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#### Chapter

# Cultural Heritage and the Crisis of Democracy

Yussef Campos

#### **Abstract**

Democracy in Brazil is experiencing a crisis that has not been seen for a long time. After the 1988 Constitution, democratic institutions began to show signs of strengthening, such as the Public Ministry, the Judiciary, direct elections, among others. However, the rise of the extreme right – a non-exclusive event in our country – has mitigated and persecuted these institutions, with their dismantling, their ideological and religious equipment and even their extinction, as happened with the Ministry of Culture. The National Historical and Artistic Heritage Institute has also been the target of repeated attacks. Appointments of unprepared individuals, without adequate qualification to assume management and leadership positions at the Institute has been the Achilles heel of the almost centenary IPHAN (National Historical and Artistic Heritage Institute, in the acronym in Portuguese). Other facts mark the attack on places of memory and Brazilian heritage. In the midst of demonstrations around the world about the modification of place names that honor human rights defenders and the overthrowing of their statues, in Brazil the president of the republic testifies to his inability to occupy this position by giving prizes to torturers who acted as torturers in the Civil-Military Dictatorship (1964–1985). Thus, this brief text will seek to exemplify how some facts – some prior to the current administration but which solidify with it – exemplify the current democratic crisis, which strikes not only Heritage and places of memory, but also an entire state structure that comes undone through the virulence of fake news and corruption led by the Bolsonaro family.

Keywords: cultural heritage, Covid-19, crisis of democracy, Brazil

#### 1. Introduction

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Democracy in Brazil is experiencing a crisis that has not been seen for a long time. After the 1988 Constitution, democratic institutions began to show signs of strengthening, such as the Public Ministry, the Judiciary, direct elections, among others.

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qualification to assume management and leadership positions at the Institute has been the Achilles heel of the almost centenary IPHAN (in the acronym in Portuguese).

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Thus, this brief text will seek to exemplify how some facts – some prior to the current administration but which solidify with it – exemplify the current democratic crisis, which strikes not only Heritage and places of memory, but also an entire state structure that comes undone through the virulence of fake news and corruption led by the Bolsonaro family.

#### 2. Unwanted toponyms for democracy

In the midst of pandemics – of the Coronavirus, of authoritarianism, of indigenous genocides – I come across encouraging news. After the collapse of the statue of slave trader Edward Colston, in Bristol, hurled into the river, anti-racist activists continued their protest movement and replaced the nefarious slave sculpture with the statue of Jen Reid, a demonstrator who was photographed on the pedestal after the outrageous landmark. This demonstrates that the iconoclasm of withdrawal alone is not enough. There is a need for substitution, training, education, political projects and public policies that enable reflection, questioning, debate and demands. These public priests to enslavers, murderers, dictators, catechists, in short, to all sorts of exercise of force and agency over the other, not only can but also must be revised.

How do we live with so many place names that bow to icons of violence and bestiality, of obscurantism? How do we accept the existence of numerous Getúlio Vargas avenues throughout the country? President Costa e Silva Bridge (yes, this is the real name of the Rio-Niteroi bridge)? Schools Marshal Costa e Silva?

Because in our country, the education crisis is not a crisis, it is a project, as the liberator Ribeiro [1] has already taught. That yes worthy of statues, busts, memorials, and different tributes, among them the most important: being heard.

Statues and busts of Christopher Columbus, Jefferson Davis (President of the Confederate States during the Civil War), Belgian King Leopoldo II, Winston Churchill, Father Antonio Vieira, among others, have already felt the weight of the indignation of those who cannot stand taxes for those who imposed dominion, religion, indifference and brutality. Duque de Caxias, Manuel de Borba Gato, Fernão Dias, Bartolomeu Bueno da Silva – Anhanguera, to put their beards on, because the Brazilians are not unaware of this movement. They did not fall off their pedestals nor have their names taken entirely from city toponyms. Yet!

