Number 249

**Brazilian Ministry of Culture
Public Policy Scholars, 1999-2000**

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Latin American Program
Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars

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Introduction

This working paper represents the collective presentation of three research efforts on Brazilian cultural issues conducted between 1999 and 2000 through the Brazilian Ministry of Culture Public Policy Scholars Program. The Program, begun in December 1997, has been formed from a partnership between the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars (WWICS) and the Ministry of Culture of Brazil (MC). Its objective is to give Brazilian senior-level public policy scholars and practitioners the opportunity to further their research and to stimulate the exchange of ideas between the academic and political communities of the United States (Washington, DC) and Brazil. In addition, the program contributes to fostering a deeper understanding of Brazilian culture in the United States. As a result of this program, the WWICS decided to launch the "Brazil @ The Wilson Center" project in June 2000. This program is designed to sponsor activities that create a Brazilian "presence" in Washington to capture the attention of national policymakers.

This working paper includes research prepared by the first group of Public Policy Scholars sponsored through the Ministry of Culture: Marina de Mello e Souza, Maria de Lourdes Parreiras Horta, and Ephim Shluger:

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Ephim Shluger, a Consultant at the World Bank on Urban Issues, has written an extensive study on the preservation of historical sites in Brazil and the rapid evolution of government policies toward their protection.

We wish to express our gratitude to all those who assisted in making this first group of Scholars the benchmark for future researchers to follow. We would also wish to thank Program Assistant Alex Parlini and consultant Craig Fagan for their assistance with this publication.

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Aspects of Black Brazilian Catholicism Inscribed in Magical-Religious Objects
Marina de Mello e Souza[1]

1. Introduction

When we speak of Black religiosity in the Americas, particularly in Brazil, we are inclined to think of possession rites, altars to a pantheon of African gods, hypnotic drums, rhythms and dance steps. These tend to be associated both to a cosmogony and to rituals directly connected to the religions practiced, above all, in West Africa. Most so-called Afro-Brazilian religions have, no doubt, a clear and direct affiliation mainly to Yoruba culture, but the weight of this contribution has cast a shadow on features whose ancestry can be traced to the religious systems of the Bantu. The latter constitute a macro-group that includes populations from the Kongo and Angola region from where, in the four centuries when people were objects of trade, a great many slaves were shipped to Brazil and to all of America. The contribution of these populations tends to be highlighted only when the focus is on Umbanda, the most syncretic of Afro-Brazilian religions, in which besides the Bantu aspects (such as ancestor worship), aspects of Yoruba (with its pantheon of gods), Catholic (with its saints and prayers), indigenous (regarding certain entities and nature spirits) and Kardecist [2] (with regard to the reincarnation of the dead and the process of spiritual development) provenance are also perceptible.

The relative lack of knowledge, among Brazilian scholars, anthropologists or historians, concerning Bantu cultures and the history of Central Africa, has served to reinforce the traditional point of view that supposed the people of this region to possess a less complex culture than that of West Africa. However, a vast spectrum of records and works, little-known in Brazil, assembled ever since the 16th century by Catholic and Protestant missionaries, by colonizers, historians, anthropologists and archeologists, teaches us the history of these people and we are thus granted access to their universe of cognition and their behavior patterns. An understanding of the social, political and cultural lives of populations who were also bricklayers of the New World's social structure helps clarify, in often surprising ways, certain aspects of American societies. While studies on the Yoruba, the main cultural group of West Africa, have for some time included attempts to comprehend Afro-Brazilian manifestations with a focus on the parent cultures, the same cannot be said for the Bantu, who were shipped here from Central Africa.

Another characteristic of studies on African influences in Brazil is the tendency to underscore aspects of resistance in the context of domination. Even when results of the African-Portuguese cultural blend are pointed out, the emphasis has been on stressing how the Africans and their descendents retained the essence of their original values, beliefs and behaviors, often camouflaged under models borrowed from their owners, who detained control over the institutions of power and repression. Thus, the integration of slaves and free Blacks into colonial society, and later into Brazil independent of Portugal, came to be seen

[2] Doctrine of French spiritualist thinker Allan Kardec (1804-1869) [translators' note]

as a game of appearances where aspects of Iberian culture were superficially incorporated to allow Blacks to practice their own traditions with relative freedom.

This paper places itself outside the axis of interpretation prevailing in studies of African contributions to Brazilian culture in so far as it examines the Bantu universe and refuses to consider the incorporation of Catholic components to be an artifice employed to hide African traditions or an attempt to seek equivalencies between these and the Portuguese. On the contrary, my stand is that these procedures constitute a creative process that spawned new cultural products, among them a number of ways and means of exercising religiosity. Therefore, I understand the images of Saint Anthony here analyzed to express the confluence between traditional Bantu beliefs, Catholicism as preached by European missionaries in the Kongo-Angola region and Catholicism as professed by the people of Brazil.

The Portuguese, upon establishing contact with the populations and kingdoms of Africa who were to become sources of labor for their American colony, introduced them to the Catholic faith, a faith that would make significant headway in Central Africa, mainly in the region of the ancient kingdom of Kongo. As an important ideological bulwark of colonial domination, Catholicism, that as we shall see was interpreted and incorporated in a very particular fashion by some of the Bantu groups (among these, chiefly by those who occupied local and regional positions of authority), was also an important power tool in the colonization of Portuguese America. While they wove intricate trade relations between Portugal, Africa and Brazil, the Portuguese administrators and merchants, and the Catholic missionaries who always accompanied Iberian trade ventures during the 16th century, established not only a circuit of economic interchange but one of cultural interchange as well.

The communities developed in Portuguese America were a fruit of the colonizers' commercial interests and of cultural contributions offered by the many groups that composed the society then being structured. With respect to the subject matter here under analysis, that is, certain specific ways of exercising religiosity that are typical of Blacks who inhabited a particular region of Brazil (the Paraíba River Valley), these groups were mainly Portuguese and Africans.

2.   New world, new communities

Interest in the ways contact was established between different cultures in the Americas, manifest in authors who study societies resulting from situations of colonial domination, emerged early on among the scholars studying the culture of Brazilian Blacks and their African ancestors. Nina Rodrigues (1862-1906), even though firmly convinced of the biological inferiority of the Blacks, based on his medical training and in accordance with the racial theories then in vogue, devoted himself entirely to these studies and pointed out the ethnic origins of some groups of Brazilian Blacks as he compared their cultural manifestations to their African matrix[3].

Following the path cleared by Nina Rodrigues, Arthur Ramos (1903-1949) added the theoretical contributions of Redfield, Linton and Herskovits[4] to the discussion on manifestations of Black culture in Brazil. Thus, he realized there were a number of variable nuances in the acculturation processes, amongst which *acceptance* – "when the process of acculturation results in the appropriation of the greater part of another culture, and loss of most of the older cultural heritage"; *adaptation* – when the features of two cultures are combined to produce a new and harmonious whole; *reaction* – that generates movements in reaction to oppression.[5] *Syncretism* would, to his understanding, be a form of adaptation, occurring when

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[3] Nina Rodrigues, *Os africanos no Brasil*, Companhia Editora Nacional, 1932.
[4] I refer here mainly to the work of Robert Redfield, Ralph Linton e Melville Herskovits, *Acculturation. The Study of Culture Contact*. 1938.
[5] Arthur Ramos, *A aculturação negra no Brasil*, São Paulo, Companhia Editora Nacional, 1942, pp. 35-6.

the original and the foreign cultural features were so intimately combined that the result was an entirely new cultural whole, the product of a balanced relationship between the parts.

The notion of syncretism, disseminated after the mid 1930s, was adopted by many studies devoted to cultural formations generated by the contact between different peoples, although those who used it did not always understand it the same way. Perhaps its operative function derived precisely from this malleability, which allowed it to cover a vast range of situations where the mix of cultural ingredients formed a new product. However, new analytical possibilities and new concepts would be formulated after deeper studies of cultural contact situations were undertaken and after the incorporation of contributions achieved by the historical analysis of exchanges between different strata of one same society - as well as among different populations in contact with one another - usually in a situation where one of these dominated the other.

Since then, the concept of syncretism has been criticized for not taking into account the relations of domination present in encounters between different cultures. One of the crucial critics of the notions of syncretism and acculturation (both detailed within the same intellectual context) is Italian historian Carlo Ginzburg, whose work disseminated the concept of cultural circularity according to which a mutual influence is exerted by cultures in contact with one another, be it between different strata of a same society or between different societies.[6] The same author developed the notion of cultural hybridism, which considers a new product, formed by diverse features, to be something that can be deciphered in different ways, depending on the cultural code of whoever apprehends the phenomenon.[7]

These new approaches, to which the contribution of historians who work in a field dominated by anthropologist was fundamental, introduced to the discussion of hybrid cultural products formed from the meeting of different cultures the idea that beyond a given cultural manifestation lay the question of *how* it was apprehended. Different people, their perception guided by distinct cultural systems, were sure to understand the same cultural product in different ways, whether this product was an object, a rite or a narrative. Having gained this insight, the analysis could now consider not only the object but also *how* it was perceived by those with whom it came into contact.

However, if this conceptual framework concerning the apprehension of a hybrid cultural product is to be useful further on, when we enter the field of the meanings attributed to the magical-religious objects here analyzed, we need to turn back a bit and restart the discussion of how the contribution of African culture to Afro-American culture in general has been handled so far.

If, one way or another, the presence of African cultural traits in manifestations of Blacks and *mestizos* has been accepted since the 19th century by Brazilian scholars, the same does not apply to the US, where,

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[6] For the concept of cultural circularity see Carlo Ginzburg, *Night battles: witchcraft & agrarian cults in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth centuries* e *Cheese and the worms: the cosmos of a Sixteenth century miller*. Nathan Wachtel, "Aculturação", in *História: novos problemas*, directed by Jacques Le Goff and Pierre Nora, translated into Portuguese by Theo Santiago, 3[rd edition], Rio de Janeiro, Francisco Alves, 1988, also offers a good discussion on the problems of using the concept of syncretism without taking into account the situation of dominance always present in the contact between two cultures. Before Carlo Ginzburg, Fernando Ortiz, scholar devoted to the study of Afro-Cuban culture, had already developed, in *Contrapunteo Cubano*, the notion of transculturation according to which cultures in contact receive mutual influences with both being transformed by the relationship established by this contact.

[7] For the notion of cultural hybridism see Carlo Ginzburg, *Ecstasies: deciphering the witch's Sabbath*. Serge Gruzinski, *The Conquest of Mexico. The Incorporation of Indian Societies into the Western World, 16th-18th Centuries*. Translated by Eileen Corrigan. Cambridge, Polity Press, 1996, works in a similar direction, talking about the "colonization of the *imaginaire*" by the Church that has as result cultural products that Spanish and Mexican cultures decoded differently, each giving their own interpretation according to their cultural codes.

during a long time, what predominated was the idea that the features of African origin were completely obscured by the white man's culture. It was Melville Herskovits who, in the most consistent and radical way, pointed out the African ancestry of many manifestations of American Blacks. Opposing what he considered to be the myth of a non-existent Negro past, he argued that the Africans brought to America were people with complex social, political and religious systems, and that if slavery and oppression did not allow the full transfer of these systems, they also failed to destroy the habits, ways of thinking and feeling of their victims.[8]

Always based on historical and ethnographic research, he postulated that to deepen theoretical knowledge of the acculturation processes it was necessary to undertake research, special attention being given to comparative studies between the different American societies that received African slaves. In his view, acculturation studies were those directed towards *"those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups."[9]* As seen above, ever since Redfield, Linton and Herskovits developed this term in 1936 and up until now, there has been a good deal of discussion on encounters between different cultures. If, as a broad definition, it remains of value, to analyze the processes of cultural interchange we must enrich it with some further reflections, such as those considering the relations of domination. Other aspects to be considered are those that indicate the possibility of differing apprehensions of a same manifestation, or hybrid cultural product, taking into account the different cognition systems of the peoples to whom they relate.

Arguing against the stance until then predominant in the US, according to which, due to their inferiority, African cultures had been eliminated by the dominant European culture – a fact supposedly heightened by the extreme cultural diversity existing among the groups wrenched from different African localities -–Herskovits identified vast cultural areas, amongst which the Bantu. He also showed that just as grammatical resemblances could be perceived in the different languages spoken in Central Africa, there existed a common "cultural grammar" in the region.[10] Although he quite often resorts to the notions of *survivals* and *retentions*, that is, cultural forms retained in the Americas, Herskovits put forth some ideas, that would be later developed, postulating that what must be sought are not residues of African cultures in the Americas but a determined *manner* of thinking and behaving, characteristic of a certain cultural area.

In the 1970s Sidney Mintz and RIchard Price updated Herskovits' contribution to what would from then on be known as *African-American culture* and systemized a new form of dealing with the cultural manifestations of Blacks in the Americas. According to these authors, rather than traits of African cultures, what is noteworthy in the New World is a particular cultural substratum which, in spite of the variety of ethnic groups shipped overseas, permeated different cultural areas.[11] They took up and broadened the idea, outlined by Herskovits, of a cultural grammar common to wide areas, just as a basic linguistic unity served to define cultural groups. In this sense we may select the Bantu as an example. In spite of the variety of cultural patterns specific to several Bantu peoples, they were all guided by certain basic and fundamental common notions. This shared manner of handling the things of the world, of structuring social life, of finding explanations for natural and supernatural phenomena, constitutes the grammar of a culture, a communal substratum on which several cultures are based.[12]

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[8] Melville Herskovits, *Myth of the Negro Past*, Boston, Beacon Press, 1990, first edition 1941.

[9] Idem, p.10

[10] Idem, p.81.

[11] Sidney Mintz e Richard Price, *The Birth of African-American Culture. An Anthropological Perspective*, Boston, Beacon Press, 1992, first edited 1976 (*An Anthropological Approach to the Afro-American Past*).

[12] This discussion is largely founded on the contribution of linguists. In the same way as the structures of language are associated to the grammar of a culture, the creation of *pidgins*, dialects that allow speakers of differing languages

Mintz and Price argued that Africans, ethnically heterogeneous and with their social structures fractured by slaving, only became a community and began to share a culture in the New world when they themselves created it from their new living conditions. They brought with them information, knowledge and beliefs, but they lacked the material and human conditions to rebuild their societies in the Americas. Thus, they were forced to reorganize themselves and create institutions that could respond to the needs of their everyday life, under the restricted conditions ordained by slavery. In this way, the methodological proposal of the above-mentioned authors also embodies, prominently, the relations of dominance present in the processes of constituting new communities and cultural manifestations.

Departing from Herskovits and going beyond, Mintz and Price defended the idea that an African cultural heritage, shared by the peoples shipped to the colonies, must be defined less in relation to survivals and retentions than by means of a grammatical principle that shapes behaviors. Therefore, common guide-lines on the functioning of the universe (such as religious beliefs and explanations of the causality of natural phenomena) and basic presuppositions concerning social relations (such as the motivations that lead individuals to adopt certain behaviors) contributed to make people who came from the same part of Africa react in similar fashion to certain situations, notwithstanding some formal differences among the solutions adopted. The authors' argument distinguishes itself from that of Herskovits insofar as, while the latter defines the identity between different African ethnic groups based on their recurrent cultural features – such as objects or rites - Mintz and Price view this same identity from the standing point of a common cultural grammar that leads to the production of these behaviors, rites and artifacts.

The small statues of Saint Anthony, objects of worship I propose to analyze here, are the fruit of contacts between the Bakongo culture (as the populations who inhabit the region of the ancient kingdom of Kongo, part of the Bantu cultural group, are called) and the Portuguese culture. Produced and utilized in the 19th century by Africans and their descendents in the Paraíba river region, province of São Paulo, particular signs of world visions and forms of relationship with the divine are visibly inscribed in their forms and functions. These signs may be understood if we are able to decode the cultural grammar that guided the making of these objects, as well as their use.

In the mid 19th century, coffee plantations spread all over the valley of the Paraíba turning it into the main economic pole of the young independent nation, kept afloat by exports of this product. The extensive monocultural plantations required a tremendous amount of the only labor then available – slave labor. This picture led to a great concentration of Blacks in the region, which would consume most of the Africans shipped here before this trade was entirely banned in Brazil, in 1850. As, however, there was an absolute predominance of Africans brought from Central Africa, the cultural features that served to build the Black communities of the valley of the Paraíba River would be those of the Bantu.

Therefore, in order to understand the magical-religious objects here presented from the point-of-view of the cultural grammar that guided their use and production, we must examine a few aspects of the world vision and history of the Bakongo, focusing in particular the contacts maintained by the people of Central Africa with Catholicism in their native villages, through the European missionaries and native preachers active there since the 16th century. Knowledge of the Bakongo culture is important not only as a means to, through its lenses, be able to decode the meanings that are embodied in the small statues. It is also essential that we gain insight into some historical aspects of the ancient kingdom of Kongo and its relationship with the Portuguese, because these magical-religious objects were also made and used in Kongo.

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to communicate, are associated to the formation of hybrid or *mestizo* cultural products.

3.   African Catholicism

The conversion of Bakongo headmen to Catholicism after the arrival of the Portuguese to the lower Zaire area, at the close of the 15th century, is a widely documented and often studied subject, although not always that well known.[13] Considered by the Kongo's political elite as something that would reinforce their power in view of the constant disputes over the kingdom's power structure, the new rites and teachings introduced by the Portuguese priests were partially incorporated into the traditional religion, although without transforming it essentially. On the contrary, what contemporary analysis show is that the rites and symbols of the Catholic Church were translated into the Bakongo cultural language, acquiring new meanings, quite distinct from those attributed them by Catholicism. Following this line of reasoning, Wyatt MacGaffey argues that the pattern established since the first contacts - when the Christian rites and dogmas were understood by the Bakongo in consonance with their own cultural codes, while the missionaries believed their teachings were being fully accepted - allowed Portugal and the Kongo to relate to each other, during centuries, guided by false but efficient presuppositions. In this way, the native structures were in large part preserved, while the Portuguese and the Bakongo each interpreted events according to their own specific concepts.[14]

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[13] On this see, among others, *Lopez* e *Pigafetta*, Duarte e Filippo - *Relação do Reino do Kongo e das Terras Cincurnvizinhas*. Translation by Rosa Capeans. Lisbon, Agência Geral do Ultramar, 1951; *Radulet*, Carmen M. - *O cronista Rui de Pina e a "Relação do Reino do Kongo"*. Lisbon, Imprensa Nacional - Casa da Moeda, 1992; *Brásio*, António - "O problema da eleição e coroação dos reis do Kongo", *Revista Portuguesa de História*, Coimbra, 1969 (XII) and "Embaixada do Kongo a Roma em 1514?, *Studia*, n.32, 1971; *Broadhead*, Susan Herlin - "Trade and Politics on the Kongo Coast: 1770-1870". Boston University Graduate School, PhD., 1971. UMI Dissertation Services and "Beyond decline: the kingdom of Kongo in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries". *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 12, 1979; *MacGaffey*, Wyatt - *Religion and Society in Central Africa. The Bakongo of Lower Zaire*. Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1986, "Dialogues of the deaf: Europeans on the Atlantic coast of Africa", in *Implicit Understandings. Observing, Reporting, and Reflecting on the Encounters Between Europeans and Other Peoples in the Early Modern Era*. Edited by Stuart B. Schwartz. Cambridge, Cambridge Univeristy Press, 1994, "The West in Kongolese Experience", *Africa & The West. Intellectual Responses to European Culture*. Edited by Philip D. Curtin, Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1972, "Kongo and the King of the Americans", *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 6,2 (1968); *Randles*, W.G.L., *L'ancien royaume du Kongo des origines à la fin du XIXe siècle*. Paris, École des Hautes Études, Mouton &Co, 1968; *Thornton*, John, *The Kongolese Saint Anthony. Dona Beatriz Kimpa Vita and the Antonian Movement, 1684-1706*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400-1860*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992, *The Kingdom of Kongo. Civil War and Transition 1641-1718*. Wisconsin, The University of Wisconsin Press, 1983, "Early Kongo-Portuguese Relations: a New Interpretation" in *History in Africa. A Journal of Method*, David Henige, editor, Massachusetts, Brandeis University, African Studies Association vol 8, 1981, "The Development of an African Catholic Church in the Kingdom of Kongo, 1491-1750", *Journal of African History*, 25 (1984), "On the trail of Vodoo: African Christianity in Africa and the Americas", *The Americas* 55 (Jan): 261-78, 1988.

[14] Wyatt MacGaffey, "Dialogues of the deaf: Europeans on the Atlantic coast of Africa", in *Implicit Understandings*. This is a good example of what we have just discussed concerning how a hybrid or mestizo product may be understood differently by the groups with whom it relates, each of them using their own symbolic universe to decode the message in question.

The first catechism written in Kikongo (1556), the language then current in the region, and the first dictionary (1652), show the development of an ambiguous vocabulary that mediated a dialogue of the deaf, leading to what the author calls the institutionalization of a misunderstanding.[15] In the early days of christianization, the Christian objects of worship were said to be *minkisi* by the missionaries themselves, who in this manner sought equivalencies with the Bakongo religious universe, employing the current local designation for articles used during religious services and ignoring the enormous difference in meanings that these held for each religion.[16] In the same manner, the missionaries were called *nganga*, like the Bakongo priests, who occupied a fundamental place in the realization of rites connected to birth, marriage, the harvest and other key moments in the lives of people and villages. Thus, options made by missionaries in their conversion program would feed the possibility of Catholic rites being read from the stand of a Bakongo cultural code, strengthening the initial "misunderstanding."

According to John Thornton, if African forms of Catholicism were accepted until the 18th century and negated in the 19th, this was due more to the different attitudes adopted by the clergy and the Holy See in Rome regarding guide-lines of conversion than to any essential changes in African Catholicism, because the latter had always been a version of the missionaries' teaching from the point of view of Bakongo cosmogony.[17] In order to understand this argument, we must keep in mind that European Catholicism in those days did not deny supernatural phenomena, and the magical thinking manifest in miracles based itself on this kind of sign as a way to affirm its dogmas. More than a difference in the form of perceiving reality, as both European and African modalities consisted of beliefs pervaded by a magical way of thinking - although their dosages might vary - what was in question was control over the rites and signs that mediated communication between this world and the next. In addition to this, Catholics at that time counted on the support of divine forces to obtain a number of earthly benefits such as protection against pests or guarantees of a good harvest and health.

In this context, if the "converted" Africans submitted themselves to the authority of the Catholic priest, substituted the *minkisi* for crucifixes and statues of saints and accepted the sacraments of the Church such as baptism, marriage and last rites (holy oils), confessed their sins to the priests and declared their faith in God the Creator of all things and his army of saints, the missionaries were certain they were truly converted. What they failed to perceive was that God continued to be *Nzambi Mpungo*, Creator of all things to the Bakongo, while the saints to them were their ancestors and nature spirits, who inhabited the world of the dead and intervened in the problems of the living when invoked by rites and magical-religious objects. This formal substitution of some rituals and symbols, and their double readability – under the prisms of Catholicism and of the Bakongo religion – allowed a priest who traveled through the

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[15] Idem, p.260

[16] The *minkisi* - plural of *nkisi* – are made and used by religious leaders, *nganga*, there existing a variety of *minkisi*, adequate for different uses and each made of specific ingredients. These ingredients, minerals, vegetables and animals, as a whole called *bilongo*, define the qualities and powers of the *minkisi* which host them, and to whom they confer power derived from their combination, confection and ritual use, making it possible for the spirits to cure and help people in a number of situations. These magical-religious objects have been studied in several texts, the most notable being: Wyatt MacGaffey, "Fetishim revisited: Kongo *nkisi* in sociological perspective", *Africa*, 47 (2), 1977; "The eyes of understanding: Kongo minkisi", *Astonishment & Power*, Washington, DC, National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institution, 1993; "African objects and the idea of fetish", *Res* 25, spring, 1994. Robert Farris Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit. African & Afro-American Art & Philosophy*. New York, Vintage Books, 1984.

