
Affective Rhetorics of Contagion

Augusto Malta in Belle Époque Rio de Janeiro

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ABSTRACT This article focuses on the photographs of Augusto Malta, the official photographer of the city of Rio de Janeiro, made between 1904 and 1929. It departs from the work of Brian Massumi, Sara Ahmed, and Anna Gibbs on affect theory to argue that Malta's images were responsible for supporting a rhetoric of contagion used to justify the violent biopolitical policies of the Brazilian republican government. Furthermore, I assert that this rhetoric depended on the mobilization by Malta of affects widely circulated in the popular media of the period. This study aims to bring affect theory into dialog with the vast body of existing historical, visual, and sociological literature on the so-called Brazilian Belle Époque. This period in the history of Brazil, and especially of Rio de Janeiro, has been amply studied by scholars from diverse disciplines. Nevertheless, engagement with theories of affectivity and the work of Malta, especially in English-speaking scholarship, remains limited. This article speaks to the implication of photography, architecture, and urban planning in medical and biopolitical discourses, contributing to the study of the mechanisms that produce and reproduce myths of progress and the emancipating power of reason in early twentieth-century Latin America.

KEYWORDS Rio de Janeiro, photography, affect theory, Augusto Malta, biopolitics

RESUMEN Este artículo se centra en las fotografías de Augusto Malta—el fotógrafo oficial de la ciudad de Río de Janeiro—realizadas entre 1904 y 1929. Toma distancia con respecto al trabajo sobre la teoría del afecto de Brian Massumi, Sara Ahmed y Anna Gibbs para argumentar que las imágenes de Malta brindaron un apoyo efectivo a una retórica de contagio utilizada para justificar las violentas medidas biopolíticas del gobierno republicano de Brasil. Además, afirmo que esta retórica dependía de la movilización por parte de Malta de los afectos ampliamente difundidos en los medios populares de la época. Este estudio tiene como objetivo poner la teoría del afecto en diálogo con el vasto corpus de literatura histórica, visual y sociológica existente sobre la llamada Belle Époque brasileña. Este período en la historia de Brasil, y especialmente de Río de Janeiro, ha sido ampliamente estudiado por académicos de diversas disciplinas. Sin embargo, especialmente en la academia de habla inglesa, hay pocos trabajos que estudien la obra de Malta a la luz de las teorías de la afectividad. Este artículo habla de la implicación de la fotografía, la arquitectura y la planificación urbana en los discursos médicos y biopolíticos, contribuyendo así al estudio de los mecanismos que producen y reproducen mitos del progreso y el poder emancipador de la razón en la América Latina de principios del siglo XX.

PALABRAS CLAVE Río de Janeiro, fotografía, teoría del afecto, Augusto Malta, biopolítica

RESUMO Este artigo se foca nas fotografias de Augusto Malta, o fotógrafo oficial da cidade do Rio de Janeiro, realizadas entre 1904 e 1908. Partindo do trabalho de Sara Ahmed e Anna Gibbs sobre a teoria do afeto, argumenta-se que as imagens de Malta serviram para apoiar uma retórica do contágio usada para justificar políticas biopolíticas violentas do governo brasileiro republicano. Ademais, eu afirmo que esta retórica dependeu da mobilização por Malta de afetos largamente circulados na mídia popular daquele período. O objetivo desse estudo é colocar a teoria do afeto em diálogo com o vasto corpo de literatura histórica, visual e sociológica existente sobre a dita Belle Époque brasileira. Esse período da história do Brasil, e especialmente do Rio de Janeiro, tem sido amplamente estudado por acadêmicos de diversas disciplinas. No entanto, o envolvimento com as teorias da afetividade e o trabalho de Malta, especialmente na produção acadêmica em inglês, permanece limitado. Este artigo endereça a implicação da fotografia, da arquitetura e do planejamento urbano em discursos médicos e biopolíticos, contribuindo para o estudo de mecanismos que produzem e reproduzem mitos de progresso e do poder emancipatório da razão na América Latina do início do século XX.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE Rio de Janeiro, fotografia, teoria do afeto, Augusto Malta, biopolítica

A sharp diagonal composition marks Augusto Malta's 1920 photograph of Rio de Janeiro's Morro do Castelo (fig. 1). The image contrasts the poorly maintained housing structures

of the *morro* on the right with the city's bay and the bright sky stretching beyond the frame to the left. The precarious structures presented by Malta and the bodies inhabiting



FIGURE 1. Augusto Malta, *Morro do Castelo: [grupo de pardieiros]*. Rio de Janeiro. 31 [ago.] 1920, 1920, gelatin photograph, 6 $\frac{7}{8}$ × 9 $\frac{1}{8}$ in. (17.5 × 23.3 cm). Fundação Biblioteca Nacional, Rio de Janeiro. Photograph in public domain; image provided by Acervo da Fundação Biblioteca Nacional, Brazil.

them meld together, the conditions of the space sticking to the bodies, and the bodies blending into the structures that surround them. The lower-income families living in Rio de Janeiro's *favelas* (slums) and their living conditions are here the two sides of the "diseased body" threatening the capital city in the early twentieth century. The disgust over the living conditions in the poor neighborhoods, fear of contagion, and anger toward their "undesirable" bodies colored the debates over the modernization of Rio de Janeiro during this period. These affects fed on social and medical discourses that pitted the "diseased" city of Rio against earlier exaltations of its tropical riches and imaginings of its modern future. Rio's *favelas* were a sharp contrast to the myth of the terrestrial Eden that had accompanied the city's bay since the early colonial period, and the Belle Époque metropolis the Carioca elite hoped it would become. In Malta's *Morro do Castelo*, this contrapuntal narrative is made visual: the dangerous favela crowds the clear tropical skies and the edenic Rio de Janeiro Bay, their colonial constructions reminding all of Rio's backwardness. This 1920 photograph showcases a rhetoric that was both over a decade in the making in the work of Rio's official photographer and essential to

the field of cultural production in early twentieth-century Rio de Janeiro.

Malta's images trafficked on a series of ideas: the rhetoric of contagion igniting popular revolts of the early twentieth century, the view of Rio de Janeiro as tropical Eden that populated the global imaginary, and the ideal of a modern nation that seduced the Brazilian elite, among others. In *Morro do Castelo* the composition is cut diagonally by the sharp contrast between the crowded, precarious constructions at the bottom right and the open sky, the sea, and a sliver of the bay on the top left. The people pose uncomfortably along the worn path that contours the cliff. A young, dark-skinned child stands in the blurred foreground, a group of six children stand crowded together behind her, and further beyond a man dressed in modest clothes leans awkwardly against an old wooden staircase. The figures' triangular arrangement is diagrammatically opposed to the triangle of open space above, the house to the left hanging over the cliff opening in the background. Captured by the camera, the inhabitants in the foreground stare straight at the photographer, while other bodies mesh into the wooden and brick structures lining the right side of the image, surrounded by clotheslines,



FIGURE 2. Augusto Malta, *Vista do Rio de Janeiro tomada do Morro do Corcovado*, 1906, gelatin photograph, 6⅞ × 9⅞ in. (17.5 × 23.3 cm). Instituto Moreira Salles, Rio de Janeiro. Photograph in public domain, credit Augusto Malta / Coleção Brascan Cem Anos no Brasil / Acervo Instituto Moreira Salles.

plants, and mountains of rubble. In this photograph, the open sky and expansive Rio de Janeiro Bay are implied by the small stretch appearing on the top left of the image, but this space is invaded by the improvised wooden fence, the rubble, and the degraded path that separates this area of light from the decadent housing structures and the impoverished population of the *morro*.