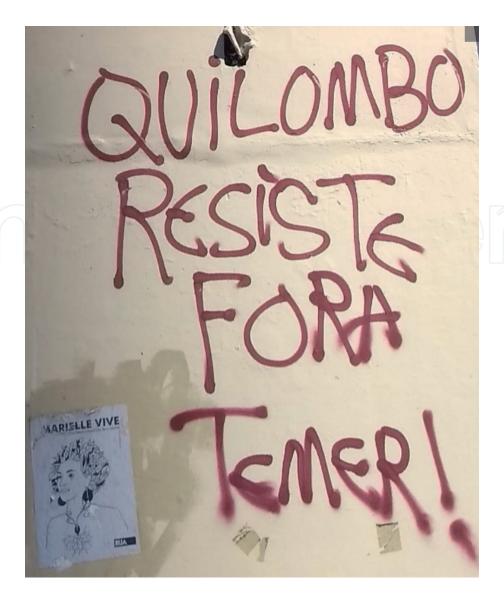
A few exceptions begin to feed us democratic hope. In Maranhão, Governor Flávio Dino signed a decree in 2015 that determined the change of names of schools that held titles of personalities presented in the report of the Truth Commission, accused of crimes of torture during the civil-military dictatorship. For example, the Castelo Branco Teaching Center was renamed C.E. Vinícius de Moraes; o C. E. Emílio Garrastazu Médici, C. E. Paulo Freire.

In Goiânia, the pedestal that supports the brutal Anhanguera is constantly the target of demonstrations (see images): "quilombo resiste" ("quilombo resists"); "Fora Temer" ("go out Temer"); "Marielle vive" ("Marielle lives"). They are not banal vandalism as the most conservative people want to call it. The monuments and the built cultural heritage as a whole, are targets of demands for their resonance and their exposure. This also became one of the functions of the monument. The oppressed must not host the oppressor itself, instructed Freire [2]. Statue for him! Let us not leave our ego depersonalized, shouted Fanon [3]. Bust it already!

If these claims are not identified as calls for a duty of justice and a duty of memory, as preponderated by Ricœur [4], soon we will have busts at Brilhante Ulstra, Major Curió and Sérgio Paranhos Fleury at the Esplanade of Ministries. May we do our duty, so that the pigeons do not have to, once again, do theirs.



Monument to Bandeirante, Goiânia (Author photo, June 14, 2019).



Detail of the photo.

#### 3. When heritage is just rhetoric

The eloquence with which a cultural or natural asset is patrimonialized, sometimes points only to its political-partisan use, with the omission of its ideal objective: the protection of the patrimony and/or the emancipation of the groups that hold the good. Let us observe.

They are registered as a World Heritage Site, by UNESCO (of the acronym in English, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), the Complex of Protected Areas of the Pantanal (Mato Grosso and Mato Grosso do Sul); the Cerrado Reserves – Veadeiros Plateau and Emus National Parks (Goiás); and the Central Amazon Conservation Complex (Amazonas).

Regarding the first, the National Historical and Artistic Heritage Institute (IPHAN), points out that "inscribed by Unesco in the List of World Natural Heritage and Biosphere Reserve in 2000, the Pantanal Complex of Protected Areas, which comprises the Pantanal National Park (Mato Grosso), the Private Natural Protection Reserves of Acurizal, Penha and Dorochet, is the largest continuous flooded freshwater system in the world and one of the richest ecosystems in wildlife. Typically regional, constitutes one of the most exuberant and diversified nature reserves on the planet".

As for the second, "the Chapada dos Veadeiros and Emus national parks were declared World Natural Heritage by Unesco in 2001. Both regions are protected areas of the Brazilian Cerrado Reserves, one of the oldest and most diverse tropical ecosystems in the world. For millennia, these places have served as a refuge for several species during periods of climate change and will be vital for maintaining the biodiversity of the Cerrado Reserves region during future climatic fluctuations".

Finally, the Amazon is an area inscribed on the World Heritage List by Unesco, which "has more than six million hectares and is one of the richest regions on the planet in terms of biodiversity, with important examples of lowland ecosystems, igapó forests, lakes and channels – which form an aquatic mosaic in constant change, where the largest variety of electric fish in the world lives. The Central Amazon Conservation Complex is formed by the Jaú National Park (registered in 2000), the Mamirauá and Amanã Sustainable Development Reserves, and the Anavilhanas National Park (registered in 2003), all in the State of Amazonas".

