

The Scarred and Sutured Map: Re-mapping Cultural Memory/Re-membering the Map
Contemporary Lusophone Art and Literature*

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* This is segment of a longer paper, presented at the American Comparative Literature Association within a three-day seminar on “Mapping Spaces, Moving Bodies: Control, Resistance, and Disorientations”. I submit it as an example of drafted material that I will revise for inclusion within *New Navigators*.

** I have included thumbnail reproductions of works of art referenced within the paper. These were projected separately as part of my presentation at the conference.

In her incisive investigation of the baroque within the work of the contemporary Brazilian artist Adriana Varejão, Louise Neri describes Varejão’s visual art as both novel and “novelistic”¹ in a Bakhtinian sense—critically and creatively representing cultural consciousness through historicized dialogues and dialogic discourse. Refocusing on Varejão’s work through this literary lens, Neri links an architectural and artistic baroque to those narrative traditions designated by Bakhtin as carnivalesque. Ranging from Mennipean satire to the modern novel, Bakhtin retraces digressive narratives marked by a concomitantly degenerative and generative polyphony and plurality, inversions of authorship and authority, interpolation of genres, interpenetration of high and low discourses, irony and incisive critique. While dissolving distances, carnivalesque contact occurs without the erasure of the difference that is necessary to dialogic realization. Rather, those “multiple deterritorializations of language” or discourses recognized by Deleuze and Guattari as constitutive of “minor literatures”, play difference out to the full. Difference is amplified by approximation, activated by a potent indifference to traditional structures of language and power. Polyphony resounds in both the literal, geo-cultural season and space of carnival and in more sustainable literary chronotopes, not only because these are crowded sites, but also because they are marked by a lack of silencing deference. The pretentiousness of power is unmasked, through the putting on of empowering masks, i.e. through the use of artifice, displaced artifacts, digressive and creative copying. Carnival involves pageantry, playfulness, parody and perversion. It generates diversity,

¹ Louise Neri, “Brave New World: Adriana Varejão’s Baroque Territories” in *Adriana Varejão*, pp. 13-21; Silviano Santiago makes a similar argument about the baroque, polyphonic, and dialogic principles of composition in Adriana Varejão’s work in “The Contemporary and Visionary Fiction of Adriana Varejão”, emphasizing a decentering through intertextual discourse, inter-cultural association, analogy, achronology, and allegory, pp. 90-.

division, doubling; but it also involves duplicity, deviation, deviance, digression, destruction, deconstruction—that sort of extreme dissembling and “remembering what has never existed” that “arrives at” what Clarice Lispector identifies as fiction’s “brutal truth”².

I initiate this investigation of interrelated modes of re-mapping cultural memory in disparate lines of Lusophone literature and art by elaborating on carnival and carnivalistic narrative discourse in Varejão’s visual narratives because carnival not only aptly describes both her and other Lusophone artists’ and writers’ post-modern interpolation of geo-cultural and generic, temporalized and spatialized, verbal and visual discourses, but also designates cultural particularity. That is, we may contrast how carnival plays out in Rio with its manifestations in Lisbon or Luanda. Insofar as carnival evokes place, it engages public space—space of encounter, the street and other sites where cultural memory is staged through both highly choreographed tradition and apparently chaotic improvisation, collaboration and individualization, commonplaces and digression. Carnival provides a theoretical framework or forum for bringing these diverse Lusophone works of art and literature, created under different conditions, into dialogue. As a cultural practice, carnival involves sanctioned and even marketed cultural critique—a seasonal, cyclical form of relatively uncensored critique. In that sense also, it may represent an analogy to the production and dissemination of literature and art, representing some of the same critical and creative freedoms and constraints. I have already suggested correlated cultural reorientations through digressive discursive play. Further, even as the creativity and critique of carnival can be retraced in language and on the landscape, it is also often mapped on the body put into public circulation. Carnival redresses and reorients bodies, concomitantly negotiating new identities and trajectories. These different works don different masks and unmask different, though not unrelated (perhaps universal, catholic) cultural dilemmas. In carnivalesque fashion, they re-map cultural memory not only through re-locations or “reterritorializations”, but also by re-casting story and history: reading the map as body, the body as map.

