

Eve, Mary, and Magdalene: Stereotypes of Women in Sixteenth- Century Brazil

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In the first Jesuit writings about Brazil, dating from the mid-sixteenth century, certain female stereotypes can be seen, which seem to have survived over the centuries and can be associated with a wide range of themes from Western culture. It is the objective of this article to present these stereotypes, understanding them in the broader cultural context in which they are set, and, at the same time, relating them to the ups and downs of Brazilian history in the first century of colonization.

Genesis, Chapter 1: 'Below the line of the Equator there is no sin'

In the beginning, there was sex... In the first decades of the sixteenth century, many Europeans established themselves on the coast of Brazil with, among other motives, the intention of profiting from the spectacle of naked women and the possibilities of experiencing the pleasures of the flesh without the control and the rules of the Holy Mother Catholic Church (Prado, 1931, 29-32 and Freire, 1981, 21). Even those who established themselves along the coast of Brazil because of shipwrecks, exile or even ambition for riches, did not fail to live this experience, which attracted Portuguese, Spanish and French alike. In contact with the Amerindian groups, these men mixed racially, leaving a large offspring of *mestizos* and adopting the customs of the *brasis* (the native Brazilians). Some turned into sorts of petty kings over parts of the territory. Three of the most well-known are the Portuguese João Ramalho and the legendary bachelor of Cananéia - both on the coast of São Paulo - and Caramuru (Prado, 1935, 65 ff). Ramalho, the first Portuguese man to live in southern Brazil, was shipwrecked on the coast of what is now the state of São Paulo and took shelter among the Tupiniquim Indians. He married Bartira, their Chief Tibiriçá's daughter (Monteiro, 1994B, 681-2). Caramuru, who settled in Bahia, in northern Brazil, about 1510 is a character similar to Ramalho. He, too, was a Portuguese victim of a shipwreck who took a leading role among the local Indians, married a Chief's daughter and had a large number of offspring. (Monteiro, 1994A, 134-5).

As colonization became an ever more serious matter for Portugal, and the French made a settlement in the Bay of Guanabara in the mid-sixteenth century, the idea of sin and, consequently, the imposition of Christian morals on the settlers became stronger. After sex, then, came the word. However, even at the beginning of the seventeenth century, with the end of the initial stage of the colonization and the dissemination of the idea of sin, it was still believed in Europe that the Equator not only divides the world but also 'virtue from vice' (Barléus, 1974, 49): for men in the southern hemisphere, everything was allowed, there was no such thing as sin.

Chapter 2: The Christian Word being spread ...

When constructing their visions of the New World, the Europeans inserted America into their memory, that is, into topography and events already known to them. They saw the new in the context of the old, discovering its place in sacred history and in the divine plan, since the beginning of time - in this way they did a double translation, a 'recognition' (Cunha, 1996, 73).

This effort to make the New similar to the Old involved a vast universe of beliefs, traditions and themes of Western culture, established at both erudite and popular levels (Holanda, 1977, 15-33 and 144-178; Boxer, 1977, 123; and Souza, 1986, 29-85). Christianity, with the Bible, the writings of the early Church fathers and medieval writings, contributed decisively in supplying the models into which to cast America and its peoples. There was also the appeal to ancient classical authors such as Ovid, Pliny, Virgil, Cato and to Tertullian, the Carthaginian theologian (A.D. c160-c230). From Church elements came the idea that the history of the Earth - and with it, that of the world being discovered, America - was marked by continuous battles between God and the devil, virtue and sin, in which the profane is flooded by the sacred (Neves, 1978, 39-40). In European thinking, until the beginning of the 18th century, the earthly spectacle provided 'in its very evanescence, lessons of eternity', as taught by the seminal work of our most important historian Sérgio Buarque de Holanda, *Visão do Paraíso* (1977, 64 and 192). Nature was the 'book of Nature', written by God, and, like the Bible, had hidden meanings besides the literal; throughout the Creation, therefore, spoke the very voice of the Creator (Holanda, 1977, 64 and 192). In its perception of America, the projections of European imagination included the search for this divine voice: mainly for the priests and the secular authorities (but also for some ordinary people and even

