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# THE METAMORPHOSIS OF THE GIANT NICTEROY IN BRAZILIAN CONSERVATISM SINCE 1822

[…] *rudisindigestaque moles*
*necquicquam nisi pondusinerscongestaqueeodem*
*non bene iunctarumdiscordiasemina rerum.*
*nullusadhucmundopraebebat lumina Titan* (Ov. *Met.* 7-10)

## 1. Introduction

In the ongoing political clash between progressive and conservative powers in so-called Western Civilization, the elites seek to substantiate their cultural platform in the past, and this "past" generally refers to ancient Greece and Rome[1]. However, this is hardly a novel phenomenon. "There is nothing new under the sun" when we see politicians or influential men using the Classics to legitimate their point of view. I could mention two brief examples. In 2013, while Mayor of London, Boris Johnson recited impromptu a couple of lines from the Iliad in ancient Greek (with several slip-ups) during a TV interview as an example of a personal problem-solving routine[2]. It is reported that Steve Bannon, a former Trump White House strategist, (cleverly) used "Sparta" as his computer password[3].

About two hundred years ago, there was conflict in colonial Brazil about its political and economic independence from Portugal, which included a clash between progressive and conservative ideals[4]. Then, too, there was no shortage of classical quotations. In 1823, when José Bonifácio de Andrada e Silva, who was later known as the Patriarch of Independence, commented on the political scenario after his exile, he

[1] P. DuBois, *Trojan Horses: Saving the Classics from Conservatives*, New York 2001, p. 97.
[2] https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-07-25/boris-johnson-recites-extracts-of-the-iliad-in/11338290?nw=0 [access: 02.05.2020]. A case of "window-dressing", in Bloxham's words, see J. Bloxham, *Ancient Greece and American Conservatism: Classical Influence on the Modern Right*, London/New York 2018, p. 140.
[3] https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2017/06/21/why-the-white-house-is-reading-greek-history-215287 [access: 02.05.2020].
[4] J.P.G. Pimenta, *A independência do Brasil como uma revolução: história e atualidade de um tema clássico*, "História da Historiografia" 3, Mariana 2009, pp. 3-82.

unhelpfully quoted this passage from the *Aeneid* (II, 521-2): *Non talia auxilio, nec defensoribus istis / Tempus eget* (*Time requires other aid and other defenders than these*[5]).

These quotations are not lacking in irony since, in the end, Johnson with his Homeric problem-solving, Bannon with his Spartan protection, and José Bonifácio with his Virgilian presumption were all looking for *auxilium temporis*. They resorted to ancient tradition to help them make decisions, ground their attitudes, and forge a certain image of themselves.

In 1821 and 1822, Pedro I, then Prince Regent of Brazil, was facing a crisis over independence vs. colonialism and republicanism vs. monarchism, which culminated in the proclamation of independence on September 7, 1822. Two main groups worked towards independence in this conflict. On the one hand, there was José Bonifácio's Portuguese Party (later, the Restoration Party), which defended more conservative views (such as an absolutist monarchy). On the other, politicians such as Gonçalves Ledo formed a group of liberals and intellectuals with more progressive (even republican) ideals[6].

During this period of political instability, Januário da Cunha Barbosa (1780-1846) composed and published the poem *Nicteroy: Metamorphose do Rio de Janeiro.* Barbosa was a professor of Moral Philosophy appointed sacred orator of the Imperial Chapel of Rio de Janeiro by Dom João VI, and co-founder (with Gonçalves Ledo) of a biweekly pro-independence periodical[7], the *Revérbero Constitucional Fluminense*. His poem consists of:

> 477 blank verses [decasyllables]. Its *sui generis* feature defies classification. It could be described as an Indianist epic poem, typical of the pre-romantic period; however, it is based on the theme of Ovidian metamorphosis, which is commonplace in Lusophone lyric poetry. […] [The poem *Nicteroy* tells] the story of a [colossal] Brazilian Indian who actually is the son of a giant from Greek mythology [Mimas], who, to avenge his father's death, decides to rise up against the Olympian gods; after having been killed by Jupiter, his body is metamorphosed into Guanabara Bay [whose geographical profile includes the famous Sugar Loaf mountain] (my translation)[8].

Barbosa's poem departs from the classical *topos* of metamorphosis (using Ovid as a model) and is based on an ancient mythical background (especially, but not only, Claudianus's *Gigantomachia*). At the end of the poem, we find a prophecy made by

[5] J.B. de Andrada e Silva, *Apontamentos[sobre política] (escritos após 1822)*, http://www.obrabonifacio.com.br/principais_obras [access: 02.05.2020].

[6] *Vide* L. Gomes, *1822*, São Paulo 2010; C.G. Mota ed., *1822: Dimensões,* São Paulo 1972; and E.V. da Costa, *Political Emancipation of Brazil*, [in:] *From Colony to Nation: Essays on the Independence of Brazil*, ed. A.J.R. Russell-Wood, Baltimore 1975.

[7] Regarding the proliferation of journals born at that time, see: L.M.B.P. Neves, *A "guerra de penas": os impressos políticos e a independência do Brasil*, "Tempo" 8, v. 4, Niterói 1999 , pp. 41-65.

[8] B.B. Alvarez, *Por uma Edição Crítica e um estudo do Poema Nicteroy, de Januário da Cunha Barbosa*, "Confluências" 51, Rio de Janeiro 2016, p. 94.

a sea-god about Brazil's glorious future. This prophecy overviews the achievements of Brazilian heroes (governors and viceroys) from the discovery of Brazil by Pedro Cabral in 1500 until the birth of Dona Maria da Glória, first daughter of Pedro I, on April 4, 1819, including the elevation of Brazil to a Kingdom in 1815. Importantly, the prognosis of Portuguese-Brazilian fame occupies almost half of the poem (184 of the 477 lines).

In this paper, I aim to discuss some initial ideas about the reception of the classical tradition in this poem. I want to examine how Barbosa's classical models reflect a moral and political phenomenon in Brazil in the early 19th century. I will also seek to understand how classical *topoi* offered by ancient and contemporary authors helped him reframe some images and how this can be connected to the conservative thought of the intellectuals and social elite in the early 19th century.

I will use classical reception studies as a methodology to describe processes of artistic-cultural reception, not merely as a mechanical imitation of models, but as an active and productive process of adjusting these models to suit the creative needs of the time[9]. As a field of research, classical reception studies allow the analysis of works influenced by classical models, clarifying the reframing process of the sources.

According to Huidobro-Salazar[10], in the context of South-American literature at the beginning of the 19th century, the reception of the classical tradition can be understood as a historical process and an intellectual movement that reformulated Greco-Roman ideological models into local ideologies and republican projects. Regarding the classical influence on republican ideals in Chile, Huidobro-Salazar claims that "the reception of the classical tradition corresponds to a political and moral phenomenon". Furthermore, she stated that:

> As with the majority of the American countries, […] the use of antiquity as a model constituted a relevant epiphenomenon derived from educational trends and practices of reading that were deeply established in late eighteenth-century culture. […] The ideals that arose from an archetypical image of Greco-Roman culture served the modern nations of Spanish America by creating identities and images of free peoples[11].

Thus, I intend to determine whether the same occurred in Brazilian cultural reception of the classics at that political moment. Since only a single image from the poem *Nicteroy* will be analyzed here, that of the metamorphosed (Greek Brazilian) giant, any statements about this complex question should be considered only initial and exploratory. The image of the giant in Brazilian literature and its cultural envi-

[9] L. Hardwick, *Reception Studies. Greece & Rome: New Surveys in the Classics* (33), Oxford 2003, p. 9.

[10] M.G.H. Huidobro Salazar, *Classical tradition and republican ideals for the independence of Chile,* "Classical Receptions Journal" 10 (1), Oxford 2018, p. 36.

[11] C. Bocchetti 2010, p. 7, *apud* M.G.H. Huidobro Salazar, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

ronment in the early 19th century and beyond will be explored. I will also speculate about some connections between Brazilian conservatism, the image of Brazil as a giant, and a constructed notion of its natural greatness. The analysis will begin at the start of the 19th century and continue until the 2013 protests in Brazil, also known as "2013 June Journeys".

I will argue that there is nothing in Greek myths about giants that is intrinsically related to conservative thought nor do they particularly lend themselves to allegories of national grandeur. In the case of Brazilian literature and its social and political environment, this association is related to an accident of geography and culture. Moreover, I contend that the idea of Brazil as a giant originates from a conservative and populist collective imaginarium, tending to erase heterogeneity and inequality and prescribing a false notion of concreteness and reality.