Varejão’s work provides one of the most compelling introductions to this complex re-mapping of cultural memory and reorientation of cultural and creative discourse, insofar as it employs both narrative and non-narrative, visual and verbal discourses, to redefine the domain and dynamics of both story and history. It is also explicitly as well as implicitly engaged in mapping. Varejão’s (re)visionary cartographic art is more carnivalistic than that of most visual artists who

² Clarice Lispector, *The Foreign Legion*

make use of actual maps, insofar as her re-mapping involves the dis-membering and re-membering of conventional cartographic and other visual art forms, distorted copies of actual maps and paintings, dissected bodies and places, deconstructed stories and histories. This extraordinary scope of her work is defined already in early paintings from the 1991–2012 series *Terra incógnita*, including *Mapa de Lopo Homem*, *Filho Bastardo*, *Chinesa*, and *Passagem de Macau a Vila Rica* (<http://www.adriavarejao.net/category/category/paintings-series>).



Adriana Varejão, *Mapa de Lopo Homem II* and *Filho Bastardo* (1992-2004)

Oil on wood and suturing thread, 110 x 140 x 10 cm

For the uninitiated, we might review a couple not immediately obvious formal aspects of Varejão’s work. This series and many of Varejão’s other works are paintings, mostly on canvas, with thick layers of underpainting or what Herkenhoff calls “surface depth”³. Like Herkenhoff, Neri discusses “thicknesses”⁴ and how these literal material thicknesses involve not only a reflexive interrogation of art (an awareness of art as such), but also thick history and story. One of the ways in which these works of art reflect on art as a mode of representation or of storytelling is through *trompe l’oeil* or *simulacrum*; they draw attention to the material surface through a kind of doubled discourse, a doubletake, or doubled defamiliarization. The motivic and methodological strangeness of Varejão’s work is first a consequence of disconcerted time and space, of historical and geo-cultural displacement—the viewer is drawn to the contemporary artist’s apparently anachronistic turn towards and mastery of an astounding array of antiquated techniques. She “draws on an astonishing vocabulary of cultural artifacts and phenomena—monochrome, cracked surfaces of Song dynasty porcelain, fantastic ‘scientific’ imaginings of the New World by European illustrators,

³ Paul Herkenhoff,

⁴ Neri, op. cit. p. 17.

tattooing and other forms of physical and mental cartography, *trompe l'oeil*, elaborate (Portuguese) tiled decorative schemes and so on”⁵. But these discourses are deterritorialized not only as representational strategies unconventionally used in another place and time, but also as representations expressed through another discourse. That is, Varejão’s critique involves not only trans-historical and trans-cultural transposition, but also generic translation. At second glance, the artist’s mastery of these archaic forms is masterful forgery. What look like *azulejos* (tiles) and *pratos* (plates) is painted canvas. Further, what seems like flesh and blood and guts seeping through sutures in the canvas or filling in the space between structural frame and surface is also coagulated paint. Through this doubling of artistic discourses compounding double-voiced discourse in the copied work of art, Varejão critically re-presents both the subject of representation and the culturally conditioned subjectivity inherent in representational style. Neri argues that Varejão presents “the rhetorical depth and complexity of painting as the very embodiment of the essential difficulty of culture and society” in order “to uncover new meaning for the genre and with it a new place for corporeality in the spatial and temporal world”⁶. Through the representation of bodies and body parts in her paintings, but also through the bodily forms that her paint and paintings take—paintings whose surface is treated like skin, as fragile and subject to scarring as human skin, similarly containing pulsing blood and nerves and organs—Varejão fleshes out complex transcultural consciousness and conscience.

