

**AN EARLY INTERSEMIOTIC TRANSLATOR OF  
MILTON IN BRAZIL:  
CLAUDIO MANUEL DA COSTA**

**UM TRADUTOR INTERSEMIÓTICO PRECOCE DE  
MILTON NO BRASIL:  
CLÁUDIO MANUEL DA COSTA**

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**Abstract:** This article provides the commented English translation of an ode (“To Milton”, composed of twelve stanzas) by the 18th-century Brazilian poet, Claudio Manuel da Costa. Our interpretation of the translated poem problematizes the fact that da Costa did not translate Milton’s works, but that he wrote an intersemiotic translation of Milton’s contributions to literature as a whole. “To Milton” concentrates and expands on themes related to *Paradise Lost* (hell and heaven, heavenly muses and earthly glory, civil wars and epic battles). Although there were no translations of Milton’s works into Brazilian Portuguese then, the ode illustrates the principles of intersemiotic translation, through which semantic expansions occur in the exercise of da Costa’s choices to invite Milton to participate in a nascent literary tradition; he approaches Milton as an author comparable to Camões and Torquato Tasso. Furthermore, we address the following questions: what does the commented translation reveal about Milton’s poetry that has not been as readily visible or legible? What was accomplished by bringing Milton into 18th-century Brazilian Portuguese? How is Milton accommodated to 18th-century Brazil and how is this new environment, prospectively or actually, different for having Milton in it?

**Keywords:** Milton, Claudio Manuel da Costa, Translation.

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**Resumo:** Este artigo apresenta a tradução comentada para o inglês de uma ode (“A Milton”, composta por doze estrofes) do poeta brasileiro do século XVIII, Cláudio Manuel da Costa. Nossa interpretação do poema traduzido problematiza o fato de da Costa não ter traduzido as obras de Milton, mas ter feito uma tradução intersemiótica das contribuições de Milton para a literatura como um todo. “A Milton” concentra e expande temas relacionados a *Paraíso perdido* (inferno e céu, musas celestiais e glória eterna, guerras civis e batalhas épicas). Embora não houvesse traduções das obras de Milton para o português do Brasil na época, a ode ilustra os princípios da tradução intersemiótica, por meio da qual ocorrem expansões semânticas no exercício das escolhas de da Costa de convidar Milton a participar de uma tradição literária nascente; ele se refere a Milton como um autor comparável a Camões e Torquato Tasso. Além disso, levantamos as seguintes questões: O que a tradução comentada revela sobre a poesia de Milton que não foi tão prontamente visível ou legível? O que foi conquistado ao trazer Milton para o português brasileiro do século XVIII? Como Milton se aclimatiza ao Brasil do século XVIII e como esse novo ambiente, prospectiva ou historicamente, é diferente por ter Milton nele?

**Palavras-chave:** Milton, Claudio Manuel da Costa, tradução.

“Milton! thou shouldst be living at this hour.”

(William Wordsworth, 1802)

William Wordsworth (1770-1850), arguably one of the most important figures of English Romanticism, published the poem titled “London, 1802”. In the poem, cited in the epigraph, Wordsworth claimed the return of the seventeenth-century English poet, John Milton (1608-1674), to the London of 1802: “Milton! thou shouldst be living at this hour”, because “England hath need of thee: she is a fen/ Of stagnant waters: altar, sword, and pen” (WORDSWORTH, 1977, p. 287). For Wordsworth, England turned into an infertile swamp without literary talent and suffered from too much individualism. The poem stated Milton needed to revisit them because English people were selfish, he would bring them happiness, and the country was flooded by stagnant waters with the altar, which represented religion; with the sword, which represented those in power; and with the pen, which represented the lack of new and extraordinary authors.