However, I wonder: why are they being destroyed? Who could protect them? What is the use of recognition as not only Brazilian heritage, but also of Humanity?

One answer to one of the questions would be the federal government. However, this is one of the accomplices, authors and artisans of the criminal destruction of our rich biomes. The statement by the Minister of the Environment that said, in a ministerial meeting, that the federal government should take advantage of the media focus on COVID-19 to "pass the cattle" became notorious. This means relaxation of environmental laws, deregulation, or, in direct Portuguese, making them loose and inefficient.

The minister had already been acting in this direction. Normative Instruction 13/2020, published even before the sacrilegious meeting of April 22, allows the spraying of agricultural fungicides and mineral oil in the banana crop, with a reduction in the distance between the population areas and those to be sprayed by pesticides. Thus, rural, quilombola, indigenous communities become more susceptible to being affected. Another example is the attempt to regulate illegally occupied lands, through Provisional Measure 910, the "MP da Grilagem" (land grabbing).

Land grabbing, land invasion, agribusiness are direct causes of persecution of family farming, expulsion and genocide by indigenous people, violence against quilombolas and, clearly, the destruction of the biomes mentioned above.

According to INPE (National Institute for Space Research, in the acronym in Portuguese), the Pantanal faces the largest series of fires in the last 20 years. To date, 15% of the entire length of the biome in Brazil has been destroyed. Species threatened with extinction, such as jaguars, pigeons, macaws, among others, suffer even more from these environmental crimes.

The same is true of the Brazilian Amazon Forest and Cerrado. According to Greenpeace, of the hotspots registered in July of that year, "539 were within Indigenous Lands, an increase of 76.72% over last year, when 305 hotspots were mapped. In addition, 1,018 reached Conservation Units, an increase of 49.92% over the same period last year". For Brasil Escola, "extensive livestock and mechanized agriculture of soy, corn and cotton are the main causes of the destruction of much of this type of plant formation". It should be remembered that the Cerrado is responsible for supplying several water networks throughout Brazil, and the Amazon is a source of moisture to feed rain in other parts of the country.

So, I think that patrimonialization actions are not simple panaceas. They must be means of promoting these biomes, instrumentalizing public protection policies, and applying effective and effective penalties. Unfortunately, today in Brazil, this is not what we see. There are only crickets and grasshoppers. Hope is no longer seen.

### 4. Women of the National Historical and Artistic Heritage Institute (IPHAN)

According to the Michaelis dictionary, the meaning of patrimony is "1 Paternal inheritance; 2 Family property". *Pater*, father. Yes. Patriarchy is present in our language. If it is the individuals who speak, express themselves, and write; and if the *pater* is historically structural, he is also part of the cultural heritage, since it is the social groups that attribute values to what becomes heritage. Would there be a cultural marriage? No, at least institutionally and legally.

Many men were responsible, meritoriously, for leaving us what we now call cultural heritage and the Heritage Institute. Modernists, state bureaucrats, academy thinkers. There they were, directly or indirectly, inventing our historical and artistic heritage, in the 1930s: Rodrigo Melo Franco de Andrade, Mário de Andrade, Lúcio Costa, Afonso Arinos de Melo Franco, Gilberto Freyre, Carlos Drummond de Andrade, Gustavo Capanema (Vargas), Luís Saia, Paulo Tedim, J. Sousa Reis, Alcides Miranda, Edgar Jacinto, Sérgio Buarque de Hollanda, Alceu Amoroso Lima, Manuel Bandeira, among many others.

There were also women. Although silenced by the massive part of historiography that focuses on the theme, they had and still have an indispensable role in the constant construction of collective memory in our country. Very briefly, I will report a little on some of them. Starting with Judith Martins. She "started working at the National Historical and Artistic Heritage Service in April 1936, becoming one of the secretaries of Rodrigo Melo Franco de Andrade, the institution's first director. Encouraged by Rodrigo, Judith began researching the bibliography on Aleijadinho, a study that resulted in the article 'Notes for the bibliography referring to Antônio Francisco Lisboa, the Aleijadinho', published in the 3rd issue of the Journal of National Historical and Artistic Heritage Service, in 1939, and republished, in 1950, in the 6th issue of the Journal of Center for Folkloric Studies, Faculty of Urbanism, University of São Paulo'.

