1765 he returned to Portugal, and soon afterwards returned to Brazil. In 1768, José Basílio traveled to Portugal with the intention of studying in Coimbra University. He was arrested on arrival under the suspicion of "Jesuitism", but managed to obtain the pardon of the Marquis de Pombal. From that

moment on, José Basílio put his pen at the service of Pombal's policies, writing poems in praise of his achievements. In 1771, he published the epic poem *Uruguay* which, although celebrating the colonial policies of Pombal, has been considered as one of the founding texts of Brazilian literature. After the death of Pombal, Basílio da Gama continued to write, and died in 1795.

Manuel Inácio da Silva Alvarenga was born in Vila Rica. His father was a *mulato*, probably a landowner. In the early 1770s, after studying in Rio de Janeiro, he travelled to Coimbra to study law. During his stay in this town, he befriended other Brazilian-born students who would later become acclaimed poets, like Alvarenga Peixoto and José Basílio da Gama. During those years he wrote a mock-heroic poem called *O Desertor das Letras*, satirising the university reforms of 1772. Contemporary sources show that, after graduating, he integrated the Lisbon networks of intellectuals and participated as a poet in public festivities like the inauguration of the statue of king D. José in 1775. He returned to Brazil around 1776 or 1777, and in 1782 was appointed Teacher of Rhetoric by the vice-roy Luís de Vasconcelos e Sousa. He became a member of the *Sociedade Literária do Rio de Janeiro* (Literary Society in Rio de Janeiro) in 1786 and published *Glaura: Poemas eróticos* in 1799. He died in Rio de Janeiro in 1814.

Inácio José de Alvarenga Peixoto was born in Rio de Janeiro but the place where he received his first education remains unknown. In 1760, his name can be found in the records of the University of Coimbra, where he completed his doctorate in law 1767. He started his career as a magistrate in 1768 and was sent to Sintra. The proximity to Lisbon allowed him to establish intellectual relationships in the capital, namely with the circle meeting at the salon of Joana Isabel Forjaz de Lencastre (1745- after 1777). His integration into the clientele networks supporting Pombal is confirmed by the fact that he participated in the poetical homage paid to Pombal at the house of Morgado de Oliveira in 1774 (along with José Basílio da Gama, among others) as well as in the celebrations of the inauguration of the statue of D. José in 1775. In the same year, he was appointed judge in Minas Gerais and went back to Brazil. Five years later, in 1780, Alvarenga Peixoto abandoned his career as a magistrate in order to concentrate on managing his properties. He was appointed colonel of a cavalry regiment in 1785 and participated in the Rio Verde campaign. Involved in the *Inconfidência Mineira* conspiracy, Alvarenga Peixoto was imprisoned in 1789 and deported to Angola. He died in 1792 in the Ambaca prison.

Of all the poets mentioned, Domingos Caldas Barbosa is probably the one most famous during his lifetime. Born in Rio de Janeiro in 1740, he was the son of a civil servant recently arrived from Angola and of a freed African slave. After having served in the army, in the colony of Sacramento, Caldas Barbosa went to Coimbra with the intention of studying law. He enrolled in the University in 1763, but never graduated, possibly because of the death of his father in 1764. Subsequently, he seems to have managed to survive thanks to his talents as singer of *modinhas* he played on the guitar, and of his virtuosity as a poetry improviser. These talents opened him the doors of the homes of the mercantile bourgeoisie and aristocracy. His participation in the poetry contests organised to celebrate the statue of D. José in 1775 shows that, by that time, he was already part of Lisbon literary life, and at least from 1777 onwards he introduces himself as a member of the *Arcadia di Roma*. He became *Presbítero secular* in 1780, and in 1788 Queen D. Maria granted him an ecclesiastical benefice. Protected by the Count of Pombeiro (the Minister of Justice), who took him to live in his house, Caldas Barbosa could dedicate himself to poetry until the end of his life. He was a founding member of the literary society Academia de Belas Letras, set up in 1790, and acknowledged as a highly versatile poet. He died in Lisbon in 1800.¹⁵

The trajectories briefly described above share some common features: all of these authors circulated and disseminated their output in Portugal and in Brazil, some of them also in Italy,¹⁶ and one produced and disseminated his works also in Portuguese Africa.¹⁷ Without exception, these authors were trained in Catholic colleges (Jesuit or Oratorian) and, regardless of the where they were born, all studied at the University of Coimbra.