## 2. Reception studies and methodology

What follows here is theoretical background about the apparatus of classical reception studies. The interpretative framework used herein does not propose a simple comparison of a text with its "classic model". Rather, analysis is based on the premise that there is no single ancient source but, rather, a long "chain of receptions" from various sources in each time[12]. As a link in this chain, a text, in its contemporary historicity, either incorporates hegemonic interpretations or does not, responding creatively within the tradition from which it derives. Nikoloutsos & Gonçalves[13] explain this idea very well:

> This hermeneutic model that espouses as its core element an emphasis on historicism has an additional advantage. A contextualized analysis of a modern rewriting of an ancient text helps cast light on what classics means to different authors at different spaces, temporal as well as geographical. Greco-Roman literature is celebrated as the foundation of the western canon, but the meaning of the texts we have inherited from these two ancient civilizations is neither fixed nor universal.

Reception studies provide a complex analysis of Greco-Roman texts, allowing us to consider this material not only as the legacy of what is called Western literature,

[12] H.R. Jauss, *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, Minneapolis, 1982; P.L. Schmidt, *Reception Theory and Classical Scholarship: A Plea for Convergence*, [in:] *Hypatia: Essays in Classics, Comparative Literature, and Philosophy Presented to Hazel E. Barnes on her Seventieth Birthday,* eds. W.M. Calder III, U.K. Goldsmith, P.B. Kenevan (eds.), Boulder 1985, p. 66-77; C. Martindale, *Redeeming the Text: Latin Poetry and the Hermeneutics of Reception*, Cambridge 1993, p. 7; C. Martindale, *Reception*, [in:] C.W. Kallendorf, *A Companion to the Classical Tradition*, Malden 2007, p. 300.

[13] K. Nikoloutsos & R.T. Gonçalves, *Classical Tradition in Brazil: Translation, Rewriting, and Reception,* "Caletroscópio" 6 (1), Mariana 2018, p. 14.

but as culturally active and present. As Hardwick points out, "[t]he vocabulary of reception studies has moved on from notions of 'legacy' to include also the values and practices of the present and future creativity of classical culture"[14].

As an emerging research area, classical reception studies represent a shift in focus regarding comparative and interpretative analysis of works influenced by classical models. It removes the quest for the "original meaning" and investigates how a text modernizes the past in its historical present, as well as the future consequences of its creative choices.

The field of classical reception studies is derived from reception theory, "alongside deconstruction, post-structuralism, and post-modernism"[15]. According to reception theory, "literary texts did not contain essential meanings which were simply waiting to be discovered"[16]. This idea opens new possibilities for readers to construct their own interpretations in light of the interpretations of earlier readers, which creates a "chain of relations" and meanings.

The idea of chains of relationships and receptions is quite productive in the present context. I intend to show how ancient and contemporary texts helped Barbosa substantiate certain ideals. Abandoning concepts such as the author's intentionality allows analysis of some relations and effects produced by the text itself. In this paper, I want to observe how the manipulation of classical material in Barbosa's poem can be related to conservative ideals that were shared among social elites in the author's time.

## 3. The poem: *Nicteroy*

*Nicteroy: Metamorphose do Rio de Janeiro* is a long poem of 477 lines of blank verse, or rather, decasyllable verse in Lusophone poetry. According to the surviving manuscript, the poem was written in 1820, although it was published by R. Greenlaw in London during Barbosa's exile in 1822[17]. Its neoclassical style glorifies the elevation of colonial Brazil to a Kingdom in union with Portugal (known as the United Kingdom of Portugal, Brazil and the Algarves), which occurred in 1815.

The book that features the poem has never been re-published in Brazil, although the full poem was reprinted in Varnhagen's anthology of Brazilian literature in 1850[18],

[14] L. Hardwick, *Refiguring Classical Texts: Aspects of the Postcolonial Condition*, [in:] *Classics and Colonialism,* ed. B. Goff, London 2005, p. 112.

[15] J. Bloxham, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

[16] *Ibidem*, p. 2.

[17] J. da C. Barbosa. *Nicteroy, ou Metamorphose do Rio de Janeiro* (manuscript), Biblioteca Nacional, Manuscrito 12, 1, 001, Rio de Janeiro 1820.

[18] I. da Silva, *Dicionário Bibliográfico Brasileiro*, Lisboa 1859, p. 254.

*Florilegio da Poezia Brazileira*[19]. Since then, it has been read mostly from this anthology, although is relatively unknown, even by specialists and scholars[20].

Critical opinions are divided regarding the poem's quality. Blixén, for example, writes: "[Barbosa] is known for his allegorical poem *Nicteroy*, so beautiful in its versification and language, as well as for his inventive talent"[21] (my translation). Other favorable reports about the poem appear in the speeches of men of letters towards the end of the 19th century. On the other hand, Antonio Candido, an important Brazilian literary critic during the second half of the 20th century, is less pleased with the results:

> […] in an effort simultaneously ridiculous and moving, [the poem] invokes nymphs, monsters, and demigods to form the Guanabara Bay and its mountains, framing, in an attempted Cyclopean style, a vision of local history expressed through Glauco, a marine deity with the gift of prophecy. Never before in Brazil has one seen such a waste of mythology, […][22] (my translation).

However, Januário da Cunha Barbosa was recognized for his great rhetorical skills by his contemporaries. Barão de Ramiz recalled the following about his speeches:

> […] His eloquence was persuasive without effort, charming without affectation, flexible and passionate at times, like that of Massilon; his pictures were drawn with art, his images were full of life and convenience, his similes revealed the lesson of the great masters and the refined taste of the speaker; his brush often drew elegant oratory portraits, which clearly show how much his genius was nourished by the fruitful lessons of the great masters[23] (my translation).

Moreover, he was an intellectual who discussed the issue of indigenous colonization. As a journalist, he defended Brazil's independence as a constitutional monarchy, notably in 1821-1822 in his periodical *Revérbero Constitucional Fluminense*, which "had an essentially political nature and served as a spokesman for one of the main political currents of the period, defending a more radical liberalism"[24].

After that period, he gained further notoriety as a founding member and permanent secretary of the Brazilian Historical and Geographic Institute (IHGB), where he encouraged historiographical research and the creation of a national historiogra-

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[19] F.A. Varnhagen, *Florilegio da Poezia Brazileira: ou Colecção das Mais Notáveis Composições dos Poetas Brazileiros Falecidos, Contendo as Biographias de Muitos Delles*, Tomo II, Lisboa 1850, pp. 667-82.

[20] Other mentions to the poem: in 1875, in a letter published in the newspaper *O Globo*, June 6; and, in 1844, in the foreword of *Mosaico Poético: Poesias Brasileiras Antigas e Modernas, Raras e Inéditas*, eds. E. Adêt; J.N. de S. Silva, Rio de Janeiro 1844. Two excerpts (ll. 86-97, 102-107) appear [in:] A.F. de Souza, *A Bahia do Rio de Janeiro: sua historia e descripção de suas riquezas*, Rio de Janeiro 1882, p. 313.

[21] S. Blixén, *Estudio compendiado de la literatura contemporánea,* "Anales de la Universidad", ano III, tomo V, Montevideo 1894, p. 746.

[22] A. Candido, *Formação da literatura brasileira: momentos decisivos*, Rio de Janeiro 2006 [1957], p. 283. Bosi (A. Bosi, *História concisa da literatura brasileira,* São Paulo 1978) and Pinassi (M.O. Pinassi, *Três devotos, uma fé, nenhum milagre: um estudo da Revista Niterói*, PhD Dissertation, Campinas 1996) also did not view Barborsa's poem favorably.

[23] L.M.B.P. Neves, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

[24] https://ihgb.org.br/perfil/userprofile/januariodacbarbosa.html [access: 02.05.2020].

phy. As a politician, he was a deputy in the first Legislative Assembly (1826-1829) of Brazil as an independent nation. In literature, he went on to edit the first anthology of Brazilian poetry, the *Parnazo Brazileiro* (1829-1832), years before Varhnagen's work (1850). Apart from *Nicteroy*, he published only a single political comedy *A Rusga da Praia Grande ou o Quixotismo do General das Massas* (*The Misunderstanding at Praia Grande or the Quixotism of the General of the Masses*, 1834) and a mock-heroic poem *Os Garimpeiros* (*The Gold Miners*, 1837), both anonymously.

It should be pointed out that Barbosa was arrested and sent to exile after an inquest by José Bonifácio at the end of 1822[25]. After passing through Paris, he settled in London, where he published his poem (dated 1822). Less than one year later, Barbosa was acquitted and returned to Brazil[26].

## 4. The story of *Nicteroy*

The author describes the subject matter[27]of *Nicteroy* in the epitome of his book. In Greek mythology, the giant Mimas had a son with Atlantis. Mimas was killed by Mars, the god of war, in the so-called *Gigantomachia*, and Atlantis, fearing for the child's safety, asked Neptune, the god of the seas, for help. Moved by her plea, Neptune hid the newborn in an unknown land that later come to be known as Brazil.