Hélcia Dias, on the other hand, who worked as a typist, librarian and expert in fine arts, published works and technical articles, such as "The Furniture of Inconfidentes", in issue 3 of J National Historical and Artistic Heritage Service, 1939; Heloísa Alberto Torres was director of the National Museum and the only woman on the Supervisory Board for Artistic and Scientific Expeditions in Brazil, from 1934 to 1939, and author of an article published in the first National Historical and Artistic Heritage Service (1937); Lygia Martins Costa, Iphan's first museologist, was the author of reference texts on Aleijadinho, Arts, Heritage, Museology and Regional Museums; Hanna Levy, German and art historian, worked at the Institute in the 1930s and 1940s.



Saint Antonio Mother Church [5]. The architectural and urban complex of Tiradentes was listed by IPHAN in 1938.

However, little or nothing is seen in the toponyms and/or other forms of homage made by the Institution itself regarding female names. Sílvio Romero Competition, Gustavo Capanema Building (Palace), Lúcio Costa Center (located at Getúlio Vargas Avenue), Roberto Burle Marx Site, Rodrigo Melo Franco de Andrade Award, Aloísio Magalhães Library, Noronha Santos Archive, Luiz Castro de Faria Award, Folklore Museum Edison Carneiro, Amadeu Amaral Library, Manuel Diéguez Jr. Award Unquestionable honors to those who dedicated themselves to the set of actions, in decades of work, to IPHAN. All men.

But I stay here, looking at the computer screen in my office, running away from anachronism, incarcerated by the pandemic, looking for prizes, libraries, buildings, competitions Judith Martins, Hélcia Dias, Heloísa Alberto Torres, Lygia Martins Costa, Hanna Levy, Nair Batista, Lia Motta, Márcia Chuva, Cecília Londres Fonseca, Jurema Machado, Cláudia Baeta Leal, Célia Corsino, Salma Saddi ...

#### 5. It is worth it?

On November 5, 2020, the rupture of the ore tailings dam in Mariana, Minas Gerais, is five years old. The companies Samarco, BHP Billiton and Vale are responsible for an environmental crime of no proportions, which spilled 40 million cubic meters of waste for what was in front of them, devastating communities, contaminating rivers, interrupting the lives of adults and children. Districts such as Bento Rodrigues and Paracatu de Baixo have been wiped off the map by mining, which has hit the state of Minas Gerais like a cancer for centuries. About 40 municipalities in Minas Gerais and Espírito Santo were directly affected and more than 600 kilometers from the Doce River and tributaries were infected by the mass of toxic stubble. And many culprits have not yet been duly held accountable.

According to the Transaction and Conduct Adjustment Term, signed by the companies and the Union, IBAMA, the Chico Mendes Institute, the National Water Agency, National Indian Foundation, the States of Minas Gerais and Espírito Santo, among other organizations and institutions, are among the areas impacted by crime: habitats and fauna along the Gualaxo, Carmo and Doce rivers; lagoons and springs adjacent to the riverbed; estuaries and mangroves at the mouth of the Doce river; fish breeding areas; etc. In addition, there was a socio-environmental impact on the way of life of riverside populations, estuarine populations, indigenous peoples and other traditional populations.

For Ailton Krenak, whose ethnicity lives on the banks of the Doce River, a relative – the river – is seriously ill. "I belong to a family that lives on the left bank of that river. My family, Krenak, lives on the left bank of that river that on the map is the Doce, but that in our subjectivity he is our grandfather. And his name is 'Watu'. We sing for 'Watu', we put our children inside him to vaccinate them. We talk to him, we dream about him. And we win his dreams." For Ailton, "at some point, for the mining companies, it was good to say that the river died. 'I'm sorry, the river died', they cry and such. When we started to say: 'Oh Watu Mirare re', 'Watu 'he is alive,' Watu 'is in a coma and we will be watching over' Watu 'until he returns'. Thus, he gave a lecture he gave in October 2019 at the Federal University of Goiás.