Vista do Rio de Janeiro tomada do Morro do Corcovado of 1906 (fig. 2) by Malta, a photograph that widely circulated as a postcard circa 1910, shows the diagrammatically opposed views of the city that he produced. In Malta's *Vista do Corcovado*, Rio is "civilized" and modern. In this photograph, a lone male figure sits atop a concrete pier hanging above the city, contemplating the Botafogo neighborhood and the Guanabara Bay. The gridlike city below and the symmetry of the composition are engaged in the idealization of modernity and order. This image shows how the Brazilian Edenic motif was in vogue during Malta's years. It was tempered during this time, however, by other ideals extracted from urbanism and medical discourses: the experiences of urban reform in Europe and America and

theories of miasmas that increasingly gained currency. Thus, *Vista do Corcovado* supported the reforms to Rio de Janeiro's urban fabric of the first decade of the twentieth century, and framed it as a modern and "cleansing" project, pushing the city in a new direction while opening the city to the atmosphere of its tropical surroundings. It also showcased the elite's "conquest" of the city, pushing out the undesirable bodies that threatened the body politic.

Vista do Corcovado is taken from one of Rio de Janeiro's mountains in the same manner as *Morro do Castelo*. In the first, the expansive sky and openness signify health and abundance. In the second, the slope opening dangerously to the left and the Bay that Malta leaves visible at a distance only serve to reaffirm the precarity of the *morro*. The ground stretching at the center of both *Morro do Castelo* and *Vista do Corcovado* are crucial triggers of affectivity. While in *Morro do Castelo* the concrete stretch is a worn path coming apart, water pooling in its crevices, in *Vista do Corcovado* it is a rectangular pier, clean and bathed by the sun. The concrete path in *Vista do Corcovado* exalts cleanliness and organization, drawing our eye out to the landscape, an effect that

is further reinforced by the streets cutting diagonally just below. On the contrary, in *Morro do Castello* the composition arouses disgust and fear at the bodies contaminated by this precarious and unsanitary space. These *puncta*¹ at the center of these images frame their compositions. In *Vista do Corcovado*, the contemplative figure's poised presence echoed in the mountain to his left is a long way from the working man awkwardly standing at the center right of *Morro do Castello*. The clean atmosphere and the abundance of Brazilian natural resources in *Vista do Corcovado*, the exaltation of this Edenic landscape, is the counterimage to Malta's denunciatory *Morro do Castello*. The cramped spaces and disarray of the latter, evoking disgust and fear of contagion, stand in sharp contrast to the former's ample sky and the sense of scarcity both of people and built spaces.

The contrast between *Vista do Corcovado* and *Morro do Castello* exemplifies the biopolitical discourse elaborated visually in Malta's oeuvre during the early decades of the twentieth century. In 1920, by the time Malta snapped the shot of *Morro do Castello*, he had consolidated this rhetoric, but it originated in the lessons extracted from the role of the media in the 1904 Revolta da Vacina (revolt against mandatory vaccination), its spatial discourse about the city of Rio, and the affective epidemic that ignited this popular revolt.

This article focuses on Malta's elaborate visual rhetoric and its impact on the explosive conflicts taking place in Rio de Janeiro during the first decades of the twentieth century. It aims to understand how mobilizing affectivity within wider rhetorics of contagion and wonderment served to justify the expulsion of "undesirable bodies" from select spaces of the city, enacting a biopolitical agenda and extensively changing Rio's urban fabric. The thousands of images produced by Malta during his years as the official photographer of the city (1903–1936) played essential roles in the violent process of modernizing Rio de Janeiro—and Brazil—and engaged, as many authors have noted, in a longstanding

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1. The concept of the *punctum* in photography is used here in Barthes's terms. Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2010).

effort to reeducate the gaze of the Carioca elite.² I argue that more than reeducate the gaze, Malta's images were part of an affective system designed to colonize the heart of the population, aligning bodies and communities and creating coherence.

The bibliography of Brazil's Belle Époque (understood as the period comprehending the 1890s up to the 1910s) is extensive,³ yet it has often approached Malta's photographs

2. For more on how Malta contributed to the configuration of the class *habitus* of the Brazilian elite of this period, see Ana Maria Mauad, "A inscrição na cidade: fotografia de autor, Marc Ferrez e Augusto Malta," in *Paisagem e Arte*, ed. Heliana Angotti Salgueiro (São Paulo: Comitê Brasileiro de História da Arte, 2000), 391–98. For other authors discussing the work of Malta in relation to construction of a new way of seeing in early twentieth-century Rio de Janeiro, see Antônio Ribeiro de Oliveira Jr, "Do reflexo à mediação: um estudo da expressão fotográfica e da obra de Augusto Malta" (master's thesis, Universidade Estadual de Campinas, 1994); George Ermakoff, *Augusto Malta e o Rio de Janeiro, 1903–1936* (Rio de Janeiro: G. Ermakoff, 2009); Gilberto Ferrez, *Photography in Brazil, 1840–1900* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1990); Amanda Danelli Costa, "Cidade, reformas urbanas e modernidade: o Rio de Janeiro em diálogo com João do Rio e Augusto Malta" (PhD diss., Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro, 2011); Viviane da Silva Araújo, "Cidades fotografadas: Rio de Janeiro e Buenos Aires sob as lentes de Augusto Malta e Harry Olds, 1900–1936," *Nuevo Mundo Mundos Nuevos*, Débats, January 2009, <http://journals.openedition.org/nuevomundo/50103>; Fernando Galha de Souza, "Augusto Malta e o olhar oficial: Fotografia, cotidiano e memória no Rio de Janeiro – 1903/1936," *História, imagem e narrativas* 1, no. 2 (April 2006): 71–93; Ronaldo Entler and Antônio Ribeiro de Oliveira Jr, "Augusto Malta e Marc Ferrez: Olhares sobre a construção de uma metrópole," *19&20* 3, no. 4, October 2008, www.dezenovevinte.net/arte/620decorativa/am_mf.htm.