These biographies allow for further conclusions about the social and cultural conditions necessary to become a successful male author in this period. Clearly, such men belonged to a specific echelon of society that included the offspring of functionaries of the imperial administration (like magistrates or army officers) or of owners of latifundia and/or gold mines in Brazil. Upon entering university, these men chose between two possibilities: a career in the church or in public administration. Both choices implied frequent relocation and thus displacement across the

¹⁵ For a recent biography of Domingos Caldas Barbosa see José Ramos Tinhorão, *Domingos Caldas Barbosa: o poeta da viola e da modinha e do lundu (1740–1800)* (São Paulo: Caminho, 2004).

¹⁶ Cláudio Manuel da Costa, Basílio da Gama, Santa Rita Durão, and Domingos Caldas Barbosa.

¹⁷ Tomás António Gonzaga.

imperial geographical space. Examining their life stories after they left university can also illuminate the kind of opportunities open to educated men in this society. The intellectuals mentioned had access to four different careers: entering public administration, becoming magistrates, serving in the ecclesiastical hierarchy or achieving the protection of a powerful politician (as happened with José Basílio da Gama and Domingos Caldas Barbosa). These conclusions should alert us to the fact that we are dealing with a very specific type of intellectual, for whom going to University meant having access to the rare paths of upward social mobility existing in the Portuguese colonial empire before 1822.¹⁸

It would be worth thinking, therefore, about the reality of political independence, autonomy, or even survival outside the established social order in a society where public offices and ecclesiastical benefices could be donated, inherited, bought, and taken away arbitrarily. These authors, so often accused of acts of subservience committed in their published works, depended completely upon the protection of the crown and its representatives, either ministers and church dignitaries or influential members of the aristocracy. Taking this into account, the trajectories of António Dinis da Cruz e Silva and of Domingos Caldas Barbosa and their appropriation by Portuguese and Brazilian literary historians can be especially revealing.

Of all the authors mentioned above, António Dinis da Cruz e Silva was the one who wrote the largest number of texts referring to Brazilian landscape. The fauna and flora of Brazil are very much present in his sonnets as well as in his poems in *redondilha* (a short verse of 5 or 7 metrical feet). The geography of this American colony inspired him to write twelve Metamorphoses where he adapts the Ovidian model to the tropical landscape.¹⁹ However, neither the presence of native elements in his texts, nor the fact that he has lived in Brazil for long periods (between 1776 and 1787 and between 1791 and 1799, which amounts to 18 years) was enough to convince the majority of Brazilian literary historians to include him in the canon. Why?

¹⁸ For more information about the career of Portuguese and Brazilian born magistrates see José Subtil, *O Desembargo do Paço (1750–1833)* (Lisbon: Universidade Autónoma, 1996); and “Os Desembargadores em Portugal (1640–1820)”, *Optima pars. Elites ibero-americanas do Antigo Regime*, edited by Nuno Monteiro, Pedro Cardim, and Mafalda Soares da Cunha (Lisbon: ICS, 2005), 253–75.

¹⁹ António Dinis da Cruz e Silva, *Obras de António Dinis da Cruz e Silva*, new edition by Maria Luísa Malaquias Urbano, vol.2 (Lisbon: Edições Colibri, 2003), 282–326.