But this crime has a precedent that has been overlooked in the past five years by the mainstream media: the privatization of Vale. Sold at a bargain price by the FHC government, the company was bought in May 1997 by the Vicunha group, which, during the Itamar Franco government, had acquired Companhia Siderúrgica Nacional. It should be noted in passing that Vale was privatized with subsidized financing, made available to buyers by the National Bank for Economic and Social Development.

The justification most exposed by managers for the privatization of companies is the low quality in the provision of services. In this way, they hide their vested interests and the illicit enrichment of some to the detriment of the real owner of these companies: the Brazilian population. Another argument is that state-owned companies are not profitable. But where is it written that a public company has profit as its primary objective? This is the purpose of private capital. Public companies aim to provide a necessary and efficient service to society. The inefficiency that is usually attributed indiscriminately to public services is, in general, a result of the lack of investment in them, often with the scope and within a project aimed at dismantling them and making them attractive to the private sector.

Privatization does not even guarantee the improvement of services. Many countries, primarily in Europe, have re-nationalized companies to achieve an improvement in their performance. In the last ten years, Germany and France undid 500 concessions and privatizations of the kind. According to geographer Lavinia Steinfort, TNI (Transnational Institute) project coordinator, re-nationalization is growing because private companies have inadequate and inefficient services. For her, "the profit prioritization of private companies is, in most cases, in conflict with the execution of services on which society depends".

In the case of Vale, the search for profit is the agent of the decrease in investments in security, one of the causes not only of the crime that occurred in Mariana, but also in Brumadinho and the others that are to come. If the privatized Vale is an ugly son, it has a father: Fernando Henrique Cardoso.



Paracatu de Baixo, Mariana, Minas Gerais (Author's collection, 2019).

#### 6. Clio's new challenges

In Greek mythology, Zeus joins Mnemosyne to celebrate his victory against Cronus. From this union, nine Muses are born, among them Clio. Titan Mnemosyne is, from Greek theogony, the feature of memory; Zeus, of authority, of power; while Cronus, of time. Can we say, even without a careful reading, that memory combined with power is capable of defeating time? Perhaps it is rushed to assert. But it is important to say that Clio, or the allegorical feature of history, emerges from this union.

I use this brief digression to refer to the Brazilian Law 14038, of August 17, 2020, for innovating the legal system. This law met a demand for years, to regulate the profession of and the historian.

There is an apparent irony in this legal instrument: it was signed by the current President of the Republic, who, in his awkward statements, claims that these professionals who practice shamelessness, drug addicts and cultivators of substances prohibited by law, are unnecessary for Brazilian science (practice, the abrupt and radical cut in the transfer of resources to the colleges and institutes of History of Brazil, present in Federal Universities), among other absurdities. However, it should be noted that the President totally vetoed the bill, and the veto was overturned by the National Congress.

The law lists as historians and historians (article 3) those who hold a diploma in higher education in history, issued by a regular educational institution; holders of a higher education diploma in history, issued by a foreign institution and revalidated in Brazil, in accordance with the law; holders of a master's or doctoral degree in history, issued by a regular educational institution or by a foreign institution and revalidated in Brazil, in accordance with the law; holders of a master's or doctoral degree obtained in a postgraduate program recognized by the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel – CAPES with a line of research dedicated to History; professionals with degrees in other areas who have proven to have been historians for more than 5 (five) years, as of the enactment of this Law.

In other words, there is a wide spectrum of professionals who can work in the area. I do not think it is a market reserve or epistemological preciousness. It is about enabling professionals to have legal and professional security to exercise the teaching of History in primary and secondary schools; organize information for publications, exhibitions and events on history topics; plan, organize, implement and direct historical research services; advising, organizing, implementing and directing historical information and documentation services; advise actions aimed at the evaluation and selection of documents for preservation purposes; prepare opinions, reports, plans, projects, reports and works on historical themes, as dictated in article 4.