1 'Reconhecimento' in Portuguese.

heretics²), experience hid sacred messages that should be deciphered, and, subsequently, learned and used. Consequently, the attempt to find the 'divine voice' in experience took on a strategic meaning. Formulations such as Paradise, Hell and Purgatory were projected onto the New World, mixing Christian and pagan elements. Laura de Mello e Souza, the best recent Brazilian authority on historical research about this subject, says that, generally speaking, Brazil was thought of as Paradise for its nature, Hell for its people - seen as the lackeys of the devil - and Purgatory, for the link with the homeland, by which it became a space for purgation (1986, 84).

Human otherness in Brazilian lands when compared to Europe, both with regard to Indians and Negroes, was explained from the Bible. For the Jesuit Manuel da Nóbrega and the Calvinist Jean de Léry, the *brasís* were less civilized than the Europeans 'because of the curse of their grandparents': they were the descendants of Cain, son of Noah, 'who uncovered the shame of his drunken father', and were cursed by 'being naked and other blights' (Nóbrega, 1954, 336-7 and Léry, 1980, 221-2). Negroes, according to the Europeans, had the same origin: their dark skin and their crisp and spiky hair were due to the curse Noah cast on Cain and his descendants (Holanda, 1977, 285). Jesuits, chroniclers and travelers of the sixteenth century also identified the civilizing hero of Indian mythologies as the apostle Thomas - according to the respected theologians, he had gone out to preach the Christian faith among the heathen of the world - they believed they could see his footsteps in many places (Holanda, 1977, 110-24 and Léry, 1980, 219).

Faced with the differences which separated their lifestyle from that of the natives, the Europeans sought help from, among other sources, the notion of the Age of Gold, described in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (Holanda, 1977, 179-80), whereby they could state that among the aborigines in Brazil there was no Faith, Law or King. The first to do so was probably Amerigo Vespucci, in a description written in 1503: 'they live without king or rules, each is his own master' (*'Vivem sem rei nem governador, cada um é o seu próprio dono'*, Augras 1991, 32). These themes appear in many texts, as, for example, in the work of Pero de Magalhães Gandavo: 'The language they use is one throughout the coast; it lacks three letters (...); it is instructive to know that in that language there can be found

2 For example, Pedro Rates Henequim, a Portuguese man who lived in Minas Gerais in the two earliest decades of the 18th Century, convicted and burnt as a heretic by the Inquisition of Lisbon in 1744, believed that the Earthly Paradise was found in Brazil. He wrote that the "Paráiso Terreal, em que Adão foi creado, está na América debaxo da Linha Equinocial e perpendicular ao lugar em q' Deos tem o Seu Trono no Ceo", vendo como prova disto o fato de que "nesta nova terra se achar tudo o que a Scriptura diz dele", como 'frutas, rios e delícias" (Gomes, 1997, 111).

neither F, nor L, nor R, something to wonder at, for in this way they have neither Faith, nor Law nor Ruler and thus live in a disorderly way' (*A língua que usam [os índios do Brazil], toda pela costa, he huma [...] carece de tres letras, convem a saber nam se acha nela F, nem L, nem R, cousa digna despanto porque assi nam têm Fé, nem Lei, nem Rei, e desta maneira vivem desordenadamente* (1980, 123-4)). The same absence of Faith, Law and King is also found in other writings of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries³.