Varejão’s paintings often involve not only work in the manner of earlier artistic traditions, but meticulously copied and collated fragments—meaning partly constructed through montage or bricolage. She gambles not only on old forms, but also on old figures, staking her bets on replaying the unimaginable and disregarded horror of the latter against the now largely unregarded beauty of the former. Varejão’s copies of Lopo Homem’s map⁷, are precise, replicating cartographic design, line, tonality, etc. But she leaves traces of her reading and re-making on her map—not subtle marks merely denoting authorship or the typical annotations and corrections of the navigator, but rather slashes, scars, and sutures that expose the copy and challenge the authority of the original. Ripping into the surface of the canvas to expose flesh and blood in the layers beneath history’s gloss of Portuguese and European colonial conquest of Africa, the Americas, and East Asia, Varejão tears

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ The first copy of *Mapa de Lopo Homem* was destroyed, hence the display of *Mapa de Lopo Homem II* on Varejão’s website.

into old cultural currency. That is, while she re-introduces old aesthetic currency into circulation, she gambles on a critical ethics of deconstructive representation. Her work changes the rules of the game through a critical, creative reevaluation.

Varejão's reevaluation is contingent on unconventional geo-cultural, generic, and gendered cross-cuts. As Santiago sums up,

the complex composite image staged by Adriana Varejão not only exhibits the capricious slopes of the “Baroque echo chamber”, but also develops a visionary and untranslatable *imago mundi*—one that casts her work beyond the boundaries predicted by a geography that enters globalization in the debit column of the old ledger in which nations and peoples of the periphery have already been entered in red (and in bloodshed).⁸

The intertextual (geo-cultural, methodological as well as motivic) origins of her work span the globe: To the question of Varejão's origins, “Where does she come from?” Philippe Sollers replies, “From Brazil, and from even further still: Egypt, Mesopotamia, Persia, Babylon, Islam, Holland, China, Portugal”⁹. One might argue with Sollers that these are not geo-cultural categories of the same order, but this list aptly represents Varejão's sensibility to historically shifting, interpolated imaginaries, cultural territories or what Lotman terms “semiospheres”. Varejão, like contemporary writers such as Lídia Jorge and José Eduardo Agualusa, spans but also reaches far beyond Lusophone territories in her eclectic references. Her originality, like that of many other artists and writers engaged in post-modern bricolage, involves individualized transculturation, translation and translingualism (involving that larger sense of language and linguistic polysystems understood by cultural semiotics), transposition and transgression, resulting in revisionary history and visionary story/art.

While Varejão's revisionary *Mapa de Lopo Homem* reviews a colonial imperialism as a bloody affair, with sutured, but still seeping wounds, in *Filho Bastardo* (bastard son), she redraws the Edenic landscape of the New World as the site of rape, borrowing and reconfiguring fragments from Debret's prints. In the style of the exotic landscapes and figures depicted on porcelain serving platters, Varejão renders subalterns flanking figures of secular and spiritual authority. Bound to the landscape, indigenous women face coercive Europeans, priest and soldiers. No longer disguised as decor, colonial violence is served up both in the re-presentation of cultural and physical violation

⁸ Silviano Santiago, “The Contemporary and Visionary Fiction of Adriana Varejão: Toward a Poetics of Mise-en-Scene,” p. 95.

⁹ Philippe Sollers, “Vertigo by Adriana Varejão” in *Adriana Varejão: chambre d'échos*, pp. 12-13.

and the fleshly underpainting exposed by the rip in the center of the platter. Vaginal, that rip suggests that the bastard Brazilian son, or perhaps any viewer of the painting, is born from that violent encounter of European, Native American, and African, secular and sacred, power and powerlessness, freedom and constraint. The brutal truths to which this ripped painting gives birth come at some cost to the original image or colonial imagining—a second soldier, rifle and bayonet, are excised by the artist's knife, one figure of authority literally replaced by a violent trace of the author. The vaginal lips here seem to speak for other lips that were forcibly silenced. There is a reflexive turn (or rip) through which creativity and critique are mapped as derivatives of the desecration, perhaps de-sacralization, of art and history.