However, I believe that the greatest challenge will be, and has already been, to meet the requirements of Articles 5 to 7, as they deal with professional registration and legal qualification for the exercise of the profession. The Brazilian National Association of History is an institution dedicated to supporting teaching and research in the field of History, since the 1960s, as well as the defense of the free exercise of the activities of History professionals. Establishing itself as a class entity based on legislation that, at first sight, evokes the need for an organization along the lines of the Brazilian Bar Association and the Federal Council of Medicine, mutatis mutandis, is the great obstacle put.

To emerge from the dismissal of a titanic authority, to resist persecution during the civil-military dictatorship, to overcome obscurantism and negationism and to bring the current president to his knees before the overthrow of the veto, we have already done so, and we continue to struggle. Now we have to trim the inside edges and promote our craft to the level of its conspicuous relevance.

#### 7. Conclusion

"God bless America"! This is the phrase that 10 out of 10 Americans cry out countless times a day, at least among conservatives. However, what will save Americans, like the entire world population, will be vaccines and supplies, in addition to oxygen. China and Russia, with their respective Coronavac and

Sputnik V, are giving us a hint of hope that everything will start to change, at least in countries where necropolitics is not the government regime. Even with the anti-diplomatic attacks carried out by the Brazilian government and its appendices, as ministers and the presidential clan, the countries that once called themselves communists and governed from their Politburos (central committees of the Communist Party), are being the breather for way out of this terrible crisis. This stalker ideology of Bolsonaro has caused the country thousands of deaths. As Millôr Fernandes would say, "I am suspicious of any idealist who profits from his ideal."

And not only have these countries given logistical support to Brazil. India and Venezuela have served Brazil with oxygen and inputs, even though the government of our country insists on conspiracy theories and replicates Trumpist silliness here, despite the orange president of the USA having left through the back doors of the White House. Therefore, God bless Bolívar and Raja. Or that Buddha protects us.

One of the president's sons told us: "it happens in the USA, it happens in Brazil". It referred to the terrorist attacks by white supremacists on that country's Congress. However, I hope that the inept Brazilian congressman is right, as American democratic institutions have survived the chaos of the past four years. May your father be prevented here and that democracy has oxygen to resist.

The polymath and polemic Millôr Fernandes, a great critic of Brazilian party politics, once shouted: "Brazil is the United States where I live". The ironic power of this great genius united the equation between the bovarism pointed out by Lima Barreto and denounced by Nelson Rodrigues, so present in the Bolsonaro clan. The president, if Millôr could define it (in fact he did it prophetically), would do it this way: "every ruler is composed of 3% of Lincoln and 97% of Pinochet".

It fits like a glove for the president, although there is, in Millôr himself, a bit of bovarismo. Let us be Latin Americans (the Brazilian lacks that!) And replace Lincoln with Allende. The old conservative waves that plague some parts of the world, and sweep Brazil, with neo-fascist agendas and unfounded alibis that "justify" the necropolitics, have made Brazil a perennial obituary. "When an ideology is very old, it comes to live in Brazil," stated Millôr.

Countless are the legal causes for Bolsonaro's impeachment. Even with the facts described above, the mayor, Rodrigo Maia, insists on saying that there is no political inclination for the impediment. What does the congressman expect? Die his? I use Millôr as a true argument of authority: "a politician is a subject who convinces everyone to do something that he has no conviction about"!

As there is still no political viability for Impeachment? I like those who defend human rights and who practice and promote inclusion and emancipation policies. They are invariably in the field on the left. But there is this other left, which is nothing more than a group of conservatives in Jacobean allegories.

"Idleness is the mother of all vices", taught Millôr! In addition to Temer's decoration, Mourão has also cleaned up presidential dejection. And point. His only contribution is to give euphemisms to the captain's profanity fenestrated by the Armed Forces.

The work of legal professionals, who specialize in Cultural Heritage, is perhaps an answer to this crisis that UNESCO, IPHAN and other preservation and protection agencies are experiencing in Brazil. The action of ICOMOS (the acronym in English, International Council for Monuments and Sites) is at the forefront of this, since it has a specific committee to deal with the relationship between Law and Heritage. But it is necessary to reinforce this committee. You need to make it robust.

Thus, this brief text also serves as a call for interested parties to allow ICOMOS to be an effective vehicle for the preservation of Brazilian heritage.

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