An author representative of neoclassical ideals, Claudio Manuel da Costa (1729-1789), had heard Wordsworth’s clamor years before. Da Costa was a Brazilian Neoclassicist poet,<sup>3</sup> and more specifically, an adept at using

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<sup>3</sup> Neoclassicism is the movement in the history of English literature that laid immense emphasis on the revival of the classical spirit during the period between 1680 and 1750 in an age also called Augustan. We are aware that German Idealism contaminates the terms Romanticism, Neoclassicism, Baroque by compartmentalizing art/literature history in terms of supposed universals and so-called evolution. We also think that resorting to alternative routes is not helpful if we decide to put our points across in a short article.

Arcadian literary conventions<sup>4</sup> in his writings. Da Costa invoked Milton's literary ideas and accomplishments in a direct reference to *Paradise Lost* in his ode, "To Milton" (1779). According to Sergio Buarque de Holanda, a Brazilian historian and literary critic, there is no indication that da Costa was able to read in English, since the study of the English language was not common at the time. Furthermore, the short epic "Vila Rica" cited John Milton as well as *Paradise Lost* and we assume that the English poet was read from a French translated version,<sup>5</sup> something to which we will return later in this article.

Da Costa cited Milton in "Vila Rica" and wrote an ode dedicated to him during a period in which Milton's epic poem, *Paradise Lost*, had not been translated into Portuguese. Father Antônio Amaro da Silva (1789) penned the first translation of *Paradise Lost* in Portuguese, but that translation was only available in Portugal; and Antônio José de Lima Leitão authored the only translation that reached Brazil, published in 1840. Da Costa, then, was the first translator of Milton in Brazil, not in terms of translating Milton's texts directly, but by providing a transitive interpretation of his works in the writing of at least two poems that demonstrated their poetic election of the English poet. The Arcadian poet wrote intersemiotic translations<sup>6</sup> of Milton's contributions to literature, inviting the poet, who had tried to accomplish "things unattempted yet in prose and rhyme" (PL 1.16),<sup>7</sup> to participate in a still nascent literary tradition.

For Jakobson (2000, p. 238), "poetry by definition is untranslatable. Only creative transposition is possible: either intralingual transposition – from one poetic shape into another, or interlingual transposition – from one language to another". In this sense, da Costa is a translator that transposes the shape and the language of Milton's most important contribution to English and universal literature, *Paradise Lost*. Da Costa also dislocates the epic form to an ode by translating the English poet's life, times,

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4 Arcadia, Greek province and Pan's homeland, the idyllic paradise of the so-called Golden Age, a mythic place of beauty and repose in which man lives in harmony with nature, has been a popular subject in literature throughout the ages with its associated pastoral and idyllic themes.

5 "Segundo Holanda, não há nenhum indício de que Cláudio Manuel conhecesse a língua inglesa, visto que seu estudo não era comum na época. John Milton e seu Paraíso Perdido citado no Vila Rica está em sua tradução francesa." (VIVEIROS, 2009, p. 93).

6 Intersemiotic translation, an expression coined by Roman Jakobson, investigates the complexities of transposing linguistic and cultural materials into different forms of reference.

7 Book and line number follow references to *Paradise Lost*.

and literary production from English into Portuguese and by revisiting Milton's production from what is later called a Brazilian perspective.

"To Milton" concentrates and expands on themes related to *Paradise Lost*, such as hell and heaven, heavenly muses and earthly glory, civil wars and epic battles. The first stanza details the election of the English poet and starts to delineate one of the poetic traditions of which da Costa chooses to be part. This tradition consists of the endeavor to follow the footpaths of Theocritus, Horace, Virgil and Ovid, especially with reference to the Boreal might or cynosure, the mention to Aonia<sup>8</sup> and to the muses themselves.

Another endeavor related to this chosen tradition is a type of affectation, of the adoption of a somewhat baroque sensibility<sup>9</sup> with regard to the use of extended metaphors, with imagination (or fantasy) metamorphosed into high ingenuity and later on into venture and fortune, smiling Aurora, animated ideas, and heavenly sweetness. The positive overtones associated with the initial imagination have been tainted and in some stanzas, the metaphor takes on dark undertones when linked to horror, strange wonders, ignorance (ill obstinacy), and misery. The religious themes are everywhere and are all connected to Milton's *Paradise Lost*: the rebellious spirit flying from the Stygian lake is an allusion to Milton's Satan, but there are also an epic trumpet, the throne of Zion, and a convoluted remark about Eden. Overall, da Costa's imagery in the poem disdains obvious similarities in favor of those that reveal unseen, unexpected analogies.