Between Eve, Magdalene and Mary: woman, according to the Jesuits

As the Christian civilizing-moralizing purpose began to be followed, writings were produced in which it is possible to detect some models for the representation of women which are marked by misogyny: Christianity, as well as other religions (Buddhism, Judaism and Islam, for example) established female inferiority and, conversely, the prominence of man (Boxer, 1977, 122). Born of male pens, these models had the Jesuits as their main disseminators. The most important Jesuits in this sixteenth century were José de Anchieta and Manuel da Nóbrega. Nóbrega arrived in Bahia in 1549 and became the first leader of the Jesuits in Brazil. Anchieta (1534-1597), who was born in the Canary Islands, arrived in Portuguese America a few years later, in 1551. Both of them tried to convert the Indians to the Catholic faith and left us a lot of writings. Anchieta wrote poems, plays and letters. He studied the Indian languages and wrote a grammar of the Tupinambá dialect: *Art of the Grammar of the Most Widely Used Language on the Coast of Brazil* (*Arte de Gramática da Língua Mais Usada na Costa do Brazil*, published in 1595, Horch, 1994, 49-50 and Villalta, 1987, 337-8). Nóbrega (1517-1570) wrote a large number of letters and the famous *Dialogue on the Conversion of Aborigines* (*Diálogo sobre a Conversão do Gentio*), certainly written in 1557 (Couto, 1994, 585). Pero Correia was less important. He arrived in Brazil many years before Nóbrega and Anchieta. He killed and captured a lot of Indians and acquired a great knowledge of an Indian language spoken in São Paulo (Anchieta, 1988, 48 and 68). One day he repented, joined the Jesuit Company and, in 1549, became its first novice. But later, in 1554, one group of Indians killed him (Navarro et al, 1988, 119).

Jesuit writings are the first material sign of the dissemination of the idea of sin. Originally forgotten in Portuguese possessions in America, the idea of sin becomes omnipresent: the vices of the flesh begin to be seen as dominating

3 For example, in the Jesuit writings of the sixteenth century (Leite, 1954, vol. 1, 231 and Anchieta, 1984, 74) and in later reports, of the seventeenth century, such as those of the Dutchman Gaspar Barléus (1974, 22) and of the Frenchmen André Thevet (Augras, 1991, 24) and Claude d'Abeville (1975, 255-6).

Brazilian lands, drawing together Europeans and Brazilians, not sparing even the secular clergy, seen more as partners of the devil than of God (Nóbrega, 1886, 87).

The priest Manoel da Nóbrega, as soon as he arrived in Brazil in the mid-sixteenth century, described the triumphs of the 'sins of the flesh' in the following terms:

In this land there is a great sin, which is that almost all the men have their Negro women [that is, Indians] as concubines (*mancebas*), and other free women, whom they take from the Negroes, according to the custom of the land, which is to have many women. And they leave them when it suits them, which is a great scandal for the new church the Lord wishes to found [...] Laymen take their example from the priests and the Gentile from all; and it is believed here that the vice of the flesh is not sin. (Nóbrega, 1988, 79, 83)

(Nesta terra há um grande pecado, que é terem os homens quase todos suas Negras [isto é, Indias] por mancebas, e outras livres que pedem aos Negros por mulheres, segundo o costume da terra, que é terem muitas mulheres. E estas deixam-n'as quando lhes apraz, o que é grande escândalo para a nova igreja que o Senhor quer fundar [...] os seculares tomam exemplo dos sacerdotes e o Gentio de todos; e tem-se cá que o vício da carne não é pecado.)

Developing this idea of a triumphant sin - which legitimizes the work they were about to do, since, after all, the existence of this sin made it necessary to evangelize the new lands, so that this discourse had a strategic meaning - the Jesuits built images of women inspired by three models: Holy Mary, mother of Jesus, a virgin, who conceived without sin; Eve, mother of all men, and, at the same time, the cause of Adam's Fall and that of all his descendants (Genesis 3:11,12 and 13); and, also, Mary Magdalene, former prostitute, the repentant sinner. These Christian models were inspired also by Aristotelian anthropology, which understands women as essentially carnal, and therefore as defective men, from which it can be deduced that their salvation would only be possible in so far as they sought to transcend their bodily and feminine nature (Novinsky, 1980, 233-4). This anthropological itinerary - from the flesh to the spirit - is significantly synthesized in the path from Eve to Mary: from the one responsible for the Fall to the virgin mother of the Saviour.

The priest José de Anchieta, in his many plays, usually written in Portuguese, Spanish or Tupy and acted in front of Indians, Europeans, and *mestizos*, tells the story of Sin, from the Fall to the Salvation of man with the coming of Jesus Christ, going all the way to the end of time. In these plays, the character of Eve has a fundamental role: the first woman, because she gave way

to the temptations of the serpent-demon, is held responsible for Adam's and man's damnation. Adam, seduced by Eve's words, lost divine Grace, symbolized in a gown (the Sunday dress).