This son of Mimas and Atlantis, *Nicteroy*, is the hero of the poem. Being described as a Brazilian indigenous giant, he decided, after growing up, to avenge his father's death. To do so, he gathered huge stones to throw at the gods. However, ingenuously, he did not conceal his intentions from them, and Jupiter unleashed a lightning bolt, ending the young giant's life. His body fell from the hills and collapsed in the ocean at the foot of the mountain, still holding in his right hand a huge rock that he intended to throw at Mars.

Neptune, in response to Altantis' plea, transformed his body into Guanabara Bay (formerly Nicteroy Bay) and the rock in his hand became Sugar Loaf Mountain. Glauco, a marine deity with premonitory gifts, then appeared to foretell the glory of Brazil, recounting its history from its discovery by Pedro Álvares Cabral in 1500 until the birth of Princess Dona Maria da Glória in 1819. In the end, Atlantis is recognized as a marine goddess and her body becomes the Atlantic Ocean.

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[25] Barbosa was imprisoned briefly at the Santa Cruz Fortress in Niterói; see J. Pereira Neto, *A memória biográfica de Januário da Cunha Barbosa: uma trajetória política na corte Imperial (1821-1846)*, MScThesis, Assis 2014, p. 5. See also Y. de A. Martins, *Biografia e história nos escritos de Januário da Cunha Barbosa (1780-1846)*, MScThesis, Rio de Janeiro 2015, p. 51.

[26] Cf. J. Pereira Neto, *op. cit.*, pp. 127-130.

[27] See B.B. Alvarez, *op. cit.*, p. 96.

Below I present my English translation of the first 25 lines of the poem in free verse[28]:

In maternal arms, newborn,
Lay Nicteroy, descended from Saturn, when
His father Mimas, an enormous giant,
Who, at the skies, with proud hands hurled
Flaming Lemnos ripped
From the seas in furor of impious war,
The waters were tinted with blood, which
From his brain sprinkled Ossa, Olympus and Othrys,
Wounded by the iron of Mars,
Who avenged Jupiter with bitter death.

Atlantis, then lamenting, to her bosom
Pressed the child, pallid and fearing
Tripartiterays advancing lit toward her.
But the king of the silvery lake heard her cry,
And the tender infant sheltered compassionately.
In the dread shock which from the Phlegraean Fields
Unsettled the world upon its poles,
Arose new lands and seas,
Spanning kingdoms, islands, capes, and woods.
Neptune spied this rich and vast domain,
At the sepulcher of sun just upraised,
Still moist and fresh, ignored, unknown
By men and the world; here he hid
The illustrious strain of Mimas wrecked,
Whose just paternal cause inherited.

[Nos braços maternais, nascido apenas, / Jazia Niterói, satúrnea prole, / Quando Mimas seu pai, gigante enorme, / Que ao céu com mão soberba arremessara / A flamígera Lemnos, arrancada / Dos mares no furor de guerra ímpia, / Tingiu de sangue as águas, salpicando / De seu cérebro o Ossa, o Olimpo e o Otris, / Ferido pelo ferro, com que Marte / Vingou de Jove a injúria em morte acerba. // Lamentando-se, Atlântida apertava / Ao peito o filho, pálida, temendo / Trissulcos raios que inda acesos via. / Ouviu seu pranto o rei do argênteo lago, / E o tenro infante, compassivo, acolhe. / No choque horrível que, dos Flegros Campos, / O mundo, sobre os polos, abalara / Surgiram novas terras, novos mares, / Cobriram reinos, ilhas, cabos, brenhas. / Netuno aponta a plaga rica e vasta, / Do sepulcro do sol, erguida há pouco, / Inda mádida e nova, inda ignorada / Dos homens e do mundo; aqui se abriga / A estirpe ilustre, em Mimas profligada, / Que o justo e paternal intento herdara.]

Due to the poem's length, it cannot be presented here in its entirety. However, for the purposes of the current analysis, the summary above and detailed description of its sources below should suffice[29].

[28] J. da C. Barbosa, *Nicteroy: Metamorphose do Rio de Janeiro,* Londres 1822, p. 5.

[29] The complete poem, in Portuguese, can be read at http://www.professores.uff.br/beethoven/poema-nicteroy/ [access: 20.05.2020].

## 5. *Imitatio* and sources

To borrow a phrase from Jean-Louis Guez de Balzac, a French author of the 17th century, the poem could be described as "a heap of ill-chosen erudition, the luggage of antiquity"[30]. Even considering that it was written before 1840, when Romanticism and its notion of originality took root in Brazilian literature, it is difficult to find any great artistic merit in its composition. Almost nothing in the poem is innovative (even among the literary canon of the time) or ambitiously emulative[31].

The main idea of the poem, the corpse of a dead giant transforming in to a mountain, derives directly from Claudianus's *Gigantomachia*, and the author himself remarks upon this connection. There is nothing extraneous here, since all neoclassical *setecentista* literature is highly allusive and imitative of classical models. Barbosa's Greek giantis an indigenous Brazilian with tanned skin and long black hair: a skilled archer living in a tropical forest. However, the author is not forthcoming about one aspect of his imitation (even considering neoclassical canon). This image of an indigenous giant as a metamorphosed mountain had already been used in at least two Brazilian poems: *Sonho* (*c.* 1790) by Inácio José de Alvarenga Peixoto and *A Assumpção* (1819) by Frei Francisco de São Carlos. Thus, besides classical sources, Barbosa also emulated more recent Brazilian models of classical *topoi*[32].

Peixoto died in exile in 1792, after being arrested and condemned for participating in the Minas Gerais Conspiracy (1789). As a result, the poem remained unpublished for some time. However, it is clear that Barbosa was well aware of the poem's existence prior to composing *Nicteroy* (which dates back to 1820 and was published in 1822) and highly regarded it, since it is the initial poem in his 1829 anthology of Brazilian literature (the poem's first appearance in a publication).

Moreover, many ideas, images, symbolic descriptions, comparisons, and even certain figures of speech in *Nicteroy* have an impressive degree of intertextuality with *Sonho* and other poems by Peixoto. The characters and geography also clearly allude to contemporary Brazilian poetry and classical texts. In the 34 pages of end notes, Barbosa himself pointed out many of these connections, although some references are more latent and indirect. Table 1 (below) clarifies these sources, some from Barbosa's notes (not always in a precise way) and others that I have identified[33]:

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[30] C. Macfarquhar & G. Gleig, *Erudition*, [in:] *Encyclopædia Britannica*, vol. 6, Edinburgh 1797, p. 721.

[31] Nevertheless, some lines are rhythmically well crafted, such as ll. 48-52, in beautiful Sapphic decasyllable.

[32] See C.C.E. de Souza, 2017, p. 395, n. 572, on the poem and its circulation.

[33] Although I cannot here explain each of these references, this will be done in a forthcoming paper by myself and Gessylene Lemos Brasil.

**Table 1.** References in Januário da Cunha Barbosa's poem *Nicteroy*

| Lines | Content | *Imitatio*: references, allusions and quotes[34] |
|---|---|---|
| 1-10 | Birth of Nicteroy, son of the giant Mimas; setting of the mythical time | Claud. *Gig*. 1-5 |
| | Mimas; account of his death | Sid. Apoll. 15.24-7; Claud. *Gig*. 84-8; Sid. Apoll. 9.86-8; Alv. Peix. *Ode* 2.15-6 |
| 11-25 | Cry of Atlantis, mother of Nicteroy | Plat. *Tim*. 24e-25a, *Crit*. 108e, 114a; Diod. Sic. 3.54 |
| | Neptune intercedes; mythical geography | Luc. 4.596-7; Prop. 3.9.45-6; Claud. *Gig*. 60-65 |
| | Nicteroy is sheltered in Brazil | Alv. Peix. *Sonho* 1-6; *Ode* 1.91-93 |
| 26-59 | Description of Nicteroy as an indigenous giant | Alv. Peix. *Sonho* 7-26 |
| | Comparison with Hercules | Alv. Peix. *Ep*. 11.1-6 |
| 60-80 | Nicteroy's changes of the geography of Brazil | Alv. Peix. *Ep*. 10.5-6; *Ode* 1.23-24 |
| | His plot for revenge | |
| 81-109 | Preparation for vengeance | Data from Natural History Dictionaries |
| | Further geographical changes | Fr. Franc. *Ass*. 6.409 et seq. |
| | Description of monstrous fauna | |
| 110-121 | The pride of Nicteroy before his attack | |
| 122-157 | Nicteroy's combat with the skies | Fr. Franc. *Ass*. 6.590 |
| | Death of Nicteroy | Claud. *Gig*. 117-9 |
| 158-193 | Cry of Atlantis | |
| | Remembrance of metamorphoses of other giants | Vir. *Aen*. 3.578-80; 9.715-6; 6.582-4; Claud. *Pros*. 1.153-5; Sid. Apoll. 15.20-2; Luc. 5.99-101, 6.92 |
| 194-208 | Neptune is asked to perpetuate Nicteroy's fame | |
| 209-229 | Neptune's speech | |
| 230-243 | A new dawn breaks and Neptune appears | Vir. *Aen*. 5.819-23, 825-6 |
| | Marine deities accompany him | |
| 244-281 | Death of Atlantis | |
| | Her body's metamorphosis into the ocean | |
| | Glauco appears | Ov. *Met*. 13.949-53; Vir. *Aen*. 10.211-2 |
| 282-308 | Glauco's prophecy begins | Auson. *Mos*. 276-82 |
| | Confirmation of Nicteroy's immortal fame | Alv. Peix. *Son*. 3.5-8 |
| 309-347 | Prophecy on the discovery of Brazil | |
| | Foundation of Rio de Janeiro | |
| 348-359 | Panegyric of the Portuguese people | Liv. 5.48 |