[17] John Thornton, "The development of an African catholic church in the kingdom of Kongo, 1491-1750", *Journal of African History*, 25 (1984), pp 147-167, Cambridge University Press, where he develops the notions of *inclusive* and *exclusive* concepts of religion, identifying the first with the positions adopted by the missionaries, incorporating features of the religions they came across, as those of the no Kongo and China, and the second with the stands of missionaries who attempted to entirely eliminate the religion they found, as occurred in Spanish America .

region to declare that in a kingdom with so few clergymen he had not met a single Christian who had returned to the former fetishism.[18]

It has been observed that Bantu reasoning contains, in its structure, an admirable capacity to resist radical transformations, incorporating the contributions continuously offered by contact between peoples, reading them from the stand of their own cognitive apparatus and, in part, accepting them as their own. It was because they saw something familiar in Christianity that it was so easy to accept. In terms of native culture the new movement was merely one of the constant revitalizations characteristic of that cultural area.[19]

The dynamics of African religions, constantly incorporating new contributions from groups and individuals, and the elemental characteristics of the religious movements continually crossing Central Africa, are dealt with in "Religious Movements in Central Africa: A Theoretic Study".[20] According to its authors, these societies are guided by the "fortune-misfortune complex." This paradigm postulates that the natural order of things is good and harmonious, involving positive values such as health, fertility and security. The Creator, Supreme Being who gave life to all, reigns from afar, but benevolently, over the universe and men. The space between the living and the dead is supposedly occupied by spirits of ancestors and by a number of other spirits, imbued with the best intentions. Thus, if life ran its natural course everything would take place within the sphere of fortune, but this rarely occurs, as the forces of evil deviate it from its path. All evil is supposed to be caused by these forces, unleashed by certain people's conscious or unconscious actions. Hence, not only were good and evil perceived as opposites, with evil capable of being battled and the natural state of things restored, but there existed a zone of ambiguity where both good and evil dwelt, one capable of being transformed into the other at high speed. According to Craemer, Vansina and Fox, this paradigm sustained religious patterns of millenary stability common to this area, while the fact that their specific expressions are extremely flexible must be kept in mind. This interpretative framework makes it clear that Christianity was received by the Bakongo as a new religious movement, exceptionally powerful, its incorporation having taken place following the traditional pattern, with dances, initiation, burning of old *minkisi* and introduction of new prayers, rites and symbols.

From the first inroads made by Christianity, at the end of the 16th century to the middle of the 19th century, the activity of Catholic missionaries, mainly Portuguese, Spanish and Italians, went through a number of different stages, their more - or less - intense presence depending on the time and the region.[21] But the introduction of some basic Catholic features to the traditional religion of the people of Central Africa did not depend only on the priests, for their teachings were also spread by native preachers. These had been disciples of the missionaries, and were charged with transmitting what they had learned. An extreme example of how Catholicism was reinterpreted in the light of traditional religion was the Antonian movement that broke out at the end of the 17th century and caused its leader, Beatriz Kimpa Vita, to be burned at the stake. Kimpa Vita claimed to be possessed by Saint Anthony and a frequent visitor to the kingdom of heaven, whence she was transported by cataleptic dreams, equivalent to the death and resurrection experienced by members of the *kimpazi*.[22]

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[18] According to Carmelite Diego de Incarnacion, quoted by J. Cuvelier, "Kongolese Art in the Era of Christ the Redeemer", *The Arts in Belgian Kongo and Ruanda-Urundi*, adapted from the French by Stephanie Chandler, CID, Information and Documentation Center of Belgian Kongo and Ruanda-Urundi, 1950, p 36.

[19] Wyatt MacGaffey, "The West in Kongolese Experience", pg 69.

[20] De Willy de Craemer, Jan Vansina e Renée C. Fox. "Religious Movements in Central Africa: A Theoretical Study", in *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, v.18 n.4 October, 1976, Cambridge University Press.

[21] At the end of the 19th century, American Baptist missionaries become predominant in the region, disputing with the Catholics the conversion of the natives.

[22] For a description of *kimpasi* initiation rites, see Joseph Van Wing - *Études Bakongo. Sociologie - Religion et Magie*. Desclee de Brouwer. Museum Lessianum. 2nd edition, 1959 (1st edition 1921, Belgium).

While still a young girl, Kimpa Vita had been introduced to the religious sect of the *kimpazi* and initiated through reclusion and a learning process shrouded in secrecy. The members practiced rites to ensure the welfare of the community and good fortune for society as a whole, differently from the *ndoki*, who were motivated by individual goals often inspired by greed and vanity and therefore the cause of misfortune to others. Although she left this sect after adopting African Christian beliefs, her main objective was in order with its spirit, for she also sought the welfare of the community as a whole. Kimpa Vita preached the search for peace, union and harmony, represented by the re-occupation of the abandoned capital, São Salvador, and the reunification of the kingdom. The latter had been shattered after the battle of Mbwila in 1665, when both D. Antônio I, the ruling *mani* Kongo, and a great many of the nobles capable of claiming central power, were killed in an armed conflict with the Portuguese. Born and bred in the midst of the civil conflict that ensued, and having witnessed its dire consequences, Kimpa Vita accused the nobles involved in the belligerence of being responsible for the misfortune that befell the Bakongo, since they were motivated by personal vanity and selfish goals.

One of the basics of her preaching dealt with the birthplace of Jesus, Mary and some saints, who were supposedly African, born and brought up in certain parts of the Kongo. She thus contested the superiority implicit in the behavior of the European missionaries who legitimated the power of certain Bakongo chiefs, in her opinion contributing to the unending wars. Incorporating Saint Anthony by means of the death and resurrection that occurred every week, Kimpa Vita became a mediator between this world and the next, where the spirits dwelt, and personally assumed the religious leadership of the people, above the Catholic priests. No wonder the sect was soon regarded as heretical by the Capuchin monks who were active in the Kongo. They were joined by some factions of the elite, criticized by Kimpa Vita for using the religious ritual apparatus to preserve their positions and guarantee their dominance, thereby damaging civil order and the union of the kingdom. The Antonian leader was condemned to die at the stake by a group of counselors of Pedro IV, who lay claim to the throne and was contested by Kimpa Vita, and they were supported by three Capuchin monks, Bernardo da Gallo, Lorenzo de Lucca and Giovanni Paolo, then actively involved with this elite. The sentence was executed on July 2nd, 1706.[23]

The choice of Saint Anthony as main entity of the sect led by Kimpa Vita, perpetuated by a significant part of the population long after her death, is a sign of the popularity this saint enjoyed among the Bakongo. Born in Lisbon c.1193, Saint Anthony is the patron saint of Portugal although he spent most of his religious life in Assisi, Italy, with the Franciscan monks[24]. His cult would be spread far and wide by Portuguese missionaries, not only throughout Africa but in Portuguese America as well. Following a line of reasoning that reveals the circulation of ideas, sensibilities and behaviors on the Atlantic circuit that united Portugal, Africa and Brazil, Robert Slenes has demonstrated how present the cult of Saint Anthony has been in these three areas. There is even a fair probability, as Roger Bastide and W.G.L. Randles already postulated, that the sermons of father Antonio Vieira, who played a noteworthy role in the political and religious life of Portugal and Brazil in the 17th century (he was born in Lisbon in 1608 and died in Bahia in 1697), may have inspired the teachings of the Capuchin monks in the Kongo. John Thornton's supposal that devotees of Saint Anthony were sent as slaves to Brazil in the context of the

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[23] See John Thornton, *The Kongolese Saint Anthony. Dona Beatriz Kimpa Vita and the Antonian Movement, 1684-1706.* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998, pp.174-5. On the Antonians see also Wyatt MacGaffey, *Religion and Society in Central Africa,* p. 208 et passim, and Ronaldo Vainfas and Marina de Mello e Souza - "Catolização e poder no tempo do tráfico: o reino do Kongo da conversão coroada ao movimento antoniano, séculos XV-XVIII", *Tempo*, vol 3, n 6, Dec. 1998. Niterói, Universidade Federal Fluminense.
[24] David Hugh Farmer, *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 3ª ed., 1992, pg 26-7.

repression to the Antonian sect in the early 18th century serves to strengthen the connections between this saint's cult in all three areas.[25]

Incorporating Catholic features to their traditional religious practices, the Bakongo gave them meanings that were specific to their own culture, while the missionaries who worked in African territory, with the intention of disseminating what they considered to be the true faith, believed in the conversion of those who accepted the Catholic sacraments, rites and objects of worship. Cases such as Kimpa Vita's were exceptions to the rule, for political issues were determining factors in the unfolding of those events. As we shall see below, crucifixes and images of saints, crucial articles for the practice of Catholicism, above all in the daily devotions of the faithful, were absorbed by the religious traditions of the Bakongo. These objects, collected along the 19th and 20th centuries, bear witness to how some African peoples appropriated symbols that were eminently Catholic and European.

4.   *Toni Malau*, *Nsundi Malau* **and** Nkangi *Kiditu*

John Weeks, in his record of life among the Bakongo, with whom he spent thirty years, having begun his work as a Baptist missionary in 1878, does not mention the images of Saint Anthony that we know existed long before that time. However, he reproduces a photo of a small wooden statue he was given by a person who told him it had been in the family for several generations and was considered by her to be a "fetish". In this statue, Saint Anthony is, as usual, represented in his Franciscan habit, left hand sustaining a book upon which the child Jesus stands holding, in *his* right hand, what may be a branch. At his left side, the saint has a cross, also present at chest level in another image that John Weeks shows next to the statuette of Saint Anthony, identifying it as a "female fetish" that imitated the images of saints introduced by the Portuguese.[26]

Studying the art of metal working among the Bakongo, Robert L. Wannyn, the Belgian ethnologist who between 1931 and 1941collected a series of objects from several tribes of the Kongo, noticed that all the articles of copper, brass, iron and other metal alloys were of Christian inspiration.[27] Produced between the early 16th and the late 19th century, the objects collected were mostly crucifixes, called *Nkangi Kiditu* by the natives, and comprised some small images of Saint Anthony, *Tony Malau*, and Our Lady, *Nsundu Malau,* as well (see Graphic 1.1). When he questioned the natives about when these objects had been made, Wannyn always heard the same reply: those objects had been made at the time of the *mafumalengo* and were kept in the families' treasure troves, passing from one generation to the next.

These *mafumalengo* (a designation the author identifies as a distortion of the term *flamengo* or Flemish) days actually cover more than the real time-span when the Flemish occupied Luanda (1641 to 1648), a town founded by the Portuguese in 1575 in a region until then controlled by the Mbundo, neighbors and allies of the Bakongo. While they occupied the area, the Flemish counted on the support of D. Garcia II, who ruled the kingdom of Kongo from 1641 to 1663.[28] According to the chronology set up

[25] Robert W. Slenes, "Santo Antonio na encruzilhada: reinterpretações do taumaturgo no Kongo e no Brasil", communication presented at the Simpósio de Arrábida, 1-5/11/1999. Mimeo. W.G.L.Randles, *L'Ancien Royaume du Kongo des origines à la fin du XIX[è] siècle*.

[26] John H. Weeks, *Among the primitive Bakongo. A record of thirty years' close intercourse with the Bakongo and other tribes of Equatorial Africa, with a description of their habits, customs & religious beliefs.* New York, Negro University Press, 1969, p. 260. In his book, *Pioneering on the Kongo*, first printed in 1900, and reprinted in 1970 by Johnson Reprint Company, New York, William Holman Bentley, who like John Weeks belonged to the Baptist Missionary Society, shows a drawing of the same image.

[27] Robert L. Wannyn, *L'Art Ancien du Métal au Bas-Kongo*. Belgique, Editions du Vieux Planquesaule Champles, 1961, p. 27.

[28] In the novel *A Gloriosa Família*, by Pepetela, that takes place in Luanda during the Flemish occupation, these are

by Wannyn, based on the oral history recounted by the Bakongo, the time of the *mafumalengo* corresponds to the days when commercial relations with the Portuguese, and at times with the Flemish, were decisive for the historical processes of Central Africa, that is, approximately from the 16th to the 19th century. In those days, the Catholicism spread by missionaries and local preachers made great headway in the region and, as already mentioned, was integrated in a very particular manner into the traditional religion. It is interesting to observe that, according to Wannyn's informants, the name by which the Flemish were called was chosen to designate this entire period, a time marked by the sermonizing of Catholic missionaries, most of whom were Portuguese, Spanish and Italian, and not Flemish, who were Calvinist Protestants. During his alliance with the Flemish, one of the points of autonomy D. Garcia II insisted on was precisely freedom of religion and permission for Portuguese missionaries to remain in the territory, even though on the political plane he supported the Flemish who were then at war with Portugal. Conversely, however, it was the name of the Flemish that was invoked to identify the era when these images of Catholic inspiration were produced.[29] Although this term was initially used by the Bakongo to designate the Flemish, *mafumalengo* probably came to mean European whites in general.

Graphic 1.1: Examples of Saints *Toni Malau and Nsundi Malau*, Africa

Toni Malau and Nsundi Malau, copper, Mafulamengo period.
Wannyn, Robert L. L'Art Ancien du Métal au Bas-Congo.

called *malufos* by the natives.
[29] Other designations unearthed by Robert L. Wannyn to indicate this same epoch, were the age of the slave trade and the era of the *nkangi* (the crucifixes) - op. Cit., p. 25. On the other hand J. Cuvelier, "Congolese Art in the Era of Christ Redeemer", in *The Arts in Belgian Congo and Ruanda-Urundi*, pg 35, states that the natives called the period the era of Christ the Redeemer.

The introduction of images, crucifixes and other objects used in Catholic rituals and individual prayers accompanied the work of the missionaries. Together with Christian teachings, the priests brought the objects required for the celebration of holy rites, including these images of saints and crucifixes soon adopted by the natives as new kinds of magical-religious articles, generically called *minkisi*. The Bakongo and the Portuguese, who belonged to distinct cultural universes, would thus establish a field of mutual understanding that gave rise to a "misunderstanding" spawned by their variant reading of certain notions, each seeing the concepts from the stand point of their own universe of cognition.

The crucifixes, usually called *Nkangi Kiditu*, are the objects of Christian influence most often unearthed in the ancient kingdom of Kongo (see Graphic 1.2). According to Wannyn, informed by the Bakongo chiefs with whom he came into contact, *Kiditu* means Christ and *Nkangi* can be translated as tied, fixed, secured, nailed, so *Nkangi Kiditu* would be "the nailed Christ". This researcher was also told that *nkangi* could mean protection, so *Nkangi Kiditu* may designate "Christ the protector". The sense of protection contained in the word *nkangi* is reinforced when the author tells us that every object, ancient or modern, made of stone, metal or wood, with a shape even vaguely cross-like, is so named and considered to be a kind of "fetish", connected to the supernatural world.[30] Regarded as magical-religious objects associated to ancestral relics, insignia of power and *minkisi*, these crucifixes were either kept in safety amongst the lineages' most precious possessions or buried with the chiefs who owned them, as some archeological findings have demonstrated.

Clearly of European inspiration, these small metal sculptures, made by the lost wax or double mold procedures, display details that are plainly African, such as the facial features and hair styles of the images, as well as the quite common presence of two or more figures, seated or kneeling on the arms of the cross. The attempt undertaken by Wannyn to understand these figures in the light of European iconography, does not lead to any conclusion. But if we recall the importance in which Bantu culture holds twins, considered to be a sort of incarnation of *bisimbi* (plural of *simbi*, spirits who inhabit certain places, such as a waterway or a rock, akin to positive powers and well-being), it is possible to understand why these two figures so often appear on either side of the crucified Christ, associated to protection.[31] Even if we are unable to decode the meanings they held for those who produced them, we can glean that the two, at times four figures perched on the arms of the cross, pointed to an eminently Bantu interpretation of the Christian symbol. Perhaps this interpretation has been lost in the sands of time, for when questioned about those images, Wannyn's informants told him they were the apostles, the Father and the Holy Ghost supporting Christ at the time of his death, or the two thieves that were crucified with him, failing to enlighten us about the eminently Bantu significance, most probably connected to the major role played by twins in the social life and religious thinking of the Bakongo.

Wyatt MacGaffey states that as cults related to twins were restricted to women and the domestic sphere, they were usually not documented by the missionaries, who remained unaware of them. For this same reason, they persist supposedly untouched by syncretism, continuing to this day quite close to ancestral beliefs.[32] While accepting this view, it appears that the cult of twins was infiltrated into the symbols and practices of African Catholicism, unnoticed by those unaware of their meaning to the

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[30] Robert L. Wannyn, op. cit., p. 37.

[31] For a definition of *bisimbi*, see Joseph van Wing, *Études Bakongo. Sociologie - Religion et Magie,* and Wyatt MacGaffey, *Religion and Society in Central Africa.* Among the Yoruba, twins are also associated to heavenly entities and merit specific cults. Known as *ibejis* in Afro-Brazilian cults, they have been associated to the two figures who appear seated on the arms of a crucifix made in Minas Gerais, Brazil, in the 18th century, probably influenced by the Kongolese *Nkangi Kiditu* and not by Yoruba culture, as stated in *Arte e Religiosidade no Brasil. Heranças Africanas.* São Paulo, Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo, II Encontro Nacional da Cultura, Ministério da Cultura, 1977, where that object is reproduced.

[32] Wyatt MacGaffey, op. cit., p. 85.

Bakongo. The twins represented a source of affliction insofar as the *bisimi* who dwelt in them were capable not only of curing illnesses and solving problems but also of causing misfortune, the fulfillment of   proper forms of worship being required to avoid this. However, special powers were also attributed to them in regard to amulets and their composition, for these were supposedly granted mankind through the *bisimi*. In this sense, the presence of figures that may be linked to pairs of twins becomes understandable on crucifixes which to the Bakongo, besides representing emblems of power, worked as amulets, carriers of good luck and tools for curing illnesses.

Graphic 1.2: Example of Crucifix, *Nkangi Kiditu*

Nkangi kiditu, copper, Mafulamengo period
Wannyn, Robert L. L'Art Ancien du Métal au Bas-Congo

Mainly after the dissemination of work done by A. Fu-Liau Bunsenki-Lumanisa, who systemized the basic foundations of how his people understand the world and explain natural and supernatural phenomena, and the inquiries of Wyatt MacGaffey on the present day Bakongo, it became clear that, contrary to beliefs until then held by researchers devoted to those ethnic groups (usually missionaries or ethnologists connected to the Belgian colonial administration) the cross was not introduced together with Christianity. Actually, long before the arrival of the Europeans, it already served as an important vehicle

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of comprehension and relationship with the surrounding world, both visible and invisible.[33] The design of the cross indicates the basic cycle of life, conceived as based on the four points crossed by the sun in its circular and continuous movement: birth, when the sun appears on the horizon; maturity, when it reaches the zenith; death, when it sinks over the other side of the horizon; and the existence of the world of the dead, when it goes to the opposite side, lighting the invisible world from whence it continues its circular path to restart another cycle.

For the Bakongo, the division between a world of the living and another of the dead is fundamental. One lies above, the other below the horizon. Water is the element that keeps them separate but also serves to join the world of the living to that of the ancestors and nature spirits who inhabit the invisible half of the world. The cross' horizontal axis connects sunrise to sunset, human birth to human death, while the vertical axis joins the sun's peak both in the world of the living and of the dead, linking the two levels of existence. The connection between the world of the living and that of the dead - source of rules of conduct and assistance for the solution of earthly troubles, such as illness, drought and misfortune in general - is effected by means of rites invoking spirits and ancestors to resolve the issues at hand.

The cross, to the Bakongo way of thinking, points to the idea of life as a continuous cycle, similar to the rotation movement of the sun, as well as to the possibility of a link between the two worlds (see Graphic 1.3). According to Fu-Kiau, the basic rite, and the simplest of them all, recommended for whoever wishes to become a messenger of the world of the dead and a leader of his people or clan, is to make a speech while standing on a cross drawn on the ground. Thus, the sacred powers that every chief requires are underscored, since temporal and religious powers are intimately interwoven. When he stands on the cross, which represents the cycle of human life, the headman affirms his capacity to make the link between the two worlds and thus lead the community in a satisfactory manner.

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[33] A. Fu-Kiau Bunsenki-Lumanisa, *Le mukongo et le monde qui l'entourant*. French translation by C. Zamega-Batukezanga. Recherches et Synthèses n° 1. Office National de la Recherche et de Développment. Kinshasa, 1969. Wyatt MacGaffey, *Religion and Society in Central Africa*. Robert Farris Thompson also incorporated into his analisis the contributions of Fu-Kiau and MacGaffey; see among other texts, *The Four Moments of the Sun: Kongo Art in Two Worlds*. Washington, National Gallery of Art, 1981. For an interesting description, although charged with ethnocentric prejudice regarding the use of the crucifix amongst the Bakongo chiefs, see William Holman Bentley, *Pioneering on the Congo*, London, Johnson Reprint Company Ltda, 1970 (first edition, 1900), vol. I, pp. 35-6.

Graphic 1.3: The Four Moments of the Sun

The four moments of the sun.
Bunseki-Lumanisa, Fu-Kiau. *Le mukongo et le monde qui l'entourant.*
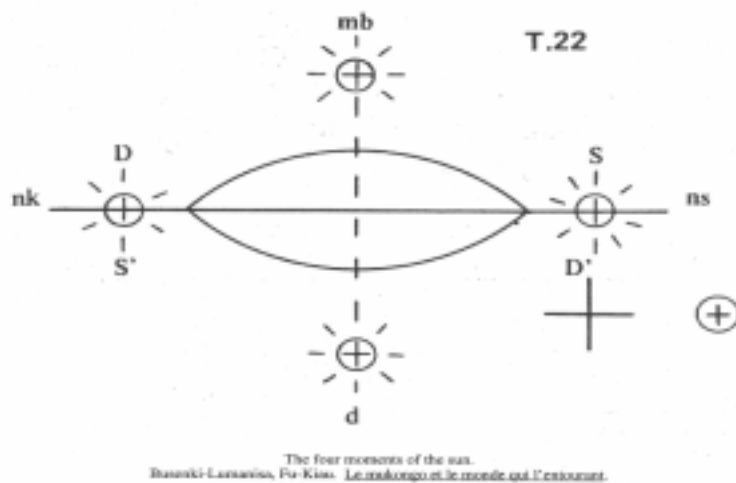
The importance of the cross among populations of the Angola region would also be noticed by an author who attributes its introduction to the efforts undertaken by Catholic missionaries ever since the first encounters with the Portuguese. Alfred Hauenstein, however, though accepting a Christian influence in decorative patterns that make use of the cross, raises the question of whether there were not other, more ancient, influences at work. To this end he recalls divination rites of the Ovimbundo (ethnic group that inhabits Angola) where the diviner draws a cross on the back of his hand as a necessary condition to enable him to reveal the hidden mysteries. Besides this rite there are others, where a cross is drawn on water held in a gourd, on a mirror or on the ground, the divination instruments being placed over it. In addition to its presence in rituals of worship, the cross appears in body tattoos, baskets and hairdos. Other authors, quoted by Hauenstein, reveal that the motif of the cross has been present ever since the Paleolithic, turning up systematically over thousands of years. [34] If we associate this ethnographic information to explanations made known by Fu-Kiau, we are confronted by the fact that the cross' value as a symbol of the connection between the world of the living and the world of spirits goes far beyond the frontiers of the Bakongo, fanning out over vaster areas of Central Africa.

Contemplation of the meanings that the cross held for the Bantu enables us to understand how important the crucifix was to populations of the ancient kingdom of Kongo, as demonstrated by the huge amount of such objects found among them, often in connection to ancestral relics, charms and power insignia of headmen whose role as intermediaries between the two worlds was of the utmost consequence. While the missionaries were satisfied to see their conversion efforts bear fruit and the *minkisi* be substituted for crucifixes, the natives absorbed the new symbol from the stand of their own cultural codes, believing they had acquired more powerful versions of their old religious objects, versions that would make it possible to direct the strength of the spirits to their specific goals.