The woman he [Adam] was given
thinking she was stealing something
with debates and insistence
was stained with guilt.
Robbed and naked
she made the miller lose
his rich Sunday dress [...]
He [Satan] knew how to use
the woman, thy partner
and made her an intriguer
Who soon tricked thee.
Thou, without a further thought,
believest her, foolish miller,
and lost thy Sunday dress.

Black were thy loves
because so black they left thee
and thy gown they took. (Anchieta, 'Na festa de Natal ou Pregação Universal',
1977, 119-20)

(A mulher que lhe foi dada [a Adão],
cuidando furtar maquiás,
com debates e porfias
foi da culpa maquiada.
Ela nua e esbulhada
fez furtar ao moleiro
o seu rico domingueiro [...]
Ele [Satanás] soube-se ajudar
da mulher, tua parceira,
e fez dela alcoviteira, para em breve te enganar.
Tu, sem mais considerar,
lhe creste, parvo moleiro,
e perdeste o domingueiro.

Negros foram teus amores
pois tão negro te deixaram
e o pelote te levaram.)

In accordance with the Bible verses, Anchieta reproduces the idea of an incompatibility between woman and serpent, and also presents childbirth as a punishment for the misfortunes brought about by the Fall; it would be the role of woman to be the gate to salvation, the glory of giving birth to the Son of God, Jesus Christ:

Woman was the means
By which the robe was lost
Woman was also the third party
by which it was restored.
The fortune of the miller
is now ennobled
with such a rich Sunday dress. (Anchieta, 'Na festa de Natal ou Pregação
Universal', 1977, 138-9)

(Para o saio ser perdido,
a mulher foi medianeira.
Mulher foi também terceira,
para ser restituído
Fica agora enobrecido
o ditoso do moleiro
com tão rico domingueiro.)

However, while seeming to redeem woman by giving her an important role in the redemption of man, Anchieta intends only to magnify the Redeemer, which he does in a very subtle way: the Glory of God the Son is such that he could come out of the womb of a woman, a lesser being, to save mankind! Therefore, in one of the plays, an angel, speaking to the devil, states:

And to give thee greater sorrow
he wants to demolish
thy inflated pride
by a little woman [that is, Mary]. (Anchieta, 'Santa Úrsula', 1977, 281)

(E p'ra te dar maior pena
a tua soberba inchada
quer que seja derribada
por uma mulher pequena [isto é, Maria].)

To which the devil answers:

oh, what a cruel stab
thou gavest me
when thou namest woman.
For woman killed me,
woman took away my power,
and striking me against the bench,
my head she broke. (Anchieta, 'Santa Úrsula', 1977, 281)

(ó que cruel estocada
m'atiraste
quando a mulher nomeaste!
Porque mulher me matou,
mulher meu poder tirou,
e dando comigo ao traste,
a cabeça me quebrou.)

Mary's role is, therefore, not so much one of glory for her, but for the man who comes from her womb, and inversely, one which humiliates the devil. Anchieta uses a similar argument when he describes, in a letter, the frightening spectacle of the birth of serpents, coming from inside a snake he had killed, when, stepping over these reptiles, he and the other priests suffered no harm (Anchieta, 1984, 142). This event showed also the omnipotence of God and the Protection which he gave to his apostles in the New World. In this way, within a tortuous logic that benefited not the agent, but the product, and, in the final instance, the Creator, and those who believed they were his soldiers, woman and snake are the cause of destruction and fear.

Sisters of Eve, the native women were seen as close to the devil. According to a character in an Anchieta play, Aimberê, a servant of the devil:

The old women are truly wicked:
working their spells
they exalt fantasies,
offend against God,
and me they fill with honours! (Anchieta, 'Na Festa de S. Lourenço', 1977, 161)

(As velhas são más de fato:
fazendo suas magias
exaltam as fantasias,
lançam a Deus desacato,
e a mim encham de honrarias.)