3. For a better understanding of the period and its historiography, see José Murilo de Carvalho, *Formação das Almas: o imaginário da República no Brasil* (São Paulo: Editora Schwarz, 1990); Jeffrey D. Needell, *A Tropical Belle Époque: Elite Culture and Society in Turn-of-the-Century Rio de Janeiro* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Jeffrey D. Needell, "The Revolta Contra Vacina of 1904: The Revolt against 'Modernization' in Belle-Époque Rio de Janeiro," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 67, no. 2 (1987): 233–69; Jeffrey D. Needell, "Rio de Janeiro at the Turn of the Century: Modernization and the Parisian Ideal," *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 25, no. 1 (1983): 83–103; Jeffrey D. Needell, "Rio de Janeiro and Buenos Aires: Public space and Public Consciousness in Fin-de-Siècle Latin America," *Comparative Studies in Society and History: An International Quarterly* 37 (1995): 519–40; Jeffrey D. Needell, "Making the Carioca Belle Époque Concrete," *Journal of Urban History* 10, no. 4 (1984): 383–422; Joel Outtes, "Disciplining Society through the City: The Genesis of City Planning in Brazil and Argentina (1894–1945)," *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 22, no. 2 (April 2003): 137–64; Nicolau Sevcenko, *Literatura como missão: Tensões sociais e criação cultural na Primeira República* (São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1983); Nicolau Sevcenko, *A Revolta da Vacina: mentes insanas em corpos rebeldes* (São Paulo: Cosac & Naify, 2010); Angela Moulin Simões Penalva Santos and Marly Silva da Motta, eds., "O 'bota-abaxio' revisitado: o Executivo municipal e as reformas urbanas no Rio de Janeiro (1903–2003)," special issue, *Revista Rio de Janeiro*, no. 10 (May–August 2003); Jaime L. Benchimol, *Pereira Passos: um Haussmann tropical; a renovação urbana da cidade do Rio de Janeiro no início do século XX* (Rio de Janeiro: Prefeitura da Cidade do Rio de Janeiro, Secretaria Municipal de Cultura, Turismo e Esportes, Departamento Geral de Documentação e Informação Cultural, 1990); Rachel Sisson, "Rio de Janeiro, 1875–1945: The

as illustrations of historical and social processes rather than agents in it. In English, the literature on Malta is minimal, and the contribution of his work to the construction of the image of Rio and its impact during a crucial moment of the building of Brazilian national identity—the first decades of the twentieth century—remains unexplored. As Ronaldo Entler and Antônio Ribeiro de Oliveira Jr have noted, the transformation of the international perception of Rio from an insalubrious to a cleansed city was visually shaped by how Malta and other photographers such as Marc Ferrez made it *seen*.⁴ The urban reforms to the city of Rio in the early twentieth century were justified and made visual by the photographs produced by Malta. The dichotomies used by Malta to consolidate a rhetoric in support of government policies have been explored by several authors, among them Entler and Oliveira Jr, George Ermakoff, Viviane de Araújo, Fernando Gralha de Souza, and others.⁵ However, the most prominent contribution of this article is its insight into the mechanisms through which the oppositions progress/backwardness, past/future, and shame/glory, among others, were visually and affectively structured by Malta in his production of two axiologically opposed collections of photographs.

The active role of photography (and images in general) in the construction of the historic experience is a premise of my reading of Malta's work because, as Ana Maria Mauad reminds us, images act as efficient methods of social control, because they educate the gaze and contribute to the dissemination of new ways of seeing and acting that define class *habitus*.⁶ Photography was instrumentalized in early twentieth-century Rio de Janeiro by circulating extensively in newspapers and illustrated magazines that disseminated codes of behavior and representations that regulated relationships within the

process of cultural and social production, creating hegemony.⁷ Starting with the Revolta da Vacina of 1904 and exploring photographs produced by Malta in the years following this popular revolt, I trace, through direct comparison, affective registers manipulated in Malta's collections of photographs. This study departs from the work of Sara Ahmed, Brian Massumi, and Anna Gibbs on affect theory; engages with Pierre Bourdieu's discussion of social *habitus* and the field of production; and is shaped by Mauad's application of Bourdieu's ideas.⁸ Malta's images were responsible for supporting a sophisticated rhetoric of contagion used to justify the violent biopolitical policies of the Brazilian government. Focusing on photographs as agents rather than trace objects of historical events, I explore Malta's images as essential nodes for the circulation of affect and the convergence of diverse semantic and semiotic systems during Rio de Janeiro's Belle Époque.

The underlining goal of the project is to fill a gap in the English-speaking literature by bringing affect theory into dialog with the extensive historical, visual, and sociological literature on early twentieth-century Rio de Janeiro and the work of Malta. Furthermore, together with its intervention in studies on nationalism, this article speaks to the implication of photography in the consolidation of ideals of *brasilidade* and the notion of *tropicality*, central to the study of Brazilian history.

RIO DE JANEIRO DURING THE BELLE ÉPOQUE

Since the arrival of the Portuguese in the sixteenth century, the beauty and the immensity of Rio de Janeiro's Guanabara Bay—the entrance to the city—has been exalted in narratives, songs, drawings, prints, and paintings alike. The bay has been pictured repeatedly from both inland and the sea. Its topography and its natural qualities, as well as the ubiquity of the expansive blue skies arching above it, remain the central focus of an abundance of images produced by artists

Shaping of a New Urban Order," *Journal of Decorative and Propaganda Arts* 21, Brazil-themed issue (1995): 138–55; and David Underwood, "'Civilizing' Rio de Janeiro: Four Centuries of Conquest through Architecture." *Art Journal* 51, no. 4, *Latin American Art* (Winter 1992): 48–56.

4. Entler and Oliveira Jr, "Augusto Malta e Marc Ferrez."

5. Entler and Oliveira Jr, "Augusto Malta e Marc Ferrez;" Ermakoff, *Augusto Malta e o Rio de Janeiro, 1903–1936*; Araújo, "Cidades fotografadas;" Souza, "Augusto Malta e o olhar oficial."

6. Ana Maria Mauad, "Na mira do olhar: um exercício de análise da fotografia nas revistas ilustradas cariocas, na primeira metade do século XX," *Anais do Museu Paulista* 13, no.1 (January–June 2005): 133–74. This methodological approach is well consolidated in the work of Stuart Hall, W. T. J. Mitchell, Nicholas Mirzoeff, Mauad, Fayga Ostroyer, Umberto Eco, Miriam Moreira Leite, and many others. Nevertheless, the use of images as passive objects meant to illustrate the processes exposed through textual references remains the norm in many academic fields.

7. Mauad, "Na mira do olhar," 134.

8. Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (New York: Routledge, 2004); Sara Ahmed, "Affective Economics," *Social Text* 22, no. 2 (Summer 2004): 117–39, <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/55780>; Brian Massumi, "The Autonomy of Affect," *Cultural Critique*, no. 31, The Politics of Systems and Environments, part 2 (Autumn 1995): 83–109; Anna Gibbs, "Contagious Feelings: Pauline Hanson and the Epidemiology of Affect," *Australian Humanities Review* (December 2001), <http://australianhumanitiesreview.org/2001/12/01/contagious-feelings-pauline-hanson-and-the-epidemiology-of-affect/>; Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993); Mauad, "A inscrição na cidade."