There are at least two ways of answering this question. On the one hand, António Dinis was one of the founding-members and the writer of the constitution of the *Arcadia Lusitana*, a Lisbon-based literary society created in 1756. In the eyes of (Brazilian) posterity, this fact has associated him in a very strong way with Lisbon intellectual circles of the 1770s. This association could have prevented his incorporation into Brazilian literature at the time of independence. On the other hand, there is a detail in his biography which seems to have played an even stronger role in this exclusion. After the independence of Brazil, when the conspiracy of *Inconfidência Mineira* was interpreted as an announcement of Brazilian nationalism, Cruz e Silva had been defending the interests of the Portuguese Crown: he had been one of the judges who condemned the *Inconfidentes* and thus, in retrospect, a “traitor” to the young nation even before it was born.

The case of Domingos Caldas Barbosa, who left Brazil at a very young age and lived most of his life in Portugal, circulating in Portuguese high society thanks to the fact that he had the protection of the Count of Pombeiro is almost the opposite. The nativist allusions to Brazil in his works are sporadic, almost exclusively concentrated in some of the lyrics he sung in his *modinhas*, a musical genre he introduced in Portugal and made him famous. But Caldas Barbosa’s work is not confined to *modinhas* lyrics. He was also a member of the *Arcadia di Roma*, and his interest in the dissemination of classical aesthetic models and codes is evident in the two remarkable poetic epistles in verse-form (*Cartas de Lerenó a Arminda*) and his numerous virtuoso poems using all the poetical forms and genres in vogue at the time.²⁰ In spite of the narrow place Brazil occupies in his work, he is regularly excluded from the Portuguese Literary History manuals.

How can we explain this? At first sight, the exceptional fame he enjoyed as a musician seems to have blinded literary historians’ to his written work. But the way he is discussed on both sides of the Atlantic, especially the constant evocation of his *mulato* identity points into another direction. In the nineteenth century, when national literary histories were

²⁰ Domingos Caldas Barbosa, “Carta de Lerenó a Arminda, em que se dão as necessárias regras dos versos de Arte Menor, ensinando a conhecer, o que sejam consoantes, e toantes; e o que são palavras agudas, graves, e esdrúxulas &c”.; and “Carta segunda a Arminda, em que se trata da composição do verso grande, ou de arte maior a que vulgarmente chamamos heróico. Por Lerenó Selinuntino da Arcádia de Roma, alias D.C.B”, *Almanak das Musas* (Lisbon: Filipe José de França, 1793), Parte Segunda, XLVII–LXX and LXXI–LXXXVII.

used as symbolic discourses mirroring nationality, the fact that he was not white excluded him from a Portuguese literary canon unable and unwilling to assimilate him into a Portuguese national literary discourse and identify him as yet another incarnation of a Portuguese “national” author.

The cases of these and other authors in Luso-Brazilian literary and cultural history highlight an ongoing preoccupation with political borders as well as with the construction of national literatures. Such anxieties have distorted the possibilities of understanding the way individuals, texts, and ideas circulated between Portugal and Brazil during the old regime. Such circulation was particularly intense between 1700 and 1822 (or 1825, the year Portugal and England accepted Brazilian independence). By focusing on laying claim to authors from a nationalist standpoint rooted in Romantic notions of originality and culture, historiography has failed to appreciate the Atlantic flavor of the lives and works of culturally and intellectually active individuals during that period. Those individuals lived in a world in which Portugal and Brazil were not only a political unit, but also a space of common cultural references that was characterised by shared educational models, academic training, readings, and even participation in the same social circles in which authors wrote for the same clientele networks and patrons.

Moreover, it is equally important to highlight that, between the sixteenth century and the first decades of the nineteenth century, the ocean that separates Portugal from Brazil in fact connected people culturally and intellectually. The travels of people, texts, and ideas from Brazil to Europe and back again made possible the constitution of a common cultural space, contiguous to the rest of Europe, and in permanent dialogue with the Americas. For Europeans, this common space opened up the possibility of looking at Brazil as an alternative political location. This idea is recurrent in the thought of a number of Portuguese thinkers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries who felt disgusted with the way European politics evolved, and materialised in 1808, with the transfer of the Portuguese court to Brazil.²¹

²¹ The most influential proponents of this solution were António Vieira (1608–1697), D. Luís da Cunha (1662–1749) and D. Rodrigo de Sousa Coutinho (1755–1812).