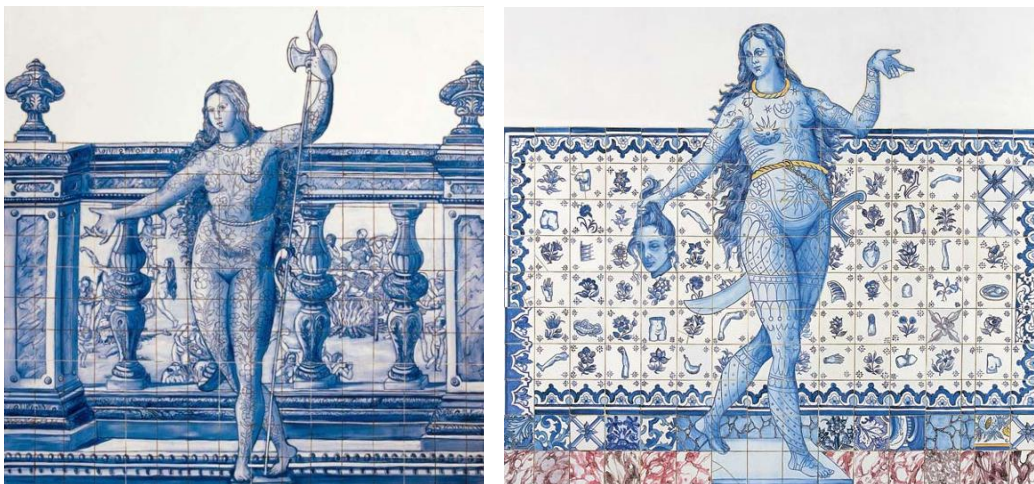


Adriana Varejão, *Chinesa* (1992)

Oil on canvas and acupuncture needles, 120 x 100 cm

Varejão goes a step further in her re-mapping of cultural memory in *Chinesa* (anticipating her *Figuras de Convite* and *Testemunhas Oculares*). In this stylized self-portrait, she re-casts the artist as colonial subject or subaltern and she dissects both artist and art as well as colonial consciousness. Here the territory that is mapped is the artist's primed canvas, the frame etched within it, and the terrain includes the artist's face, arm, and tools. As far as topographical or political demarcation—the terrain is denoted in terms race and violence. Varejão's painting involves both remembering and

dis-memberment. The right arm and hand of the artist bear marks of suffering, perhaps relieved by the actual acupuncture needles pressed into the canvas. The artist's knife is bloodied, an instrument of violence lined up next to the paintbrush. Here the artist seems to accept some sort of responsibility and, facing the audience, forces response.



Adriana Varejão, *Figura de convite* (1997) & *Figura de convite II* (1998)

Oil on canvas, 200 x 200 cm

In her *Figura de Convite* and *Figura de Convite II*, Varejão invokes a similar response and sense of responsibility: her curvaceous allegorical warrior figures, borrowing on but subverting Theodor de Bry's classical figures, beautifully rendered in painting that replicates the exquisite blue azulejo panels at the entrance to Portuguese estates¹⁰, directly face the viewer, apparently issuing a conventional invitation. But this invitation is not to be taken at face value, no more than the canvas so perfectly painted as a wall of tiles. Though the relative aesthetic value of original and replica might be debated, the replica has an ethical cultural gravity far greater than the original. Through her *trompe l'oeil*, Varejão both re-values the Portuguese *azulejo* tradition as a high form of art and critiques the cultural limits, or blindspots, of that tradition. "By assimilating the artistic rhetoric made available by the European world vision, [Varejão] inverts and subverts the *locus* of observation, deterritorializing it twice over¹¹. The figures are marked by both geo-historical and generically wide-ranging intercultural traces. Their tattooed bodies are inscribed in the tradition of Japanese *irezumi*, with indigenous Brazilian signs. In the background, behind the conventional marble balustrade and between the flora

¹⁰ Cf. Santiago, op. cit. p. 86

¹¹ *Ibid.* p. 88.

and fauna typical to Portuguese tilework, Varejão represents scenes of anthropophagy or cannibalism, dis-membered bodies, and her own decapitated head (in the hands of one of her figures)¹². The indifference of the invitational figure to the violence only makes it more horrific, mirroring our own indifference. The beauty of the work makes the cruelty clearer. Varejão invites us to reconsider the costs of colonialism, but not at a distance. Her work asks us also to consider the complicity of art in colonialism. That is, Varejão's

chimerical power retraces the path traveled by the figurations of colonial illusion.