FIGURE 3. Augustus Earle, *View from the Summit of Corcovado Mountains, near Rio de Janeiro*, c. 1822, watercolor on paper, 6 $\frac{7}{8}$ × 10 $\frac{1}{8}$ in. (17.5 × 25.7 cm). National Library of Australia, Sydney. Painting in public domain, image provided by National Library of Australia, nla.obj-134508248.

from diverse parts of the world. Augustus Earle's *View from the Summit of Corcovado Mountains, near Rio de Janeiro* of about 1822 (fig. 3) is a nineteenth-century example that draws on an array of previous compositions and shapes countless representations made afterward, including Malta's *Vista do Corcovado*.⁹ In Earle's watercolor, the expansive bay is seen growing in the distance, while in the foreground one well-dressed man walks up a cliff where the vegetation threatens to engulf him, his hand up in surprise. The Romantic tradition of picturing the sublime has a strong influence on this image,¹⁰ where the man facing the immensity of nature and its overwhelming power feels a mix of fear and awe as he grapples with his surroundings. The chaos of nature threatens to overtake and engulf the figure at the center of Earle's image. It finds its companion, and opposite, in Malta's *Vista do Corcovado* made nearly a century later. It was images such as Earle's edenic landscape that Malta had to both dialog with and reshape. Malta's Rio of the early twentieth century had to be edenic but modern, sublime but controlled.

9. For a discussion of images of the Rio de Janeiro Bay made by traveling artists, see Ana Maria Belluzzo, *O Brasil dos viajantes* (Rio de Janeiro: Objetiva Metalivros, 2000).

10. An array of paintings, prints, and photographs are shaped by the European Romantic tradition in nineteenth-century Brazil. See Mauad, "A inscrição na cidade," 392.

As Lúcia Lippi Oliveira and Carlos Martins have argued, Rio de Janeiro has been one of the most reproduced cities in the world, depicted in prints, paintings, photographs, and films since the moment of colonization.¹¹ This iconic landscape played a substantial role in the construction of the idea of *brasilidade* ("Brazilianness"). Concerns with what it meant to be Brazilian, especially in a region marked by its expansive territory and heterogeneous population, date back to independence and the foundation of the empire (1822). Shaping the notion of *brasilidade* during this period are the celebrations of Dom Pedro II and José Bonifácio of the expansiveness of the Brazilian territory and its natural wealth—*tropicality*—as well as the myth constructed around the notion of *racial democracy*.¹² Nevertheless, it was during the republican moment in

11. Lúcia Lippi Oliveira, *Americanos: representações da identidade nacional no Brasil e nos EUA* (Belo Horizonte, Brazil: Editora UFMG, 2000), 157.

12. For more on the discussion of national identity and the representations of *brasilidade* in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, see Carvalho, *Formação das Almas*; José Murilo de Carvalho, "Terra do nunca: Sonhos que não se realizam," in *Brasil, fardo do passado, promessa do futuro: Dez ensaios sobre política e sociedade brasileira*, ed. Leslie Bethell (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 2002), 46–75; and Aleca Le Blanc, "Building the Tropical World of Tomorrow: The Construction of *Brasilidade* at the 1939 New York World's Fair," *Hemisphere: Visual Cultures of the Americas* 2 (Summer 2009): 26–45.

Brazil (after 1889) that the issue of national identity gained traction.

The Edenic motif is central to the understanding of the construction of the Brazilian imagined community. Sérgio Buarque de Hollanda argues in *Visão do Paraíso* that the ideal of Eden was responsible for the emphasis, as early as antiquity and especially during the Renaissance, given to nature as the model for ethics, morality, and aesthetics.¹³ Consequently, this model influenced the encounter of Europeans with the New World. In the Middle Ages, the belief that the Garden of Eden was not a mythical but a real place became a staple of religious narratives. Undoubtedly, this myth factored into the understanding of cartographers and travelers in the first encounter with the Americas. The natural abundance of places like Brazil, contrasted with the seasonal and ever more labor-intensive agricultural reality of Europe, struck travelers as something right out of the Scriptures. The myth of the terrestrial Eden varied throughout the years, yet some aspects remained constant and shaped its legacy and reappearance in the early twentieth century. Narratives exalting a place of perennial springs and invariable, temperate air, neither too hot or too cold, where inhabitants were supernaturally healthy and lived abnormally long lives, define the Edenic motif. Furthermore, the vision of a mountain complex surrounded by abundant water sources had been an infamous image since the fifteenth century. Rio de Janeiro fulfilled many of these expectations and became associated with the terrestrial Eden in the early modern global imaginary.¹⁴

Nevertheless, Rio de Janeiro in the early twentieth century was living through a moment of turmoil; the market that had first boomed in the late nineteenth century suffered from the unhealthy conditions of the city and the instability of the recently formed Brazilian republican government. The Lei Aurea of 1888 that mandated the end of slavery and the proclamation of the Republic announced a year later caused a political and symbolic vacuum, albeit changing little of the system of exploitation in place since colonization. This tension resulted in constant attacks from political movements—Jacobins, monarchists, and other more dispersed groups—which put increasing pressure upon the republican government (supported by state oligarchies in São Paulo and

13. Sérgio Buarque de Hollanda, *Visão do paraíso: Os motivos edênicos no descobrimento e colonização do Brasil* (São Paulo: Companhia Editora Nacional, 1969), ix.

14. Buarque de Hollanda outlines in his book the varied facets of this myth and its construction throughout the years, including a vast array of visual and textual references. See Hollanda, *Visão do paraíso*.

Minas Gerais).¹⁵ These political struggles added to tensions already mounting due to Rio's complex geography, and the city's unequal social structure continued to escalate in the late nineteenth century with a massive exodus and expansion. This resulted, by the first decades of the twentieth century, in an urban crisis that needed coordinated public interventions into the city's fabric.

The city of Rio was from the outset a very idyllic but precarious settlement. The region's overlapping of lakes, marshes, mountains, and hills made it nearly uninhabitable up to the mid-seventeenth century, when it became the capital of the viceroyalty. The efforts to raze the city's peaks and hills and fill the wetlands grew together with the increase in its population in the eighteenth century.¹⁶ The peculiarities of Rio's patchy geography and the history of haphazard projects, often carried out in order to profit from real estate development, complicated the relationship between legal and use rights, resulting in a chaotic urban infrastructure. In 1799, Rio had 43,000 inhabitants, more than one-third enslaved, and was quickly becoming the central port of entry of African peoples and goods from Europe and the point of exit of gold and diamonds bound for metropolises such as Lisbon and London. In 1808, the arrival of 15,000 people from the Portuguese royal court accelerated the city's growth, a phenomenon exacerbated by the increase in coffee plantations in the region. By 1869, Rio was a city of 206,000 inhabitants. With the mid-nineteenth-century coffee boom, the rapid growth of immigration to Brazil, and the abolition of slavery, new groups came to the capital in search of work and opportunities. This sudden new inflow resulted in massive population growth, putting pressure on the already subpar public infrastructure of the city. Rio de Janeiro reached 522,651 in 1890, 805,335 in 1906, and 1,147,599 in 1920, of which over 40 percent were people of color.

The growing infrastructural problems of the city meant it became known by the end of the nineteenth century as

15. For discussions of the social and political scene, see Needell, *Tropical Belle Époque*; Sevcenko, *Literatura como missão*; and Carvalho, *Formação das Almas*.