This baroque sensibility also stands out because of stylistic experimentations such as pairing uncertainty and plenitude by contrasting night to day, a descent followed by an ascent, and obscure parallels as in imagination/poetry (fantasy) and errantry (or amazement). Another type of stylistic experimentation is the obscurity and fragmentation in the eleventh stanza in the mention to Eden, when Milton takes us by the hand up to the point where the lost good (Adam and Eve's short stay in Eden) dissociates from fatal craving (disobedience leading to temptation) and becomes a miraculous home/homing/homecoming. This miraculous home is possibly a reference to the end of *Paradise Lost* with providence being Adam and Eve's guiding light in the world before them. Da Costa's poem reads:

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<sup>8</sup> A region of Greece sacred to the Muses, whom Ovid calls the Aonides.

<sup>9</sup> More on Baroque Milton, see Frank (1966), Tuve (1961), Canfield (2003), Roston (1980).

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| <p>With you I am entertained,<br/> I spend the night and day in<br/> anticipation,<br/> And filled the imagination<br/> Of images, Oh Milton, of your<br/> poetry,<br/> I descend to the regions of errantry</p> <p>With you I climb to an immense<br/> height<br/> That bathes from your face the<br/> Boreal might.</p> | <p>Contigo me entretenho,<br/> Contigo passo a noite, e passo o<br/> dia,<br/> E cheia a fantasia<br/> Das imagens, ó Milton, do teu<br/> canto,<br/> Contigo desço às Regiões do<br/> espanto,<br/> Contigo me remonto a imensa<br/> altura,<br/> Que banha de seu rosto a<br/> Cinosura.</p> |
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Every stanza in Portuguese has the abbcdd rhyme scheme and we decided to keep the same scheme in the English translation only in stanzas 1, 2, 7, and 10. The rhyme scheme in the other stanzas was changed because we chose to stick as much as possible to the content conveyed. There are, notwithstanding, different rhyme schemes adopted in the English translation in stanzas 11 (abbacc) and 12 (abcbbca). Stanzas 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, and 9 have irregular rhyme schemes or no rhyme at all.

In contrast to the heroic odes of the Greek poet Pindar, Horace's odes are intimate, related to friendship, love, and the practice of poetry. Da Costa's is an irregular (as long as generic form is concerned) and rhymed ode that employs neither the three-part form of the Pindaric model nor the two – or four-line stanza that typifies the Horatian pattern. Da Costa's ode is also written in irregular meter.

The second stanza begins with a reference to the Thames. It compares the abundance and fluidity of the river to the sublime creativity or to the distinctively national overtones associated with its name. Ensign moves on to design and the latter is a reference to Scripture, which serves as a kind of Pandora box for Milton. The spilled evils become Milton's burden, but they can also be linked to his lifelong fortune.

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| Thames, you gave us<br>Within your bosom high<br>ingenuous ensign,<br>That the sacred design<br>From the divine Poem inspired,<br>As the vault of evils you spilled<br>About your fortune? Like treadle,<br>You bring it from the long left<br>cradle? | Tâmisá, que nos deste<br>Dentro do seio teu tão alto engenho,<br><br>Que o sagrado desenho<br>Do divino Poema lhe inspirastes,<br>Como o cofre dos males derramastes<br>Sobre a sua fortuna? Como ao Fado<br>O trazes desde o berço abandonado? |
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The third stanza stresses the power of the homeland, of foreign lands, and of civil wars. Da Costa suggests that Milton is bloodied in imagination and in the creative pilgrimages to poor and evil places. The price Milton paid is exacted: laborious studies and excessive tiredness.