[34] A legend explaining these abbreviations is provided after the reference section.

| Lines | Content | ***Imitatio*: references, allusions and quotes**[34] |
|---|---|---|
| 360-379 | Prophecy of the heroes of the nation (Governors of Rio de Janeiro) | Henceforth, several commonplaces of eulogy poetry |
| 380-434 | Prediction of the Portuguese royal family's flight | |
| | João VI is compared to Jason | |
| | Elevation of Brazil to a Kingdom | |
| | Pedro I as Prince | |
| 435-440 | João VI is proclaimed King of Portugal | |
| 441-472 | Wedding of Pedro I with Leopoldina of Austria | |
| | Birth of Dona Maria da Glória | |
| 473-477 | Epilogue: Neptune raises the trident, Glaucois silenced and Atlantis is recognized as a goddess | |

Even if *Nicteroy* is no jewel of Brazilian poetry, the poem is important because it helps us understand how classical models were used by Januário da Cunha Barbosa, an influential intellectual during his time, and to what extent the use of these models corresponds to a "moral and political phenomenon", to use Huidobro Salazar's terminology.

## 6. The giant

### The giant as an ancient model

The Gigantomachy, according to Latacz, "is part of the myth of securing the well-ordered world (under Zeus) against repeated uprisings by uncivilized representatives of an elemental world condition"[35]. Since antiquity, the Gigantomachy represents the "ultimate decisive battle between utter violence and the norm" and became an artistic and a literary *topos.* Latacz also points out that the first literary mention of Gigantomachy is probably Hesiod, *Theog*. 954 [1. 419], followed by a clear reference in Xenophanes (21 B. 1,21 DK).

One of the most important sources regarding this story is Claudianus's *Gigantomachy*[36]. Claudianus (*c*. 370-*c*. 404 AD) was a 4th century AD court poet of Emperor Honorius who composed, in addition to the *Gigantomachia*, an unfinished epic, *De raptu Proserpinae* (The Abduction of Proserpina). He is also recognized for his panegyric texts.

[35] J. Latacz, *Gigantomachy*, [in:] *Brill's New Pauly, Antiquity volumes,* http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1574-9347_bnp_e424400 [access: 20.05.2020].

[36] In Portuguese, see R.R. Claudino, *A Gigantomaquia latina de Cláudio Claudiano: tradução e análise*, MSc Thesis, Recife 2016.

## The giant in brazilian literature

In early 19th century Brazil, the image of a giant was often associated with the topography of Rio de Janeiro in literature, the visual arts, cartographic iconography, and travel stories. I will present some figures showing that the geography of Rio de Janeiro, although it naturally helped perpetuate this image, has had little to do with the symbolic interpretation of the image over time.

In *Nicteroy*, the dead giant is described as follows (ll. 152-7):

> A horrible corpse lying supine,
> Strewn with earth and stones, he fills and occupies
> The long space from the ugly bosk to the sea.
> The great boulder he meant to throw
> Is clutched in his dead right hand; his gaze so wild
> And dreadful to the skies is still turned.
>
> [Horrendo corpo ressupino avista / Que entalam terra e pedras, que enche e ocupa / Do feio bosque ao mar extenso espaço. / Inda o grande penedo, que arrojava / Segura a destra morta; inda horroriza / Medonho e fero o aspecto aos céus voltado.]

Later Neptune heeds Atlantis' plea to maintain the fame of her son, the descendant of Saturn (ll. 223-5); his memory will be recorded in the geography of Rio de Janeiro (ll. 306-8):

> Nicteroy will ever live and be remembered
> In the mountain, valley, and rock leveled
> At frightful Mars, in fiery wrath.
>
> Immortal you'll remain, O stone, and from afar
> The new river inlet will speak of you,
> Reminding the skies and world of Nicteroy.
>
> [Viverá Niterói lembrado e eterno / Na serra, e vale, e rocha, que apontara / Ao terrífico Marte, em fúria aceso.]
>
> [Imortal ficarás, ó pedra, e ao longe / Do novo rio a barra assinalando / Niterói lembrarás aos céus e ao mundo.]

Two components in this image must be addressed. First, chroniclers have often reported that, when arriving at the mouth of Guanabara Bay from the Atlantic, foreign sailors envisage a sleeping giant in the surrounding mountains. Although these reports clearly increased after 1808, when the Portuguese court fled to Brazil, similar reports have regularly occurred since at least 1663[37]. Second, neoclassical poets toward the end of the 18th century used this image as a literary *topos*. It is difficult now to trace the origins of this association between a sleeping giant and the silhouette of

[37] Pe. S. de Vasconcelos, *Crônica da Companhia de Jesus no estudo do Brasil*, Lisboa 1663, pp. 360-1.

Rio de Janeiro or the extent of this idea in the 16th and 17th centuries. However, between 1790 and 1820, this image definitely gained prominence.

The well-known *Voyage pittoresque et historique au Brésil* (1835), by Debret, a French painter who visited Brazil from 1816 to 1831, reports: "aussi les navigateurs l'appellent-ils [des montagnes] le Géant couché" (so navigators call them [the mountains] the recumbent Giant). Baron Roussin, a French admiral who was in Rio de Janeiro in 1828, recorded in his chroncile: *Le pilote du Brésil, ou description des côtes de l'Amérique Méridionale…* (1845):

> When the King of Portugal arrived in Brazil in 180[8], this appearance suggested to an army officer who accompanied His Majesty the ingenious idea of drawing a recumbent colossus, which he called the essence of Brazil. The royal fleet entered the capital of the country at full sail, and we read, in a banner drawn above: *Géant, lève-toi* (Giant, Arise!)[38] (my translation).

Augusto Fausto de Souza (1882), a military historian, described Guanabara Bay in similar terms, which shows that this was a recurring image in the 18th century:

> In this immense figure, generally known as the Sleeping Giant or the Stone giant, the mountains of Gávea and Tijuca form the face, gifted with a pronounced aquiline nose, the mountain of Corcovado represents the trunk and legs, and the Sugar Loaf completes it as a foot[39] (my translation).

The iconography[40] of maps and some watercolor paintings and woodcuts from this period clearly depict the sleeping giant of Guanabara, as can be seen in Figures 1-3 below:

**Figure 1.** Watercolor of Rio de Janeiro by Lieutenant Robert Pearce (1819)[41]

[38] A.-R. Roussin, *Le pilote du Brésil, ou description des côtes de l'Amérique Méridionale comprises entre l'ile Santa-Catharina et celle de Maranhaõ,* Paris 1845, p. 58. "Lors de l'arrivee du roi du Portugal au Brésil, en 180[8], cette apparence suggéra, à un officier de l'armee qui accompagnait Sa Majesté, l'idée ingénieuse d'un dessin représentant ce colosse couché, qu'il désigna comme le genie du Brésil. La flotte royale entrait à pleines voiles dans la capitale du pays, et on lisait, dans une gloire placée au-dessus du tableau 'Géant, lève-toi'!"

[39] A.F. de Souza, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

[40] See further images in the following video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=du-2ehqetDY [access: 05.05.2020].

[41] Pearce expressed no comparison with a lying man or giant.

**Figure 2.** Woodcut of Rio de Janeiro by Thierry Frères (1835)

**Figure 3.** Illustration of Rio de Janeiro in Fausto (1882)

**Figure 4.** A recent photograph (c. 2017) of Rio de Janeiro from the Atlantic[42]

This image was cultivated during the 19th century by national and foreign literati and luminaries. After 1840, Gonçalves Dias, Fagundes Varella, Bernardo Guimarães, Francisco Dutra, Muniz Barreto and even the Portuguese poet J. Feliciano de Castilho composed poems about the "stone giant"[43]. The giant is also frequently mentioned

[42] http://portal-dos-mitos.blogspot.com/2017/03/o-gigante-adormecido-da-baia-de.html [access: 20.06.2020].