Our specific interest here is, however, the small images of Saint Anthony and Our Lady known as *Toni Malau* and *Nsundi Malau*. Even though, among the Bakongo, they occupied a less relevant place than the crucifix, whose presence has been recorded since the early days when the Kongo headmen were converted to Catholicism and that was adopted, at the end of the 15th century, as an emblem of their

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[34] Alfred Hauenstein, *Examen de Motifs Décoratifs Chez les Ovimbundu et Tchokwe d'Angola*. Coimbra, Instituto de Antropologia, Universidade de Coimbra, 1988, pp. 27-31.

closely interwoven temporal and religious powers. The small sculptures, also referred to as products of the *mafumalengo* period (when commercial relations were most intense with the Portuguese, as was the expansion of Christianity resulting from these encounters) are basically of European inspiration and were used for magical-religious purposes in accordance with Bakongo symbolic codes. *Toni* is a contraction of Anthony, a saint whose cult, as seen above, was quite far-reaching in the kingdom of Kongo. *Malau*, in most Kikongo dialects, expresses the idea of luck, success, conquest, and opportunity. *Toni Malau*, therefore, was supposedly a Saint Anthony who made fortune smile on its owner, that is, a charm to obtain good things. Similarly, *Nsundi Malau* would be a lucky Our Lady, *nsundi* designating a young woman who has not yet known sex.[35]

Small statues belonging to these two categories, at present collectors items but produced in ancient times, during the days of the *mafumalengo*, show signs of wear in some parts indicating they have been rubbed against the body to cure illnesses.[36] There is sign that these objects, usually made in accordance to European aesthetic standards, reproducing Catholic symbols, often permeated by symbolic and decorative Bakongo details, were employed following the traditional magical-religious practices of Central Africa. They therefore served as means for people to try and cure illnesses, obtain success in daily affairs (such as women's fertility, good hunting and harvests) and to solve a number of problems (such as identifying and punishing eventual aggressors whose actions resulted in damage to the person in question), in short, as tools of good fortune.

Some of these functions were also attributed to the saints in Brazil, in Portugal and other parts of Europe, where the Catholicism practiced by the people, often distant from the strict control of the Catholic Church's orthodoxy, was blended with ancient beliefs and pagan rituals. As mentioned above, the Catholicism in effect along the 16th, 17th and18th centuries included a great deal of magical thinking, meaning divine forces were called upon to intervene in matters of daily life. These aspects of religion survive to this day in some segments of the population, faithful to traditional behavior patterns, and this is especially valid for Brazil. The use of images of saints and crucifixes as vehicles to obtain supernatural aid, following the Bakongo religious codes, was not unfamiliar to missionaries and other agents of European origin active in Central Africa, who understood such practices from the stand point of the European tradition. In a similar fashion, in Brazil the saints were granted a major role in relations with the sphere of the divine, for as a result of colonization, as there were not enough priests to cover the vast territory, the Catholic faith was practiced in a fairly free style by the population. As the liaison between mankind and God, saints were appealed to and, when requests were granted, appeased. But in case entreaties were denied, they could be punished by means of their images.

Upon reaching the Paraíba valley, forced to adopt the religion of their owners (if not already converted in Africa), the Bantu, specifically the Bakongo, must have found it relatively easy to accept the idea that images of saints were vehicles of communication with God, considering them to be magical-religious objects instrumental for eliciting supernatural aid, equivalent to the *minkisi*. The slave owners, on the other hand, did not quite realize that while making use of the images of saints in their religious rites their slaves were acting mostly in consonance to codes of their own traditional beliefs, and not obeying the dogmas of the Roman Catholic Apostolic Church.

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[35] These meanings are found in Robert L. Wannyn, op. cit., pp. 42-3, who, however, does not make the connection between the meaning of the words and the significance of the objects, bearers of good fortune, that is, amulets. W.G.L.Randles, *L'Ancien Royaume du Congo*, pp 150-1, also mentions the popularity of the cult of Saint Anthony among the Kongolese, citing as proof the brass statuettes called *Toni Malau*, *malau* signifying good luck, success, conquest.

[36] Cf. Robert L. Wannyn, *L'Art Ancien du Métal au Bas-Congo*, p. 43, and "Ancient Religious Insigniae in Bas-Congo", *The Arts in Belgian Congo and Ruanda-Urundi*, p. 50; Douglas E. Bradley, *Christian Imagery in African Art: The Britt Family Collection*, The Snite Museum of Art, University of Notre Dame,1980, p. 10.

In this context, we may consider that the images of Saint Anthony made and used by Africans and their descendents in the valley of the Paraíba River, in São Paulo, were objects born from the meeting of different cultures and, in addition to incorporating symbolic aspects of distinct origins, they could be interpreted in different ways according to the cultural universe of the viewer.

5.   Magical-religious objects in Black Catholicism in Brazil

Retrieved in the 19th and 20th centuries in the ancient kingdom of Kongo, but dated mainly from the 16th and 17th centuries, these small images of Saint Anthony and Our Lady that denote the incorporation of Christian facets into the traditional Bakongo religion, were also produced in the Paraíba valley region, state of São Paulo, during the 19th century (see Graphic 1.4). The samples found in this area are, to the best of our knowledge, the only ones in the Americas. They were mostly made of pine wood knot, the hardest part of the pine tree, a rare and almost extinct species in the valley of the Paraíba River, but there are also some images made of horn, bone and lead. All of them, today part of collections, date from the eighteen hundreds. Known as Saint Anthony of the pine wood knot, these statuettes have a varied appearance and tend to be small scale, measuring between 15 and 3 centimeters high.

Eduardo Etzel, who collects religious images, is one of the few authors to mention these statuettes, some of which he purchased personally. In his view, everything points to their being amulets, sheltered in halos of mystery, *"for it is with great reluctance that some of their owners agree to show or even to mention them."*[37] According to the author, they are linked to the past but it is their purpose as talismans or good luck pieces that lends them significance. He attributes their creation to the Blacks, arguing that the hardness of the pine wood knot and its dark color link it to African ebony, while the rustic aspect of the pieces, besides "*strange signs, like crosses*" scattered over them, supposedly reveal the marks of a maker of African origin. Clues that connect these images of Saint Anthony to Africa are indicated, but cannot be decoded by the author, who is unacquainted with important aspects of the history and culture of those populations from whence the men taken to the valley of the Paraíba River were wrenched, made prisoners and enslaved in the first half of the 19th century.

The trail, however, does not yet vanish. It is Etzel himself who, with his brief but dense indications, continues to furnish clues, involuntarily contributing to determine the meaning of the statuettes. To demonstrate that ancient beliefs, in the framework of which these images gained relevance, were disappearing with the end of slavery, he mentions he was able to collect the pieces as some of them had been *"abandoned at holy crosses."* The cross is a vital feature in the practice of popular religiosity as well as the major symbol of official Catholicism. Simultaneously, as seen above, it is central to the cosmogony of the Bakongo, to whom it represents the basic principles of their cognition system. The fact that these statuettes where left next to "holy crosses" points to meanings much more complex than a mere *"relaxing of ancient beliefs"*.[38]

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[37] Eduardo Eztel, *Imagens religiosas de São Paulo. Apreciação histórica*. São Paulo, Edições Melhoramentos, Editora da Universidade de São Paulo, 1970, p. 152. Stanislaw Herstal, *Imagens Religiosas do Brasil*, São Paulo, Authors' edition in collaboration with the Sociedade Brasileira de Expansão Comercial Ltda, 1956, p. 33, also mentions the amulet aspect of these statuettes, which he calls small "*pocket*" images, adding that "*jealously kept from the eyes of strangers, they passed unnoticed from generation to generation*".

[38] Idem, p. 155. In popular Brazilian Catholicism the cross if venerated as a symbol of Jesus' martyrdom and merits a special feast, on May 3rd, in places usually far from the towns, villages or rural neighborhoods, where a "holy cross" is erected, often protected by a roof, and where on the feast day the people gather to pray, sing and then dance, eat and drink, after the habitual pattern of Brazilian popular religious feasts, according to which the religious celebration is followed by the worldly feast. In the region of the Paraíba valley, mainly among rural communities, the "feast of the Holy Cross" is common to this day.

If we correlate Etzel's information, that many of the images he collected were found next to *"holy crosses,"* to the importance of this symbol in the totality of Bakongo explanations of the life cycle and of the relationship between the natural and supernatural worlds, this data gains a dimension he could not have supposed to exist, considering he ignored how crucial this symbol was for the Bantu, inhabitants of the region from where most of the Paraíba valley slaves came from. Even when converted to Christianity and employing the symbolic language furnished by this religion, their choice of certain details over others was inspired by the cultural grammar of their upbringing. When they placed those statues next to the cross, the slaves and their descendents were in a sense touching base with the world of the dead and of the spirits employing, to this end, not only an object permeated by magical-religious meanings but also a space, as seen, that was basic for communication between the two worlds: one of the living, another of the dead, the spirits and the ancestors who were on call to solve problems of life on earth.

Graphic 1.4: Afro-Catholic Religious Images, Brazil

Herstal, Stanislaw. Images Religiosas do Brasil (Religious Images of Brazil). Grafinec; São Paulo, 1956. These are small pocket images, amulets (founded in São Paulo with a ring or incision for hanging), distinguished from all others by their style, absence of polychromy and by the material employed: knot of pine-wood or lead.

In the kingdom of Kongo, the crucifix seems to have been the article of Christian origin best accepted by local communities, and this was probably due to the fact that Christianity was practiced mainly by the elite in power. Associated to the possibility of connecting the world of the living to that of the dead, and to the idea of a circuit within which mankind's life unfolded, the crucifixes became fundamental emblems of headmen, the leaders who directed community life by resorting to the other world where they found the best ways to solve matters they needed to settle. As for the images of saints, mainly the *Toni Malau* and *Nsundi Malau*, they were supposedly talismans like many others, unconnected to relations of power where the rulers were the link with the spirits. Perhaps because they lacked meanings associated to headmen, these statuettes proliferated on American soil where power relations were mediated by the slave system that had destroyed the old African social organizations.

No longer able to resort to the security offered by the ruler, who was both judge and priest, guarantee of a good harvest and health, sustained as he was by   the spirits, the enslaved Africans submitted to new forms of social organization accepted Christianity - already known to many of them who came from the region of the Kongo and Angola - and adopted, at the same time, more individualistic and direct relations with the Beyond, using these small images of saints as go-betweens to mediate this relationship.

Saint Anthony, long familiar to the Bakongo, was the saint most chosen to play the role of messenger between men and spirits, and once again the Catholic priests did not question the relations developed between Blacks and the saint, because in popular European Catholicism, as in its colonial version, these divine emissaries were often called upon to intervene in a vast spectrum of earthly affairs, such as the need to find a husband, an object that had disappeared or a runaway slave. The saint's image was often treated as if it were alive (see Graphic 1.5). . Whenever it granted entreaties it was rewarded with flowers, adornments and new clothes, not to mention the prayers and feasts offered in his or her honor. But failing to shower the requested blessings on its owner it was punished by being plunged headfirst in water, dumped in a dark corner or by having the image of the child Jesus taken from its lap. Punishments were only suspended when the owner was granted the blessing requested of the saint.

The way Saint Anthony was used by the Blacks of Bakongo origin is very different from the equivalencies between Catholic saints and African entities pointed out by scholars who study Afro-American religions, usually of West African provenance. According to the latter mechanism, Christian names and representations are associated to African concepts, and this is often applied to the Afro-American religions set up in Brazil (candomblé and umbanda) and in Caribbean countries such as Cuba (santería) and Haiti (voodoo). In these cases the saints have been linked to certain entities, based either on their representations, when these allowed equivalencies to be remarked, or on the similarities between the African myths and Catholic legends. Thus details such as the color of a garment or the shape of an ornament , used to represent a saint or an African entity (orishas or voodoos), might justify the association. In addition to the parallels traced between attributes ingrained in Christian hagiography and West African representations, the myths that accompany entities and saints, as just mentioned, also helped to establish equivalencies. Examples are the association between saint Barbara, a fragile woman whose martyrdom unleashed the fury of God, making him cast lightening rods on earth, and Xango, a virile man, god of thunder. But these Catholic saints merely serve to represent the African entities, for the latter's power does not lie in their images but in rocks, herbs, plants and talismans, always present on the altars next to the Catholic images.[39]

This dissociation between images of saints and depositaries of the entities' power does not occur in the pine wood knot Saint Anthony statuettes, for these simultaneously represent the saint and host his powers as protector and bearer of good luck. It was also not an association established in the New World that led them to be adopted by the populations of African origin as magical-religious objects, for the image was already known and used as a talisman in their homeland. What took place on Brazilian soil

[39] Cf. James R. Curtis, "Santeria: Persistence and Change in Afro-Cuban Cult Religion", in *Objects of Special Devotion. Fetishes and Fetishism in Popular Culture*. Org. Ray B. Browne, Bowling Green, Ohio, Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1982. There is a vast bibliography on Afro-American religions broaching this subject. Some examples are: For Brazil, Roger Bastide, *Les Religions Africaines au Brésil*, 1960; Arthur Ramos, *A aculturação negra no Brasil*, 1942; Nina Rodrigues, *Os Africanos no Brasil*, 1932; Edison Carneiro, "Os cultos de origem africana no Brasil", 1959; Mary Karasch, *Slave Life in Rio de Janeiro 1808-1850*, 1987. For Cuba, Renato Ortiz, *Los negros brujos*, 1917; Lydia Cabrera, *El Monte*, 1975, e *La Regla Kimbisa del Santo Cristo del Buen Viaje*, 1986, among others. For Haiti, Alfred Métraux, *Black Peasants and Voodoo*, 1960; Luc de Heusch, "Kongo in Haiti: A New Approach to Religious Syncretism", 1989. Examples of some studies that deal with the Americas as a whole are: Robert Farris Thompson, *Face of the Gods. Art and Altars of Africa and the African Americas*, 1993; George Eaton Simpson, *Black Religions in the New World*, 1978; Angelina Pollak-Eltz, *Cultos Afroamericanos (Vudu y Hechiceria en las Americas)*, 1977.

was the proliferation of these images, in a certain period and region, when and where there arrived a great many people of Bantu origin, enslaved in their ancestral land.

Graphic 1.5: Image of St. Anthony from the Eighteenth Century, Brazil

SAINT ANTHONY
Late 18th Century
Alcobaça

Portuguese sculpture.
Herstal, Stanislaw. *Imagen Religiosas do Brasil (Religious Images of Brazil)*. Graficas: São Paulo, 1996.

The adoption of Catholicism was a way to blend the Africans and their descendents into slave society, encouraged by owners and official administrators and accepted by the Black communities. The latter nevertheless had their own particular forms of living religion, reinterpreting symbols, rites and dogmas from the point of view of their original cultures. As we have seen, these processes of reinterpretation were common in Central Africa and also took place in Brazil, even during the oppression imposed by slave society. The grievous lack of records on Brazilian slaves' ways of life, especially regarding how they exercised their religiosity, lend the utmost significance to even sparse and fragmented information. The small statuettes of Saint Anthony, examples of cultural products formed in the circuit that joined Portugal, Africa and Brazil, are therefore clues that serve to spotlight aspects of the life of Blacks in the valley of the Paraíba River in the 19th century.

If, as Melville Herskovits states, the theoretical deepening of acculturation processes largely depends on the research undertaken, as well as on comparative studies between the different American societies who received African slaves, the analysis of this particular case, restricted in time and space, may gain a different dimension when taken as an example of a process of symbol reinterpretation based on a cognition apparatus distinct from the one that originally created them. Analyzing the historical processes, and the processes of cultural transformation that resulted in the creation of the pine wood knot Saint Anthony statues, I here propose a new possible path for dealing with the issue of the incorporation of

Catholic features by Black communities, judging these features to have been adopted after they were interpreted by the light of fundamental aspects of Bantu religiosity. Always open to incorporate new components, the Bakongo integrated the small images of Saint Anthony to their beliefs, using them in congruence with their own traditions, accepting them fully and not only as disguises for hidden meanings. They were thus embracing conversion, adopting the teachings of the Catholic Church insofar as they could understand them, by way of their own cultural grammar.

Considering that every cultural process is dynamic, the analysis here proposed is valid for a determined period during which the presence of Bakongo ways of thinking, feeling and behaving were more intense due to how near their original cultural universe were to those just arrived in a new society. With the suspension of the slave trade, these bonds to their culture of origin ceased to be renewed through recent arrivals. Thus, features pertaining to the dominant groups, that is, he Catholic religion, gradually gained strength. More and more integrated into the language of popular Brazilian Catholicism as a whole, the grammar of Bantu culture would, however, remain inscribed in the material utilized by the Africans and their descendents to express their beliefs and exercise their religiosity.

6.   The morphology of the sculptures

There are a good number and various types pf pinewood knotted Saint Anthony images belonging to some private Brazilian collections and to the Center of Afro-Brazilian Studies of the University of São Paulo. Their existence was made public mainly by these collectors and a few exhibitions and publications that they have appeared in, the most recent of which organized by Emanoel Araújo, a scholar devoted to Afro-Brazilian art.[40]

In some of these saints the influence of popular Portuguese imagery is clearly visible in the proportions between the different parts of the image, in the definition of details such as facial features, limbs and garments, the whole composing a relatively realistic picture of the saint with his Franciscan cassock, the child Jesus at his left seated on the book, at his right the cross. However, in most of these little saints it is the Bantu aesthetic traditions, with their formal simplification that prevail over the realism, and the highlighting of symbolically important aspects. Among these, the cross is to be distinguished, always present, while the book appears more rarely and the child Jesus is often absent.

Graphic 1.6: Images of St. Anthony from the Nineteenth and Twentieth Century, Brazil

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[40]See Carlos A.C. Lemos, "O Santo Antonio de nó de pinho", in *Arte e Religiosidade no Brasil. Heranças Africanas*, São Paulo, Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo, II Encontro Nacional da Cultura, Ministry of Culture, 1977; "A imaginária dos escravos de São Paulo", in *A Mão Afro-Brasileira*, São Paulo, Técnica Nacional de Engenharia, 1988, and *A Imaginária Paulista*, São Paulo, Edições Pinacoteca, 1999; Francisco de Castro Ramos Neto, "'Nó de pinho': imaginária católica afro-brasileira em São Paulo", in *Os herdeiros da noite. Fragmentos do imaginário negro*. Textos de Emanoel Araújo et al. Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo, 1995. Exhibition promoted by the Ministry of Culture at the Centro de Cultura de Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais, 12/21/1995 to 2/5/1996. Apart from these publications I am acquainted with only three other works that mention these images, two of which already quoted: *Imagens Religiosas do Brasil*, by Stanislaw Herstal; *Imagens Religiosas de São Paulo*, by Eduardo Eztel, and "'Malungu, *ngoma* vem!' África coberta e descoberta no Brasil", *Revista USP*, n 12 (Dec/Jan/Feb, 1991-92), by Robert Slenes, who is also doing work on the devotion to Saint Anthony among the blacks of Bantu origin in the valley of the Paraíba river. In the exhibition "Redescobrimento do Brasil" promoted in São Paulo (April to September 2000), by the Fundação Bienal as part of the celebrations for the 500 years of Brazil's discovery, in the block organized by Emanoel Araújo, entitled "Negro de corpo e alma" ("Black in body and soul"), many pine wood knot Saint Athonys were on display.
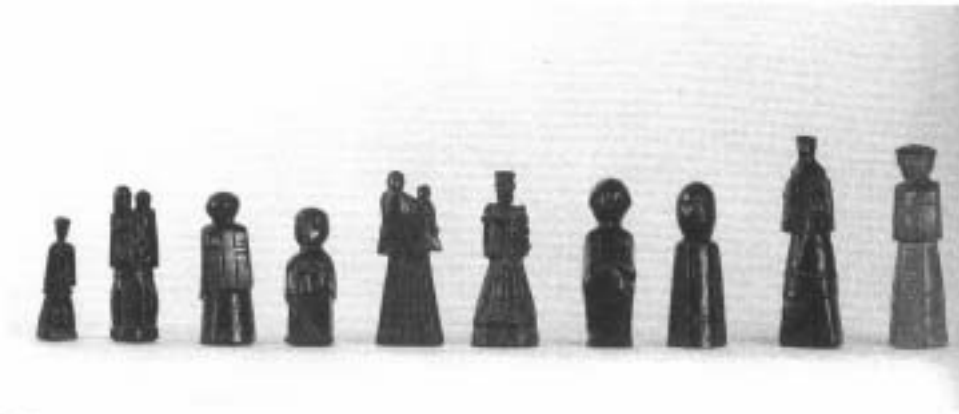
Saint Anthony, Paraíba River Valley. *Arte e Religiosidade no Brasil: Heranças Africanas*.

The small statues almost always display three well defined parts: the head, the trunk - that forms a compact whole with the arms more or less suggested by the carving but never separate from the body - and a circular base that completes the Franciscan vestment when this is defined (see Graphic 1.6). This basic structure of the sculpture recalls that described by Robert Hottot when he registered what he named Teke[41] "fetishes." According to this author, who was in the area in 1906 to carve an image that would be transformed into a magical-religious object (*nkisi*) after receiving the necessary substances and going through the required rites, the sculptor divided in three a cylinder of wood, specially chosen, and chiseled out the head, trunk and lightly delineated arms, and the legs.[42] This pattern, that may be considered an

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[41]Bantu people, also named Tio, inhabiting the right bank of the Zaire river at Lake Stanley (known as Malebo Pool until the end of the 19th century) and with which the Bakongo traded since before the arrival of the Portuguese in the 15th century.

[42]Robert Hottot, Frank Willet, "Teke Fetishes", *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, vol 86, n 1 Jan/Jun, 1956, 25-36.

element of the Bantu cultural grammar, seems to have inspired the shape of the pine wood knot Saint Anthony statues found in Brazil, the volume of the legs oftentimes substituted for the round base of the image, as they were hidden by the Franciscan vestment, so the trunk and lower limbs became one piece. Although the final shape may differ, the division in three parts is clear both in the Brazilian statuettes and the religious objects of worship of the Teke.

Continuing to read these small wood figures as a product of the interpretation of Christian symbols by the light of the Bakongo cultural grammar, we may underscore the erect posture of the saint, with his hands in front of him, either joined or holding the cross and the child or, most often, just the cross. In all these situations the hands are in front of the body. Robert Farris Thompson says that the standing body recalls a decisive intervention insofar as its attests his power, remaining in balance and controlling the force of gravity, and that the gesture of laying both palms over the stomach, called *simbidila*, "holding firm" is, among the Bembe, a Bantu people, a sign of prayer. When one places both hands over the stomach one leaves behind matters pertaining to the inferior level, such as envy and vengeance, proceeding to raise mind and heart to higher levels. With this gesture, one prepares the terrain, organizes the surroundings, and clears the air of possible discussions in order to attain positive goals[43]. The pinewood knotted "Saint Anthonys" are almost always at prayer, either with their hands joined in front of their stomach, in a slight variation of the Catholic tradition in which the hands are held at chest level, or with their hands placed side to side, close to the *simbidila* gesture. Even when they hold the child Jesus and the cross, the saints' hands are side by side, over their stomach. This gesture indicates the person represented by the image is, to Catholics as well as to Bantu, directing his mind to God, *Nzambi Mpungo* or both, blended as the cultures they sprung from.

The pinewood knotted "Saint Anthonys," made of a particularly hard wood difficult to find in the region where they were produced, have aesthetic patterns close to those prevailing in certain parts of Central Africa, with sharply significant postures and always prominently displaying the cross – the major symbol of mediation between the worlds of the living and of the dead, as well as of the cycle of human existence (see Graphic 1.7). When decoded from the point of view of the Bakongo cultural grammar, they acquire a dimension that goes far beyond that of mere amulets and good luck charms. In these small magical-religious objects, particular forms of relating to the supernatural, specific to the Bantu, are inscribed. The choice of the wood is certain to have a meaning that escapes us, but is evidently connected to its hardness and rarity, just as the animal, vegetal and mineral substances that integrate the *bilongo*, which activates the strength of the spirit contained in the *nkisi*, are chosen based on associations between their names and qualities, and the names and qualities of things upon which the spirit is requested to act, like in a punning, were the sounds of the substances' names are associated to the sounds of the names of actions the spirits are supposed to perform.

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[43]Robert Farris Thompson, *African Art in Motion. Icon and Art*. Los Angeles, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1974, p.49.

Graphic 1.7: Examples of St. Anthony with Cross, Brazil

Saint Anthony, left and middle made of ox-horn, right made of copper.
Etzel, Eduardo. Imagens Religiosas de São Paulo. Edições Melhoramentos Editora da Universidade de São Paulo; 1971.
A esquerda: Fig. 1 Santo Antônio, ponta de chifre, 6 cm. Notar a grande cruz e os sinais em X e os traços; à direita: Fig. 2
Santo Antônio, chumbo, 6,3 cm.

     Their aesthetic pattern, borrowed from the European model, would reach total independence in Brazil. The small sculptures were often identified as Saint Anthony merely because they were so called, since there was nothing in their appearance that was akin to the saint's current likeness. These images were stylized representations, quite congruent with the African taste, of a standing figure with his hands placed before him and a cross drawn over the trunk at the level of the chest or legs, only occasionally at the level of the hands (See Graphic 1.8). Imprisoned, wrenched from their social and cultural milieu, brought to the region of the Paraíba River valley already in the last stage of the slave trade, and accepting Christianity (one of the main ideological justifications of slavery) after their own fashion, when they chiseled and used these small magical-religious images the Blacks were expressing concepts and values specific to their cultures of origin.