Conversely—*pelo avesso*, in Portuguese—she manipulates the blindness of the Americanist European artist inspired by an English geographer and the blindness of the Orientalist European artist enlightened by the travel accounts and the literature of the period. [... Varejão] preserves the *pictorial illusions* typical of the prints of the colonial past so that the contemporary visitor may delight in examining various simultaneous images with a complicit and critical gaze that is, at once, distanced and visionary. An art that travels deliriously across the time-space coordinates of humanity.¹³

The artist as witness is accused of complicity in a colonial imaginary and offers a complex post-colonial critique, through which we are made both complicit and more critically-aware witnesses of this complex cultural history and memory.



Adriana Varejão, *Proposta para uma catequese - parte I* diptico: morte e esquitejamento (1993)

Oil on canvas, 140 x 240 cm

¹² Cf. Santiago, comparing this to Gustave Moreau's *Salomé*s, 87.

¹³ Santiago, op. cit. 87.

This complex re-imagining and repositioning of artist and audience vis-à-vis cultural history is achieved through dialogic juxtaposition of disparate copied fragments in works such as *Proposta para uma catequese - parte I díptico: morte e esquartejamento* (Proposal for a catequism – part I dyptic: death and quartering). Baroque figures and flourishes and, in Latin, the Johanine invocation to eat and drink the body and blood of Christ for mutual indwelling, frame scenes of anthropophagy, again adapted from de Bry. Varejão’s painted replicas of tiles, copied baroque forms, juxtaposed fragments, or artistic bricolage as much as the actual scenes of violent inter-cultural contact flesh out the skeletal claims of Brazilian modernist *Cannibalist Manifesto*. Varejão engages in Oswald de Andrade’s notion of “counterquest” or counter conquest both through what and how she depicts. Cultural memory is not just revised through carnivalistic replaying of ritual scenes of cannibalism, but also through the way Varejão recolors painted tiles and recovers what lies behind the tile mask. As Schwartz notes, the varied blues of Varejão’s painted tiles function multivocally in retelling these stories: her use of “Manganese blue, Cerulean blue, Cobalt blue, Ultramarine blue, Indanthrene blude, Prussian blue, Indigo blue, Phthalocanine, Faience blue” color the canvas with *saudade*, “misfortune, sadness and even hope”¹⁴.



Varejão acadêmico - heróis (1997)

Oil on canvas, 140 x 160 cm



Oil on canvas from the series *Linguas e cortes*

In her series of “academic” paintings, discovering dis-membered “heroes” beneath prosaic tile walls, Varejão similarly redresses both history and the history of art, conjoining ethics and aesthetics. In the series *Linguas e cortes*, she ripples the surface, continually recovering the flesh and bone beneath monumental and mundane surfaces. Pushing beyond the conventional boundaries of genre, she recovers a kind of human history in the reconstituted ruined walls (painted and sculptural

¹⁴ Lilia Moritz Schwartz, “Paved and Tiled by Adriana Varejão” p. 145.

installation) of *Linda do Rosário* or *Cidade de Deus*. In *Azulejões*, Varejão’s “disconcerting” and “deconstructive” gaze appears more abstracted, yet involves an actual act of reterritorialization, restoration, reconstruction and (re)creation of a work of art¹⁵. In her *Saunas* paintings, space becomes at once more concrete and intimate and universal and abstract—we are drawn into geometrical designs that depict evacuated inner rooms, saunas, psyches. Here again, space is marked by rippled lines and traces (streaks of light or blood on the floor), on which we slip into consciousness and memory.