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| Not enough beyond the homeland<br>Pilgrim to wander strange lands,<br>In the horror of civil wars<br>Bloodied the arm to the Muses<br>given?<br>By filthy, vile poverty still<br>outstridden,<br>Want me to moan, and count at a<br>low price<br>From your studies the tired excess? | Não basta além da Pátria<br>Peregrino, vagar estranhas terras,<br>No horror das civis guerras<br>Ensangüentar o braço às Musas<br>dado?<br>Da torpe, e vil pobreza inda vexado,<br><br>Queres que gema, e conte em baixo<br>preço<br>De seus estudos o cansado excesso? |
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The fourth stanza elaborates on the personal gain: the adventurous songs will produce fame and fortune. Fortune to those who will drink from the fountainhead of Milton's treasured poems as opposed to idolatry to those who drink from ignorance or ill obstinacy. The reference to the sacred place for the muses reinforces the neoclassical thread and develops the idea of going beyond the homeland.

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| <p>Yes, this is venture,<br/>         These are the myrtles, the golden<br/>         wreaths<br/>         That in the century to come<br/>         Those who drink from Aonia will<br/>         apperceive:<br/>         Fortune, your treasures only<br/>         receive<br/>         Bastard idolaters, who from early<br/>         infancy<br/>         Caressed in their arms ill<br/>         obstinacy.</p> | <p>Sim, é esta a ventura,<br/>         Estas as murtas e as grinaldas de<br/>         oiro<br/>         Que ao século vindoiro<br/>         Hão de levar os que de Aônia<br/>         bebem:<br/>         Fortuna, os teus tesoiros só recebem<br/>         Bastardos Gentios, que da tenra<br/>         infância<br/>         Afagou nos seus braços a Ignorância.</p> |
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The fifth stanza names another river and introduces a different tradition. Camões groans the Tagus and the benevolent Aurora smiles on the Appennine but rather fails to illumine noble Tasso.<sup>10</sup> What seems to be at stake here is the spilling of evils from the vault once held by Milton.

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| <p>You know, Oh Tagus,<br/>         Great Camões groans and cries<br/>         you;<br/>         Not even smiling Aurora<br/>         In the Apennine illumines the<br/>         noble Tasso:<br/>         From door to door, slow and loose,<br/>         Begging the singer of the Greek,<br/>         The unfortunate weight of misery<br/>         feels.</p> | <p>Tu o sabes, ó Tejo,<br/>         O teu grande Camões o geme e<br/>         chora;<br/>         Nem mais risonha Aurora<br/>         No Apenino esclarece ao nobre<br/>         Tasso:<br/>         De porta em porta vagaroso, e lasso,<br/>         Mendigando o cantor da Grega<br/>         gente,<br/>         O peso infausto da miséria sente.</p> |
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The sixth stanza calls Aurora a fickle goddess and a deity that denies vainglories. The use of an oxymoron, mute silence, windingly draws us to illustrious glory and to long history. Immortal memory is watched over by Aurora and oblivion is kept at bay.

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<sup>10</sup> Torquato Tasso was an Italian poet of the 16th century, known for his 1591 poem *Gerusalemme liberata*.

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| Deny them a lot though<br>Fickle Goddess, vain riches;<br>thence<br>Amidst the mute silence<br>From the ages lie; the illustrious<br>glory,<br>That the names bespeak the long<br>history<br>Free from sinking in this change<br>Watch over them in immortal<br>memory. | Nega-lhes muito embora<br>Deusa inconstante, as vãs riquezas;<br>tudo<br>Entre o silêncio mudo<br>Dos tempos jazerá; a ilustre glória,<br><br>Que os nomes encomenda à larga<br>história<br>Livre de naufragar nesta mudança<br>Os guarda e zela na imortal<br>lembrança. |
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Da Costa suggests that he sees through Aurora and that he contemplates Milton trampling disgrace. The fame and fortune of his name travel everywhere, reaching the burning hearts of studious scholars and poets. The allusion to *Paradise Lost* is clear: the happy road paved by the epic in terms of things never attempted before in prose and verse.