Graphic 1.8: Stylized Images of St. Anthony, Brazil

Fig. 86 Peças de Santo Antônio, de 6 a 5 cm de altura. Tôdas de nó de pinho, salvo a quarta imagem da esquerda para a direita, em cedro.

Saint Anthony, made of pine-knot.
Etzel, Eduardo. Imagens Religiosas de São Paulo. Edições Melhoramentos. Editôra da Universidade de São Paulo; 1971.

As we analyze the morphology of these pieces, we notice that the images of Saint Anthony seem to have embodied, in this part of Brazil, meanings that are much more complex that those current in Central Africa, where the statuettes found were usually made of copper and much more in line with European aesthetic and symbolic standards (see Graphic 1.9). It was far away from their homeland and their native community that the Africans and their descendents became vehicles for the expression of Bantu concepts, simplifying the representation of the saint as much as possible and putting the cross in special relief, thus asserting their own specific aesthetics and cosmogony, substantially distinct from those proposed by the slave owners. As they were prevented from enacting traditional rites in which the *minkisi* played a central part, either due to a lack of *ngangas* capable of celebrating them or to the limitations imposed by the slaves owner's repression, the little saints, or *Toni Malau* - in Central Africa used as talismans, devoid of any crucial function in the magical-religious liturgy - came to occupy another, more important position. Still employed as good luck charms and to cure illnesses when rubbed over the affected body parts, they in time also came to serve as a link between the two worlds, this purpose being revealed by the prominence granted to crosses in the small sculptures, and the fact that they were found "*abandoned at holy crosses.*"

In this way, the appropriation of the saint here described is completely different from that existing in Afro-American religions, where the Catholic saint is a representation, among others, of African gods and spirits. The pinewood knotted "Saint Anthonys", products of the Bantu culture of slave communities sold

to plantations owners in the Paraíba River valley where they developed new social relations, and new forms of religiosity, are magical-religious objects through which men kept in touch with the sacred and the supernatural, that is, not a mere disguise for African beliefs, as suggested by scholars of candomblé, umbanda, santería and voodoo. As there is news of their existence only in this region of the Americas during the 19th century, they constitute a unique example of a cultural creation, restricted to a determined time and place, during which the influences of Central African peoples were intense. As the mix became more acute, the Bantu meanings were diluted into the miscegenation of signs, values, behaviors and world visions of African and Europeans, and the pine wood knot saints became restricted to family relics chests and to collectors. Their existence, however, allows us to contemplate the processes by which some Africans and theirs descendents used their own cultural grammar in order to adapt to the slave society they were forced to become part of.

Graphic 1.9: Image of St. Anthony, Sixteenth Century (Africa)

IMAGE FOUND IN RUINS OF CATHEDRAL, SAN SAL-VADOR

Saint Anthony.

In *Among the Primitive Bakongo*, John Weeks says that a person gave him this wooden object, and that the object had belonged to that person's family for several generations. Also, Weeks says that the object dates back to the sixteenth century. The drawing above is in *Pioneering on the Congo*, by Rev. William Holman Bentley. Rev. Bentley and John Weeks were in the Congo at the same time and it is probable that Bentley saw the object and drew the picture above. However, Bentley claims that this object was found in the ruins of San Salvador cathedral.

7.   Final considerations

The case here analyzed differs from what happened with Afro-American religions, where rites, teachings, and symbols of African origin predominated in the structure of new religions, amongst which candomblé, santería and voodoo, as well as in the Black Christianity developed mainly in the southern United States. In the latter example, as the images that mediate the relationship with God are absent, the faithful must address the Lord directly and the words of the Bible are more essential than any ritual. In this situation the influence of an African cultural grammar is noticeable in the introduction of forms of worship, such as the chorus replying to the preacher's discourse, hand clapping and chanting into with ancestral rhythms and musicality were blended leading the faithful to a state of trance typical of African religions. While in the first examples mentioned the Catholic elements are peripheral, and not actually part of the structure of explanations and symbols developed by the new religions, in the second case it is the African features that are peripheral, guiding some behaviors and ways of exercising a religiosity that remains, however, essentially Christian. If in one case the African cultural grammar prevailed, in the other it only made itself felt in formal aspects of the faith.

Accepting the variety of situations which result from the encounter between different cultures whose basic features were combined in different ways, it is best to analyze them grounded on an understanding of the cognition mechanism within the cultures in question, perceiving the processes of symbol reinterpretation inserted in their historical contexts. It is thus possible to avoid sticking labels on them, such as *acceptance*, *adaptation* or *reaction*, which only serve to measure the intensity or the direction of the transformations without explaining the new cultural products' creative processes or the reinterpretation of their symbols. We can only understand a culture based on an acquaintance with the fundamental principles that guide the thinking and conduct of the people who create and activate it. And as we understand these cultures, we will be taking steps towards a better knowledge of the society in which they exist and acquire meaning, as well as of the people who are part of them.

Just as a building, apt to shelter a great many people and to be used in a number of ways, is made brick by brick, counting of the joint effort of a huge team, each with their specific wisdom and each indispensable to the final goal, a society is made of small contributions. Therefore, awareness of the meaning and value of each one of them rounds off our knowledge of society as a whole. With this in mind, I dare believe that the analysis here undertaken will help us become better acquainted with the history and thought mechanisms of a significant part of the Brazilian population, traditionally excluded from what has been termed citizens' rights, such as the fruition of the benefits offered by social organization (such as decent education, health, leisure, work and housing) and participation in political decisions with a direct impact on everybody's lives. When we divulge the fact that behind behaviors considered superstitious and ignorant there lies a different approach to reality, with its own innate logic and its own history, we intend to emphasize that there exists no such thing as superior and inferior cultures, nor anything that can justify the domination of one by the other.

The Wonderful Wizard of Washington:
The Tale and Case of the Smithsonian Institution

Maria de Lourdes Parreiras Horta[44]

1.   Introduction

This paper will propose that the Smithsonian Institution, in Washington, D.C., can be used as a potential model for heritage sites and museums in Brazil that are under the authority of the federal government. Given its public mission, management, structure, the current changes being implemented, and those proposed for the future, the Smithsonian is a source of inspiration as one of the most important museums and research organizations in the world.

I have principally based my comments and observations on the following sources:

a) interviews with certain key persons inside the organization;
b) the web site of the Smithsonian (mainly the Office of Public Affairs and various reports from the Secretaries, Board, Directors and other senior staff) which provides financial reports for the Institution's resources and expenditures[45];
c) selected bibliographies on the subject as well as articles from books, magazines, and other publications;
d) the annual publications of the Smithsonian Institution (1996 to 1999) and some partial institutional reports from 2000.

Another important source of information, perhaps more telling than those referred to above, has been my direct observations from the field. I have gone through the many museums along the Mall to try to

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[44] I would like to express my kindest feelings and gratitude to the staff at the Woodrow Wilson Center, who gave me the most friendly and warm reception and support: my thanks go to Ralph Espach, Arlyn Charles, Kathy Morse, Lindsay Collins, Heather Golding, and to the Library staff, Zdenek David, Janet Spikes and Cassandra Osterloh. I am most thankful as well to Ben Amini, for providing me such an intelligent and helpful student, Scott Wiliamson, who as an intern gave me great help with research and bibliographical matters. Thank you as well to Rositta Hickman who helped when those "dot.com" things did not work so well. This exciting adventure, along paths that led me through this wonderful land of the Smithsonian realm, would not have been possible without the support of the Ministry of Culture of Brazil under the initiative of Minister Francisco Weffort, a former Woodrow Wilson Center Scholar. He proposed increasing scholarship opportunities for Brazilian specialists and experts in various fields and found the means for that to happen, at first through a cooperative agreement with the Latin American Program at the WWIC, and afterwards through the "Brazil at the Woodrow Wilson Center" Project recently launched under the wise and expert direction of Luis Bitencourt. The rare opportunity to be in Washington, at the heart of museum heaven in the United States and with such excellent facilities and support for doing comparative work in the field as those provided by the WWIC, was something that surely contributed to my personal and professional enrichment and growth.

[45] Revenue and expenditure analysis has been completed by considering each of their sources: patrons, sponsors, associates, retail businesses, product development and licensing, marketing, public visitation and collections, buildings maintenance fees, staff management, outreach programs and educational activities

experience the Smithsonian phenomenon not only as a museum professional and critical observer but also as a foreign visitor in the midst of the crowd.

Despite this exploration, I have only begun to scrape the surface of this "virtual Castle" - the Smithsonian Institution- that is now in its 154th year of existence.   As the millennium begins, the Smithsonian is under a Secretary (the 11th in its history) whose pace and direction announce new times ahead.

My first conclusion drawn from this fascinating exploration is that two months[46] are not enough for one to go through the many paths of this organizational forest. The countless number of institutions, people, programs, activities, departments and offices, events, publications, stores and, of course, the endless river of visiting crowds, requires more time.

A second, paradoxical conclusion is that the Smithsonian (apart from being a Metro Station in the nation's capital) is as "virtual" as its web site. As my new intern from Texas once told me, he "was planning to go there, some of these days (…)" although there is no one physical place to find the "Smithsonian." Emerging from the Metro Station in central Washington, one sees a wide empty space, surrounded by trees and imposing buildings that in the summer is crowded with white tents and people of all colors and origins. This feature forces your eyes away from the area towards two opposing, but complementary perspectives: the Washington Monument on one side, pointing to the nations' past deeds and founders, and the Capitol, where the present and future of the American people are being constructed. This triangular quality, that becomes clearer after some reflection, is part of the Smithsonian's "kaleidoscopic" nature: unending, different and offering multiple images with every look.

From this observation, there is a third conclusion that is not difficult to reach. The Smithsonian is not a "place," nor a major "site" in the world of American museums, or a "thing" to be worshipped as a national attraction (less known only than the Statue of Liberty, as a recent poll revealed). Rather, the Smithsonian is virtually and effectively a "work in progress," an "open structure" continuously changing and transforming itself with the winds and tides of time. After learning a bit of the history of the organization, how it has developed, and observing the directions it seems to be taking today, I have come to view the Smithsonian phenomenon as a continuous process.   In the words of Marc Pachter, one of the principal historians on the Institution, the Smithsonian is a succession of happy (and sometimes not so happy) events. This series of occurrences has not always been planned or anticipated. They have just happened, successively or simultaneously, as they continue to do today. These events are as much a result of individual as they are collective ideas, efforts, dreams, beliefs and values, exchanges and negotiations, pressures and demands. Most importantly, they have been a product of the hard and creative work of everyone involved, from the past until the present, in this almost legendary institution. It is difficult to grasp this rich flow of change and transformation because institutions reflect the people who have built them and, in fact, they "are the people." For this reason, no institution can exist in itself because it inevitably bears the imprints of the individuals who have worked for it, in it, with it, or, at times, against it. Its staff and workers come to form part of the vital "blood" that maintains an institution alive through the generations. The Smithsonian is an outstanding example of longevity, stability, and vitality, only comparable with some of the older universities in America. In this sense, the Institution's success has been derived from its people.

Nevertheless, conflicts are inevitable in such a framework. This point brings me to my fourth conclusion: this "conflict" arises from friction. Friction, while being the source for heat and light, is responsible for the tensions that characterize the Smithsonian's institutional nature. These forces are actually what maintain the organization's ability to generate the level of "energy" necessary for "heating"

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[46] Two months was the length of my fellowship at the Woodrow Wilson Center in 2000.

its visitors hearts and feelings and for "enlightening" their minds and lives. More importantly, this energy has produced a synergy, both inside and outside the institution, among the different units, experts, staff, and volunteers which extends to society, from donors and sponsors to partners and the general public. The new Smithsonian Secretary, Larry Small, aims to foster such synergies and expand them throughout the institution and the country. Both his public comments and plans for restructuring the Smithsonian's management reflect these ideas.

These four observations lead to the central question that is at the core of any institutional analysis and which this paper tries to explore: what is the true "mission" of the Smithsonian Institution and how are its management strategies benefiting the American people and Institution itself?

2.   The "Explorer's Guide"

My discovery and the exploration of this wonderful phenomenon of institutional "wizardry" was made possible through the help of so many people, linked directly or indirectly to the Smithsonian organization. They were able to guide my first steps and give me some "hints" on which paths (or "aspects") to explore. I am grateful, thus, to Joseph Tulchin, Director of the Latin American Program at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. He not only offered me a place at the Center where I could conduct my research, but opened up many doors that led me to key personalities in the complex structure of the Smithsonian organization, and gave me some clear insights into the topic of institutional management. I am as much grateful to Dean Anderson, Director of Planning and Management at the Woodrow Wilson Center, who gave me firsthand, experienced insights into the Smithsonian's unique character and history, and helped me to speak with key persons within the Institution.

At the Smithsonian's "castle", I had the most helpful and knowledgeable Hamlet Paoletti, from the Office of Public Affairs, as my guide. He provided me with both basic and detailed information on the Institution, together with his personal views on and experience in the organization, and opened up many doors for me to other informed people. I am equally grateful for his supportive and friendly assistance that aided me in these efforts. Another key person who was Marc Pachter, the present Director of the National Portrait Gallery, who gave me some of the most brilliant and deep insights into the subject. He is an individual who continues to be an active and influential member of the Smithsonian administrative board and that has undoubtedly left his "imprint" on the Institution's direction and development. It was a great experience speaking with and getting to know him, and I am thankful for all his kindness and availability in discussing my questions on the subject.

Another important source of advice and support for my work was the staff at the Museum Reference Center of the Smithsonian Institution. Both Nancy Fuller and Stephen Weil provided me with an enlightened vision of the Smithsonian phenomenon and with a source of inspiration. I must also thank Valerie Wheat, at the Museum Reference Center's Library, for her great help and support in assisting me to compile a bibliography for my research.

I want to also acknowledge the fortunate opportunity I had to meet Carole Wharton, the Under Secretary of Finance and Administration, who was most kind to share her views and experiences of managing this incredible "machine" with me. Her department is truly the engine that has been driving the organization's "train" over the years.

I am so grateful for the chance to meet Dennis O'Connor, the Under Secretary of Science for both the former and present Secretary, who is one of the "key" persons in the organization. His sound experience and knowledge of the Smithsonian, and his long dedication to its development, make him one of the best sources I could have had to understand its scientific "spirit."   I am grateful as well to Carole Neves,

Director of Policy and Analysis, who shared with me her informed views on the organization as well as analytical studies on institutional policies and reforms that her department had developed. I am equally grateful to the staff of the Smithsonian Office of International Relations, especially to Brian Le May who gave me his insights into the organization, and to Ann Gossett, who shared her views and feelings on working with the Institution's Directors.

The "case" of the Smithsonian's impressive achievements and role in American society is an inspiration for the complex and provocative discussions that are currently taking place in Brazil. During this time of structural and administrative changes to the federal government's structures, all efforts are being made to find the best management and operational models for national museums and heritage institutions. Interest has arisen from the need to increase museums' effectiveness and social impact while at the same time providing for their maintenance and growth. For this reason, I am most grateful to all these people that have given me the unique opportunity to contribute in some way to this debate.

3.   The Smithsonian "Fairy-Tale"

It is perhaps not a mere coincidence that when I came to Washington, D.C., the Library of Congress was presenting an exhibition to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the most famous American fairy-tale, "The Wonderful Wizard of Oz" by L. Frank Baum.

Since its publication in 1900, the book has had a universal appeal and has reached the status of an American "icon" for its fanciful and lyrical creations. Oz metaphors are deeply embedded in the American psyche. This power comes from the fact that the book can be seen as an early attempt to construct a fairy tale out of American ideals. Frank Baum has added many characters and aspects from the American reality of the early twentieth-century to the common elements of European tales like those about witches, wizards and talking animals. These features include a portrayal of rural American life and a focus on the fury of nature (i.e. hurricanes and cyclones). First, the characterizations of the scarecrow, as always looking for some "brains," and the tin man, in an endless search for a "heart," are metaphorical for the risks posed by a technological society. Second, the cowardly lion, an animal not found in America outside circuses, offers an ironic commentary (and perhaps a moral lesson) on what true power and courage are. Lastly, there is Dorothy. In her ruby slippers, which are interestingly now a prized object at the Museum of American History, she attempts to wage a moral fight against the wicked witch and lead her most unusual party of friends to the wonderful and magical Land of Oz. Their quest is to reach the Wizard who is rumored to be able to make anyone's wish come true, somewhere over the rainbow…

The textual story, in its entirety, is a reflection of the young American nation at the end of the nineteenth century, its search for national identity, and the fulfillment of this dream. "Dangers" along the way include the forces of nature and the prevailing environmental conditions that must be controlled. The obscure forces of ignorance and hate, as represented by the witches and winged monkeys of the story, are also a threat to be combated. Lastly, the character of the great Wizard and King of Oz can be considered a subtle critique of the problems facing the new nation. Its politicians and false prophets that hold power through manipulative skills can be paralleled to the Wizard, a simple man who has the ability to project the image of a powerful entity in order to impress his people. The idea of a very diverse group of characters that comes together reflects the solidarity and spirit of collaboration that have inspired and moved American society since its beginnings. This quest, both for Dorothy and her friends as well as for the American people, does not seem to have ended.

The Smithsonian Institution can be seen in many ways as a mirror of the Oz metaphor, reflecting the new society of America. As Marc Pachter suggests, Brazilian and American societies have something in common in this regard. They are both products of young nations that are still in the process of constructing their present, creating their future, and defining for themselves the notion of "national

identity." One could argue that cultural institutions, like museums, schools, and universities, can help to foster this notion. However, Mr. Pachter feels that these institutions do not build a "national" ideal but simply "reflect" it by reacting, responding, and reinforcing social demands, changes, and ideals. These comments are directly applicable to the case of the Smithsonian, which has not had a "master plan" since its inception. The history of the Smithsonian, as Mr. Pachter explains, has been characterized by a series of accidents that have led to its current incarnation: "At the beginning, nobody knew what it should actually be, whether a College, a Research Institution, a Museum, a Library…these series of events, absolutely accidental, have led to decisions, initiatives and changes which are still taking place today." Mr. Pachter offers the astute observation that as a responsive institution, the Smithsonian "…can never make grand plans."[47]

As if echoing Baum's tale, the Smithsonian started its institutional life at the wise hand of Joseph Henry (32-year term: 1846 -1878). Henry was perhaps the most renowned scientist in the United States during his time. He set up the first network of 200 weather observers throughout the country and took advantage of the newly invented telegraph to place some of them as far away as the Bermudas, South America and Canada.   Henry's actions were perhaps the seeds that began the Institution's extended activities in environmental fields.[48]   Since then, the Smithsonian has become a leader in scientific areas through partnerships and cooperative efforts. This strategy has probably been one of the main "secrets" to the Smithsonian's great impact on and recognition by other cultural and scientific institutions around the world.

Henry oversaw the Smithsonian during a period that ignored regions of the country were rediscovered through research expeditions to places like Alaska and the Southwest. While all bore the adventurous and exciting spirit of Dorothy's journey, they more importantly contributed to the formation of the first collections in American natural history and ethnography and would later serve as the basis for other Smithsonian museums.

Today, many of the Institution's archives and collections of American history highlight the politics and power struggles that have occurred as if parallel to those taking place in the Land of Oz.   The Smithsonian's collections deal with anything from political personalities and presidential campaigns to revolutions and social pressures. Even the current topics of human rights, gender relations, and equal opportunities are areas available for exploration, both in the book as well as through the Smithsonian archives, exhibitions, and storage facilities.

Similar to the moral that Baum's fable finally proposes when Dorothy wishes to go back to the farm, the message "there's no place like home" pervades all the exhibits and archives of the Institution. For example, the history of technology and its evolution, as represented by the odd tin man in Baum's fictitious story, can be discovered at the American History Museum, the Air and Space Museum, or the Cooper-Hewitt Design Museum in New York City. Meanwhile, lions of any mood or character can be found at the National Zoo. Finally, the balloon that brings Dorothy back home can be encountered not only at the Air and Space Museum but also in the "Exploration of the Universe" exhibit[49].   Throughout all of these exhibits, the constant theme is a pride and unwavering trust in the home land, spirited by feelings of national identity and citizenship.

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[47] Marc Pachter, interview with the author, June 1st.2000
[48] By 1857, the Smithsonian was producing weather reports for much of the Eastern half of the United States, which were then published by the Washington Evening Star. From this foundation the government created the U.S. Weather Bureau, in 1869. In "The Smithsonian Institution, a World of Discovery: an Exploration of Behind-the-Scenes Research in the Arts, Sciences, and Humanities", Mark Bello et.al., Smithsonian Institution, 1993.
[49] This exhibit can be found at the Astrophysical Laboratory, maintained by the Smithsonian in partnership with Harvard University.

The Institution's location and integration with the surrounding area is equally representative in this sense. The red brick road of the Smithsonian Institution, from the Castle past its many buildings, along the Mall and away from it, leads to Capitol Hill. It is here that the abstract ideal of a democratic nation is materialized everyday in congressional discussions and decisions. Looking to the past, the Smithsonian road then points in the direction of the Washington Monument. As a national landmark, it symbolizes the moments and leaders that helped to found America.

By observing the Smithsonian in this manner from the outside, it appears representative of a "cultural fairy-tale." It lacks nothing that a romantic, post-medieval Tuscan castle might have, being everywhere yet nowhere at the same time. This appearance gives the institution an aspect of something magical that mystifies all its visitors. It has multiple spaces and underground labyrinths where a myriad of unknown people (the "green jackets" of this tale) do their work and give life to an enchanted land. The Smithsonian could even be compared to a real kingdom. The king, wizards, feudal lords, and "army" of workers that make up the Smithsonian kingdom keep its doors open to millions of visitors each year. However, this characterization does not mean that the "wizardry" of the institution (its hidden aspects) is apparent to everyone. It remains like other museums in America as a "sacred grove."[50]

The nickname, "the Nation's Attic," could also be used to describe the Smithsonian. This name accurately characterized the Institution during the mid-twentieth century because of the incredible amount of collections it housed. In this great "attic," among pieces of historical significance, one found the icons of American popular culture, its arts, and sciences. Most importantly, it was here that the American "spirit of curiosity" was encountered. The national quest for knowledge always led Smithsonian scientists much further than the institution's walls, into unlimited fields of research. Such exploration brought the vision of Joseph Henry to reality that the Smithsonian would and should be a "college for discoverers."

As in the fairy-tale of Baum, the objects and artifacts of the Smithsonian's collections have come to form the "bricks" that continue to pave the road to where the ideas of a nation and national identity dwell. In the tradition of most fairy-tales, the Smithsonian's story could equally begin with a fanciful introduction: "once upon a time, a 150 years ago, when an unknown man (well-respected in European scientific circles as an eminent mineralogist), who never visited nor had any relatives in America, one so-called James Smithson, signed his will declaring that…"

4.   The Origins of the Smithsonian Legend

The story of the Smithsonian starts with the will of one individual, James Smithson, a renowned English mineralogist and collector, who decided to leave his fortune to the people of the United States. One version of the tale states that Smithson's bequest was an act of protest against the British aristocracy, who did not accept nor recognize his right to bear the name and birthrights of his father, the Duke of Northumberland. Another version says that Smithson had already made his will, leaving his fortune to the Royal Society of London, when certain scientific papers that he had submitted for publication to the society were turned down by it. It was only upon receiving notice of their refusal that he changed his will. Nevertheless, in any of the versions, the decision was an "accident" of offended pride that would produce some many years later a "true miracle".

Smithson, who died in 1829, provided in his Will that…

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[50] Sidney Dillon Ripley, a former Secretary of the Smithsonian, coined this term. S. Dillon Ripley, "The Sacred Grove", Simon and Schuster, New York, 1969.

> *"In the case of the death of my...nephew without leaving a child ... I
> then bequeath the whole of my property ... to the United States of
> America, to found at Washington, under the name of the Smithsonian
> Institution, an Establishment for **the increase and diffusion of
> knowledge** among men".*

Smithson's nephew died without a descendant, and the whole process of fulfilling James' Will was begun. In 1838, the United States won its final lawsuit against the British Chancery Court, for the right to receive Smithson's bequest. The amount of the money received, at more than half a million dollars, was equal to the country's budget for that year. It was brought to Washington D.C. in gold sovereigns, aboard the ship "The Mediator." Symbolically this name signaled the "mediating" role of the institution it served to found. The Smithsonian would come to act as the link for the American people and the citizens of the world to the spirit of discovery, knowledge, values, and traditions that its activities stimulated.