But, according to Saravaia, another of the devil's servants, not only old women obeyed the devil:

I threw revolt into the forest,
I snared lonely women.
Softly, softly watching,
Did not sleep when catching them:
They are my eternal prey! (Anchieta, 'Na Festa de S. Lourenço', 1977, 161)

(Meti revoltas na mata,
lacei mulheres sozinhas.
Em espreitas bem mansinhas,
não dormi, à sua cata:
são presas eternas minhas!)

Thus, women are prisoners of the Devil, eternal prisoners.

As Eve ruined Adam so the female *brasis* ruined virtuous young men, since, according to priest Ambrósio Pires, the Indian women caused the loss of virtue of the students who had come from the homeland (*reinóis*) to study in the school of the Society of Jesus.

The women go around almost naked and are so wicked that they chase these young men in order to sin with them and deceive them, and they let themselves be easily deceived. Therefore, this land is only for old men, or young ones so virtuous that their virtue outstrips their age. (Leite, 1954, vol. 2, 232)

(as mulheres andão quá nuas e são tão roins, que andão trás estes moços pera pecarem com elles e enganão-nos, e elles que facilmente se deixão enganar. Assi que esta terra não é senão pera velhos ou moços tão virtuosos, que a virtude muito supra a idade.)

If the Jesuits worried about the snares of the Amerindian women, the same is true with regard to the Indian practice of offering their sisters and daughters to their prisoners, whether Europeans or Indian enemies, who would then be devoured in cannibalistic rituals. There was also the Indian practice of offering women to their guests (Nóbrega, 1886, 63, Anchieta, 1984, 213) who would then become their sons or brothers-in-law. The Jesuits were equally upset to see white Christians giving their daughters to single men without the formality of marriage (Nóbrega, 1886, 87). The reports about these practices, however, are not as strong as those which describe the temptations brought about by the women themselves, which would appear to express the misogyny of the authors.

The negative image of women comes up continually in the plays and letters written by the Jesuits. If the old women were allies of the devil (possibly because they were more resistant to the cultural and moralizing crusade), if the female gender is a prisoner to Satan, women also incite Indians to adultery (Anchieta, 1977, 133) and remind Europeanized Indians of indigenous practices, such as an old woman who remembered the delicious flavour of young Indians' hands, devoured in a cannibalistic ritual, an account written down by Jaboatão in the 18th century (Souza, 1986, 61). Even the Amazons are mentioned, women who 'sin against nature' taking lust to extremes:

there are even some women, who in arms and in other things behave like men; and they have other women they are married to. The greatest insult that can be made against them is to call them women: in this place, if someone calls them women they run the risk of being shot at with arrows. (Leite, 1954, vol. 1, 224-5)

(ay acá algunas mugeres, que ansi en armas como em outras cosas siguen officio de hombres ; y tienem otras mugeres con que son casadas. La mayor injuria que les puedem hazer és llamarles mugeres : em tal parte, se lo llamara alguna persona, que correra peligro de tirarle frechadas.)

There are women, however, who redeem themselves, in spite of their old age: from Eve, they convert to Magdalene. In the early days of São Paulo, for example, the main wife of João Ramalho, turned from an enemy of conversion into its ally and died a Christian (Anchieta, 1984, 155-6). The mother-in-law of the Indian chief censured him for disagreeing with the Jesuits (Leite, 1954, vol. 2, 208). There are references to many others, young and old, who became fully devout (Leite, 1954, vol. 2, 299-300), some of whom went so far as to let themselves be beaten and killed for the Christian faith (Leite, 1954, vol. 2, 273, and Anchieta, 1984, 117).

Thus, from Eve we come to Magdalene: Indian women who leave their customs, embracing those imposed on them by priests, moving away from 'sinful sex' (Anchieta, 1984, 159) – that is, sex outside marriage – or even white women who, 'wrong in Europe', had to be sent to the colony to be married:

It seems to me very convenient for Your Highness to send here some women who there (in Portugal) have little chance of marriage, even if they are 'wrong', because they will all marry very well, as long as they are not such as have lost all shame before God and the world. (Nóbrega, 1988, 80)

(Parece-me cousa mui conveniente mandar Sua Alteza algumas mulheres que lá [em Portugal] tem pouco remédio de casamento a estas partes, ainda que fossem erradas, porque casarão todas mui bem, com tanto que

não sejam tais que de todo tenham perdido a vergonha a Deus e ao mundo .)