[43] Just to mention a few: *O gigante de pedra [The stone giant]*, by Gonçalves Dias (who used Victor Hugo's *Le Géant* as epigraph): "Gigante orgulhoso, de fero semblante, / Num leito de pedra lá jaz a dormir! […]". It should be pointed out that, using Pêcheux's Discourse Analysis, A. dos S. Prada diverges from Gonçalves Dias's poem, identifying a displacement of meaning in the expression "the giant woke up"; see: A. dos S. Prada, *"The giant awoke" as a myth in the national imaginary*, "Inventário" 17, Salvador 2015, pp. 1-13. However, Prada ignores the use of the giant *topos* before 1850.

in letters and other reports about Rio de Janeiro. Due to space constraints, I cannot discuss these references (which are numerous) in detail. I must now return to the period immediately prior to Barbosa's composition of the poem.

In 1820, although the image already existed, it was less frequent in literature, since the concept of a national literature was not yet solid, although it began to concretize in the first two decades of the 19th century. Only in 1829 was the first anthology of Brazilian poetry published, edited by Barbosa. Interestingly, as mentioned above, the first poem in this anthology is *Sonho* (*Dream*) by Alvarenga Peixoto[44], who was the first poet (as far as I can determine at this point) to employ the *topos* of the awakening giant, associating it with the greatness of Brazil. Here, I quote the translation of Roberto Acízelo de Souza of the first six lines of his 48-line poem[45]:

> Oh, what a dream, oh, what a dream I had
> In this happy, fortunate, restful nap!
>
> I saw Sugar Loaf Mountain rise,
> And in the middle of the waves change
> Into the figure of an Indian most genteel,
> He alone standing for Brazil.
>
> [Oh, que sonho, oh, que sonho eu tive nesta / feliz, ditosa, sossegada sesta! // Eu vi o Pão d'Açúcar levantar-se, / e no meio das ondas transformar-se / na figura do Índio mais gentil, / representando só todo o Brasil.]

Barbosa takes his description of the giant Nicteroy from this poem. Compare, for example, the following lines:

> *Sonho (c. 1790)*
> From a white ermine **baldrichung**
> **the hollowed-out tooth** of **a seabeast**
> that held his precious weapons:
> Of diamond points were his **arrows**
> with golden shafts, but black feathers;
> not one of which did the brave, bold and strong Indiansend
> without also **sendingdeath**. (*underscoring is mine*)
>
> [Pendente a tiracol de branco arminho, / côncavo dente de animal marinho / as preciosas armas lhe guardava: / De pontas de diamante eram as setas, / as hásteas de ouro, mas as penas pretas; / que o Índio valeroso, ativo e forte, / não manda seta em que não mande a morte.]

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[44] https://enciclopedia.itaucultural.org.br/pessoa4004/alvarenga-peixoto [access: 02.05.2020].

[45] This translation, by R.A. de Souza, was published in *Indigenism and the search for Brazilian identity: European influences and national roots*, [in:] *Brazilian Literature as World Literature*, ed. E.F. Coutinho, London 2018, p. 73. The complete poem in Portuguese is available at: https://www.literaturabrasileira.ufsc.br/_documents/alvarenga-2.htm. Cf. D. Proença Filho, 1996, p. 983, and C.C.E. de Souza, *op. cit.*, p. 395.

*Nicteroy (c. 1820)*
A mottled skin forms **a baldric**,
On which **hangsa quiver** made from the **hollowed tooth**
Of a horrific **monster bred by the sea**.
From this Nicteroy draws his reedy **arrows**,
With which he **sends** beasts straight **to death**. (*underscoring is mine*)

[Mosqueada pele um tiracolo forma, / De que pende em carcás cavado dente / De monstro horrendo pelo mar gerado. / Niterói daqui tira ervadas setas, / Em que as feras certeiro à morte envia.]

There are other remarkable similarities between the two poems, but I will highlight one difference. At the end of the Alvarenga Peixoto's poem, the indigenous giant, allegorized as a New World Pindar, declares himself vassal and faithful to Portugal, although his song points out with little exultation: "for insulting fate and fortune / and unequal luck, whoever dies knows, death / is neither death nor evil"[46].

The "unequal fortune" that Peixoto[47] mentions is noteworthy. According to Antonio Candido, the purpose of the illustrated literature of that time was to praise the kings and rulers while simultaneously calling attention to local problems[48]. In a different poem exalting Dona Maria I, queen of Portugal (1777-1816), Peixoto highlights yet another facet of this "unequal luck": "Why did Nature / put her treasure in this country / in a wealth of stones, / in thick mines abundant with gold, / for the people to remainimpoverished?"[49].

If Peixoto's Brazil was abundant in natural resources, it was also unfair in their distribution. Almost 150 years later, Stefan Zweig echoed this sentiment: "There is no more beautiful city in the world [than Rio de Janeiro], perhaps there is no other that is more mysterious, more heterogeneous".

Brazil's social inequality has been long recognized by tourists and intellectuals. The same travel narratives that described the Guanabara giant also commented about the miserable indigenous and Afro-Brazilians who populated the narrow streets of Rio de Janeiro, workers and slaves who, in colonial Brazil, were constructing the city through hardship and sweat while also being affected by the local flora and fauna (or climate and geography).

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[46] "Insultando o fado e a sorte / e a fortuna desigual, / a quem morrer sabe, a morte / nem é morte nem é mal." C.C.E. de Souza, *op. cit.*, p. 396.

[47] An important account of 17th century poetry (more specifically on Silva Alvarenga's works) as a contextualized response to current political and cultural issues can be found [in:] F.L. Morato, *Um mestre na periferia da Arcádia: a obra poética de Manuel Inácio da Silva Alvarenga no contexto do Império português do século XVIII*, PhD Dissertation, Ohio 2019.

[48] A. Candido, *op. cit.*, p. 114.

[49] "Que fez a Natureza / em pôr neste país o seu tesouro, / das pedras na riqueza, / nas grossas minas abundantes de ouro, / se o povo miserável?", C.C.E. de Souza, *op. cit.*, p. 392.

The metamorphosis of nature is a powerful image. Lamego Filho once wrote this about Rio de Janeiro: "Its natural setting, spectacular and refined, would certainly transform any man who embraces it"[50]. This geologist recognized, along with Burton, the profound influence of Rio's geography on its inhabitants: "The aspect of nature is now recognized as influential on the ideal and intellect of man. […] This region of Brazil is exactly between the extremes of nature that excite or depress the imagination"[51].

The imaginarium that evokes a Brazilian giant that is both Greco-Roman and indigenous could have, according to current literary conventions and the power of the image, symbolically united the past and present, forging an imaginary geography through a creative metamorphosis.

However, Barbosa erased those characteristic marks of heterogeneity, inequality, and the "depressed imagination", producing a narrative without a sincere simile, a fair comparison, or an imaginative metaphor of telluric power in his personification of Brazil. He abandoned the oneiric fields from which Peixoto's indigenous giant awoke, ultimately creating a mythical, distant, aulic and panegyric allegory far removed from the sentimental geography of earlier narrators, substituting a false natural projection of a royal, courtly and hereditary justice.

Moreover, Barbosa's innovative feature, the intertextual link that he adds to the chain of reception has meant the erasure of Brazilian peculiarities. Thus, the poem foresees not only the glory of the Kingdom of Brazil, but the rise of Brazilian conservatism, as well.

## 7. Conservative appropriation

Although Barbosa was a defender of Brazil's independence alongside Gonçalves Ledo in 1821 and 1822, his association with liberal ideas[52] made him closer to a modern conservative intellectual. For instance, regarding the French Revolution[53], which inspired so many Republican efforts throughout the Americas, Barbosa's view points directly reflected Burkean conservatism.

It should be pointed out that Brazilian liberal politicians, who during the First Kingdom (1822-1831) made liberalism a powerful weapon of opposition and an instrument of criticism, became conservative during the Second Kingdom (1840-1889)[54].

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[50] A.R. Lamego, *O homem e a Guanabara*, Rio de Janeiro 1964, p. 15.

[51] A.J. Lacombe (transl.), *Viagem aos Planaltos do Brasil [de R.F. Burton]*, Rio de Janeiro 1868, Rio de Janeiro 1940, v. 1, p. 58.

[52] A.J. Lacombe, *Discurso do Presidente*, "Revista do IHGB" 149, Rio de Janeiro 1988, p. 580.