16. In her *A Poverty of Rights: Citizenship and Inequality in Twentieth-Century Rio de Janeiro* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008), Brodwyn Fischer discusses the changes to the city of Rio and its growing population. In the first part of the book, she gives an overview of the changes and challenges of Rio de Janeiro as an urban space since the sixteenth century, while accounting for real estate speculation and the unequal conditions of the population of the city that continued to worsen in the next centuries. This text is the source of the quantitative data I discuss in this section and central to the understanding of the history and the state of the city during this time.

an insalubrious place. The first epidemic of yellow fever, in 1849, had taken 4,160 lives out of the 166,000 living in the city. During that time, the German physician Robert Christian Barthold Avé-Lallemant had disseminated the idea that the disease spared the enslaved, made some victims among those of mixed race, but decimated those of European descent.¹⁷ Following the 1849 outbreak, the city's government enacted the first sanitary policies. Theories of social medicine and miasmas, popular in Europe during this time, blamed the environment and racial issues for the growing epidemics, and the Brazilian elite followed these racist and eugenic discourses closely. These rhetorics of disgust and fear focused on Rio's "disease" and the myth of the contamination of the white Brazilian population by those of African descent.

In the early twentieth century, massive drops in foreign investments, resulting from these unhealthy conditions and the recurrent outbreaks of various diseases, worried the Brazilian elite. Boosting the fear of economic and political collapse were anxieties about the international perception of the country's blackness. As Lilia Schwarcz argues in *Spectacle of the Races*: "From the brush of W. Adams and other artists who accompanied scientific expeditions emerged a mulatto Brazil, always in the same image, regardless of the sex, race, or social status of the person represented. . . . It was also a mestizo image that Louis Agassiz took away from the country when he returned to the United States in 1865, carrying fresh notes on the land that had become a naturalist's paradise."¹⁸ With the elite's growing concerns also grew the pressure faced by the republican government. It was an anxiety that continued to build, supported by the growth of the mass media and the availability of quantitative data: "In newspapers and the censuses, data reaffirmed Brazilians' theoretical fears regarding the makeup of the population. According to the 1872 census, while the number of [enslaved peoples] had dropped dramatically in 1798 (the enslaved population was 48.7 percent of the whole) [and] by 1872 it was only 15.2 percent, the black and mestizo population was growing (55 percent of the whole)."¹⁹ The commission and implantation of different urban and hygienic plans in Rio in the early twentieth century

aimed to exert social control and enact a broad eugenics agenda to resolved the so-called Brazilian racial issue.²⁰

In the First Universal Races Congress in London of 1916, João Batista Lacerda, director of the Museu Nacional do Rio de Janeiro spoke of the "solution" to this issue: "The hope for Brazil within this century looks to the whitening of the mestizo as its escape and its solution."²¹ With the spreading of these eugenic ideas, the power of the state as the protector of the city and body politic grew extensively, manifesting itself in increasingly aggressive medical policies and the creation of the medical police in Rio de Janeiro. This institution had the authority to intervene in society and police the causes of disease, "destroying dangerous components of the social space, which caused medical disorder."²² As such, the hygienization of the people meant not only structural changes to the city but the displacement of bodies considered to be such *dangerous components*.²³ The need for new foreign investment and the growth of social and racial ideologies across Europe were fundamental platforms of President Francisco de Paula Rodrigues Alves and Rio de Janeiro's Mayor Francisco Pereira Passos, elected in 1902.

Amassing an army of medical professionals, architects, urbanists, and prominent engineers, including Oswaldo Cruz and Paulo Frontin, the Rodrigues Alves administration proposed a series of hygienic and urban plans. These were meant

20. Schwarcz and Fabiola López-Durán critique the view of scholars of race in Brazil such as Thomas Skidmore and Dante Moreira Leite, who argue that in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries race theories were adopted piecemeal by Brazilians in ways derivative of the discussions happening in Europe and the United States at the time. They argue that rather than dismissing the impact of these theories in the history of race relations in Brazil, it is important to understand their role in the social *habitus* of the Brazilian elite, as well as how they were disseminated, manipulated, and adapted to the Brazilian social discourse of the time, a key point of this article. For more, see Schwarcz, *Spectacle of the Races* and Fabiola López-Durán, *Eugenics in the Garden: Transatlantic Architecture and the Crafting of Modernity* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2018).

21. Schwarcz, *Spectacle of the Races*, 3.

22. Benchimol, *Pereira Passos*, 115.

23. The expulsion of the poor and extensively mulatto population from Rio's center was not a new event. Racially motivated expulsions had already happened upon the arrival of the Portuguese court to the city in 1808 and at several times afterward. In the early twentieth century, the idea again gained traction due to the growing fear of blackness and the eugenic discourse of the Brazilian elite, leading to their initial support of the government's new policies. The role of photography in this discourse was also extensive, as it was used as a tool of the state in the process of ordering the city. See Bruno Carvalho, *Porous City: A Cultural History of Rio de Janeiro* (Liverpool, UK: Liverpool University Press, 2013); Sisson, "Rio de Janeiro, 1875–1945;" Underwood, "'Civilizing' Rio de Janeiro" and Jens Andermann, *The Optic of the State: Visuality and Power in Argentina and Brazil* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2007).

17. Benchimol, *Pereira Passos*, 114.

18. Lilia Moritz Schwarcz, *The Spectacle of the Races: Scientists, Institutions, and the Race Question in Brazil, 1870–1930* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1999), 5.

19. Schwarcz, *Spectacle of the Races*, 10.

to counteract Rio's infrastructural problems by cleansing the center of the city of "undesirable bodies," increasing the confidence of foreign investors, and strengthening the economy. The public works of the early twentieth century and their impact on Rio's architectural and urban landscape were the culmination of historical, social, and political processes and resulted in the deepening of colonial inequalities and the continued subjugation of a massive percentage of the city's population. This was the outcome of a fundamental problem: the modernization of Rio was not the consequence of economic growth and social development but a strategy to achieve it. Like other cities at this time, such as Manchester and Chicago, Rio's dependence on foreign capital meant that its growth and wealth was inextricably tied to poverty, inequality, and social violence. This paradox of progress put Rio firmly among other "shock cities" of the period, where the rising impact upon the environment and the social structure was the result of the collusion between state and corporations in search of a "civilized" nation, both in terms of international perception and capitalist appeal.²⁴

Nevertheless, Rodrigues Alves and Pereira Passos's new urban policies were, from the very start, drastic and invasive. Many of the measures, like obligatory vaccination, impacted the social structure of the Carioca bourgeois life, causing growing suspicion among the elite. The government also increasingly attacked the lower classes, decimating their ways of living and limiting the spaces available for them in the center of the city. Amidst political struggles, Jacobin and monarchist groups clung to the growing dissatisfaction among ruling and lower classes alike. Using technologies of