Adriana Varejão, *Celacanto provoca maremoto* (2004) Oil painted gesso on canvas
442 x 1436 cm (4 x 14 telas, 110 x 110 cm each) & *Linda do Rosário* (2004)
Aluminium, polyurethane, and oil, 195 x 800 x 25 cm From the series
Mares e azulejos & Charques

As to where we find ourselves in Varejão’s work, Sollers delineates a dizzying, disorienting set of dimensions: architectural demarcations (walls), materials (tiles), and domains (bathrooms, saunas, operating and dissecting rooms, kitchens, morgues, ruins), but also bodily parameters (flesh, blood) and parts (legs, arms, torsos, tongue). These concrete things—neo-realistically represented—make us reconsider the material and move us beyond the material. The artist re-presents wounded walls, “plastered over by time” but incisively recovered by the artist, re-covering surfaces to expose a cover-up. The cover-up is still present in the play with the classical “decorative function” of azulejos

¹⁵ Schwartz, *op.cit.* p. 153-154.

so beautifully wrought by Varejão. But the reframing of the subject, the painted representation of azulejos, the seductive invitation figure's re-territorialization against a background scene or mosaic of anthropophagic dismemberment "subverts" the "courtly scene" as "it becomes steeped in blood, proliferating, historical."¹⁶ The complexity of the image reorients us with respect to the cultural imaginary.

Sollers describes how Varejão makes her viewer complicit through restraint, discretion and allusion, incision, indirection ("the past is presented tangentially, both saved and ruined"). Rather than told, we are "invited to look at time, to listen to silence, to feel a cut, to taste repulsion leading to an appetite". With Varejão's irony, we are invited into an art gallery turned into a sauna, where we are stripped, where there are no mirrors, where the heat is intense. Again we confront tiles and traces, but these are abstracted from history, and ours are the only bodies present. Rather than the perverse (clear-sighted view of cannibalistic apprehension of Eucharist) or pornographic (engaged in a new kind of eroticism), Sollers aligns Varejão's work with the joy that follows what Varejão herself termed the "full acceptance of the real," or what Sollers denotes in terms of restoration, reconstruction and recreation, flesh that awaits and bursts out¹⁷.

Silviano Santiago casts Varejão's visual and verbally framed (titled) art as one that relocates itself and culture through a process of exploration, both retrospective and prospective, and "aims to attract the spectator's plurivocal gaze—the one ordinarily demanded of him [or her] by the theater and cinema [or the novel]—in order that he may witness the moving images of a *discursive* performance"¹⁸. This performance is profoundly intertextual. It is also intratextual:

Varejão's cartography moves between truths and simulations, cleanliness and dirt, history and re-reading, blood red and sky blue, azulejo tile and tear, canvas and simulacrum. Like a kaleidoscope in which the material is always the same but produces new designs, [Varejão's] works appear to be constantly shuffled. The design of one canvas is always completed in another; each box opens to reveal a new one; each story results in the following one. The stories never end, for there is always a world that invents them and, after all, as Borges wrote, everything has been written.¹⁹

¹⁶ Sollers, op. cit. pp. 12-13.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* p. 12.

¹⁸ Santiago, op. cit. pp. 88-89.

¹⁹ Schwartz, op. cit. p. 154.

On process, Neri writes that Varejão operates like a “New World Explorer”, “contrasting the ‘fullness’ of endlessly charted and recharted terrain with the elaborate tools and signs of History at her command”²⁰, charting the process of charting as part of the cultural territory her work explores.

This is terrain already partly explored by Anna Bella Geiger, who anticipates Varejão’s post-colonial re-mapping, while heading in other directions. Surveying interior margins of Brazilian cultural consciousness as well as other transcultural, transAtlantic crossings, Geiger similarly incorporates the maps of prior cultural cartographers and continually reorients cultural dialogue through a recursive, reflective, reflexive aesthetics. While the scope of this inquiry doesn’t allow for the same sort of survey of work by this also extraordinary visual artist, even a glimpse of a few different motifs and methods in Geiger’s interdisciplinary work might elucidate further connections between re-mappings of cultural memory in recent Luso-Brazilian art and literature.