Smithson's will named the United States as "trustee" of the bequest with the condition that it would establish an institution for the advancement and dissemination of knowledge to the American public. Thus, the scientific and educational role of the Smithsonian was to be defined before its birth. Such a broad vision would permit the Institution's future expansion while providing a simple and clear mandate: the increased diffusion of knowledge. The inclusion of these clearly stated goals probably created the foundations for the Smithsonian's success, as it marks its 155th year of existence.

The bequest provoked, as one can imagine, many discussions among political (government officials and Congressmen), scientific, and cultural circles. In 1835, President Andrew Jackson sent a message to the Congress, forwarding the papers related to the Smithson will:

> *"...The Executive having no authority to take any steps for accepting
> trust and obtaining the funds, the papers are communicated with a
> view to such measures as Congress may deem necessary"*

By a legislative act in 1836 (July 1, 1836), Congress decided to assume control over the trust and accept the commitment of establishing the institution that Smithson had requested in his will. Many discussions occurred in Congress and publicly over how to exactly fulfill the donor's mandate. Opinions were many and varied. John Quincy Adams, acting as Chairman of the Select Committee in the House of Representatives, declared:

> *"In the commission of every trust, there is implied tribute of the soul
> to the integrity and intelligence of the trustees; and there is also an
> implied call for the faithful exercise of those properties to the
> fulfillment of the purpose of the trust.*
>
> *Your Committee are fully persuaded, therefore, that... the Congress of
> the United States, in accepting the bequest, will feel in all its power
> and plenitude the obligation of responding to the confidence reposed
> by him, with all the fidelity, disinterestedness and perseverance of
> exertion which may carry into effective execution the noble purpose
> of an endowment for the increase and diffusion of knowledge among
> men" (1836).*

The Act of 1836 helped to define some of the fundamental aspects of the organization such as the commitment of the United States government (the executive and legislative branches) to fulfill the trust. As a result, a compelling commitment and duty were established. The responsibilities of the trustees were

stated explicitly. A "Board of Trustees" was to act on behalf of the nation and to have the characteristics of integrity, intelligence, and devotion in the "*faithful exercise*" of their "mission." The development, stability, and constant growth of the Smithsonian Institution throughout its history has been a reflection of these Trustees and Secretaries who earnestly accepted the commitment of making a last wish into a reality.

It took more than ten years for Congress to debate the form the institution should take. Different opinions were voiced over whether the bequest should be used to create a library, a research institution, or a college. While the stipulations of the will were quite clear, the method to implement them was not so obvious. Finally, by an Act of Congress on August 10, 1846, the basic charter for the Institution was established, vesting authority for management of the Smithsonian with a Board of Regents.[51] Legally termed the *Act of Organization,* the charter was quickly passed by Congress and signed into law by President James Polk.

Two years later, the Smithsonian published its first book, "Contributions to Knowledge," which highlighted the newborn organization's capacity and determination for pursuing its founder's request. This publication was followed by two more, "The Ancient Monuments of the Mississippi Valley" (a study of Indian mounds) and a report on the newly discovered planet Neptune. These reports were harbingers for two of the major traits that would characterize the Institution: i.) a center of research into America's roots and cultural traditions and ii.) a focal point for the exploration of the astrophysical universe. The first Secretary of the Smithsonian, Joseph Henry, one of the most eminent scientists in the country, had the vision to make the Institution into mainly a center for scientific research, a "college of discoverers," for the development of and expansion of applied and pure sciences. Henry's ideas led the Smithsonian to actively contribute to the "writing" of the world's "great volume of nature:"

> *"We have scarcely as yet read more than the title page and*
> *preface of the great volume of nature, and what we do know is*
> *nothing in comparison with that which may be yet unfolded*
> *and applied..."[52]*

This emphasis on natural sciences became dominant by the mid-nineteenth century not only within the Smithsonian but also around the world. Among those in the United States, America was considered pure "nature." People viewed the country as an incarnate form of "nature"[53] that offered a richness to be explored. The first priority of this exploration was to discover an unknown natural world and the wealth of a land yet to be conquered.

To accomplish these aims, the Smithsonian initiated in the following year (1849) a program called the International Exchange Services to trade academic publications between United States and countries abroad. The goal set by its founder for the diffusion of knowledge was slowly being realized. The exchange program began a tradition of establishing a whole network of relationships with international collaborators that would expand the Smithsonian's activities far beyond its physical grounds in Washington, D.C. These relationships would serve as the principle source for the organization's growth and increase in prestige (internationally and nationally).

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[51] This information has been taken from the "Smithsonian Directive 150", of April, 16, 1996, available at the Smithsonian PRISM intra-Web site.

[52] Joseph Henry, first Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, quoted in "The Smithsonian Institution, a World of Discovery: an exploration of behind-the-scenes research in the arts, sciences, and humanities", Mark Bello et.al., Smithsonian Institution, 1993, p.12.

[53] Commentary by Marc Pachter, interview to the author, June 1, 2000

Secretary Henry resisted in endowing the Smithsonian with any responsibilities that were non-scientific in nature. For him, the Smithson endowment was to increase knowledge through scientific and pure research leading to "the discovery of new truths and the diffusion of these to every part of the civilized world" [54].

> *"At the beginning of this Institution the confusion of ideas on this subject*
> *was so great that in the interpretation of the will, even by some of*
> *our prominent and enlightened men, the diffusion of knowledge was*
> *identified with its increase; and it was contended that Smithson had*
> *used the terms as synonymous, and desired by the one merely to*
> *enforce the other. But that this was not the case may be gathered*
> *from the meaning attached to these terms by the class of men to*
> *which he belonged".[55]*

He set out immediately after his appointment to discuss with Congress and others his personal interpretation of the bequest. For example, he did not want to care for any national collections, fearing that the growing number of pieces would require an immense building and drain the resources of the original Smithson endowment.   Secretary Henry's sentiments would prove to be indeed prophetic. The first Smithsonian building, "the Castle," was completed in 1855 with the intention of transferring to the Institution the nation's collections. These had been under the control of the Government and were overrunning the U.S. Patent Office where they were being housed.[56] The Smithsonian would have to expand once again its facilities to house the collections from the International Exposition held in Philadelphia in 1876.
In this manner, the conflict or friction between the "increase" of knowledge and the "diffusion" of it was settled from the start.

However, the reconciliation of these forces remains a matter of discussion and debate. The moral conclusion to the story is related to the historical "riddle" posed by the sphinx's oracle in Greek mythology: "Decipher me or I Devour you." Smithson's bequest has been a permanent challenge for the inheritors of his legacy to create an institution "for the increase and the diffusion of knowledge among men." The apparently eternal question of "what is knowledge," which has a myriad of answers, is constantly discussed at the table of the Smithsonian "wizards." Is knowledge the "increase" of information gathered from discovery and research or is it the "diffusion" of this information? Perhaps, knowledge is the perception of the usefulness of this information for the benefit of mankind. Knowledge for others is the ability and capacity of putting information together to produce new information and, thus, to increase the "background knowledge" of humanity.   It must be clear that knowledge is a different concept than from what it is in the Arts and Sciences. For instance in the Sciences, it is an instrument for producing new information, discovering new facts and qualities about the world, and increasing knowledge itself.

This perennial discussion has taken place in both scientific and cultural circles and has pervaded the debates on the Smithsonian's function since its early beginnings. The "research and diffusion" side has historically predominated in the Institution until very recently.   Those that prescribe to the belief that Smithsonian should function as a museum for the "diffusion of knowledge" claim that real objects and

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[54] Joseph Henry, Annual Report for 1856, quoted in Wilcomb E. Washburn, "Joseph Henry's conception of the purpose of the Smithsonian Institution" in <u>A Cabinet of Curiosities: five episodes in the evolution of American Museums</u>, The University Press of Virginia, 1967, p.111.
[55] Joseph Henry, Annual Report for 1859, p.14.
[56] Many of these objects and specimens had been collected during an expedition led by Lieutenant Charles Wilkes all around the world from 1838 to 1842.

specimens should be its primary focus. For the latter group, museums are privileged sites for the translation and communication of the knowledge accumulated from the research of others.[57]

No matter what side is taken in the debate, it is clear that Smithson's bequest reveals his qualities as a good scientist and sound philosopher to question the natural world. His mandate is actually a challenge to the Smithsonian's trustees by asking them: "what is really knowledge?;" "how should it be increased;" and "how should it be diffused among men?" These questions are still under discussion today, within and outside the Institution.   Their interpretation has varied, depending upon who is answering the question. Whether they are Smithsonian "insiders" (secretaries, their assistants, Directors and staff) or "outsiders" (the Congress, government, media, and general public) has made all the difference.

5.   First Organizational Steps

According to S. Dillon Ripley, the 8th Secretary, the Smithsonian during the nineteenth century was "a microcosm of museum problems." "Founded finally by a somewhat reluctant United States Congress after eleven years of bickering over the purposes of the unexpected bequest," says Ripley, "the Institution's subsequent growth under its first two Secretaries, Professors Henry and Baird (1878 - 1887), had somewhat the character of Dr. Doolittle's fabulous beast, the 'pushmepullyou'."[58] Henry composed the first plan for the Institution, on the basis of his interpretation of the "Will of Smithson." The plan was submitted to the Board of Regents and approved in 1847. It even won universal approval from a number of scientific and literary societies in the country. Henry's vision was for the Institution to be an advanced research center, capable of increasing and diffusing knowledge to all men. However, the act of organization passed by Congress (1846) established that the Institution would have to include a library, a national museum and an art gallery. This stipulation revealed how much discussion had taken place in Congress over the different interpretations of the will. The Act provided for the construction of buildings to house both Smithson's and the nation's collections but Secretary Henry contested. As mentioned, he feared these additional expenses would drain resources that he preferred to invest in research and scientific endeavors. Consequently, the Board of Regents resolved to divide the interest earned on the original endowment into two equal parts; one to support institutional research and publications, and the other to support the museum, library and gallery's activities. Henry then tried to negotiate with Congress for the government to pay for the Smithsonian's care of the national collections, including the construction and maintenance of any necessary buildings. A "deal" was finally struck between the two and the collections housed in the U.S. Patent Office[59] (the "National Museum" or the "Nation's Cabinet of Curiosities" in Dillon Ripley's words) were formally transferred to the Smithsonian in 1858. It took three years for the first "Bureau of the U.S. National Museum" to be formally organized.[60]

Henry had wanted this arrangement to only be provisory and for the Smithsonian to *"…readily take the supervision of an establishment of this kind, and give plans for its organization and arrangement, provided it be requested to do so, and the means [the necessary money] for effecting the object be liberally supplied."*[61]   The action proved to be irreversible, to Henry's disappointment, but it was through his decision that rich and extraordinary collections came under the umbrella of the Smithsonian

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[57] It is possible to relate this dichotomy to the permanent debate, in Brazilian historical institutions and Offices, and the National Museums on the predominance of the "preservation and conservation" duties of the IPHAN with respect to Museum Public Programs and the level of budgetary investment that should be made for each program.
[58] S. Dillon Ripley, op. cit. p.52.
[59] One of the most significant and oldest buildings in Washington, the Patent Office houses the National Portrait Gallery, the Museum of American Art and the Archives of American Art, now closed for a major renovation project which will take 5 to 6 years to be completed, and will absorb 160 million dollars.
[60] S. Dillon Ripley, op. cit. p. 58.
[61] Ibid.

organization. For example, Spencer F. Baird, who was Professor Henry's assistant, brought from Carlisle, Pennsylvania a whole train containing his personal collections. As a naturalist and avid collector,[62] he then succeeded the former as the second Secretary of the Smithsonian. He was the impetus for building the Institution's great collections, especially those related to the exploration of the West.   It was during this period that the expansion of the Smithsonian, into its current "octopus" nature,[63] began.

6.   The Organization Today: The Smithsonian Wonderland

It is possible to verify how the Smithsonian has been built and consolidated since the acts and bylaws passed during the first years after its founding (See Annex A).   This process has occurred in a very particular and unique manner, that has provided the organization with stability, a status of supervised autonomy, and a flexibility to grow and expand in response to the demands of the times.

The original structure has provided the Smithsonian Institution with a perpetual commitment of various, key actors.   The Congress, the Smithsonian's Board of Regents, government representatives (the executive, legislative, judiciary) and honorable citizens (nine people from each different state, including two from the District of Columbia) are all endowed with powers to govern and manage it.   In this manner, the Secretary and Board of Regents of the Smithsonian are made accountable to the Congress, government, and people of the United States.

However, the Smithsonian is granted a type of fiscal independence. Its founding charter and subsequent acts have provisioned for sufficient funding of the Institution to conduct its activities. The Smithsonian is to receive the interest on the capital invested by the government from the original endowment and is allowed to annually determine the funding for its primary activities. It can also receive outside financial resources from donations and grants. Other rights include the ability to appropriate buildings for housing the collections and to establish the guidelines for these pieces and any new acquisitions.

7.   The Nature and Status of the Smithsonian Institution

Upon a closer study of the Smithsonian phenomenon, some of its unique and extraordinary aspects become visible. As an organization, it is neither a federal agency nor a private entity. It is not a 'foundation," "museum," "university," or even a "research institute" although it encompasses many aspects of all of them. One could perhaps think of it as an "institutionalized endowment" whose mission and goals are still embedded into the Nation's ideals, 155 years after its founding. It is not easy to define the Smithsonian because it has an amazing power to surpass its own limits. If there are limits for increasing its diffusion of knowledge, they are not evident. The Smithsonian has an extraordinary capacity of renewing itself everyday because of its ability to awe and inspire people from the scientist to the common citizen.

Dean Anderson, Deputy Director for Planning and Management at the Woodrow Wilson International Center, and former assistant to the Secretary of the Smithsonian, offers one of the best definitions for the Smithsonian. For him, the Smithsonian has an "instrumentality"[64] for achieving the goals set out by its founder while serving the Federal Government of the United States in accomplishing "…its obligations and responsibilities towards National Collections, Public Education and the preservation and diffusion of the National Cultural Heritage, the Nation's Memory and collective History." In this sense, the Smithsonian is a kind of "tool," as Marc Pachter agrees, for a young nation that is still constructing its

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[62] Baird's collections donated to the Smithsonian formed the nucleus of the Natural History Museum.

[63] See Geoffrey T. Hellman, The Smithsonian Octopus on the Mall, J.B.Lippincott Co., Philadelphia, New York, 1966-67.

[64] Dean Anderson, interview to the author in May 17, 2000

notion of national identity. The Smithsonian should be seen as an extension of this work in progress, changing in and with time to always respond to the demands upon it:

> *"Because there has been no rigid master plan, because we have kept ourselves*
> *flexible in response to changing needs, opportunities, and solutions, there can be no*
> *one simple definition of what the Smithsonian is or does. I count this as a blessing."*[65]

The Smithsonian has entered once again into a period of renewal with the ascension of its 11th Secretary, Larry Small. Since January of 2000, he has been at the helm of the challenging responsibility that is the Smithsonian.

Part of the "uniqueness" of the Smithsonian comes from the process that has created it. Born from a gift of a private individual, a native of a nation with which the United States was in a "state of war," it is a gift that sets a challenge for the people and government of the United States. Smithson's gift has committed the government to take on the responsibilities associated with fulfilling his request.

Perhaps if it had been a small sum of money, the offer would have been rejected. Yet, the extraordinary amount and nature of the endowment made refusal impossible. As one former Secretary of the Smithsonian surmised, "*….what Smithson left us was an inspired and briefly worded mandate and the resources to work out its possibilities. His was as much an act of faith as an act of generosity."* [66] The establishment of the Smithsonian was the clever response of the Congress to this difficult challenge:

> *"Each nation has its own combination of attributes, its "genius." Ours proved to be*
> *particularly suited to the spirit of Smithson's bequest. Once Congress, led by John*
> *Quincy Adams, set up a unique combination of public and private governance and*
> *support as the structure of the Smithsonian, the Institution became a way that the*
> *nation could respond to unexpected opportunities in the many fields of cultural and*
> *scientific discovery and support. Like the political process set in motion by the*
> *Constitution, and the pattern of the market economy, growth within the Smithsonian*
> *over the years has sprung from ideas, energy, and circumstances."*[67]

The specific character given to the newborn institution, or better the "institution to be," was of a "contractual relationship" that was "dual" in nature. The first contract existed between the people of the United States and the federal government that by an Act of Law assumed the role of Trustee for Smithson's endowment. A second contract was between the Congress and "The Board of Regents" " who were entrusted with the daily governance and management of the Smithsonian as well as with the responsibility of implementing a brief but challenging mandate: "the increase and the diffusion of knowledge among men." A Board of Regents was formed by Congress to comply with its legal rights and responsibilities in executing the Smithson bequest. The Board was composed of half-less-one of its members from Congress. The other half-plus-one members were to be private citizens, with high qualifications and appointed from seven different states along with two representatives from Washington, D.C. Besides these members and number of permanent staff, ex-officio the Vice-President and the Chief Judiciary were usually appointed to the position of Chancellor of the Board.

This model is unique because of its almost unconstitutional exclusion of the three "powers" of government (the Executive, Legislative and Judiciary) from administrative functions in the organization's structure. Even the "official" positions held on the Board do not bring with them any degree of authority.

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[65] Secretary I. Michael Heyman, Statement for Smithsonian Year 1996. Smithsonian Web-site.
[66] Statement by Secretary I. Michael Heyman for Smithsonian Year 1996. From Smithsonian Web-site.
[67] Statement by Secretary I. Michael Heyman for Smithsonian Year 1996. Smithsonian Web-site.

Rather, the government has derived its authority over the Board because it is accountable to Congress and the American people for its performance, expenditures, and activities. The fact that the Congressional positions on the Board are for eight members, versus the nine for individuals from the private sector, the balance of power is shifted in favor of the latter.

8.   The "Wizardry" of the Institution…

Marc Pachter explains that the relative independence of the Smithsonian is a unique feature because:

> *"...we began with a very different notion, as an ideology, in this country... and that is, we always resist the concentration of authority... it can happen, it has happened, but it is not in the Nation's credo. So, the Nation is always 'at war' with Washington, it has created a presidential system that forces change, it has created a system of government which fights itself (the Executive, the Legislative and the Judiciary)...you may say this would not be an "efficient" system, and I think it has been created not to 'be efficient,' but to challenge too much authority. The Smithsonian reflects and develops that American ideal, by a series of accidents..."* [68]

The creation of the Smithsonian was in contradiction to this ideology because the notion of a "cultural capital" was considered dangerous. This sentiment was prevalent because there was a fear of concentrating too many authorities in one place. Ideally, the nation's cultural focal point, similar to its commercial and business center, should had been elsewhere because Washington, DC was to be a federal capital about federal government.[69] By the time of the discussions in Congress on how to execute Smithson's request, this logistical question was undoubtedly fully contested and debated.

The "formula" that was finally adopted for the Smithsonian was a process of unending negotiations between the Institution, the federal government, Congress, media, and the diverse groups that make up the "mosaic" of America's cultural identity. In this way, every time the Smithsonian was requested to assume another responsibility by the government or Congress, the Institution would make sure that no part of the original bequest would be spent on these activities and that instead more funds would be designated from the Treasury.

This permanent process of negotiating and pleading the "case" of the Institution before congressional appropriation committees has resulted in the federal government being the major "donor" to the Smithsonian. Today, these inter-institutional relations have resulted in an annual budget that is 70% financed through the President's budget. Moreover, they have produced a delicate balance between the Smithsonian's institutional interests and its ability to execute its federal responsibilities. It is a "trustee" not only for the nation's collections but also for the American people's legacy. It is clear from the original bylaws that the Smithsonian's collections belong to the Government and People of the United States. The government has the legal right, if it ever wished, to remove all of its collections from the care of the Smithsonian and place them in another institution.

As a result, it can be concluded that the Secretaries that have presided over the Smithsonian during its 155 years of existence have been wise administrators, clever promoters for the Institution's cause, and very good marketers. The fact that the original bequest still exists demonstrates the good public management and administration that has occurred. This quality may be attributed all the Smithsonian's Secretaries, who have been parsimonious in their expenditures of resources and who have expanded private funding of the Institution by their ability to defend the Smithsonian "cause".

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[68] Marc Pachter, interview to the author, June 1st 2000.
[69] Marc Pachter, interview to the author, June 1st 2000.

"...its [the Smithsonian] *strength lies in what it represents, in the statement it makes about our nation's commitment to values of memory, curiosity, exploration, inquiry, and explanation. But there is no denying that the Smithsonian's development over time has left it with a multiplicity of tasks, resource bases, and perspectives that, day to day, provide an enormous number of challenges. On certain days, I might even want to call them tensions."*[70]

9.   The Smithsonian's Operations: A Kingdom for Visitors

This amazing "kingdom," that has developed in the center of Washington, serves the United States as its major research institution, museum organization, and educational complex. Today, its multiple operations outstretch the geographical frontiers of the District.[71]

To run all these units, programs, and facilities, the Smithsonian has a permanent staff of around 6,300 people. More than 4,800 men and women support the Institution as volunteers, working as guides and information assistants or in the laboratories and curatorial departments of the Smithsonian. Besides this "army" of workers and supporters, one may include hundreds of other people who work in collaboration and partnership with the Smithsonian and its related institutions.

In terms of its collections, their size and scope are probably the biggest in the world. The total number of objects, works of art and scientific specimens in the care of the Smithsonian, is estimated at more than 141 million, of which 122 million belong to the Natural History Museum. Part of the objects which are not on display (the majority of the collection) is available for study and can be lent externally. The latter has taken on a new impetus with the recently created Affiliations Program which lends objects to other museums around the country. It is a program that will allow even more people (staff and visitors) to become involved in the life of the Smithsonian. Undoubtedly, it will contribute to expanding the reach, role, and image of the Institution throughout the nation. This type of expansion has become one of the main priorities for the Smithsonian under its the new Secretary. A unique feature of the Smithsonian is this capacity to be a "**model of cooperation and collaboration,**" both internally and externally because of the constant negotiating process that occurs between the Institution and its constituencies.[72]

The success of its operations has resulted in an expanding client base. In 1999, more than 35 millions visitors experienced the Smithsonian phenomenon, including 28.4 million to the museums, an estimated three million to the National Zoo and some four million people to the Smithsonian's traveling exhibitions. The Smithsonian is attending an equal number of visitors virtually. During one month alone in 2000, approximately 40 million "hits" accessed the Smithsonian on-line website, not including an additional 4.5 million hits from individuals connected with the Institution.

[70] Secretary Michael I. Heyman, Statement for Smithsonian Year 1996. Smithsonian Web-site.

[71] The Smithsonian counts among its institutions and agencies: 16 museums and galleries (two of which are located in New York City);[71] the National Zoological Park; the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory (Cambridge, MA); the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center (Edgewater, MD); the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute (Panama); the Marine Station (Fort Pierce, FL.); Center for Materials Research & Education (Suitland, MD); the National Zoo's Conservation & Research Center (Front Royal, VA); the Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage; the Center for Latino Initiatives; the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Services (SITES); the Smithsonian Office of Education; the Smithsonian Associates; the Archives of American Art; the Smithsonian Institution Archives; the Smithsonian Institution Libraries; and Smithsonian Business Ventures.

[72] *"Other aspects of the modern Smithsonian have been shaped by such models of cooperation as that between ourselves and Harvard in the support of the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory, or that with the government of Panama to enable the work of the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute..."* Secretary I. Michael Heyman, Statement for the Smithsonian Year 1996. Smithsonian Web-site.

10.   The Organizational Structure of the Smithsonian:

The Institution is governed by a Board of Regents that by law is composed of the Vice-President of the United States, the Chief Justice of the United States, three members of the Senate, three members of the House of Representatives and nine U.S. citizens. The Chief Justice traditionally serves as the Chancellor of the Smithsonian.

The present organizational structure of the Smithsonian is an outgrowth from the original model. Its expansion, increasingly complicated functions, and hierarchical structure reflect the change in size and complexity of the Institution. The Smithsonian has constantly adapted itself over its century and a half of activities to new demands, changing audiences, and the "increase and diffusion" of knowledge.