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| I look at you through her<br>To trample, Oh Milton, disgrace's<br>hole;<br>From the frozen pole<br>Your victorious name extends to<br>us,<br>In noble fire the heart kindles,<br>When the happy road you paved<br>Of the Epic never before craved. | Por ela te contemplo<br>Calcar, ó Milton, da desgraça o colo;<br><br>Desde o gelado Pólo<br>Teu nome vencedor a nós se<br>estende,<br>Em nobre fogo o coração acende,<br>Quando nos abres a feliz estrada<br>Da Epopéia jamais de alguns<br>trilhada. |
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The eighth stanza touches on the sublime with the unheard language and with celestial creatures. Da Costa, just like Milton, mingles “the chaste expressions of the First Fathers”, a Christian reference, with the classically mythological battles in Aquilon, which is transformed from the Roman god of the North Wind, equivalent to the Greek god Boreas, to an imaginative toponym. The closing line of this stanza sums up the sublime and the divine with “All is great, oh good God.”



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| <p>The unheard language<br/>Of the eternal celestial creatures,<br/>The soft tenderness<br/>The chaste expressions of the First<br/>Fathers,<br/>Of incorporeal substances the<br/>warriors<br/>Battle in Aquilon! Imagine all;<br/>All is great, oh good God, divine<br/>and in awe.</p> | <p>A nunca ouvida língua<br/>Das eternas, celestes criaturas,<br/>As suaves ternuras<br/>As castas expressões dos Pais<br/>primeiros,<br/>De incorpóreas substâncias os<br/>guerreiros Combates no Aquilon!<br/>tudo imagino;<br/>Tudo é grande, ó bom Deus, tudo<br/>é divino.</p> |
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As a counterpoint, the ninth stanza introduces the archfiend flying from the Stygian lake, an extremely dark, gloomy, forbidding stream of water. Stygian originates from “Styx”, the river that separates the Earth from Hades in Greek mythology, and it is associated with horrible abysses, funereal paroxysms, and the threat of monstrous protagonism. Milton’s Satan in da Costa’s version is also loath to sing the so-called triumphs of our plight or the (mis)fortunes associated with human tragedy.

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| <p>Fly from the Stygian Lake,<br/>Oh rebellious spirit: an icy-cold<br/>snake<br/>Let my eyes just him make!<br/>Try the Equinoctial, wander the<br/>abysses!<br/>How horrible! Amidst funereal<br/>paroxysms<br/>Perhaps I even fear that the<br/>Monster might<br/>Sing the triumphs of our plight.</p> | <p>Voa do Estígio Lago,<br/>Ó Espírito rebelde: um frio gelo<br/>Me deixa apenas vê-lo!<br/>Tenta a Equinoctial, vaga os abismos!<br/>Que horror! Entre funestos<br/>paroxismos<br/>Talvez chego a temer que o Monstro<br/>possa<br/>Cantar os loiros da tragédia nossa.</p> |
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The tenth stanza has the archfiend enfeebled by the epic trumpet sounding from the throne in Jerusalem. The dragon’s injury is avenged and the proud, furious monster is confounded or rather vanquished for the moment. Again, as in Milton, da Costa’s Satan falls repeatedly because of the “dubious mire”; he becomes stuck internally and externally in mud and he confounds himself.

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| Oh no: hear the cry<br>From the Epic Trumpet: rapture I<br>admire,<br>And already in the dubious mire<br>Far from terrifying me the Dragon<br>fright,<br>Mountains uprooted I hope to<br>sight<br>From the Throne of Zion, the<br>injury avenged,<br>Proud, put down the fury, you<br>confounded. | Ah não: oiça-se o brado<br>Da Épica Trombeta: o rapto admiro,<br><br>E já no dúbio giro,<br>Longe de me aterrar o Dragão fero,<br><br>Arrancadas montanhas ver espero<br><br>Do Trono de Sião, vingada a injúria;<br><br>Confunde-te, oh soberbo, e rende<br>a fúria. |
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The eleventh stanza confounds idealizations or wonders and imagination. The sublime and the divine are conjoined in Milton, for he takes us by the hand to see grace brought forth by the fortunate fall, when anxiety is no longer attached to the lost good. The end of this stanza is a homecoming: a stream of ideas, not unlike the previous mentions to national rivers, in the miraculous (earthly) Eden.