In his introductory essay to the Anna Bella Geiger “retrospective”, Navas talks about her works’ revisionary sense of space and place by likewise invoking the Bakhtinian notion of dialogism. While mapping her works as archipelagos, he argues for an imaginary world in which islands and constellations of islands move at a rather more rapid pace. (His description of those constellations in movement is suggestive of Lotman’s description of dynamic, colliding and interpenetrating, continually de-centered and re-centered semiospheres). There are constant elements to Geiger’s creative cosmos—certain dimensions, dynamics, and domains of cultural memory—one of which is the continually shifting center—both geo-cultural and generic. That is, Geiger’s work remains consistently eccentric or marginocentric, so that the old center (the intertextual or intratextual point of departure) always has become ex-centric and is eccentrically engaged. That is, rather than inconsistent, Geiger’s work (sketches, postcards, maps, sculptural works) re-map cultural identity through contra-diction and juxtaposition. Relative to Varejão’s, Geiger’s work seems to draw more on modern arts and Brazilian modernism (though Varejão also draws on modern art and architecture—especially on modern architectural ruins, as in *Linda do Rosário* and *Cidade de Deus* and the *Saunas* series—as well as on abstraction—as in *Azujelões*). Geiger draws on popular art and discourse (postcards, slogans, sayings) in such renowned sketches as *America Latina* and in the neo-documentary photographic projects, *Brasil Nativo/Brasil Alienigena* and *O Pão nosso de cada dia*. Like Varejão, Geiger situates the body in space, re-casts Brazil as female figure assuming a pose,

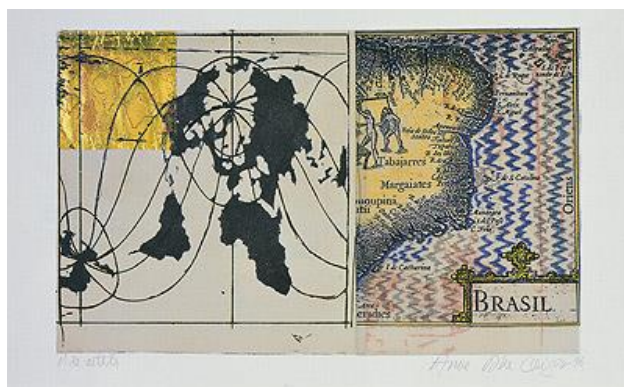
²⁰ Neri, op cit. p. 13.

reconfigures Latin America as crippled and consumed body, as holy bread (transubstantiating host) and as holy bread (present absence).



A. B. Geiger, *Am. Latina* (1977), *Brasil Nativo/Brasil Alienigena* (1977), *O Pão nosso de cada dia* (1979)

The intertextual works depend on double-voicing and doubletakes from popular culture, borrowing from secular and Catholic ritual. Like Varejão, Geiger adapts forms or methods of seeing as well as motifs, critiquing a more contemporary capitalist colonial perspective, as well as reconsidering the complicity of the artist and audience. Yet Geiger also reaches into the archives as she makes her composite maps for the series *Local da Ação*, *Scrolls*, archival drawers in *Fronteiriços*, and works such as *Sobre nácar* and *Sobre Nadar*.



A. B. Geiger, *Brasil 1550 – 1995* (1995, signed 96)
Photographic engraving on metal, serigraph, collage,
& colored pencil, 30 x 67.5 cm



Indiferenciados 2 (2001), instalação *Gavetas*,
Local da Ação n° 10 in archival metal drawers
56 x 12 x 5 cm

The titles of her exhibits and series of works themselves point to their chronotopic play: *Local da Ação*, *Fronteiriços*, *Obras em arquipelago*, *Constelações* and *Territórios*, *Passagens*, *Situações*. We might note Geiger's similar strategies of stylization and parody, citation, excitation, play with seduction, but less

overtly perverse, violent, more abstracted, but still narrative retelling of history. Geiger reframes cultural perspectives through repeated gestures and reflections that make us aware of how cultural identity is framed. She gives the verbal text greater importance within the work of art, offering not only title but text within the visual work as a key, like the words on a map, framing our reading, denoting correspondences, implying interpretive trajectories. Geiger's works (not only her films and photographs, but even her maps and "Jewish" scrolls and encaustic paintings within archival drawers), are often also self-portraits, reflecting on artist and artistic process, on the consumption and preservation of cultural text as well as on cultural context in which art is part of *our daily bread, place of action, frontier*.