Apart from the Chief-Executive Officer, each museum has its own director and staff.   Museum directors report to the "under-secretaries" who, in turn, report to the Secretary. Many changes have occurred to the organizational structure of the Institution since its inception. It is the legal right of each new Secretary to establish any changes to the Smithsonian, provided that the Board approves them. While the previous Secretary, I. Michael Heyman, had reduced the number of under secretaries and assistants, the current Secretary has introduced modifications to the charter, recreating the position of under-secretary. The current structure for the organization, already announced and approved (May 2000), creates three under-secretaries: the Under Secretary for Science, the Under Secretary for American Museums and National Programs, and the Under Secretary for Finance and Administration. The new format also includes a Director for the International Art Museums Division and a Chief Executive Officer for SI Business Ventures.[73] All museum directors report to the Under Secretary for American Museums and National Programs. However, directors for the science museums (Natural History Museum), the Zoo, the Astrophysical Observatory, the Tropical Research Institute and other research facilities, including the SI Press, report to the Under Secretary of Science. All planning and budgetary matters are reported to the Under Secretary for Finance and Administration. In this manner, the role of the under secretaries is to act as the "critical nexus" between the directors and the Secretary, transmitting at the same time the Secretary's directives to the executive staff.[74]

Directly linked to the Secretary's Office are the Secretariat, the Inspector General, and three other offices. The first is the Office of Policy Analysis. It has recently been created by Secretary Small to develop institutional and managerial procedures that can serve as the basis for new initiatives. The second, the Membership and Development Office, has added importance given it deals with the 2.1 million associates that contribute and support the Smithsonian's programs and operations. The third, and last, is the Office of Government Relations which serves as the tool for congressional negotiations and the mechanism for the formation of better political relationships with its members.

11.   The Smithsonian's Budget

Direct federal monies have been increasing for the Institution. During fiscal year 2000, the last figures available for analysis, the Smithsonian received an increase in federal funding, up from US$412 million the previous period to US$428 million. This rise demonstrates the positive image held by

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[73] These business ventures include the Smithsonian Magazine, the Catalog, the Entertainment Initiatives, the Marketing Database, the Retail shops, concessions, property licensing and IMAX Theaters.

[74] I am most grateful to Carole Wharton, the Under Secretary for Finance and Administration, for providing me with these documents.

Congress of the Institution and its work, including the Smithsonian's keen ability to "market" its services to the nation.[75]

Another source of monies is from its "trust funds." These annually receive contributions from private sources (individual donations, sponsorships from corporations and foundations) as well as the revenues generated from the Smithsonian's non-core business activities: shops, product licensing, restaurants, entertainment facilities, mail-order catalogs, publications and credit card alliances. The rising importance of these sources of funding for the Institution's budget have led to the creation of a new agency, Smithsonian Business Ventures. The total sales from the Smithsonian's business activities reached $144 million in 1999, and are estimated to have risen again in 2000 ($153 million). While these revenues must be reported to Congress, their expenditure is not subject to any federal constraint. However, these resources are, according to Carole Wharton, the Under Secretary for Finance and Administration, "the cost of good" and are only used for new acquisitions, catalog production, and publishing.

Budget negotiations are conducted by the Office of Finance and Administration each year. Its efforts are assisted through its direct relationship with the staff of the Office of Management and Budget of the President. The Smithsonian's budget is included under the President's budget but it must pass through a review process before it is approved. Another process of negotiation is also conducted with the Congress. Whenever there is a block in the budget negotiations, it is the responsibility of the Secretary himself and the Office of Government Relations to advance the discussions.

Federal funds cover basically the maintenance costs associated with the Smithsonian's numerous museums and facilities. "We take the position," continues Carole Wharton, "that the care and conservation of the collections are the responsibility of the government, and that means, the buildings, the security systems, protection systems, the specialized staff." For her, financial problems arise from a real tendency of "micro-managing" the budget. "We are probably, in total budget, the value of one big missile. For the Department of Defense, this is one big project lost."[76] Also the Smithsonian's activities are under constant monitoring because of its high public profile. "We are very visible, we are right in front of Capitol Hill, that means the Senate and the Congress…they read everything on the papers about us, everything, good or wrong… and almost in a 'parental' fashion they can even reprimand us."[77] The controversy of the Enola Gay exhibition, five years ago, is a good example of some of reactions, positive as well as negative, that the Institution's activities and programs can provoke. This extreme visibility, both to the Government as well as to the public, has made the directors and Secretary to become very skillful in the process of budget negotiations. As the fundamental source of revenue for the Institution, the federal government has an increased right to interfere and assert its own interests and directives over the Smithsonian The limits of this political and ideological influence are difficult to determine. It is the role of the Board of Regents to be a protective shield against such incursions, similar to the armories hanging on the walls in "The Commons" Dining Room of the Smithsonian.[78]

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[75] For the Fiscal Year 2001, the Smithsonian Institution requested $463 million, increasing by $25 million the amount requested and received from the previous year. Of this request, $397 million is for salaries and expenses (approximately two-thirds of the 6,500 employees are considered federal). Another $62 million is for repairs and restoration of the buildings and $4 is million for several construction projects. In addition, the request includes an increase of $8.7 million to continue the construction of the National Museum of the American Indian on the Mall. The major renovation project in this budget is the request of $17 million for the National Museum of American Art and the National Portrait Gallery, which share the Old Patent Office Building in Washington.

[76] Carole Wharton, in interview to the author, June, 21,2000.

[77] Ibid.

[78] For the discussion of the Board of Regents' role refer to Stephen E. Weil's article: "Museums in the United States: The Paradox of Privately Governed Public Institutions", in Museum Management and Curatorship, vol.15, n° 3, pp.249-257, 1997, Elsevier Science Ltd.

Apart from the aforementioned areas, any other scientific and cultural activities of the Institution are funded through private grants and trusts that have been previously approved by the Board. In some instances, government grants and contracts have also supported these other research projects.

12.   Planning and Budget Processes

Planning and budget formulation begins each year in January and extends through the fall. Museum and research institutions must prepare their submissions and negotiate them with their senior managers. During this process, an institutional plan and budget are formulated and submitted for the Board of Regents' approval   They are then submitted to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and Congress. Both federal and trust fund requests must pass through the same process. However, the approval of the Trust's budget is the sole responsibility of the Board of Regents. As a result, this budget can be assigned for the fiscal year beginning the first of October for the year in which it is developed while federal requests are only applicable for the following fiscal year. The Institution has also developed a five-year strategic plan. This document establishes the Smithsonian's goals for the next five years and assists in annual budget forecasts as well as evaluations of the organization's performance. In this sense, the Smithsonian's budget process can be seen as a tool for forcing a re-evaluation of the Institution's priorities within each unit, museum, center, and program.

13.   Undergoing changes and new strategic goals

The current Secretary, coming from a financial and banking background, appears to have new goals and priorities which are eliciting different reactions within the Smithsonian. Even the planning and reporting processes have changed, according to Carole Wharton, to include more figures rather than graphics.   The primal importance of institutional service and public satisfaction seems to be the main goal of Secretary Small. Emphasis is turning from "increasing" the Institution's mission to "diffusing," in the most comprehensive way, its treasures to the public. Secretary Small has brought his own people into the higher levels of its administration in order to implement his vision of the Smithsonian.   The creation of the Office of Policy Analysis, under Dr. Carole Neves (PhD. in Public Administration), is another sign that the structural and managerial changes recommended by her team are being implemented. This process has generated much friction and tension, especially in regards to the evaluation and reassessment of the Smithsonian's scientific endeavors. In one press release (February 2000), it was announced that Secretary Small's reorganization of the Institution would make it more responsive to the needs of the American people and ensure the growth of its "areas of excellence." This process has resulted in more than 80 meetings since Secretary Small was appointed. In a speech to the employees (6,300) and volunteers (5,000) of the Smithsonian, Small stated:

> "*At the start of the 21st century, the Smithsonian is in the enviable position of facing new and heightened expectations from our many constituencies. They ask more of us because our record of achievement is great and has accustomed them to expect the truly exceptional. To do so, we must marshal our resources more skillfully than ever and have in place an organizational structure that is at once **coherent, creative, flexible, and responsive**.*"

This "responsive" nature of the Institution, as pointed out by Marc Pachter, has been one of the fundamental reasons historically that the Smithsonian has grown in "authority" and "recognition."   The Institution's life is in this sense correlated to its responsiveness to the "opportunities" that have been presented to it.   The Smithsonian seems to have taken advantage of every opportunity it has crossed along the way to expand its possibilities for further exploration. It has also been alert to the changing times and how to remain "connected" with its constituency: the American people and its social "mosaic."

Maybe it is here that the "secret" or "wizardry" of this "Castle on the Mall" lies. Any institution that is disconnected from society will loose purpose and eventually its own "life." Today one can find institutions that are empty skeletons of what once were working "bodies." Nothing more than ghostly entities remain of them. They stand unnoticed amid the forest of public and private entities that form a country's social life and fabric. Such institutions have lost their reason to survive because they surrender themselves to the idea their existence is an end in itself that does not merit a justification to the public.

In order to achieve the new changes proposed for the Smithsonian's mission, Secretary Small issued a memorandum (March 1, 2000) to the directors. The list of institutional goals was as follows:

1. **Public Impact** : to enlarge dramatically the audiences and degree of attachment with the public, in Washington and throughout the country, and to improve the quality of the Smithsonian experience for audiences, specifically through the following:

   1.a . **First-class Exhibits**: to attract significantly greater numbers of visitors to existing museums by offering them compelling and absolutely first-class exhibits in immaculately maintained and serviced facilities; and to mount exhibits that are exciting, memorable, and distinctively "Smithsonian" in museums, programs, and national outreach efforts, including the replacement of existing exhibits as necessary.

   1.b. **Major Building Projects**: to attract significantly greater numbers of visitors in the Washington area by completing flawlessly the major building projects that have been undertaken including:
   o The Dulles Center of the National Air and Space Museum.
   o The National Museum of the American Indian
   o Renovation of the Patent Office Building shared by the National Portrait Gallery and the National Museum of American Art.
   o Restoration of the Smithsonian Castle and the Arts and Industries Building.

   1.c. **National Outreach**: to attract significantly larger audiences all across America through:
   o A national outreach effort that will include greatly expanded roles for the Smithsonian Affiliations Program, the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES), and the Smithsonian Associates.
   o An education program that is coordinated with the work of all the foregoing and that has particular regard for reaching students from kindergarten through college.
   o A refashioning of *Smithsonian* magazine to increase both its readership and its profitability.
   o A well-thought out strategy for using the Web to bring the Smithsonian to the nation and to the world.

   1.d. **Minorities and New Americans:** to attract significantly greater numbers of minorities and new Americans to the Smithsonian and its exhibits.

2. **Focused, First-Class Scientific Research**: in accordance with its commitment to the pursuit of scientific innovation and discovery, the Smithsonian will:
   o Study recent scientific activity at the Institution using outside parties.
   o Focus the Institution's resources on centers of excellence.
   o Set specific objectives for each center and track progress against the objectives.
   o Phase-out, over time, those activities outside its areas of specialization.

3. **Management Excellence**: it will evaluate and modernize the following management systems and bring them to a level of quality and sophistication appropriate to a contemporary organization of the size and complexity of the Smithsonian Institution:
   3.a.   Collections, management, and storage
   3.b.   Financial and accounting controls
   3.c.   Capital management
   3.d.   Management information

3.e.　　Information technology
　　　　3.f.　　Human resources
　　　　3.g.　　Physical plant and facilities
　　　　3.h.　　Congressional, local, and state government relations
　　　　3.i.　　Press relations.
4. **Financial Strength**: to provide the financial support that will be essential if the Smithsonian is to achieve its large goals by:
   o Increasing Federal appropriations especially for repairs and rehabilitations.
   o Increasing donations from the private sector.
   o Managing the endowment to meet market indices.
   o Increasing the profits of Smithsonian Business Ventures.

What is going on inside the Castle's labyrinths, abstracted from several statements by the new Secretary, appears to be a desire to centralize the Smithsonian's functions against the general trend of decentralization. Secretary Small has proposed a stronger synergy among the institutional departments to create only one "Smithsonian." He has attempted to encourage relationships between the different museums through various proposals to link art and history with the sciences; to adopt a holistic view of the collections and research projects; to give more attention to what interests the public; and to lessen the emphasis placed on the curators' own interests. Secretary Small has stated that "the Smithsonian should be a place of instruction and delight and inspiration for the greatest number of people we can possibly accommodate.*"*[79] He points to novel ways of fulfilling this "mission" by using new technologies to expand the reach of the Institution "…through the virtual electronic modes that are the gateway to whole new worlds of learning and enjoyment." The public's interaction with the Smithsonian must be "…as vivid and complete and satisfying a cultural experience as the exercise of our skills and knowledge and best efforts can make it."[80]

Secretary Small's ideas for the Smithsonian reveal a different way of viewing the social role of museums and cultural institutions:

> *" The word "Smithsonian" should be synonymous for Americans with the most enlightened, enlightening, and memorable forms of the museum experience. And we should be able to judge our success at providing them that experience…we must first know who our audiences are. We have a staggering degree of engagement with the public. There are some thirty-five million visits each year to Smithsonian-created exhibitions… although the figures cannot be precise, they do make overwhelmingly clear that we are involved in millions and millions of lives… our job, then, is not simply to retain the respect and admiration of Americans already familiar with the Smithsonian. It is to gain the attention of entire new segments of the population[81]…Above all, we must make certain that the Smithsonian speaks to all Americans and acknowledges why they all matter to America.*

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[79] Taken from his installation address, January, 24, 2000. Smithsonian Web-site
[80] Secretary Larry M. Small installation address, January, 24, 2000. Smithsonian Web-site.
[81] Secretary Small elaborates the audience that is being targeted and how this goal is to be accomplished: *"Americans who have never heard of the Smithsonian, or who have not been able to imagine that the wealth of this great national cultural enterprise is their treasure too. We must win new audiences by giving the Smithsonian a greater presence throughout the country. We must increase our affiliations with local institutions by lending them many more items from our collections. We must send out additional traveling exhibitions. We must exploit the power of electronic outreach.. We must become a visible, active, constructive force in communities all over America.*"

The plans that are being outlined during these times of institutional change in the Smithsonian clearly reflect the "ongoing transformation of the American Museum." Stephen Weil has analyzed this topic in a recent article "*From being about something to being for somebody.*"[82] He suggests that:

> "…*in place of an establishment-like institution focused primarily inward on the growth, care, and study of its collection, what is emerging instead is a more entrepreneurial institution that…will have shifted its principal focus outward to concentrate on providing a variety of primarily educational services to the public…by the overarching criterion of whether it is actually able to provide those services in a demonstrably effective way*".[83]

Even the most "ostensibly private of American museums," says Weil, "must inevitably be expected not only to provide a level of public service comparable to that required of so-called public institutions but also to maintain the standards of accountability and transparency appropriate to such public institutions."[84]

The idea of measuring the performance of museums and other cultural institutions remains a matter of debate among professionals in the field. The standards for evaluation are not always accepted because they are more difficult to "quantify." Any discussions on this process bring accusations of "downsizing" the museum's role to a matter of figures and graphics. Secretary Small has attempted to address this point because he understands that it is a source of friction among the Institution's staff:

> "*Let me be clear that 'measuring success' is not to be equated narrowly with just cold, dry statistics…So we must find ways to evaluate rigor, intelligence, imagination, persuasive argument, and aesthetic sensitivity…And as we do so, we must build within the Smithsonian a consensus for clear, overarching mission statements, five-year goals, one-year objectives, and for tracking and monitoring approaches that keep us to our course.*" [85]

Stephen Weil shares Small's vision of an emerging new museum model. For him, the museum should be transformed and redirected into an institution that can, through its public-service orientation and special competencies, contribute positively to the quality of individual human lives and the well-being of communities.

In a related manner, author Paul C. Light has presented four tides or movements rising among museums and other nonprofit institutions as new models are sought:

1) **scientific management**, which is built upon a template of best practices that all nonprofit agencies should adopt;
2) **liberation management**, which places its faith in using outcomes as the compass by which nonprofit agencies should guide themselves, irregardless of their configuration;
3) **"war on waste,"** which seeks improved performance of nonprofit organizations through mergers, acquisitions, shared administrative services, co-location, and other cost-saving techniques largely culled from the private sector's downsizing years; and

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[82] Stephen Weil, "From Being about Something to Being for Somebody: The Ongoing Transformation of the American Museum", in DAEDALUS, Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, vol.128, number 3, Summer 1999, pp.229-258.
[83] Ibid. p.229,230.
[84] Ibid. p.230.
[85] Larry Small installation address, January 2000, Smithsonian Web-site.

4) **"watchful eye,"** which puts its emphasis on exposing nonprofit organizations to the "…sunshine of public disclosure as a fundamental disciplining tool."[86]

It is very clear that the tides of change in the Smithsonian present a moment to reflect upon these ideas and their related methods. The results of its changes are yet to be seen because of resistance within certain circles of the Institution. This situation is similar to the experiences of some of the larger museums of the world. It appears to be a "syndrome" left over from some monarchical time that plagues even young democracies like the United States. As major organizations, museums can have many of the characteristics of fiefdoms, including their own lords and servants. The heads of such organizations play roles similar to that of a King and are the "moderating" force to control frontier tensions. Nevertheless, the tendency to downsize structures like the Smithsonian remains. Secretary Small notes "the Smithsonian has grown to a size and a complexity that demand adherence to the same principles of management that today guide other large and complex enterprises…the reality is that we have no choice but to be specific about our mission, our goals, and our priorities."[87]

14.   The Road Back Home

There are many ways of exploring the Smithsonian "tale" without taking it as a "model" for Brazilian institutions. The social grounds where these two cases happen are in fact very different. Nevertheless, somewhere, "over the rainbow" of more circumstantial and earthly matters, certain aspects should be taken into consideration. These points can assist discussions over the best management and administrative models for museums and cultural heritage institutions in Brazil.

Franz Boas, the noted anthropologist, has said that in order to understand a culture, one has to look at its "configuration." The configuration of a culture, which can allow us to better understand its "spirit," is the way its social elements interrelate and repel each other. While the manifestations of a culture may vary and change, according to time and historical transformations, its configuration can have an incredible "permanence."[88] The configuration of the Smithsonian has an extraordinary permanence and remains almost the same since its inception. A similar assertion can offered for the nation's democracy whose principles and systems are embedded in its social spirit.

These conclusions are my preliminary thoughts on the Smithsonian. They are intended to open a healthy debate and permit new interpretations of this ever-changing institution. Moreover, they reflect the cultural "configuration" that can exist between institutions, their governing bodies, and constituencies as well as individuals:

1) The relationship between the federal government, Congress of the United States and its citizens, through the "trusteeship" of the Smithsonian legacy, has perpetually committed the nation to supporting the Institution. While this support may be waning, the government's "trusteeship" is dynamic entity that must continually respond to the public's demand for the maintenance of the Smithsonian legacy.
2) The role of the Board of Regents, in a "trusteeship" between the government and its citizens, acts as a protective shield against political interference and personal interests influencing the Institution. Culture should not be too near politics, as most would agree. This problem is most apparent when a Minister of Culture, that may be the best qualified, has less responsible individuals below him or her.

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[86] Paul C.Light, Making Nonprofits Work, a report on the tides of nonprofit management reform, The Aspen Institute, Brookings Institution Press, Washington, D.C. p.2-3.
[87] Larry M. Small installation address, January 2000. Smithsonian Web-site.
[88] Franz Boas, Preface to Patterns of Culture, Ruth Benedict, ……

3) The participation of the private sector in the Smithsonian (through the Board of Trustees) is an outgrowth of the legal right that all citizens have to share in the responsibilities. It is not a "concession" that has been made by the government given that the property held belongs to society and is only in the "trusteeship" of the government. Therefore, the participation of the private sector in all matters of institutional governance and planning acts as a "watchful eye" over the government's proper execution of its duties.
4) The models of cooperation and collaboration, either through public-public or public-private partnerships, that have been created and extended by the Smithsonian are important sources for supporting and renewing its vision.
5) The relative "autonomy" of the Institution, as established in the original trust, has aided in guaranteeing the independence of the Smithsonian's operations and has prevented outside pressures from influencing its goals and mission.
6) The transparent access to the Smithsonian's operations, administration, programs, and even annual budgets, has created a guarantee that any citizen of the United States can learn how his tax revenues are spent.
7) The direct budget negotiations that occur between the federal government and the Smithsonian have created permanent advocates amidst the Congressional members that sit on its Board of Regents. These supporters of the Smithsonian "cause" provide a great bargaining tool for obtaining support for its activities.

Despite the historical and current configurations of this magical kingdom, the Smithsonian "fairy-tale," as well as its reality, is a story that continues to be written...

> *"Thus grew the tale of Wonderland:*
> *Thus slowly, one by one,*
> *Its quaint events were hammered out --*
> *And now the tale is done,*
> *And home we steer, a merry crew,*
> *Beneath the setting sun".*
>
> Lewis Carroll - *Alice in Wonderland*

<u>Annex A: Original Organizational Design of the Virtual "Castle":</u>

Under Title 73 of the Revised Statutes, entitled "The Smithsonian Institution" (passed in February 1877), the following preamble formally declares the incorporation of the now renowned Institution:

> *"James Smithson, esquire, of London, in the kingdom of Great Britain,*
> *having by his last will and testament given the whole of his property to*
> *the United States of America, to found, at Washington, under the name*
> *of the 'Smithsonian Institution', an establishment for the increase and*
> *diffusion of knowledge among men; and the United States having,*
> *by an act of Congress, received said property and accepted said trust;*
> *therefore, for the faithful execution of said trust, according to the will*
> *of the liberal and enlightened donor..."*

> *"The President, the Vice-President, the Chief Justice, and the heads of*
> *executive departments are constituted an establishment by the name of*
> *the Smithsonian Institution for the increase and diffusion of knowledge*
> *among men, and by that name shall be known and have perpetual*
> *succession with the powers, limitations, and restrictions hereinafter*
> *contained, and no other."*[89]

The Act of 1846, revised in 1894 and amended in subsequent years, helped to define the management structure of the Institution (Board of Regents) and determined its composition. These original stipulations are still effective to this day, stating:

> *"The business of the Institution shall be conducted at the city of*
> *Washington by a Board of Regents, named the Regents of the Smithsonian Institution, to be*
> *composed of the Vice-President, the Chief Justice*
> *of the United States, three members of the Senate, three Members of*
> *the House of Representatives, and nine other persons, other than*
> *Members of Congress, two of whom shall be residents in the city of*
> *Washington, and seven of whom shall be inhabitants of some State,*
> *but no two of them of the same State".* [90]

The rules for the appointment of regents, their terms of office, and conditions for vacancies are also derived from the same act:

> *"The regents to be selected shall be appointed as follows: The*
> *Members of the Senate by the President thereof; the Members of the*
> *House by the Speaker thereof; and the nine other persons by joint*
> *resolution of the Congress. The members of the House so appointed*
> *shall serve for the term of two years; and on every alternate fourth*
> *Wednesday of December a like number shall be appointed in the*
> *same manner to serve until the fourth Wednesday in December in*

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[89] R.S. & 5579, as originally enacted, constituted the President, the "Vice-President, the Secretaries of State, the Treasury, War, and the Navy, the Postmaster-General, the Attorney-General, the Chief Justice, the Commissioner of the Patent Office, and the Governor of the District of Columbia, and such persons as they might elect honorary members…"

[90] The revisionist Act of March, 12, 1894, struck out "the Governor of the District of Columbia" after "the Chief Justice of the United States. The 1970 amendments authorized three additional persons on the Board of Regents.