24. Harold L. Platt, *Shock Cities: The Environmental Transformation and Reform of Manchester and Chicago* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005). For the relationship of Rio's urban reforms and capital speculation, see Teresa Meade, *Civilizing Rio: Reform and Resistance in a Brazilian City, 1889–1930* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 1965). Also, for a discussion of the relationship of rapidly growing "shock cities" and new forms and practices associated with increasing commercialization and popularization of the daily newspaper in the nineteenth century, see David Nord, "The Victorian City and the Urban Newspaper," in *Making News: The Political Economy of Journalism in Britain and America from the Glorious Revolution to the Internet*, ed. Jonathan Silberstein-Loeb and Richard R. John (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2015), 73–106. The role of the daily newspaper in the construction of rhetorics of contagion in early twentieth-century Rio de Janeiro is central to understanding the context of Malta's images. Nord's study speaks to the impact of the changing economic and political relations within "shock cities" on journalism and the daily newspaper. Another important study that frames the role of the daily newspaper in the everyday life of Brazil at this time is Teresa Cribelli's *Industrial Forests and Mechanical Marvels: Modernization in Nineteenth-Century Brazil* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

affect, they incited fear and anger in the population starting in 1904.

In this context, the image of the capital city in Brazil and abroad became a central debate of the period.²⁵ Images were at the center of these political battles, and the popular media played a vital role in the construction of the Brazilian elite's social *habitus*. Photography thus rapidly emerged as Rodrigues Alves and Pereira Passos's most potent weapon against the continued attacks of the opposition. At the moment that this political struggle for the image of Brazil deepened in 1903 Pereira Passos hired Augusto Malta to be the official photographer of the city of Rio de Janeiro, a role he performed until 1936.

In what follows, I will expose the mechanisms of Malta's rhetoric of contagion by exploring first the way affectivity was deployed by the government's opposition during the 1904 Revolta da Vacina and second how Malta's photographs manipulated this, and other, affective systems to create two axiologically opposed collections of photographs that presented the city of Rio as locked—spatially and ideologically—in a struggle between backwardness and modernity. With this, Malta's oeuvre became a tool to justify the violence enacted against the lower-class population during the urban reforms of the early twentieth century. To outline this interplay between images, texts, and historical events and maintain the integrity of the photographs as social and political agents, I start with a section on the Revolta da Vacina, move to a discussion of Malta and the role of photography during this time, followed by two sections focusing on the dichotomous groups of images produced by Malta.

THE 1904 OBLIGATORY VACCINATION REVOLT AND THE ORIGINS OF THE RHETORIC OF CONTAGION

The Revolta da Vacina of 1904 is the crucial case in point when considering the rhetorics of contagion constructed in Rio de Janeiro during the early twentieth century. The revolt was the culmination of the social upheavals that marked the Brazilian Belle Époque. As Jeffrey Needell argues: "After the turmoil of the 1890s, which had brought Brazil penury and a reputation for violent instability, a healthy and 'civilized' port capital was to be presented to the

25. For a detailed discussion of the construction of *brasilidade* and the role of images in the consolidation of this mythological discourse starting in the nineteenth century, see Carvalho, *Formação das Almas*.

West as a symbolic and functional element in the country's new viability and potential as a secure advancing nation."²⁶ This critical economic issue was the focus of Rodrigues Alves's governmental plan, in a clear bias in favor of his supporters: the agricultural oligarchies maneuvering for the income of capital and tourism into the country.

While the government defended the interests of the oligarchical elite, sectors of the opposition continuously undermined these efforts. These oppositional groups were made up of classes that arose during the earlier phase of the republican regime. One group were the lower-ranking military officers, autonomous urban workers, public servants, and small business owners, who aligned with Floriano Peixoto (one of the military leaders of the establishment of the Republic) and were influenced by Augusto Comte's positivist views. These Jacobins, or *florianistas* as they were called, advocated for an industrial civilization administered by businessmen (rather than the traditional Brazilian rural elites) and ruled by military men. Another group were the surviving monarchists, who called for the return of the Brazilian Empire under the rule of the descendants of the Portuguese royal family.²⁷ While these oppositional groups were unable to fully grasp the radicalism of the popular movements springing up under their leadership, as Nicolau Sevcenko has argued, they profoundly influenced the media and the public sphere, capitalizing on the social instability of the time.²⁸

The Revolta da Vacina showed the Rodrigues Alves government the power of the opposition's rhetoric and the need to fight the growing affective epidemic that they ignited.²⁹ The policies of the government enacted in 1903, which clearly followed Parisian Haussmannization as a model, attempted to change the face of Rio de Janeiro while advancing the political goals of the agricultural elite and the foreign investors supporting them. The broad Haussmann-like boulevards planned for Rio's center (the Avenida Central being the primary example) and the electrification of several areas was meant, among other things, to prevent the use of the already tortuous urban structure in armed resistance against the government. The cavalry, the most

efficient method for controlling the masses, could not efficiently navigate the narrow and dark streets of Rio de Janeiro. The early twentieth century's strenuous urban scenario, the fruit of the earlier revolts as well as rural exodus and growing government interference, led to tensions in a city with an increasingly multiplying population and a challenging topography.

The growing epidemics of yellow fever and smallpox, and the government's emergency policies, reached a breaking point in 1904, resulting in the Revolta da Vacina. This rebellion was a response to the administration's obligatory vaccination decree promulgated in October, which mandated smallpox vaccine for all. The idea of strangers—even if doctors—entering the bourgeois *sobrados* and *chácaras* (the homes of the Rio upper-class) and injecting the very cause of disease onto men and women, whom to top it off had to remove part of their clothing to receive the vaccine, was morally unacceptable to the Brazilian elite. The lower classes, already suffering from expulsion from the city and policies that prohibited street vendors and popular cultural practices, saw mandatory vaccination as yet another violent attack on their ways of life.

The Revolta da Vacina brought home the point about the military's difficulty controlling a city like Rio de Janeiro in its colonial configuration: the angry mass rioted in the streets and managed to hold off the government's repressive forces for several days.³⁰ Thus, cleansing the streets of physical and social pathologies through the reconfiguration of space was appealing to the republican government and the Brazilian elite. Nevertheless, the policies enacted by the government had to be sold to the rural oligarchies, who approached it with suspicion. The events culminating in the Revolta da Vacina clearly showed that by 1904 the government was losing the media war against the opposition, who used their significant influence in newspapers such as *Correio do Manhã* to fuel the revolt. Increasingly evident during that time was the ruling party's inability to use affectivity to consolidate a coherent discourse in favor of their urban policies. Winning the people over to the cause of urban and sanitary reforms proved not to be an easy task. The opposition's outcries

26. Needell, "Rio de Janeiro at the Turn," 86.

27. For more on this political scenario, see chapter 1 of Carvalho, *Formação das Almas*.

28. Sevcenko, *A Revolta da Vacina*, 14.

29. For thorough analyses of the causes, events, and consequences of the Revolta da Vacina in Rio de Janeiro, see Needell, "Revolta Contra Vacina"; Sevcenko, *A Revolta da Vacina*; and Ângela Porto and Carlos Fidelis Ponte, "Vacinas e campanhas: imagens de uma história a ser contada," *História, Ciências, Saúde* 10, no. 2 (2003): 725–42.