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| Strange wonders in idealization<br>Of some mortal genius never<br>attempted!<br>Ideas Animated<br>In the newest, rarest imagination!<br>Milton takes us by the hand,<br>guiding,<br>Cease from the good lost the fatal<br>craving,<br>This is in Eden the miraculous<br>homing. | Estranhas maravilhas<br>De algum gênio mortal jamais<br>tentadas!<br>Idéias animadas<br>Na mais nova, mais rara fantasia!<br>Se Mílton pela mão nos leva e guia,<br><br>Cesse do bem perdido a fatal ânsia,<br><br>Esta é de Eden a milagrosa estância. |
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The neo-classical and baroque sensibilities are united in the twelfth stanza. The Muses educate with heavenly sweetness, “Nectar, and ambrosia, a new glory”, and the bust of the deceased seems to be crowned not with a brief epitaph, but with a twelve-stanza ode. The end is also oxymoronic, for Milton is simultaneously dead and alive. The promise of

resurrection is carried out in the poem with a neo-classical and baroque rhyme: brief [breve] rhymes with light [leve] in Portuguese.

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| Muses, you who educated him                    | Musas, vós que educastes                   |
| Such a great soul, and taught to enjoy         | Alma tão grande, e que a gostar lhe destes |
| The heavenly sweetness tasted                  | As doçuras celestes                        |
| Nectar, and ambrosia, a new glory              | Do néctar, e da ambrósia, um novo loiro    |
| Come weave him a Bust to overjoy               | Vinde tecer-lhe; e junto ao Busto de oiro  |
| Have this brief Epitaph engraved:              | Mandai gravar este Epitáfio breve:         |
| Milton is dead: let the earth be light to him. | Milton morreu: seja-lhe a terra leve.      |

Bearing the translation of da Costa’s ode in mind, we address the following questions: first, what does the commented translation reveal about Milton’s poetry that has not been as readily visible or legible? The classical tradition within which Milton himself worked, the baroque sensibility or archi-texture of his long epic poem, and a proto-romantic stretch of the imagination that would take us to outbursts of intense passions/creations are all foregrounded in da Costa’s ode. Be it the melancholy end of a lost paradise, be it the cruel realization also at the end that we, as a species, are built around a void/vortex and are prone to disobedience and temptation, Milton’s *Paradise Lost* through the lens of the ode may be said to feature proto-romantic characteristics. One such characteristic is the use of imagination: the approximate human equivalent of the creative powers of nature or even God, the newest, rarest power that allows mortals some type of transcendence in life and/or art.

Second, what was accomplished by bringing Milton into 18th-century Brazilian Portuguese? A return to classicism via Milton is brought about and this classicism is simultaneously a neo-classicism in the way the muses educate Milton (the use of rationalism and didacticism) in heavenly sweetness with nectar, ambrosia, and a glorious, Greek-like diadem. All that permeated by a provincial poet who dares to conflate Milton, Tasso, and Camões. To da Costa’s credit, the ode, and the short epic “Vila Rica” (with references and allusions to Milton), allowed him the fulfillment of the desire to found a not-yet national, but regional, literature that would mean the tentative incorporation of Minas Gerais, a wealthy province,

into the culture of the West. By attempting to acclimatize Milton and his *Paradise Lost* to his own South-American wilderness, da Costa used the literary traditions and conventions on hand to express his fragmented, in-between reality: simultaneously neo/classical, baroque, and proto-romantic.