*the second year succeeding their appointment. The Senators so
appointed shall serve during the term for which they shall hold, without reelection, their office as
Senators. Vacancies, occasioned by death,
resignation, or other wise may be filled in like manner by joint
resolution of Congress"*

Title 44 of the Revised Statutes of this act (&5582) has remained the legal source for determining the organization of the Board, the designation of the Secretary, related expenses, and any gratuitous services:

*"The Board of Regents shall meet in the city of Washington and elect
one of their number as chancellor, who shall be the presiding officer
of the Board of Regents, and called the chancellor of the Smithsonian
Institution, and a suitable person as Secretary of the Institution, who
shall also be the secretary of the Board of Regents. The board shall
also elect three of their own body as an executive committee, and shall
fix the time for the regular meetings of the board; and, on application
of any three of the regents to the Secretary of the institution, it shall be
his duty to appoint a special meeting of the Board of Regents, of which
he shall give notice, by letter, to each of the members; and, at any
meeting of the board, eight shall constitute a quorum to do business.
Each member of the board shall be paid his necessary traveling and
other actual expenses in attending meetings of the board, which shall
be audited by the executive committee, and recorded by the Secretary
of the board; but his service as Regent shall be gratuitous".[91]*

Title 45 of the same Revised Statutes (&5585) defines the supervisory role of the board and the conditions for a special meeting of its members:

*"The members of the institution may hold stated and special meetings,
for the supervision of the affairs of the institution and the advice and
instruction of the Board of Regents, to be called in the manner provided
for in the bylaws of the institution, at which the President, and in his
absence the Vice-President, shall preside."[92]*

Meanwhile, Title 46 (&5583) of the Revised Statutes defines the duties of the Secretary:

*"The Secretary of the Board of Regents shall take charge of the
building and property of the institution, and shall, under their direction,
make a fair and accurate record of all their proceedings, to be preserved
in the institution until no longer needed in conducting current business;
and shall also discharge the duties of librarian and of keeper of the
museum, and may, with the consent of the Board of Regents, employ
assistants."[93]*

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[91] An amendment by Law 91-551 of 1970 increased the number of members required to constitute a quorum from five to eight.

[92] Present standing bylaws of the Board of Regents and Charter Provisions of the Smithsonian Institution are annexed to this paper, and have been kindly provided to me by Dean Anderson, together with all the Statutory Authority documents of the organization. Present bylaws and regulations are based on the original Act of 1846, and on its subsequent amendments.

Title 50 (&5586) regulates the receival and arrangement of specimens and objects of art:

"Whenever suitable arrangements can be made from time to time for their reception, all objects of art and of foreign and curious research, and all objects of natural history, plants, and geological and mineralogical specimens belonging to the United States, which may be in the city of Washington, in whosoever custody they may be, shall be delivered to such persons as may be authorized by the Board of Regents to receive them, and shall be so arranged and classified in the building erected for the institution as best to facilitate the examination and study of them; and whenever new specimens in natural history, geology, or mineralogy are obtained for the museum of the institution, by exchanges of duplicate specimens, which the Regents may in their discretion make, or by donation, which they may receive, or otherwise, the Regents shall cause such new specimens to be appropriately classed and arranged. The minerals, books, manuscripts, and other property of James Smithson, which have been received by the Government of the United States, shall be preserved separate and apart from other property of the institution."[94]

Title 52 (&5588) establishes the procedures for titling sites and buildings:

"The site and lands selected for buildings for the Smithsonian Institution shall be deemed appropriated to the institution, and the record of the description of such site and lands, or a copy thereof, certified by the chancellor and Secretary of the board of Regents, shall be received as evidence in all courts of the extent and boundaries of the lands appropriated to the institution."

Title 54 (&5590) regulates the control of the interest accumulated on the original Smithson endowment:

"So much of the property of James Smithson as has been received in money, and paid into the Treasury of the United States, being the sum of $541.379.63, shall be lent to the United States Treasury and invested in public debt securities with maturities requested by the Smithsonian Institution bearing interest at rates determined by the Secretary of the Treasury, based upon current market yields on outstanding marketable obligations of the United States of comparable maturities, and this interest is hereby appropriated for the perpetual maintenance and support of the Smithsonian Institution; and all expenditures and appropriations to be made, from time to time, to the purposes of the Institution shall be exclusively from the accruing interest, and not from the principal of the fund. All the monies and stocks which have been,

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[93] The functions and role of the Secretary will change along time, when a clear distinction of the Governance and Management functions in organizations will be developed. The former statement, last amended in 1951, quoted above, appoints the Secretary as serving to the Board of Regents, and simultaneously acting as the Librarian and the Curator of the still growing "National Museum."

[94] It is clear from this statement the provision for what would be referred to as the "National Museum", despite the resistance of the first Secretary and of some other influent people in the process. The National Museum was never created by any express statutory provision for that purpose. It was first mentioned in an appropriation for postage "for the National Museum in the Smithsonian Institution", contained in an act from June, 20, 1874. An appropriation for a building for the use of the National Museum was made by an act on March, 3, 1879, and annual appropriations have continuously been made for expenses of heating, etc. for the building. "Statutory Authority of the Smithsonian Institution" papers.

or may hereafter be, received into the Treasury of the United States, on account of the fund bequeathed by James Smithson, are hereby pledged to refund to the Treasury of the United States the sums hereby appropriated".

Culture and Development in Brazil
Promoting Public-Private Partnerships in Heritage Preservation

Ephim Shluger[95]

1.   Executive Summary

In recent years, Brazil has adopted swift policy measures to adjust and stabilize its economy and revitalize the social development agenda. In tandem, it has also formulated innovative policy reforms to support culture and to protect its natural environment. In this context, we are witnessing a release of cultural creativity and vitality by celebrating regional, ethnic and social traditions. Likewise, decentralization and new institutional arrangements, such as tax exemption packages, are being used to promote private investment in cultural industry and the preservation of historic heritage--all of these measures bring us closer to a modern concept of society and development (Weffort, 1998).

The responsibility for a wide range of cultural policies, particularly those related to preservation activities, is formally circumscribed to the authority of the State. Unfortunately though, more often than not, insufficient technical resources and a lack of long term strategies have hampered the implementation and development of adequate management and preservation programs. The earlier policy orientation in which the State would shoulder the responsibility and costs for preservation activities has been exhausted and is no longer viable. Presently, new partnership programs are assisting local initiatives, and resources are being mobilized through partnerships established between the federal and local administrations, community groups and private sector enterprises.

This essay is organized in two main sections. In the first, it attempts to examine the historic role of culture, as a binding element in the social, economic and religious formation of Brazil, and to shed light on the key role played by the State and its institutions in the colonial and republican periods. The triumph of modernity brought to the fore a host of new cultural references, conveying the ethos of the modern nation. In the process of constructing a new paradigm, the modernist movement obliterated many cultural references--a disjunction stemming from the necessity to overthrow an older order of legitimacy with its social history. The creation of a national heritage preservation agency (SPHAN) in 1937 to identify, list, conserve and protect important historic monuments and sites and movable collections enabled the State to preserve a national legacy of cultural resources. Many of these resources were threatened by destruction, through a combination of neglect and unbridled development. The policy motivation underlying heritage preservation was to create the national symbols and references to propagate the ideas and myths that sustain national identity.

The second section attempts to summarize the cultural policies of the late 1970's--a period marked by the political democratization and economic liberalization in Brazil. As in most places, the emergence of globalization touches on the explicit links between political issues, democracy, citizenship, and the nation-state, placed in a broader international framework. New insights on the "conception of nationhood

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[95] The author, an expert in urban development and cultural heritage, is a Public Policy Scholar of the Latin American Program at the Woodrow Wilson Center. The findings, interpretations, and conclusions expressed in this paper are entirely those of the author. They do not necessarily represent the views of the Woodrow Wilson Center, the World Bank or IADB. An abridged version of this paper was presented at the Conference "Culture Counts", held in Florence in October of 1999.

and democracy that we now take for granted, presuppose notions of "collective interest" and "popular sovereignty", which in turn, depend on forms of public subjectivity such as "the voice of the people" and "public opinion" (Lee, B. 1998). To address the articulated demands of a growing array of grass root movements and interest groups, the new Constitution enshrined an article that defines the roles of the public sector, civic groups and private sector and ensures the legal right of all citizens to access national culture. The Ministry of Culture was established to formulate and test an array of policy instruments to support and enable cultural development activities and projects, to search for innovative policies in promoting cultural awareness programs, to support cultural industry and to improve the preservation management of historic heritage. The concluding chapter contains an assessment of a string of policy initiatives based on tax exemption laws (i.e. the *Mecenato* Program), and programs that actively promote partnerships among local administrations, civic groups and the private sector in cultural production and heritage preservation. So far, the results suggest a robust growth in the raising of "non-budgetary" funds from private sources, which, combined with improved institutional arrangements--with transparency in the competitive approach in selection and funding of new projects--has clearly contributed to the growth of the cultural industry in Brazil.

2.   Whose memory, which culture to protect?

Brazil is endowed with a rich and diversified cultural and historic heritage. The Federal Decree of 1937 officially recognized the State's responsibility for the designation and protection of cultural and historic patrimony. The Decree also established the administrative and technical agency in charge of protecting cultural heritage: *Secretaria do Patrimonio Historico e Artistico Nacional* (SPHAN), precursor of the National Institute of Cultural and Historic Heritage of the Ministry of Culture (IPHAN).

The Decree also defined the criteria for selecting monuments to be listed (i.e.included in the four registry books also known as *Livros do Tombo do Patrimonio Histórico e Artístico Nacional*). During the period from 1937-1981, SPHAN identified, researched and listed unique examples of 17th and 18th century religious, military and civil architecture. The list contained, among others, Franciscan churches and convents of Salvador, Ouro Preto, São João Del Rey, Congonhas do Campo, Paraiba do Norte, Rio de Janeiro, the ruins of the Jesuit Missions (Rio Grande do Sul), and the many exceptional examples of baroque works by Antonio Francisco Lisboa, *o Aleijadinho*, and Mestre Valentim, in Minas Gerais as well as palaces, civic space and administrative buildings in Rio de Janeiro. Ironically, popular and regional culture, including the wonderful native traditions of Amerindian art, as well as ethnological art and archeology, crafts, legends, folklore and even superstition, which were part of the original framework policy document prepared by Mario de Andrade, were left out of the program agenda. (Campofiorito, Italo, 1985; Falcao, Joaquim. A. 1984)

The listed heritage (i.e. *monumentos tombados*) by IPHAN includes an array of colonial architecture, baroque churches, old forts and ruins of Jesuit missions along the southern frontier, as well as fifty historic centers, modern architecture and splendid examples of neo-classic and eclectic architectural styles built in the last two centuries. In addition to the built heritage, IPHAN has about one thousand designated and listed cultural and historic artifacts, which includes museums and their collections, archives and more than ten thousand archeological and natural sites and 56 historic cities and sites. IPHAN is responsible for research activities, the identification and registry of historic and cultural heritage property and resources, as well as the supervision of conservation works and public education and awareness programs. In addition to the heritage registered by IPHAN, there are about 16 thousand monuments inscribed and preserved by the State and Local authorities.

The preservation of Brazil's cultural heritage was entrusted to a young group of modernist writers, painters and architects who sought to maximize public awareness of history through the interpretation of

the built colonial heritage, with "its visibility, impressive physical presence and artistry". (Costa, Lucio, 1962)   SPHAN experts sought to preserve the "monuments of stone and lime", an expression commonly used in Brazil which refers to the religious monuments of the colonial period, in contrast to the vernacular architecture which was mostly built in wood and adobe, but it also reveals where the emphasis was placed in the preservation of the built heritage. (Londres Fonseca, M.C., 1996) The policy of choosing colonial and religious architecture as the preeminent icons of the cultural image of Brazil has its roots in the origin of the preservation movement and is linked with the political ideals of nation building.

The pioneer group of SPHAN experts and conservationists placed greater importance on the oldest buildings for the federal listing, justified on the basis of their authenticity and antiquity, found in the refined buildings and artistic interiors represented by the 17th and 18th century baroque churches and convents. The aesthetic preferences would be embodied by the architecture of the Jesuits, a legacy of assorted religious and administrative buildings, which formed a clear visual "unity" of Brazil's complex colonial past. By adopting a rather narrow base for cultural identity, SPHAN understated the importance of a larger pool of cultural resources, such as vernacular architecture, the living culture and sacred sites of the Indigenous populations and African-Brazilian communities, eclectic and neo-classical architecture, industrial complexes and railroad stations built in the19[th] century. In the initial stages of SPHAN, these were considered unsuitable for heritage listing. Without legal protection or patrons interested in their protection, a significant number of landmarks were either abandoned, destroyed by new construction cycles or left in ruins. A longitudinal review of the federally designated monuments, spanning from the first year (i.e. 1937) until 1981, reveals that, of a total of 810 landmarks listed by IPHAN, 50,9 % of the entries were Catholic churches, convents, monasteries, etc., 0.2% were of Protestant heritage, and 48.9% were non-religious monuments. (Falcao, Joaquim, 1984). The World Heritage List has inscribed nine important sites in Brazil as "Patrimony of Humanity"[96]. Seven of these are unique examples of colonial and baroque architectural monuments or ensemble of monuments.

In Brazil, the State's traditional responsibility for the preservation of cultural heritage has had a broad mandate and functions, which ranged from determining the criteria of historical and cultural significance to identifying and listing monuments, as well as exerting authority over planning details, and funding the whole spectrum of preservation activities. The State became a custodian of the national heritage, particularly in the selective assessment of cultural resources, influenced by the historiographical concerns with nation building and with propagating the ideas and myths that sustain national identity (Needel, J.D., 1999).

The assumption that the preservation of Brazil's unique heritage would cement social *cohesion* and *continuity*, as well as help establish *tradition* and *memory*-- essential elements needed to consolidate the national identity -- is well grounded. While there were few doubts about the principles that led to the adoption of federal laws to legitimate the protection of material heritage against decay and destruction, the perceived or real benefits brought by heritage preservation policy were not shared equally by all. Resistance was found among property owners, some clergy and city mayors, who saw the bestowing of official heritage recognition on a property (i.e. *tombamento*) an obstacle to private interests in building and renovation. Others preferred the ornamental eclectic style of the past, or the neo-colonial style brought to fore in the 1930's, to the new official aesthetics.

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[96] These include the Historic Town of Ouro Preto, Historic Center of the Town of Olinda, Iguaçu National Park, Historic Centre of Salvador (Bahia), Sanctuary of Bom Jesus de Congonhas, Brasilia, Serra da Capivara National Park, the Historic Centre of Sao Luis (Maranhão)

3.   From the Baroque to Modernity

> É sabido que a tradição – entendida como passado vivo –
> nunca se nos dá feita: é uma criação"
> *Octávio Paz*

Who are we? This query was launched by Celso Furtado, in "Seven Thesis About Brazilian Culture", an article published in1984. As in an Orwellian fiction when all identities are blurred in a moment of crisis, the protagonist is struggling to grasp his identity while he remains conscious that he has played the wrong role in history. Furtado's metaphor fits the times that brought together a whole new generation of writers, painters, architects and artists to meet in Sao Paulo in 1922, during the *Semana de Arte Moderna,* to challenge the content and formalism of the mainstream cultural preferences of the elite. The modernist movement gained momentum at the time when the primary product export cycle in the Brazilian economy, based on a government controlled coffee-export policy, collapsed. This economic collapse signaled the decline of the old oligarchic structures that had supported the successive republican administrations known as the *Republica Velha*.   In the formation of modernist movement in Brazil, from the present point of view, two events, one cultural and one political, stand out as the principal points of reference: the *Semana de Arte Moderna* and the revolution of 1930 led by Getulio Vargas, which imposed a new state and a new cultural identity on the country.

The cultural canons of the *República Velha* were largely modeled on academic classicism, and expressed in the arts, theater, dance, opera, literature, architecture and town planning. The French *belle epoque* and eclectic styles were particularly fashionable at the turn of the century in the capital city of Rio de Janeiro, where it took form through urban renewal and public works programs, and in the lavish public buildings erected in the downtown areas of Rio and Sao Paulo, and also in the remote provincial centers of Manaus and Porto Alegre. This was particularly evident during the presidential administration of Rodrigues Alves (1902-1906) and Epitacio Pessoa (1918-1922). According to recent research (Neddell, 1989), "the administration successfully sought to reassert Brazil's claims to being a rising power by the measures of positivist emblems (*Ordem e Progresso*) implicitly identified with France, Britain and the United States. The administration of Rodrigues Alves attained great success through projects designed to elevate Brazil's status as a nation whose invigorated export economy, still untapped resources, and political stability should assure European investors and immigrants alike of a sound, that is, European future." Rodrigues Alves launched three fronts: foreign diplomacy, disease and drought control and urban reform. With the modernization of the center of Rio de Janeiro, the construction of a modern port and the opening of downtown avenues, modeled after Haussmann's plans for Paris, the administration attained its major success. New public buildings featuring official and academic architecture, that is, public buildings and buildings for the use of the wealthier classes, were developing along lines increasingly remote from our own reality. In a compendium on the origins of Modern Architecture in Brazil, the author draws sharp observation that the protracted period of transfer of cultural language and symbols from Europe soon found its limits: "it was bound to happen considering its original imitative nature. It went on its way copying indiscriminately from the most diverse models" (Mindlin, H.E. 1956).

Cultural historians credit the Vargas regime for the shifts in direction by which "the popular culture of Brazil's majority received state consecration because of its nationalist potentials and populist appeal" (Neddell, op.cit.). Others are even more incisive and assert that the proclamation of "transcultural legacy of Brazil was consolidated under the Estado Novo, and the nation was reinaugurated under the mestizo pantheon. Contact with the European avant-garde, the valorization of the primitive, and the desire to seek the specificity of cultural interactions outside the European norm led to a severe critique of the cosmopolitanism of the Belle Epoque." (Jaguaribe, B., 1999). Oswald de Andrade's "Anthropophagic Manifesto" published in 1928 offers perhaps the best satirical illustration of cultural appropriation: no longer imitators or subservient colonial subjects, Brazilians were now cultural cannibals who devoured

the more savory bits of European culture and cooked them together with African and Amerindian ingredients into an overwhelming concoction (Jaguaribe, B., op. cit.). Modernist language and its imagery soon appeared in Brazilian literature, painting, architecture and theatre. With the Estado Novo, the nationalist government laid the foundations of the national identity built upon the powerful triad formed by the Church, the State and the Family. Culture became an ideological instrument in the hands of the State; it proclaimed the spiritual traditions of the Catholic Church and the formation of moral values embedded in family unity. The reconfiguration of cultural messages expressed through popular and classical music and literature, as well as through the visual arts, stressed the native, popular, and even folkloric traditions and the unique national character and the idea of Brazil's peculiar racial "democracy". The triumphant traditions and economic progress were central to the cultural discourse and these themes were often reiterated in art and expressed in political speeches. In this way, state patronage and propaganda were critical to understanding the role of culture as an ideological tool of the Vargas regime.

According to Furtado, the colonial culture finds its strength in the architecture and sculpture of the period. It can not be denied that, to some extent, it represented the unity of the Portuguese world, given that the State and the Church, at that time, occupied a position similar to the one it had occupied in the pre-renaissance societies of Europe. In colonial Brazil, society was entirely subjugated by the State and the Church—the dominating social structure was comprised of the landed gentry and its bureaucracy, the military, and the clergy. In colonial Brazil, there was no formation of a merchant class to speak of, because literally all commercial transactions were mediated or monopolized by the metropolitan companies. In the absence of a merchant class, all activities depended on the State and the Church. Furtado remarks that "the Brazilian baroque cycle was perhaps the last cultural synthesis of an epoch manifested at end of the European Pre-Renaissance", (Furtado, C. 1988)--which corresponds to the transition which occurred in northern Europe during the 14th century. The point made is well taken both from the social and economic structure of the colony and its dominant cultural expression. Further the author concludes, "with the advent of the Renaissance period, there is the dissolution of the baroque cycle in Europe and the beginning of the age of humanism that will lead into the 18th century romantic period". Clearly this is an important reference, for in Brazil, the romantic period will find in the baroque style the host for its creativity and project the austere geometric facades and rich interiors, in quite a contrast with the formalism of European classicism. These elements of romanticism can be appreciated in the works of *Aleijadinho* (in architecture and sculpture) and *Mestre Valentim* (sculpture) and the religious paintings of *Athayde* found in Ouro Preto, Sao Joao Del Rey, Congonhas de Campo and Mariana.

Brazilian modernism was influenced by and established on the principles similar to those developed by the European *avant-garde* at the beginning of the century, rejecting the academic style in the arts and architecture, while elevating and asserting the modern technologies, the aesthetics of the machine age, blended with popular art and national motives. However, in Brazil, the modernist movement kept a strong link with the past traditions of the colonial heritage, particularly with the baroque cycle--motivated by its *anti-classical* posture and the search for originality which found its best expression in the visual aesthetics and beauty of these architectural and sculptural forms (Campofiorito, I, 1997). Curves representing the higher senses of emotions prevailed over the straight lines, which represent the rational, linear and the economy of gesture, so typical in the classical repertoire of art and architecture.

Freedom of expression was a formal act, which can be seen in the early modernist architectural works of Warshavchik, Costa or Niemeyer, and tropical gardens of Burle Marx, or in the social motives that inspired the paintings by Portinari and Di Cavalcanti, and in the evocative orchestral compositions of Villa Lobos. Modern art captivated the collective interest and media attention and became a new symbol of the cultural identity of Brazil. Paradoxically, much of the early modernist works were created during the *Estado Novo*, a dictatorship marked by the ascendancy of the political right, at a time when the regime introduced censorship and a repressive grip over society's expression. By rescuing and re-assessing the importance of the baroque cycle in Brazil, the modernist movement linked two historic and cultural

moments, as a way to root and legitimize the new ideas put forward.   By using the past--which contained the formal elements and symbols representing the dominant culture of the European colonization of Brazil-- they sought to project the future. The modernist conception incorporated the far-reaching ideals and principles of creative freedom in the arts and cultural expressions, fit for an emergent urban industrial society. However, the critique of the modernist perspective is precisely due to its reductionist approach to historic continuity and its disregard for cultural roots, such as the native and Afro-Brazilian rich traditions and expressions.

The contemporary formulation of a cultural policy based on acceptance of diversity and the logic of inclusion, however, transforms collective perception of cultural identity and the broad array of references, origins, roots and symbols it contain. Concepts such as cultural identity, as well as tradition, are steadily evolving and changing. From the cultural anthropology point of view, Da Matta affirms that "if the concept of tradition is not seen as dynamic, it merely serves to legitimate domination, freezing differences and screening out the understanding of reality". For policy studies, Da Matta continues: "if there is an 'Ibero-American' tradition, one may take a different route than do most scholars to reach it. We cannot allow ourselves to be content with the identification of the components of our tradition; it is necessary to give more weight to the less eloquent words of traditional descriptions. That is, we should be less taken with the fact that we may have Thomism, autocracy, and republicanism in Latin America, and more concerned with words such as 'mixture', 'confusion', 'combination' and others that designate what should really be understood: interstices and simultaneity, or simply relations." (Da Matta, 1990). Social historians reviewing the relationship of nation and memory, both as essential ingredients in building national identity, have come to realize that these were in the past tenuous links. Olick concedes that "it managed for a while because it used the past to project the future. Now, at the end of the twentieth century, we experience a memory boom in which novelty is associated with new versions of the past rather than with the future." (Olick, J.K., 1998). The construction and de-construction of collective identities--a transformation that has shaken all aspects of the established canons of culture-- in the face of current globalization which undermine them simultaneously from "above" and "below", should not be underestimated.

4.   Preserving the Urban Heritage

With the exception of State protected built heritage, most of the old neighborhoods located in the core of large Brazilian cities were exposed to the ravages of building and rebuilding cycles or left in a state of disrepair. Many 19th century dwellings, containing eclectic and neo-classical architecture, were lost due to a combination of deferred maintenance and repairs, and rampant real estate speculation. In fact, the whole process of urbanization has been polarized between formal/legal and informal/irregular development. Rolnik succinctly lays out this duality found in the case of Sao Paulo: "the defining features of Brazilian cities today is their dual built environment: one landscape is produced by private entrepreneurs and contained within the framework of detailed urban legislation, and the other, three times larger, is self-produced by the poor and situated in a gray area between the legal and illegal.   In addition to being an expression of economic and social disparities, this contrast has profound implications for the form and function of the cities. The sprawl of what are here termed "precarious peripheries" has led to a great disconnection of poorly urbanized spaces from the city center where jobs and cultural and economic opportunities are concentrated. The effects of this persistent "territorial exclusion" are devastating and occur in both the peripheries and the city center." (Rolnik, Raquel, 1998).

The cycle of the obsolescence of the built heritage led to the crumbling of urban infrastructure and public services. Both conditions contributed to the decline of inner-city property value. The loss of original communities and their replacement with newcomers transformed the old neighborhoods and brought a host of social problems arising from poverty. "The challenge of rescuing the heritage at risk", writes Ismail Serageldin (1998), "is the inevitability that development means change, and not all that is

old must be preserved. Far from it. But there are many parts of the old that can be adaptively reused, and we must refashion the past to suit the present. This enormous challenge is worked out in practically every arena: literature, visual art, music, buildings, customs, ritual and the objects of everyday use".   There is more to it: where pre-modern societies—up to the last century, lived within continuous past, contemporary societies have separated memory from the continuity of social reproduction; memory is now a matter of explicit signs, not of implicit meanings.