[53] The theme of revolution is closely connected with the genesis of conservatism, which in an anti-revolutionary way tries to build its own concept of revolution. Cf. J.M.A. de Souza, *Tendências ideológicas do conservadorismo*, PhD Dissertation, Recife 2016, p. 115.

[54] E.V. da Costa, *Da Monarquia à república: momentos decisivos,* São Paulo 1999.

By conservatism, I mean a set of ideals and practices based on the principles of Burke, who according to Bloxham, was "suspicious of state power; he preferred liberty to equality; he was patriotic; he had a strong faith in existing institutions; he was skeptical of the idea of progress; and he was elitist"[55].These principles include organic and traditional society, hierarchy, and authority.

In Barbosa's case, this also included the desire to maintain religious order and a parliamentary government. Barbosa's position was ambiguous with respect to the Portuguese Crown and Brazil's independence. In *Nitceroy* there is an almost feudalistic defence of Portugal while simultaneously exalting Pedro I, the future and first emperor of the independent Brazil. Such ambiguity is characteristic of that period. Regarding the cultural and literary situation of Brazil in the early 19th century, I quote Bosi's *A história concisa da literatura brasileira* [*A concise history of Brazilian literature*]:

> All processes of Independence (from 1808 to 1831) were undertaken through the intervention of the ruling classes, who inherited from the colonial period many ambiguities: illustration-reaction; Pombalism-Jesuitism; theism-bigotry; thought-rhetoric…[56] (my translation).

The "illustration-reaction" dichotomy characterizes Barbosa's thoughts well. Even though he was illustrious and a connoisseur of ancient (rhetorical) sources, he rejected new progressive models of government, such as republicanism and democracy. Januário da Cunha Barbosa defended Brazil's independence, but as a means of maintaining social order and continuity.

At the beginning of the 19th century, one ongoing event that threatened this continuity was the French Revolution. In *Nicteroy* note 41, the author explains his allusion (line 396) to a "horrendous storm" ("horrenda tempestade"): "the political storm that was formed on the banks of the Seine by the French Revolution and spread throughout Europe, coming to afflict the Kingdom of Portugal in November 1807"[57]. This is quite similar to Edmund Burke's view in *Reflections on The Revolution in France*:

> All circumstances taken together, the French revolution is the most astonishing that has hitherto happened in the world. The most wonderful things are brought about, in many instances by means the most absurd and ridiculous, in the most ridiculous modes, and apparently by the most contemptible instruments. […] In viewing this monstrous tragicomic scene, the most opposite passions necessarily succeed and sometimes mix with each other in the mind: […] alternate scorn and horror[58].

Barbosa, however, did not mix scorn with horror, nor did he produce a tragicomedy. Instead, comedy is suppressed through his grandiloquent style, leaving only trag-

[55] J. Bloxham, *op. cit.*, p. 6.
[56] A. Bosi, *op. cit.*, p. 85.
[57] J. da C. Barbosa, *Nicteroy*, p. 58.
[58] E. Burke, *Reflections on The Revolution in France*, London 1790, p. x.

ic horror. In an 1813 speech celebrating the fifth anniversary of the Portuguese royal family's flight to Brazil, he spoke against the French Revolution, since it had led to their exile. In the passage below, he invokes Divine Providence and appeals to the people's desires:

Who would not have said, Gentlemen, meditating deeply on this contrast, which I have just presented to you, that the [Iberian] Peninsula was marked by Providence to be the cradle of the Continent's freedom; that their peoples did not sleep in such a deep peace, but to wake up more robust, and at the most opportune moment to wake up with fame of their prowess, those people who already sleep tired of fighting with the Giant of the Revolution?[59] (my translation).

This passage is remarkable, since he not only encourages combatting the French Revolution, but describes it as a giant that threatens the peace (continuity) and power (social stability) of Portugal. Thus, his "natural" explanation is that the French Revolution caused the Portuguese Crown's flight to Brazil as a divine intervention to bring "freedom" to the Americas. According to Huidobro-Salazar, in the Americas intellectuals:

were linked to political and institutional roles and they were mediators of knowledge production between other countries and local society. Their activity involved not only imitation but also creation, adaptation, and translation to generate new symbols of tradition and collective identity[60].

Thus, it is curious that Barbosa selected a giant to represent Brazil in his poem, given that he had previously associated one with French Revolution. However, as a "mediator of knowledge production" by creating and adapting ancient models, he could create new symbols. And he probably knew it. In his "new" Brazilian symbology, the giant does not stand for change, but rather sleeps, divinely transformed through the appeal of a heartbroken mother who herself was elevated to divine status. All of Barbosa's metamorphoses are about titans or gods who are represented as part of nature, which can resemble Burkean philosophy. According to Harris, "[f]or conservatives, vital political relations are organic. Unlike reactionary thinkers, they regard traditions not as static, but as in a gentle and gradual flux, encouraged by the astute reformer"[61].

Thus it appears that Barbosa employed Greek mythology to reframe ancient sources, merging them with Christian ideas of a "God who presents Himself through nature"[62]. Harris argues that the God of the Bible "devises and sustains nature in a way that leads man to society and facilitates the improvement of that society"[63].

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[59] J. da C. Barbosa, *Oração de accão de graças recitada na Capella Real do Rio de Janeiro celebrando-se o quinto anniversario da chegada de S. A. R. com toda a sua real família a esta cidade*, Rio de Janeiro 1813, pp. 10-11.

[60] Huidobro Salazar, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

[61] I. Harris, *Edmund Burke*, [in:] E.N. Zalta ed., *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2020 Edition), https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2020/entries/burke/ [access: 20.06/2020].

[62] I. Harris, *op. cit.*

[63] *Ibidem*.

If, as Huidobro-Salazar claimed, in Chile and Spanish America "the image on which the Creole authors relied corresponded to an idealized representation of both the Roman republic and Greek heroism"[64], then they fought for Republican ideals and to free the people from the yoke of monarchy. However, according to di Tella, "[in] Brazil, ideological influences from other parts of the continent were not very marked"[65]. Thus Roman and Greek heroism could be employed to justify continued privilege for the elite.

Based on the analysis to this point, it could be said that *Nicteroy* embodies a moral and political epiphenomenon (to use Huidobro-Salazar's expression) that has helped reinforce Brazilian conservatism. As explained by Costa, Brazil's "revolution" for independence was engineered by an elite committed to the preservation of the *status quo*[66]. Thus, the giant Nicteroy represents this conservative concept of revolution: a divine metamorphosis that modifies little.

## 8. The conservative giant in the 20th and 21th centuries

In this section, I will elaborate on the connection between this nature-related giant and Brazilian conservatism. Approximately twenty years after *Nicteroy* was published, the romantic period began in Brazilian literature, which erased the giant's indigenous characteristics from the *topos*, substituting it for the generic idea of natural greatness. The epitome of this non-indigenous nature-giant can be seen in the positivist poem composed by Joaquim Osório Duque-Estrada in 1909 that was declared to be the official lyrics of the Brazilian national anthem in 1922, the centennial of Brazilian independence:

> Giant by thine own nature,
> Thou art beautiful, strong, a fearless colossus,
> And thy future mirrors that greatness.
> […]
> Eternally lying on splendid cradle
>
> [Gigante pela própria natureza, / És belo, és forte, impávido colosso, / E o teu futuro espelha essa grandeza, […]. / Deitado eternamente em berço esplêndido]

From the Proclamation of the Republic (November 15, 1889) until the so-called "1930 Revolution", this image gained increasing use in literature and became completely integrated into politics and the collective imaginarium[67]. However, a grow-

[64] Huidobro Salazar, *op. cit.*, p. 33.
[65] T. di Tella, *History of Political Parties in Twentieth-century Latin America*, New Brunswick 2004, p. 29.
[66] E.V. da Costa, *Da Monarquia.*
[67] The gazette *O Malho* (n. 236, 1907) published a cartoon with a similar reference: "You shall see whether or not Brazil is that giant… not sleeping…" ["Verão se o Brasil é ou não é o gigante… sem ser deitado…"].

ing anti-liberal consensus resulted in an era of political centralization and economic interventionism. Getúlio Vargas, a politician from Rio Grande do Sul, led a populist revolt against the agricultural oligarchs behind the Old Republic, claiming the presidency in a *coup d'état* in 1930. To illustrate this "revolution" a popular gazette entitled *A Careta* published the cartoon below (Figure 5) on 15 November 1930, the anniversary of the Republic.