Another way of bringing Milton to the 18<sup>th</sup>-century Brazilian context was to invite the English poet to participate indirectly in the first pro-independence act, a rebellion against the Portuguese imperial Crown. The political movement, called “Minas Gerais Conspiracy”, was an act of rebellion that used no weapons and no army, but the minds of poets, priests, and readers that exercised their right to claim for independence from the Portuguese colonial empire. For some historians, da Costa was “the most brilliant mind of the movement” (FRIEIRO, 1957, p. 10).<sup>11</sup>

At the time, the Portuguese political representatives repressed the movement, arrested the conspirators, and prepared many assaults on their private libraries, for they tried to halt rebellious ideas. One of the assaults took place in the house of a priest, Father Luis Vieira, who used to keep the largest book collection of the group. In his house, they used to meet, read, and discuss the pro-independence ideas. Eduardo Frieiro, a Brazilian writer who analyzed the books kept in the priest’s library, reiterates the importance of the volumes that gave rise to the “Minas Gerais Conspiracy”.<sup>12</sup>

It is now possible to realize that “the destiny of the best books is this: to enchant and to disturb, to excite the imagination magically, to nourish and stimulate the creative faculty of the spirit, encouraging them to dream through acting” (FRIEIRO, 1957, p. 27).<sup>13</sup> Milton’s *Paradise Lost* was found in the priest’s library: “From the French classics, Corneille, Racine, Bossuet, Voltaire, Fenelon, Montesquieu, Marmontel... In French translations, Anacreonte, *Le Paradis perdu* by Milton” (FRIEIRO, 1957, p. 37).<sup>14</sup> The volumes in this library reinforce Frieiro’s words and *Paradise Lost* can be listed as

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11 “Para José Pedro Xavier da Veiga, e para alguns outros historiadores, foi Claudio Manuel da Costa a cabeça mais forte da conjuração.”

12 See *Autos da devassa da Inconfidência Mineira*, vol. I and II, published by Biblioteca Nacional (Ministério da Educação), Rio de Janeiro, 1936-1938.

13 “O destino dos livros melhores é esse: o de encantar e perturbar, excitando magicamente a fantasia, o de fecundar e estimular a faculdade criadora do espírito, irmanando o sonho com a ação”.

14 “Dos clássicos franceses, Corneille, Racine, Bossuet, Voltaire, Fénelon, Montesquieu, Marmontel ... Em traduções francesas, Anacreonte, *Le Paradis Perdu* de Milton”.

one of the books that nourished da Costa's poetic imagination along with his political concerns. Milton was thus invoked, just as Wordsworth did in 1802, and came to colonial Brazil, in a turbulent moment when the not-yet nation was also in need of extraordinary authors: "Oh Milton .../ Your victorious name extends to us" (WORDSWORTH, 1977, p. 287).

Third, how is Milton accommodated to 18th-century Brazil and how is this new environment, prospectively or actually, different for having the English poet in it? In terms of reception, Milton gains even more meaning in view of the incessant noise of mining, the dusty landscape of the towns, the immensity of the forests and the presence of the threatening mountains that surrounded this countryside location in Brazil and that was made filthy rich by the goldmines in a state now called Minas Gerais. On the one hand, da Costa publicizes the tripartite tradition he chose for himself in the election of Milton.<sup>15</sup> On the other hand, Milton's simultaneously terse ("Forth reaching to the Fruit, she pluck'd, she eat" – PL 9.781) and sublime style, his puritanical ethos and proto-romantic pathos, Milton's classical *topoi* and baroque turns followed by counterturns go native ("the way/ I must return to native dust?" – PL 11.563) in this dusty, arid, backward province of Brazil. The end of da Costa's ode miniaturizes many scenes in *Paradise Lost* (and serves as parallel to the very last line: "Through Eden took thir solitarie way" – PL 12.649), where after long and winding descriptions, lengthy and composite lists, extra-ordinary similes and convoluted bits of syntax, we reach a promise that unites neo-classicist, baroque, and proto-romantic sensibilities: "Milton is dead: let the earth be light to him", and nothing will ever be the same.

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<sup>15</sup> Let us not forget that this tradition also branches out to Portuguese (Luís de Camões, Diogo Bernardes, and António Dinis da Cruz e Silva) and Spanish (Francisco Gómez de Quevedo y Santibáñez Villegas and Luis de Góngora y Argote) literature from the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries.

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