Some Amerindians truly followed the 'truths' of the Jesuits. They led the catechization, becoming the right arm of the priests, as occurred in São Vicente, where, according to Father Pero Correia, in 1551:

one of these indoctrinated Indian women rose up one night to preach in these streets of São Vicente, and with such fervour that she put men and women in disarray. And in such a way that some of these Indian women indoctrinated in this way are a mirror not only to their kin, but to many Portuguese women who are here. (Leite, 1954, vol. 1, 222)

(uma india destas doutrinadas se alevantou huma noute a preguar por estas ruas de São Vicente, e com tanto fervor que poos a homens e molheres em muita confusão .E hé de maneira que algumas destas indias assi doutrinadas são espelho nam somente a seus parentes e parentas, mas a mutas das molheres de Portugal que caa há.)

In these Brazilian lands, therefore, there was not only space for sin. In the Jesuit writings, it is clear, on the one hand, that virtue was not entirely absent among the Amerindians, since the married women tended to be faithful to their husbands (Leite, 1954, vol. 1, 132-3). On the other hand, Mary was taken as a model to be followed, the ideal of chastity.

Therefore, in one of Anchieta's plays, probably performed on arrival at Vila de Vitória in the State of Espírito Santo, a character, Saint Mauricius, mentioning a relic of a supposed eleven thousand martyrs from Colombia, Germany, says :

[...] the highest Good
sends them those ladies,
eleven thousand virgins, who come
in order, with us too,
to be your guardians. (Anchieta, 'Santa Úrsula', 1977, 283)

([...] o sumo Bem
lhes manda aquelas senhoras,
onze mil virgens, que vêm
para, conosco também,
serem suas guardadoras.)

To which the character Vila de Vitória answers:

Such glorious damsels,
deserve to be much honoured,

[And Saint Mauricieus, adding:]
and with us sheltered,
since they are such beautiful virgins,
crowned with martyrdom! (Anchieta, 'Santa Úrsula', 1977, 283)

(Tão gloriosas donzelas,
merecem ser mui honradas,
[E São Maurício, complementando:]
e conosco agasalhadas,
pois que são virgens tão belas,
de martírio coroadas!)

In another play, a messenger of the 'highest Good', Mary, also called Tupansy, expels a demon, Anhangá, from Brazilian lands:

Oh! Come and protect us,
Tupansy, Holy Mary!
To Anhangá send terror
and run to defend us! (Anchieta, 1977, 274)

(Oh! vem a nos proteger,
Tupansy, Santa Maria!
A Ananhangá terror envia
e corre a nos defender)

This model can be seen to be incorporated into the routine, if not of the evangelized peoples, at least of the narratives built by the Catechists, in a piece of writing left by Father Antônio Blázquez about the sufferings of an Indian woman defending her chastity in the town of Bahia. She was brought from her parents' home while very young, and lived as a slave in the house of an 'honourable woman', and became so fervently Catholic that she made a vow of chastity, 'which was not usual for the Indian women of this land'. Her path, from then on was, according to the same priest, marked by a struggle between God and the devil. Her owners wanted to deflower her, stealing the 'jewel of chastity', and besieged her any number of times. Astounded by her refusal to give in, a novelty in which they themselves recognized the 'virtue and grace of the Lord', they retreated, in shame, for a while. But then they came back, driven by their wickedness and by the jealousy of the devil, who could not accept defeat to a Brazilian Indian woman, not brought up in a convent, born of 'simple and almost savage people' (Leite, 1954, vol. 2, 442). The young woman, however, insisted on defeating them, equipping herself with a crucifix which she put on her lap, and seeking by all means 'to show a poor appearance to men to see if they would leave her alone, she would wear nothing on her head, nor combed it, nor put anything over her hair, a natural thing for the honesty of women, but wore it

disheveled and unkempt, so that she looked ugly to men and very beautiful before the eyes of God' (Leite, 1954, vol. 2, 444) refusing to wash and insisting on leaving her clothes dirty. On one occasion she used a crucifix so that her master gave up his plan to make love to her. This master ended up selling her to another, who also was bent on molesting her. She asked her priests to find her married masters. The priests then, seeing her affliction and perseverance, began to collect alms in order to buy her freedom (Leite, 1954, vol. 2, 441-4). Her joy was to speak of the Lord, to hear sermons, to confess, and to encourage other Indian women to do the same, for which she was despised by other slaves. After a long calvary, this Indian died - and she died a virgin.