Anna Bella Geiger, from *Fronteiriços* series & *Mapa Mundi com Ventos I* (1995)
metal and wood archival drawers, encaustic, springs, copper wire and copper leaf,

Bakhtin talks about the life of literary works in "Great Time" or time/space that is not conventionally progressive or linear, but multidirectional, multidimensional, in which authors/works continually confront each other (like consciousnesses and cultural semiospheres) through re-readings, provoking further reorientations, re-readings, re-interpretations that leave traces in language and in the world. This complication of time and space does not render geo-cultural place and history irrelevant; rather it renders these more dynamic, as it does the conventions of language and literature, image and imagination. Post-modern re-mapping, revision, re-visionary literature and art presumes that we have a more or less fixed set of maps and modes of mapping, an anticipated story and given history, modes of storytelling and historiography that can be critically and creatively reconfigured. Post-modern works also recognize that any stylization or parody reconstructs, even as it deconstructs the object/subject of its critique. But it simultaneously constructs an alternate perspective or subject, recasts subjects in dialogue, renders clearer the viewer/reader's complicity in

interpretation, represents the reader as part of what is present with the work of art or text, provokes open-ended questions of response and responsibility.

These visual artists *show* us some of what Lusophone writers *tell* us in similarly visionary and revisionary exploratory maps, navigations of past and present, of history and story/art as representation. One of the interesting intersecting aspects of the work of these two artists, connected to their engagement with cartography, is their critical reflection on reading, through their inscription of the verbal text within the visual image and through their insistent reframing of “verbal” or intermedial genres as visual art (especially Geiger with her films, scrolls, archival drawers, etc.). Their refraction of the verbal text, of narrative story and history, fiction and documentary within predominantly visual arts may elucidate also that of post-modern writers similarly interested in re-mapping story and history partly by inscribing the visual text (cartographic, photographic, etc.) within the verbal.

Post-modern Lusophone novels by writers ranging from Osman Lins to António Lobo Antunes, Lídia Jorge, José Eduardo Agualusa re-map cultural memory through the (re)visionary interpolation of plural perspectives, past and present. Their redrawing of place and space is critical to their reorientation of cultural discourse. They engage in a kind of textual cartography that revises both literal and literary terrain as cultural territory. This is partly layered space, palimpsest place and text within which traces of underlying cultural contexts, literary subtexts, political pretexts become legible. These texts recuperate elusive, often erased pasts. Yet the chronotopic dimensions of cultural memory are far more radically reconfigured insofar as these novels re-read a past dynamically present. Time in these narratives is concomitantly linear and non-linear. Pasts and presents co-exist. These writers are new navigators, negotiating the treacherous terrain of complicity in the (re)construction of the past. They locate this complicity in Recife, Lisbon, Algarve, Luanda.... Yet the surface of the city and subject is ripped open, as in Adriana Varejão’s redrawn maps. Like her redrawing of Lopo Homem’s globe, these writers expose wounds, ripped open through everyday rituals, still bleeding through sutured memory. These fictions register repressed voices; they discover scars on bodies, disregarded borders, discarded bounty. They map place through sound and silence, sight and blindness, misunderstanding and misperception, colliding discourses, crossed trajectories, dialogically counterposed contradictory readings of text and context. They reach towards margins, decentering or deterritorializing cultural discourse through geo-cultural relocations, gendered recasting, and generic crossings. But these writers are post-modern, post-colonial

cartographers, whose works not only critically reorient, redraw, redefine navigational markers in cultural memory, but also reflexively interrogate their own chronotopic conventions, framed by pathological cultural consciousness, consciously complicit in the cartographic record it subjects to critique. That is, these writers also give us figures/traces of the writer in the bodies that contain these worlds. They reflexively turn self-conscious figures to confront the ruptures and frame(s) of the fiction. They dissolve boundaries between visual image and verbal imagination, fiction and documentary, story and history, objective map and subjective memory, retrospective and prospective scope.

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