An increased social awareness of the need to preserve cultural and historic heritage, and particularly, historic sites, stems from the fact that, in this century, unlike any period in the past, modernization also meant neglect and destruction of past legacies — erasing memory, identity and the image of places. Rapid population growth and an accelerated pace of urbanization, coupled with industrialization, has brought fundamental changes in social relations as well as in cultural trends and values across the region. In larger cities, the pace of change was even faster. "It was axiomatic in such societies--future gazing, and governed by wealthy elites--that buildings and neighborhoods as they aged were regarded, in the absence of a strong sense of tradition or continuity, as simply outmoded and ripe for replacement "(Mayne, A.1998).

In the 1960's, with massive investment in public infrastructure and road networks, the central districts of large cities - traditionally, residential areas of the upper and middle classes-experienced profound changes, including the loss of middle-class residents together with the retail and services that catered to this segment of population. Most moved to the sprawling peripheral neighborhoods. The old city centers of Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo, Salvador and Recife, underwent significant functional changes. The business functions remained in the central districts surrounded by a considerable stock of obsolete and decaying private and public property.

As a rule, in the dynamics of property market, the under-utilized stock of dwellings falls into disuse and disrepair. This segment of the market usually caters to the low-end renters and businesses, such as tenement houses, no-stars hotels, informal sector activities and vacant land parcels which stand side by side with some of the significant heritage monuments. Nearly all of the oldest and most traditional cultural institutions are located in the historic urban core, often adjacent to the blighted areas; these are museums, theatres, universities, conservatories and academies, interspersed with public parks and gardens, and a significant cluster of protected monuments.

In the broader political debates that swept Brazil during the liberalization process of the late 1970's and throughout the 1980's, the national cultural profile and policies were closely reexamined.   The establishment of the *Pro-Memoria Foundation* and the launching of a series of inter-ministerial programs, including participatory planning activities in the preservation of cultural heritage and historic cities were organized and tested in this period. In hindsight, the results of these programs and activities indicated a heavy dependency on the transfer of federal resources, while the assessment of project components revealed that these not always reflected local aspirations or priorities

In the mid 1970's, under the leadership of Aloisio Magalhaes, the National Center of Cultural References was established with an interest in unrecorded histories as sources for alternative narratives and history. (Magalhães, A. 1985) The Center's regional focus was on research, and the documentation and interpretation of a range of cultural traditions, including the production of crafts. By documenting the specialized knowledge and skills still found in the remote areas of Brazil, the Center's aim was to save the memory of the old and traditional methods of manufacturing, a culture that is fast disappearing in the development process. At the helm of IPHAN, Magalhaes introduced many innovative ideas and concepts; programs became dynamic and responsive to local communities' priorities and aspirations, thus broadening the social and economic scope of built heritage preservation. The new discourse for the protection of national heritage transcended the earlier physical conservation models, by advocating the re-

use of this patrimony for social and economic benefits. It touched on the important aspect of reversing the functional obsolescence of the built heritage. At the same time, the Ministry of Planning jointly launched a program for the rehabilitation of historic cities. Its design contemplated community benefits, by adapting historic buildings to new uses, and it sought to foster cultural tourism with the investments to be made in historic cities.

The early approach of "do no harm", as a principle for the preservation of monuments was due to limited resources available to supervise and enforce preservation laws throughout the vast territory and in localities where local mayors would not comply with the regulations. Integrated approaches in which a given monument(s) would be preserved or rebuilt in their historic environment, and given a new use or function, have superseded the old conservation principles. Presently, a wide array of civic organizations, including private foundations, NGOs, and local administrations are mobilizing resources and extra-budgetary funds to tackle the daunting tasks of saving local landmarks and partaking in their preservation management.

The new Constitution of Brazil (adopted in 1988) in its Article 215, clearly sets out the role of the State, society and individual rights: "The State will ensure all citizens of the cultural rights and access to sources of national culture, and will support, promote, enhance its value, and disseminate cultural manifestations". Furthermore, "The State will protect cultural manifestations of the Indigenous Population and Afro-Brazilians, and other social groups that participate in the *"processo civilizatorio nacional"* (national civilizing process).   Cultural rights and the access to cultural expressions, although broadly inscribed into the law, are recognized *de jure* for the first time.   The advance of political liberalization in Brazil (*Abertura*) was followed by a scholarly interest in the themes of ethnicity, cultural diversity and memory, i.e. the array of ideological and cultural references, collective memory and elements of popular culture as part of national identity. As in other places, the unfolding of identity politics, an increase in redress claims and the increased willingness of governments to acknowledge wrongdoing, as well as the breakdown of repressive regimes that have left difficult legacies behind, is reflected in the aims of the referred article of the Constitution.

5.   Promoting Public Private Partnership

In 1995, the Government launched an improved package of tax incentives to stimulate private sector support for cultural programs. The new legislation also included new competitive procedures for the selection of cultural projects. In a recent conference, the Minister of Culture of Brazil stressed that the new cultural policies had to overcome years of public perception and bias regarding the role of the State over cultural matters (Weffort, 1998). Overcoming the old dichotomy of the roles played by the State and by the Market (i.e. private sector) in the cultural sector was the first important step in this process. This perspective was simply put:

> "*In Brazil, cultural development - be it music, literature, cinema, programs to promote reading, visual arts, performing arts, folklore, etc. - is a responsibility of the State. Traditionally it has been this way, and, since 1988, it is constitutionally mandated. This does not mean that the State should act as a producer of culture but rather that the State must be prepared to stimulate, promote, regulate and support, with budgetary resources, cultural activities. Culture has, therefore, a position similar to that of education among governmental responsibilities. In the past, this principle had been taken to such an extreme, that in many cases it was impossible to distinguish it from sheer state paternalism. This attitude fostered corporatism and clientelism. The State not only ignored the market's cultural potentialities, but also favored certain groups and persons, instead of benefiting the public at large and cultural development in general.*
> *At the beginning of the nineties, attempts were made, though unsuccessfully, to turn things around. If before, the State was everything, now the market and the private sector became*

responsible for everything. However, since a model cannot be replaced by another model overnight, and since a market may not yet be in place just because the State is absent, a vacuum was created. The result of this abrupt change was disastrous for many cultural activities. Beyond the crisis, however, we learned that partnerships were necessary. We now know that cultural development does not depend exclusively on the State or on the market, but on the combined efforts of both these sectors." (Weffort, op. cit. pp 2-3)

The Minister concludes that the "*dichotomy of State versus Market is a false one. This is especially evident in the cultural activities that have a market of their own--indeed a large one, I might add, and they do not need the State in order to develop*". (Weffort, op cit p8). This is abundantly clear for the popular music and recording industry, and to a large extent, for the publishing industry. However, the fields of dance, folklore, archeology and museums or the activities related to the preservation of the built heritage will continue to require decisive public sector support.

Currently, the process of determining the historical significance of cultural heritage and built monuments is undergoing considerable reexamination. Salient among recent changes is the growing involvement of civic groups in the process of defining and even managing cultural heritage resources. The engagement of civic groups and the participation of the private sector have transformed many aspects of the ways in which preservation activities are approached. Most notable are the tangible connections being made between people and historic contexts and sites, preserving not only the unique monuments of the colonial past but entire urban areas and neighborhoods, protecting movable collections and celebrating popular traditions and historic events. Moreover, the introduction of private funds in heritage preservation has shed new perspectives on the priorities and rationale in selecting urban monuments for preservation. Indicators show that more than half of all private funds allocated for heritage preservation were for buildings not included in the federal list of IPHAN--these include the adaptive reuse of turn-of-the-century buildings into theatres, museums and cultural centers by private foundations and the state led building program of public libraries.

In the late 1980s, a string of Municipalities launched downtown revitalization programs that included elements of cultural heritage preservation. Listed monuments were preserved as part of urban revitalization programs. The components of these integrated programs combine, among others, repair works of urban infrastructure in old city blocks, re-development of vernacular buildings into cultural centers and shopping arcades, theatres and public libraries, improvements in public spaces and conservation of a significant number of listed monuments. These urban regeneration programs were carried out in the major cities, namely: Rio de Janeiro (Corredor Cultural and Rio Cidade), Curitiba, Sao Paulo (Viva o Centro), Salvador (Pelourinho), and Recife (Polo Bom Jesus).

In recent years, the process of heritage designation has evolved with the adoption of new criteria and the inclusion of a vast array of cultural resources--some of which have been disregarded in the past. These include structures and sites of the early stages of industrialization in Brazil, such as old factories, ports, warehouses and train stations, as well as old plantation mansions, Amerindian sacred places and archeological sites, religious sites of African-Brazilian cults of *Candomblé* in Bahia and a Synagogue in Recife (Vieira, C.A.1998). The recent process in the listing of cultural and heritage resources also reflects the changing nature of the public's perceptions and a shift in the thinking about what is historic and artistically valuable and what is worth preserving for posterity.

Since 1985, when the Ministry of Culture was established, through to 1994, eight different Ministers occupied this Cabinet post. The frequent turnover of Ministers denotes the volatile political and economic conditions as well as the difficult administrative problems faced in this period.   The challenge was, and

still persists, in finding ways to improve cultural heritage governance in the face of declining public sector resources and consequently, a diminished capacity to innovate and meet new challenges.

The question looming today is how to attain a sustainable preservation management of the "important" and "significant" federally listed monuments. Sustainability is meant the raising of sufficient income revenues to cover all activities concerning the conservation and maintenance of a single monument or a historic or sacred site containing a number of listed monuments. Given that many of the protected monuments are located in remote and/or economically depressed areas, sustainability is a variable dependent on increased economic activities with an increase of visitors to these sites, coupled by the improved economic utility of the historic structures and sites. This implies improving visitors' accessibility and attraction to historic structures and sites, in order to generate higher income revenues, hence expanding the local tax base. On the other hand, public education is crucial in order to increase the understanding and appreciation of the wealth of the national patrimony by a broader public. This requires a systematic survey of public awareness and knowledge on one hand and effective public education and awareness raising programs on the other--it is indeed a key feature in the framework of the ongoing *Monumenta* Program. (Taddei, 1998).

6.   Mobilizing Private Sector Resources for Culture

In 1995, the Ministry of Culture launched a program based on private funding, linking economic development and culture and promoting tax rebate packages and incentives to attract private sector resources. In "*Mecenato Privado e Democratizacao da Cultura*", (Moises, J. A., 1998), the author argues that the rationale for a new strategy for financing culture should not be dependent on a sole and exclusive source of funding. This is justified given Brazil's unique cultural legacy with its markedly ethnic, regional and social diversity. On the other hand, the author asserts that the mechanisms adopted should be sustainable so that the financing of arts and culture would remain in place even when future administrations may, for one reason or other, decide to reduce the public funds for heritage and cultural projects. In this framework, the State re-affirms its responsibility towards the financing of culture, but reserves its role as an enabler and regulator rather than a patron, distributing budgetary funds. Leveraging private sector resources for cultural projects and activities is meant not only for projects fetching higher rates of return, but also for those that could generate stable employment opportunities and promote public appreciation of the value of culture, i.e. through museum exhibits, dance, visual arts, literature and drama.

The policy of partnership hinges upon attractive fiscal incentives for private firms to invest in cultural projects and activities. The aim was to strengthen the mechanisms of the grant programs under the *Fundo Nacional da Cultura.* Within the rules of new federalism, it was believed that an enhanced distribution of public funds would increase the flows of private resources to the cultural sector. The proposed partnership program involved three interested parties, namely, the State, the cultural industry (or artists) and the enterprises-- public or private firms willing to participate with their tax contribution to support cultural projects. At the State and Municipal levels, the federal policy of incentives to fund cultural activities also sought to utilize tax exemption of the real property tax (State level) and value added and services taxes (Municipal level) to firms that would opt to invest in cultural projects. The aim was to expand the scope of the partnership program from local to regional levels, so that the private funding would benefit from federal, state and municipal fiscal incentives.

With rare exceptions, private patronage or sponsorship of culture for public benefit did not exist until recently. During the administration of President Sarney, the first law to raise private funds for culture was passed by the Brazilian Congress. From 1986 to 1990, an estimated 450 million dollars were raised through a federal law that established a tax deferral mechanism to benefit cultural projects (a.k.a. *Lei Sarney*); reportedly, there was no systematic evaluation of the origin, application and regional distribution of these funds. Nevertheless, even though the achievements of the *Lei Sarney* cannot be fully assessed, it

was an important starting point for a new concept for funding cultural initiatives, and soon it would influence the formulation of new legislation (*Lei Rouanet*) adopted by the National Congress in 1991. In many respects, the new law advanced the concept of a public-private mechanism to fund culture though the raised volume of resources fell short of the expectation: only 6% of the R 250 million available from tax deductions was allocated to cultural projects. (Moises, J.A., 1998).

In 1995, the existing *Lei Rouanet* was significantly amended and it became much more effective. These amendments included:

(a) increasing the tax deduction rate from 2% to 5% of the tax owed by private enterprises to be allocated to cultural projects;
(b) streamlining the procedures in order to speed up fundraising and project approval processes;
(c) introducing a project brokerage agent, i.e. allowing that specialized agencies or impresarios to market pre-selected cultural projects--a task that requires business acumen and marketing skills and networks which artists and cultural producers seldom posses.
(d) allowing that project proposals could be submitted throughout the year without dead-lines for submissions;
(e) having the Ministry of Culture establish a maximum of 60 days for internal technical reviews of project proposals submitted for funding.

Besides the above amendments introduced into the Federal Law (*Lei 8.313*) that helped to increase the leveraging of private funds, there was also an auspicious political atmosphere geared to support cultural activities at the beginning of President Cardoso's administration. Under the new team, a coordinated effort was made by key Ministries, i.e. Communications, Energy, Transport, Industry and Commerce, to induce state enterprises to support cultural projects through the application of the new tax laws. The progress was swift. While in 1994 only 72 private enterprises benefited from this law -- which also included contributions from commercial banks, automobile makers and multinational corporations -- by 1995, the number tripled to 235. It tripled again by 1996 to 640, and by 1997, it reached 1,072. (Moises, 1998) With the early successes in raising and investing tax deferred funds in cultural activities, small and medium commercial firms followed suit coordinated by the Ministry of Culture. It should be noted that the impressive volume of private funds raised for culture was buoyed by the stability and growth of the Brazilian economy during the aforementioned period of time. The aggregate volume of funds raised through the tax incentive more than doubled the funds available for cultural preservation programs in the period of 1995-1998, (See Table I, below).

Table I: Cultural Heritage - Preservation Activities under IPHAN Protection
(in millions of 1998 Reais)

Sources of Funds		1995	1996	1997	1998*	Total	%**
National Treasury		11.9	8.9	13.5	5.0	39.3	36.3%
Internal Revenue		0.6	0.8	1.2	1.3	3.9	3.6%
Other Sources	Agreement MINC	1.6	2.0	1.5	1.1	6.2	5.7%
	Agreement MEC	--	--	0.5	0.5	1.0	.9%
	Congress Budget Review	--	0.1	0.7	0.4	1.2	1.1%
FNC (Fundo Nacional da Cultura)		0.2	2.0	0.3	0.5	3.0	2.8%

Mecenato Program (Sponsors)	0.5	11.2	38.9	3.0	53.6	49.5%
Total	14.8	25.0	56.6	11.8	108.2	100%

Source: IPHAN Internal Report, Brasilia 1998.
* Data refers to the activities of the first semester of FY1998
** Figures do not add up to 100% due to round-off error

The table below indicates distribution of funds for heritage preservation and cultural organizations by category of expenditure. Building cultural centers, theatres and public libraries experienced the biggest expansion starting in 1996.

Table II - Preservation of Built Heritage: Projects Completed

January 1995-June 1998

Material Heritage	1995		1996		1997		1998		Total	
	No.	Funds*	No.	Funds	No.	Funds*	No.	Funds*	No.	Funds*
Churches	31	1,318	57	4,119	40	3,728	24	1,257	152	10,422
Theaters	10	1,696	22	6,124	12	1,863	24	3,293	68	12,976
Libraries	9	1,140	79	5,675	82	5,438	238	11,362	408	23,615
Cultural Centers	21	1,392	77	8,143	78	7,786	121	7,415	297	24,736
Museums	57	3,954	57	8,632	45	4,073	24	976	183	17,635
Other Sites	34	5,442	69	8,719	49	7,457	22	2,234	174	23,852
Total	162	14,942	361	41,412	306	30,345	453	26,537	1282	113.236

Souce: Maria Balaban. "*Os Indicadores Quantitativos da Cultura*", in *Um Olhar Sobre a Cultura Brasileira*, 1999. *In thousands of Reais

The following graph reveals the robust growth of funds available for heritage preservation projects during the period from 1990-1997, both in absolute and in relative terms. The steep increase of private sponsorship for cultural projects is reflected at two milestones, first the enactment of the *Lei Rouanet* in the period from 1991 to 1993 and the *Lei do Mecenato* of 1995. The overall picture reveals the confidence with which the private sector engages in its support of cultural projects. During 1995-1998, there was an increase of 27%, in real terms, of the budget available for cultural affairs; this increment was due to the budget review increases approved by the Congress and compounded by the reduction in recurrent cost expenditures. These funds were allocated to project and program activities and represented a significant increase in the array of cultural activities, supported both by public and private funds.

7. Concluding Remarks

What have we learned from the experience of a public-private partnership initiative based on tax incentives aimed to promote sustainable social and cultural development in Brazil? The new policy instrument has triggered very positive transformations by which cultural affairs are defined not anymore by the State institutions alone, but in partnership with civic groups and private investors. It injects

substantial amounts of new resources into the cultural sector. The process is conducted in a transparent way and projects are funded through a competitive selection process. In addition, with broader stakeholders' involvement, new elements of tangible and intangible cultural expressions found in Brazil are being mainstreamed.   The raising of extra-budgetary resources, from voluntary deductions of corporate owned income taxes, is arguably one of the best ways of addressing the issue of chronic resource deficits (i.e. budget) afflicting the cultural sector. However, the amount of resources raised through the *Mecenato* Program has yet to reach the levels considered adequate for supporting the broad range of activities submitted to the *Mecenato* Program for funding, as well as to cover the recurrent expenditures for heritage preservation programs. For lack of available data the analysis of effects of the monetary crisis in Brazil (1999) on the levels of funds raised by the *Mecenato* program is not part of this essay.

Public and Private Enterprise Sponsorship of Preservation Efforts 1990-1997
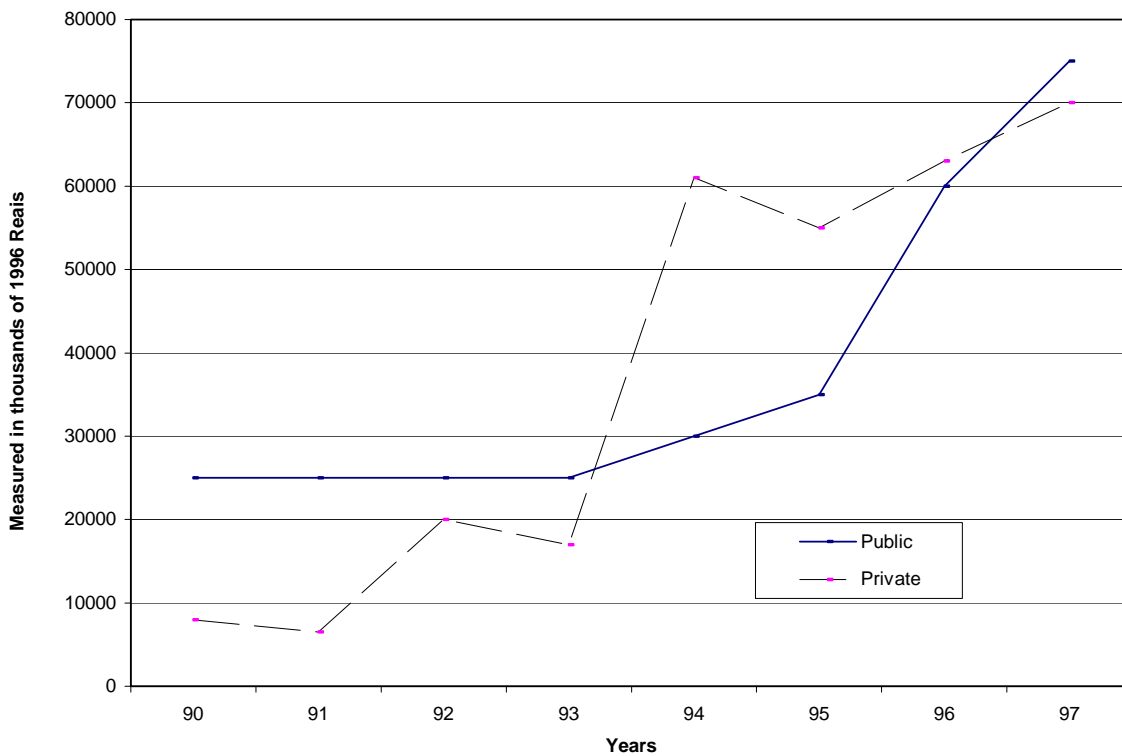
Source: Maria Balaban. "*Os Indicadores Quantitativos da Cultura*", in *Um Olhar Sobre a Cultura Brasileira*, 1998.

New answers often bring old problems, and this is all the more true when the problems are deeply embedded and not seen at first glance. This is certainly the case of the regional economic disparities and social and economic stratification in Brazil. The awesome concentration of industrial and agricultural production as well as trade in the Southeastern states of Brazil, particularly in Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, is clearly reflected by the magnitude of funds collected through the *Mecenato Program*-- the Southeastern states led with about 99% of the total tax contributions raised in 1992 and 85% in the fiscal year of 1997, while all other regions combined shared 15% of the amount raised in the latter period. (Moises J.A., op.cit). This glaring regional imbalance in economic development and the concentration of wealth only deepens the imbedded social differentiation and opportunities to access cultural resources. The Ministry of Culture admits that revisions of the tax incentive policy may be introduced to compensate

for the regional imbalance, while it is fully aware that introducing control mechanisms to compensate for these distortions may distort and pervert the market-led competitive spirit that underlies the *Mecenato* Program. Policy response to the regional imbalance may be addressed in several ways. The least "interventionist" measure, however, is to strengthen the local capacity in preparing better proposals for cultural projects, which by virtue of their intrinsic quality and value could be on better footing with other proposed projects (i.e. submitted from other regions) competing for funding.

In conclusion, this essay does not attempt a comprehensive cultural policy analysis or cultural historiography of Brazil; it does, however, pinpoint important transitions in policy formulations-- particularly concerning management preservation of the listed built heritage. The role of the State and of civic society has significantly evolved since the adoption of the new Constitution in 1988. Apart from the new laws, under the initiatives of civic groups and corporate interests, the traditional landscape of cultural heritage and its fixed references are rapidly changing. The cultural expressions rooted in the Afro-Brazilian and Indigenous Peoples' traditions as well as new cultural elements brought about by the significant inflow of immigrants throughout the 19th and 20th centuries are now being included. Mainstreaming the regional and ethnic cultures is still a formidable challenge to be faced in Brazil, due to the entrenched traditions and resistance found in the established cultural canon, aggravated by regional and intra-regional economic disparities, and severely limited public resources to support the range of cultural activities and also the preservation of built heritage. The growing demands of the Brazilian "cultural industry", triggered the Ministry of Culture to launch and test new mechanisms to fund cultural projects. With the corporate contributions through the *Mecenato* Program, the pool of resources available in the domain of culture has doubled in recent years and the funding of a new generation of cultural products is now based on a system of competitive project selection. Nevertheless, it is clear that funding sources are still insufficient in volume and inelastic in nature for the expanding potential of the Brazilian cultural sector, particularly during the downturns of the Brazilian National economy.

Lastly, I am pleased to conclude this essay on a positive note by sharing a successful achievement of the *Mecenato* program. The case in point is related to the Brazilian movie industry, which experienced a remarkable turnaround during a short period of time due to essential funding received from private sponsorship. Between 1995 and 1998, nearly R 215 million was raised by the film industry through the tax incentive program for new productions, including prizewinning films, such as "Central Station" (Weffort and Balaban, M.D., op cit.). In relative terms the growth of the industry was spectacular, from 71 projects funded in 1995 to 426 projects funded in 1998.

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