In this narrative, marked by ethnocentrism and by misogyny, the figure of the Most Holy Mary can be seen: if Mary, the only woman to conceive without sex, remaining chaste, shared the suffering and martyrdom of Jesus for the salvation of Man, the poor Brazilian Indian woman, after hearing the 'divine word', faced many torments, saved her honour and her soul, paying for this with her very life. Although a slave, she 'freely' served God. Therefore, if in the Jesuit plays and other writings, Eve seems to be a model for disaster, for the Fall, Mary is her counterpart: she is the model of the ideal, virgin, pure and chaste woman, devoid of all vanity. Vanity, one must remember, was an element stigmatized by thinkers such as Thomas More, Erasmus of Rotterdam and Juan Luis Vives (Priore, 1993, 112) and also by the Calvinist Jean de Léry, in his report on Antarctic France. Léry, whose objective was to defend Indian women in general (and not to attack them), refers to vanity to speak against womankind in Europe (Léry, 1980, 121). Mary, although a woman, stood out from her sex and, because of this, seems to become a model to be tirelessly imitated by all other women and venerated by all men:

Virgin Mary Mistress,
your slave I wish to be
and promise to live
in your service, now
and ever after, until I die. (Anchieta, 'Na festa do Natal ou Pregação Universal',
1977, 136)

(Virgem Maria Senhora,
vosso escravo quero ser
e protesto de viver
em vosso serviço, agora
e depois, até morrer.)

Chastity is an essential element for the veneration of Mary, so much so that a chorus of boys, in the play 'Aldeia de Guaraparim', recite and sing:

Hail, beautiful Mary
At your conception,
Adam's vile sin, today
was not inoculated in you,
From it God freed you,
for he loved you from his heart. (Anchieta, 'Na Aldeia de Guaraparim', 1977,
205)

(Ave, formosa Maria, [...])
Em ti não se inoculou,
hoje, à tua conceição,
o vil pecado de Adão,
mais dele Deus te livrou,
pois te amou de coração.)

This idea comes up again in the same play, in a later act, in which, beside this, the figures of Eve and Mary confront each other :

Eve, our first mother,
coveted the great deceit,
when she saw the pleasant fruit;
as the swift snake spoke
she harvested and ate her harm.
[...] to Mary did not come
original sin:
in her holy joy,
she trod on the devil and made
evil flee the land. (Anchieta, 'Na Aldeia de Guaraparim, 1977, 232)

(Eva, nossa mãe primeira,
cobiçou o grande engano,
ao ver a fruta fagueira;
à voz da cobra ligeira,
colheu e comeu seu dano.
[...] Não se achegou a Maria
o pecado original:
em sua santa alegria,
calçou o demo e fazia
da terra fugir o mal.)

If sex, in its origin, was an evil, motivating the Fall, it became acceptable only in the shadow of monogamous and indissoluble marriage. The Jesuits dedicated themselves to spreading matrimony and combating polygamy and concubinage, whether among Europeans or among half-castes and Indians

(Nóbrega, 1886, 56, 80, 83). With regard to the natives, there was a problem in their marriage preferences: they encouraged unions which in the eyes of the Catholic Church were incestuous. In order to solve this problem, the Jesuits requested legal concessions. They managed to get an authorization from the Pope, in 1554, for marriages between consanguineous relatives, except between brothers and sisters and parents and children (Anchieta, 1984, 66-74). Since it was the only admissible outlet for experiencing sex, women were not free from marriage: marriage was the acceptable alternative to the model of chastity represented by Mary, that is, it was the only respectable way to experience sex. If unable to be chaste, women had to marry and be faithful to their husbands. Any alternative was associated with the Fall, with Eve's dark figure ...