**Figure 5.** Political cartoon "The Giant Has Awakened", depicting Getúlio Vargas (lower left) and "Zé Povo" (lower right), *A Careta* 11/15/1930

By 1955, the giant was depicted as still needing to wake up. In his bid for president, the populist Ademar de Barros (known as one who "rouba mas faz" [steals but gets the job done]) used the giant *topos* in one of his campaign jingles: "É preciso despertar / Esse gigante adormecido / Uma terra de riquezas / Pela própria natureza / Não…" ["We need to wake up / This sleeping giant / A land of wealth / Bestowed by nature / We need not bow down…"][68].

This image later became a symbol of economic growth in the 1960s and 1970s[69] while the Brazilian military dictatorship carried out a well-defined development project. This image was disseminated internationally: in 1973 it was reported in *The Times* of London that "Like a sleeping giant, Brazil is awakening to a period of industrial expansion and development unparalleled"[70], while in 1971 *The New York Times* similarly

[68] See E.S. Migowski, *Ritmos da história: 100 anos da república contados e cantados pela música popular (1889-1989)*, São Paulo 2019. This book offers a good account the ways in which the sleeping/awakened giant has been used by politicians in the twentieth century. Cf. A. dos S. Prada, *op. cit.*, pp. 7-8.

[69] A 1963 CPC/UNE song depicted the nation as a giant that wakes up as a dwarf. See A. Aggio, A. de S. Barbosa, H. Lambert, *Política e sociedade no Brasil, 1930-1964*, São Paulo 2002.

[70] M. Spektor, *Kissinger e o Brasil*. São Paulo 2009. Cf. https://arte.folha.uol.com.br/especiais/2014/03/23/o-golpe-e-a-ditadura-militar/artigos.html [access: 05.06.2020].

reported that "The giant of the continent, dismissed as a sleeping giant until recently, has begun to stir and interest in Brazil's intentions has grown among her neighbors"[71].

It is impressive how this image has been used for multiple purposes and has gained a new meaning each time, albeit invariably conservative. In Brazilian political history, liberalism and conservatism have struggled since the beginning. Maia and Taylor state it well:

> From the early 1800s through the present, Brazilian liberals have been buffeted between the distinct priorities of the liberal project – seeking to achieve individual rights, equal citizenship, political freedom, economic liberty, and local autonomy while checking state power – and the opposition to liberalism found in often dominant political viewpoints, including the conservative dominance of the mid-nineteenth century, the positivist groups of the early twentieth century, and the developmentalist project of the second half of the twentieth century[72].

Beginning in the early 19th century, Brazilian conservatism, first expressed by pro-independence groups, followed by the agricultural oligarchs of the First Republic, the positivism and populism of the early 20th century, and then the military dictatorship, has employed time and again the image of an awakening giant.

Moreover, this image has persisted since Brazil returned to democracy in the late 1980s. In 1984, one year before the return to democracy, *Time* magazine ran the following headline: "Brazil: Waking the Sleeping Giant"[73]. More than two decades later, in 2008, Tom Phillips of London's *The Guardian* proclaimed, "the country of the future finally arrives […] the sleeping giant of South America is awakening"[74]. At that point, led by Lula da Silva of the Workers' Party, Brazil had become the eighth largest economy in the world after years of progressive government. As part of the BRICs, a group of emerging economies that also included Russia, China, and India, the South American giant was not badly damaged by the on going global recession[75].

In 2011, Scottish whiskey maker Johnnie Walker leveraged the image of an awakening Brazilian giant in a marketing campaign specifically designed for Brazil, the first such campaign for a single foreign country in the company's 200-year history. The clever 1-minute video (Figure 6)[76] dialogues with the brand's slogan "Keep Walking", strategically appropriating images and manipulating cultural elements.

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[71] J. Novitski, *Brazil's Neighbors Watching Warily the Sleeping Giant Stirs*, "The New York Times", March 21, 1971.

[72] O. Stuenkel & M. Taylor eds., *Brazil on the Global Stage Power: Ideas, and the Liberal International Order*, New York 2015, p. 38.

[73] http://content.time.com/time/subscriber/article/0,33009,921682,00.html.

[74] T. Phillips, *Brazil: The Country of the Future Finally Arrives*, "The Guardian", 10 May 2008, p. 41.

[75] Levin Institute, *Brazil: The Sleeping Giant Awakens and Rebounds from Recession*, 2020. See https://www.globalization101.org/brazil-the-sleeping-giant-awakens-and-rebounds-from-recession-2/ [access: 20.06.2020].

[76] Campaign video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ja2CP0W3E6c [access: 20.06.2020]. About the campaign, see: https://adage.com/creativity/work/keep-walking-brazil/24740 [access: 20.06.2020].

**Figure 6.** Johnnie Walker 2011 marketing campaign "The Giant is no longer sleeping"

In Brazil's largest cities in June 2013, mass protests erupted, instigated mainly by the *Movimento Passe Livre* (Free Fare Movement). The primary goal of these protests was to repeal recent bus fare increases. These protests became known as the *Jornadas de Junho* (June Journeys) and rapidly encompassed a number of other issues, such as corruption and police violence. By June 20th, protests were ongoing in over 100 cities and included over two million people.

The effects of June 2013 still reverberate in Brazilian politics and social life. Although it can only be mentioned in passing here, I will briefly point out that the protests, based on social mobilization in a networked society[77], ushered in a new sense of democracy in public administration, demonstrating that the intersection between nationalism, media and communications still has far to go. In practice, what has been shown repeatedly on TV is conflicting discourse about the national identity[78]. One could ask oneself what: what does this have to do with the sleeping giant? To develop their own brand of "social awakening", conservative movements have once more employed the image of an awakening giant, reappropriating the Johnnie Walker slogan.

> At this point, slogans from two advertising campaigns begin to appear and to become, in a way, the trademarks of the [conservative] movement: "come to the streets", a slogan from Italian automaker Fiat; and "the giant is no longer sleeping", slogan of Scottish whiskey maker Johnnie Walker, which was changed to 'the giant woke up'[79] (my translation).

[77] As argued by M.A. Ruediger *et alii*, *June Journeys in Brazil From the Networks to the Streets*, "Draft paper prepared for the APSA Annual Meeting, Washington, DC, 28-31 Aug. 2014", 2014, p. 2.

[78] C. Jiménez-Martínez, *Media and the Image of the Nation during Brazil's 2013 Protests,* p. 192.

[79] I.A. Fontenelle, *Alcances e limites da crítica no contexto da cultura política do consumo*, "Estudos Avançados", 30 (87), 255-278, 2016.

So, once again, the "giant awakened"[80], with its movement representing the natural rising grandeur of the nation. Thus, for at least 200 years since Barbosa's poem, this metaphor has been used to bolster tradition or represent some prophecy yet to be fulfilled. It does not matter if the giant's veins run with Scottish whiskey or if the power and strength it actually represents come from progressive governments. The image is stunning and mighty, the great giant of Sugar Loaf rising and walking, inspiring people and demonstrating national power. When protests erase any remembrance that Johnnie Walker's Brazilian giant awakened during a progressive moment of democratic inclusion, or when they disregard the fact that it was merely a marketing invention to sell liquor by appealing national sentiment[81], they are calling upon a tradition which says that Brazil is naturally grand, both geographically and metaphorically. Thus, Brazilian mass movements guided by nationalistic discourse that invokes the image of an awakening giant denote the pursuit of an imaginary legacy rather than a search for real change.

> To conservative individuals, tradition is the intimate aspect of his/her performance, tradition means force of authority, not invented but inherited, the property of a specific group and a model of prosperity in the present while looking to the future. A legacy is a benefit that has been built up for generations, a common syntax. To conservatives, this idea is more solid than saying that every tradition is "invented"[82] (my translation).

To some extent, Johnnie Walker's giant resembles Barbosa's giant: a foreigner representing Brazilian nature, a metamorphosis invented to manipulate the social imaginarium, an image taken hostage by conservatism[83] to create a mythology of greatness and natural divine protection.

## 9. Final remarks

Although lackluster, the poem *Nicteroy* is an eyewitness account of a decisive period in Brazilian social history and helps us understand how a conservative political project operated through literature to forge a collective imaginarium, erasing any revolutionary or progressive traces from the previous narratives it has appropriated.

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[80] See A. dos S. Prada, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-10.

[81] "The giant arouses curiosity and patriotism in the people who follow its mutation process". See https://www.meioemensagem.com.br/home/comunicacao/2011/10/07/johnnie-walker-envia-mensagem-para-o-brasil.html [access: 12.06.2020].

[82] https://outraspalavras.net/crise-brasileira/para-uma-anatomia-do-conservadorismo/ [access: 12.06.2020].

[83] On Brazilian contemporary conservatism, J.M.A. de Souza, *op. cit.,* p. 217, explains: "The contemporary period, in which the reactivation of Burkean conservatism […] stands out, […] both reinforces and modifies conservative ideological inclinations inscribed in the class struggles in Brazil since the colonial period […]".