30. As Renato Ortiz reminds us, the Haussmanization of Rio, repeating the French model, was motivated in part by a need to prevent the setting of barricades, thus the widening of the streets and expelling from its center the "dangerous elements." The urban reforms enacted in Buenos Aires in the late nineteenth century served as an encouraging model for the Rio de Janeiro elite, who up until the obligatory vaccination bill looked at the reform of Rio very favorably. See Renato Ortiz, *Cultura e Modernidade* (São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1991).

against impropriety and the violation of individual rights grew stronger just as the government watched these groups capitalize on a powerful affective economy of fear and a rhetoric of angst.

Ahmed argues that rather than “resid[ing] in a given subject or object . . . [emotion] is economic; it circulates between signifiers. . . . In such affective economies, emotions do things, and they align individuals with communities—or bodily space with social space—through the very intensity of their attachments.”³¹ The author proposes that emotions work through adherence—sticking individuals together and acting in the creation of their social habitus, to adopt Bourdieu’s terminology³²—creating collective coherence. Affective registers gain strength through their circulation and, as Gibbs proposes, “the media act as vectors in affective epidemics in which *something else is smuggled along*: the attitudes and even the specific ideas which tend to accompany affect in any given situation.”³³ Pride, fear, disgust, and awe were all affective signs mobilized by both the Brazilian government and its opposition during the early twentieth century, a propagandistic war that gained currency by circulating in newspapers such as *Correio da Manhã*, *Gazeta de Notícias*, *Jornal do Comércio*, *A Avenida*, and *Rua do Ouvidor*.

An enlightening example is the article published in October 1904 in the oppositional *Correio da Manhã*. It urged people to see the photograph of a disfigured man, extracted from the journal *The Liberator*, glued to the front of the *Correio*’s building. The newspaper, however, did not reproduce the so-called portrait of the victim but constructed it textually. The text paints a picture of a man with a contorted body suffering from a grisly tumor. The headline, “The Dangers of the Vaccine: Portrait of a Victim,” was accompanied by the words: “so that the public can evaluate the risks of mandatory vaccination.”³⁴ The text described the changes supposedly caused by the vaccine: “When he underwent the vaccine, his skin was smooth and clean, soft and beautiful, and he enjoyed perfect health.” The verbs used in the text emphasize the attack *suffered* by the body; rather than *taking* the vaccine, the man *underwent* it. It continues: “Contemplate his portrait carefully now and see the state in which he was left. What is the

cause of this scary change? What? Vaccination clear and simple, the great destroyer of human happiness, of human health, and human life.” The vaccine is discussed as an entity, with its own will to destroy and focused on the eradication of humanity: happiness, health, and ultimately life.

The article’s writer also plays on the government’s rhetoric from the obligatory vaccination bill, entitled the “human law.”³⁵ Rather than turning to medical jargon, which often circulated in newspapers supporting the government, the opposition trafficked in affective language, capitalizing on the population’s fear of contagion, their angst, and disgust. Another excerpt from the article confirms this strategy: “Vaccination, the propagator of all sorts of filthy nuisance, the monster that pollutes the innocent and pure blood of our children with the excretion expelled by dying animals, and contaminates the system of any living being.”³⁶ The vaccine is further conflated with filth, contagion, and animalistic bodies. Contagion by the vaccine was the *great destroyer*, polluting and threatening *our children*, the future of the body politic. A clear line is drawn between *them* and *us*, those contaminating and those vulnerable to contamination. The government sanitary officials were firmly located in the former.

That October article in *Correio da Manhã*, like so many pieces published in newspapers between July and November 1904, conflated affective registers, official governmental language, and the speeches of renowned members of the opposition. During those critical months, medical professionals such as Soares Rodrigues, a very prestigious figure in the capital, protested the law, arguing it “ripped children from their mothers, and mothers from their children, to throw them in horrible hospitals.”³⁷ Politicians also entered the debate, as did Rui Barbosa, who contested the methods of application of the vaccine: “There are no names, in the category of crimes committed by those in power[,] for the recklessness, the violence, and the tyranny . . . voluntarily, obstinately, poisoning me, with the introduction in my blood of a virus . . . which is the conductor of disease and death.”³⁸ This language of fear, angst, and contagion was mobilized over and over, circulating extensively during those critical final months of 1904. The small article in *Correio da Manhã* employed specific affective registers

31. Ahmed, “Affective Economies,” 119.

32. Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*.

33. Gibbs, “Contagious Feelings,” 2. Emphasis mine.

34. *Correio da Manhã*, October 13, 1904, 1. All translations of primary sources are mine unless otherwise noted.

35. Sevcenko, *A Revolta da Vacina*, 18.

36. *Correio da Manhã*, October 13, 1904.

37. Sevcenko, *A Revolta da Vacina*, 19.

38. Sevcenko, 20.



FIGURE 4. Leônidas Freire, *A Lavagem Obrigatória*, caricature, *Correio da Manhã*, September 29, 1904, front page. Biblioteca Nacional, Rio de Janeiro. Work in public domain, image of the newspaper cover provided by Acervo da Fundação Biblioteca Nacional, Brazil.

distilled from larger rhetoric that was becoming established through the extensive circulation of texts and illustrations. Anger, fear, and disgust circulated through newspapers' hyperbole. The association of the vaccine with impurity and contamination also expanded from the physical to the moral sphere. On the front page of *Correio da Manhã*, September 29, 1904, a caricature appeared next to an article reporting the obligatory vaccination bill (fig. 4). Captioned "In 1905: Mandatory Enema" the cartoon parodied the need to strip parts of clothing for the application of the

Downloaded from http://online.oup.com/latam/article-pdf/22/4/47/4053741/ncv_2_2_047.pdf by guest on 15 July 2020

smallpox vaccine—and for the repeated surveillance predicted in sanitary regulations meant to guarantee that no one would escape vaccination—and warned of a future when the government would demand the stripping of all clothes for obligatory enema. The caricature shows two women in their traditional Rio de Janeiro Belle Époque coiffure, clenching their dresses down at their ankles, their buttocks protruding back as they look over their shoulders in horror at the men coming their way. The man at the center is out of proportion; his head sits strangely on his shoulders and stands out from his long, thin limbs. He has no neck or hip line, his larger-than-life head sticking out from behind the medical apparatus he puts forward aggressively in a peculiarly grotesque manner. His eyes are large and bulging, his curved mustache and hat frame his pointy nose and typical coiffure. It is his hat, central in the image, that marks him as one of the sanitation specialists responsible for the implementation of the government's medical policies.