Some counter discourses

In the documents there are abundant signs of resistance to the culture and sexual morals preached by the Jesuits, both by the Amerindians, the half-castes and the Portuguese. But there are only rare occasions on which one may find questioning on the level of discourse, indications of the negative speech of the 'other'. There are, however, two passages in Anchieta's letters, which question fundamental elements of sexual morality and the stereotypes of women spread by the Jesuits: the contrast between the soul and flesh, the ideal of chastity, the virginity of Mary, Hell, salvation and the idea of God, as a God who inspires fear.

In one passage, an old Indian raises a doubt about the virginity of Mary, showing himself surprised and intrigued with the fact 'of our Lady giving birth and remaining a virgin', and asks for more details about this (Anchieta, 1984, 199). In another passage, the Tamóio Indian Pindobuçu asks Anchieta why priests do not have wives, with the awkward question: 'And do you not desire women when you see beautiful ones?' Anchieta answers this by saying that it is God's commandment and showing him the fasts, the abstentions and the self-flagellation by which he controlled the flesh. Pindobuçu then replies: 'And what will God do to you? Why do you fear him?' Anchieta then tells him about 'hell and glory' (Anchieta, 1984, 216-7). Thus, the contrast between soul and flesh, the ideal of chastity, the virginity of Mary, Hell, salvation and the idea of God, so widespread in the practice and writings of the evangelists, confront those who question them with counter-arguments, with a different world view. Many other Indians in Brazil, if they did the same, did not manage to get their words written down by the Jesuits: however, it is clear that many of the inhabitants of Brazil of the mid-sixteenth century, and not only the Indians, developed a strong resistance to the evangelists, since they returned to the practices condemned by the priests, which brought about continuous laments. Detailing this resistance, however, goes beyond the scope of this article.

Conclusion

The first Jesuits in Brazil, unsurprisingly, produced writings which express a misogynous view anchored on a wide range of pillars of Western culture. These writings present narratives in which there are the underlying or explicit figures of Eve, Magdalene and Mary, and, in a very secondary way, the Amazons. These stereotypes have a strategic meaning, responding to the imperatives of evangelization of the peoples: first they led to demonization, through the figure of Eve, of the sexual and cultural practices which did not meet Christian ideals; then they redeem, inspired by Magdalene, those women who abandon these practices; and, finally, they make chastity sacred, spreading the worship of the Virgin Mary or making her into a model for those women who kept themselves chaste or at least satisfied their sexual desires within marriage.

If sacred history provided models for the interpretation of American reality, if these models were disseminated in Portuguese America, the very historical process, for its part, was understood by the Jesuits in such a way as to repeat the models of Western culture, especially those of Catholicism. In parallel to their use and dissemination of these stereotypes, the Jesuits sought to spread the practice of Christian marriage, confining acceptable sexual experience within it. In this, men and women were equally restrained. Women, however, were stigmatized because they were not able fully to redeem themselves, not even through Mary, whose conception was more a motive of glory for her offspring, Jesus, than for her and womankind. Female inferiority was, therefore, prisoner to 'immemorial eternity', which went all the way back to Genesis.

Somewhat impressionistically (considering that I am not supported by recent research on the subject but only by my experience as a member of present-day Brazilian society) I could add that these stereotypes can still be found and that the representations of women spread by the Jesuits, among others, survive to this day. The cult of the Virgin Mary is widespread, so much so that as 'Nossa Senhora Aparecida' ('Our Lady who Came from the Waters') she is the Patron Saint of Brazil. Motherhood is praised as a value in itself, to such a point that it becomes a condition *sine qua non* for the state of 'being a woman'. Women who live their sexuality freely, unresigned to virginity or to sex within marriage, are often, in turn, stigmatized and demonized. To conclude, no few repenting Magdalenes are to be found, living in society or in the Brazilian imaginary. One has here to do with stereotypes which go back a long way in time.

Translated by Charles Spencer Bacon.

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