A type of conservatism emerged in Barbosa's *Nicteroy* narrative that did not mention Peixoto's "unequal fortune" of the colony's inhabitants and ignores "impoverished people". Such conservative traits had previously appeared in travel narratives and cartographic iconography, literally disregarding the native viewpoint and assuming that a foreigner can become a national symbol. Much time later, conservatism again invoked this image of national grandeur while occluding the fact that the country's recent economic growth was due to progressive government. Manipulating narratives to create a shallow and false imaginarium that appears both populist and natural is a conservative response to a more broadly progressive movement; Brazilian elites have rearranged narratives to remodel tradition again and again, projecting an image that substitutes reality.

The belief that Brazil is naturally grand and powerful and that this nature is identified with a giant-mountain (personified sometimes as an indigenous) that will someday awaken resembles the book title "*Ein Land der Zukunft*" (A Land of the Future) used in 1941 by Austrian historian and novelist Stefan Zweig as an epithet of Brazil[84]. This future projection reminds me other phrase that can be found written in a board in "botecos" and mom-and-pop markets through out Brazil: "*Fiado, só amanhã*" (You can only purchase on credit tomorrow). If you come back tomorrow, the sign remains the same: only tomorrow. This has the same pernicious and ludicrous effect of the "land of the future". Tomorrow, the epithet will still be the same. The future never comes. Similarly, the idea that the giant will arise persists; *lève-toi* they shouted hundreds of years ago[85]. If one imagines that it has finally awakened, a visit to Guanabara Bay and the sight of the recumbent giant will quickly reset the actual to the potential: it will rise someday. Someday.

If I began this paper referring to politicians who sometimes quote the classics, I will ironically finish it appealing to *auxilium temporis* with a quote from Xenophanes of Colophon[86] (*c.*570-528 BCE), pre-Socratic philosopher, one of the first to talk about giants: "There is nothing useful in [the wars of the Titans or Giants], […] the creations of our predecessors"[87].

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[84] S. Sweig, *Brazil: A Land of the Future*, London 2007.

[85] Cf. E.S. Migowski, *op. cit.*

[86] Cf. B.V.G. Vieira, *Mito e tradição literária na luta entre Hércules e Anteu: Farsália, 4.589-665*, "Classica" 20 (1), Brasil 2007, p. 48.

[87] fr. 1 Ath. 11.462c, ll. 21-23. English translation comes from: D.E. Gerber ed. and transl., *Greek Elegiac Poetry: From the Seventh to the Fifth Centuries BC*, Cambridge, MA 1999, p. 412. Complete lines 19-23: "ἀνδρῶν δ᾽ αἰνέω τοῦτον, ὃς ἐσθλὰ πιὼν ἀναφαίνῃ, / ὥς οἱ μνημοσύνη καὶ τόνος ἀμφ᾽ ἀρετῆς: / οὔτε μάχας διέπει Τιτήνων οὔτε Γιγάντων, / οὐδέ τι Κενταύρων, πλάσματα τῶν προτέρων, / ἢ στάσιας σφεδανάς: τοῖς οὐδὲν χρηστὸν ἔνεστι:" ["and to praise that man who after drinking reveals noble thoughts, / so that there is a recollection of and striving for excellence; / it is not meet to make an array of the wars of the Titans or Giants / or Centaurs, creations of our predecessors, / or violent factions – there is nothing useful in them;"].

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## Annex 1

| **Abbrev.** | **Author** | **Abbrev.** | **Title** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Alv. Peix. | Alvarenga Peixoto | *Sonho* | Sonho Poético |
| | | *Ep.* | Canto Épico |
| | | *Ode 1* | A D. Maria I |
| | | *Ode 2* | Ao Marquês de Pombal |
| | | *Son. 3* | Sonnet "A mão aterra…" |
| Claud. | Claudianus | *Gig.* | Gigantomachia |
| | | *Pros.* | De Raptu Proserpinae |
| Diod. Sic. | Diodorus Siculus | | Bibliotheca Historica |
| Fr. Franc. | Fr. Francisco de S. Carlos | *Ass.* | A Assumpção |
| Liv. | Livy | | Ab Urbe Condita |
| Luc. | Lucano | | De Bello Ciuili |
| Ov. | Ovid | *Met.* | Metamorphoses |
| Plat. | Plato | *Tim.* | Timaeus |
| | | *Crit.* | Critias |
| Prop. | Propertius | | Elegiae |
| Sid. Apoll. | Sidonius Apollinaris | | Carmina |
| Vir. | Virgil | *Aen.* | Aeneid |

## THE METAMORPHOSIS OF THE GIANT NICTEROY IN BRAZILIAN CONSERVATISM SINCE 1822

Summary

In 1821-1822, Pedro I, then Prince Regent of Brazil, faced a crisis that culminated in the proclamation of independence on September 7, 1822. During this period, Januário da Cunha Barbosa (1780-1846) published the poem *Nicteroy: Metamorphose do Rio de Janeiro* (1822). The poem could be described as an Indianist epic poem, based on the *topos* of metamorphosis and on an ancient mythical background that included Claudianus's *Gigantomachia*. The poem tells the story of Nicteroy, son of the Greek giant Mimas. Nicteroy is a colossal Brazilian indigenous whose body is metamorphosed into Guanabara Bay, including Sugar Loaf Mountain. Over time, this classical *topos* of a giant has come to represent the natural and national greatness of Brazil, being extrapolated in literature. This paper analyzes the reception of classical tradition in this poem. I will show how the classical models used by Barbosa reflect a moral and political phenomenon in Brazil in the early nineteenth century. I will also explain how classical *topoi* helped the author reframe some images and how they are connected to the conservative thought of intellectuals and elites in the early 19th century and beyond. The methodology is based on classical reception studies, which help describe processes of artistic-cultural reception, not merely as mechanical imitation, but as active and productive adaptations of these models to suit the creative needs of the time. I will argue that there is nothing about this image or the myth of giants that is intrinsically linked to conservative thought, nor there is anything about it that necessarily lends itself to an allegory of national grandeur. Regarding Brazilian literature and its social and political environment, I contend that the image of a Brazilian giant is derived from the creation of a collective and popular imaginarium by conservatives.
**Keywords:** classical reception studies, *Gigantomachia*, metamorphosis, Brazilian literature, Brazilian conservatism

## METAMORFOZA OLBRZYMA NICTEROYA W BRAZYLIJSKIM KONSERWATYZMIE OD 1822 ROKU

Streszczenie

W latach 1821-1822 Pedro I, wówczas książę regent Brazylii, zmierzył się z kryzysem, którego kulminacją była proklamacja niepodległości 7 września 1822 roku. W tym okresie Januário da Cunha Barbosa (1780-1846) opublikował poemat *Nicteroy: Metamorphose do Rio de Janeiro* (1822). Poemat ten można uznać za epopeję z nurtu indianizmu, bazującą na toposie metamorfozy, nakreśloną na starożytnym, mitycznym tle, w którym zawiera się *Gigantomachia* Klaudiana. Poemat opowiada historię Nicteroya, syna greckiego olbrzyma Mimasa. Nicteroy jest wielkim brazylijskim tubylcem, którego ciało przeobraża się w zatokę Guanabara, łącznie z górą Głowa Cukru. Z czasem ten klasyczny topos olbrzyma zaczął reprezentować naturalną i narodową wielkość Brazylii. Niniejszy artykuł analizuje recepcję tradycji klasycznej w omawianym poemacie. Przedstawię sposób, w jaki modele klasyczne użyte przez Barbosę odbijają moralne i polityczne zjawisko w Brazylii na początku XIX wieku. Wyjaśnię również sposób, w jaki klasyczne toposy pomogły pisarzowi przeformułować pewne wyobrażenia, oraz to jak łączą się one z konserwatywną myślą intelektualistów i elit na początku XIX wieku i nie tylko. Metodologia bazuje na *classical reception studies*, które są pomocne w opisywaniu artystyczno-kulturowej recepcji, nie jako jedynie mechanicznej imitacji, ale jako aktywnych i produktywnych adaptacji tych modelów, by służyć potrzebom kreatywności danego czasu. Będę twierdzić, że w tym wyobrażeniu czy micie o olbrzymach nie ma nic, co byłoby naturalnie powiązane z myślą konserwatywną i co nieodzownie nadawałoby się na alegorię narodowej wielkości. Biorąc pod uwagę literaturę brazylijską oraz jej społeczne i polityczne otoczenie, uważam, że wizerunek brazylijskiego olbrzyma został wywiedziony przez konserwatystów ze zbiorowej i powszechnej imaginacji.
**Słowa kluczowe:** *classical reception studies*, *Gigantomachia*, metamorfoza, literatura brazylijska, konserwatyzm brazylijski