Thus, the issue with obligatory vaccination was not only the fear of the effects of the vaccine but also how it invaded Carioca upper-class life. The procedure demanded that doctors enter the homes of the elite—or worse, that these individuals leave their houses to go to the vaccination clinics—in a series of events the Brazilian bourgeoisie considered morally unacceptable. The opposition banked exactly on the vaccination challenging these established social norms, as well as the public's lack of understanding of the vaccine, to instill fear and anger, whipping people into a frenzy that erupted on November 13, 1904. On this day a massive sector of the population stormed the streets in protest, and a bloody struggle ensued. It lasted several days as the government, calling on the police and later on the military, attempted to control the rebellion. Newspapers such as *Correio da Manhã* were censored and shut down, and the inability to control the population within the narrow and tortuous urban structure of Rio de Janeiro became ever more apparent.³⁹

While the opposition banked on texts, speeches, and cartoons circulating in the press to create the affective epidemic that led to the Revolta da Vacina, photography was the government's most efficient weapon for a counterattack. It enjoyed a strong position in the Brazilian imaginary of the early twentieth century as the very embodiment of modernity and European high culture. The vehicles that

39. Sevcenko, 25.

most clearly configured and consolidated the Carioca Belle Époque class hegemony were illustrated magazines and postcards.⁴⁰ Furthermore, during this time it retained its aura of realism, the reality effect of photography becoming a weapon in the fight to conquer the minds and hearts of the Brazilian population. Photography's *noeme*, as Barthes discussed it, its "that-has-been-ness," guaranteed its evidentiary properties in the minds of the early twentieth-century audience.⁴¹

The 1904 Revolta da Vacina is a fundamental example for understanding the rhetoric of contagion established in this period. The role of the popular media in the production and fracturing of consensus proved to be vital in the political and social struggles that would spread during the next decades. Malta, the official photographer of the city, did not produce a single image of the Revolta da Vacina.⁴² Perhaps because Malta understood the "eyewitness power" associated with photography, he did not make a single image of that or later popular revolts such as the one erupting in January 1909 against the electrification and transportation company *Light*, for which Malta was also the official photographer. Although Malta recorded in his nearly 80,000 photographs almost everything that took place in

40. The illustrated magazines, newspapers, and postcards that populated the Rio de Janeiro visual sphere in the early twentieth century were vital for the configuration of the elite's habitus, as well as the dissemination and circulation of Malta's images and the strengthening of their rhetoric. For more on these vehicles, see Samuel Gorberg, *A propaganda no Brasil através do cartão-postal: 1900-1950* (Rio de Janeiro: Edição do autor, 2002); J. Carlos Dalzoto, *Cartão-Postal, arte e magia* (São Paulo: Gráfica Cipola, 2006); Camila Nascimento Azevedo, "Imagens Seleccionadas: Uma coleção de postais e alguns de seus significados," *Baleia na Rede: Estudos em arte e sociedade* 9, no. 1 (2012): 337-54; Claudia Thurler Ricci, "Imagens e crônicas da arquitetura nas revistas ilustradas" *19&20* 3, no. 1 (January 2007), www.dezenovevinte.net/arte/decorativa/ad_arq_revistas.htm; Gustavo Freire Biaventura, "A narrativa de beleza em anúncios da belle époque tropical" *Contemporânea* 9, no. 2 (2011): 114-26; Cláudia Oliveira, *O moderno em revistas: representações do Rio de Janeiro de 1890 a 1930* (Rio de Janeiro: Garamond, 2010); Marialva Barbosa, *História cultural da imprensa: Brasil, 1900-2000* (Rio de Janeiro: Mauad X, 2007); Maria Cecília Zanon, "A sociedade carioca da Belle Époque nas páginas do *Fon-Fon!*" *Patrimônio e Memória* 4, no. 2 (June 2009): 217-35; Silvana Louzada, "Fotografia, modernidade e imprensa carioca: as primeiras décadas do século XX" *Anais do XIII Encontro de História Anpuh-Rio* (2008), www.encontro2008.rj.anpuh.org/resources/content/anais/1212971636_ARQUIVO_anpuh_2008-revisto.pdf; Carolina Vianna Dantas, *O Brasil café com leite: mestiçagem e identidade nacional em periódicos: Rio de Janeiro, 1903-1914* (Rio de Janeiro: Edições Casa de Rui Barbosa, 2010); and Mauad, "A inscrição na cidade."

41. Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 77.

42. For more on this silence in Malta's oeuvre, see Oliveira, "Do reflexo à mediação" and Amara Silva de Souza Rocha, "A sedução da luz: eletrificação e imaginário no Rio de Janeiro da Belle Époque," *Revista de História Regional* 2, no. 2 (1997): 51-80. For more textual references of the events of the Vaccine Revolt, see Sevcenko, *A Revolta da Vacina*.

the city of Rio de Janeiro between 1903 and 1936, these and other popular revolts are a gap in this oeuvre. The violence and bloodshed in Rio's streets, the struggle over space, survive mainly in textual portraits of the time. As one of the main contributors to the visual vocabulary of the elite and the government, Malta silenced these moments of resistance, and especially the role of the cityscape in it. Nevertheless, the photographer clearly learned from the opposition's strategies for triggering upheaval. Disgust, fear of contagion, and the anger that populated the debates of the period were triggers used in the images Malta produced in the next three decades, and the inner spaces of the city of Rio the material for the construction of his intricate rhetoric. Malta used these established ideas, as well as a new set of affective registers, including pride, awe, and hope, in the elaboration of a new rhetoric of contagion favoring the Rodrigues Alves administration and those that succeeded him, creating an image of Rio's modernity.

THE OFFICIAL PHOTOGRAPHER OF RIO

Augusto Cezar Malta de Campos was born in the city of Paulo Afonso in the state of Alagoas in 1864.⁴³ Part of a family of politicians, Malta was raised in the northeast of Brazil, moving to the capital around 1889. In Rio, he started his career as a bookkeeper, owning for a short time his own business. After the failure of this first endeavor, Malta opened a luxury goods store and sold luxury fabrics and articles to the Brazilian aristocracy and rising bourgeoisie. His passion for photography gave way to a new career, one that benefitted from the patronage of the elite he had catered to as a salesman. After being introduced to Mayor Pereira Passos, Malta became the first official photographer of the city of Rio de Janeiro starting in June 1903.

Malta's role in the government was to photograph an array of spaces in the city, from buildings marked for demolition to inaugurations and public events, as well as the opening of Avenida Central, Avenida Beira-Mar, and other iconic boulevards of the time. His carefully crafted photographic dossiers included images of streets, squares, buildings, and public spaces from several angles and in great detail. They were the primary resources in an apparatus built to justify the demolition, expropriation, and

43. Biographical information here is extracted from an interview given by Amaltea Malta Carlini, Augusto Malta's daughter, to the Museu da Imagem e do Som of Rio de Janeiro in 1980, cited in Ribeiro de Oliveira Jr, "Do reflexo à mediação."

low restitution paid to the owners of real estate, as well as the expulsion of legions of lower-class families from the center of Rio in the name of sanitation and the cleansing of the body politic. This use of photography was unprecedented in Brazil, and Rio's official documentarian played a central role in the new life of the city. Malta's images were used to convince the elites of the need to cleanse the city, both to protect their bodies against diseases and the body politic against those that would infect it. These images were also crucial for the new real estate economy rising at the center of the Brazilian capital.⁴⁴

Armed with the best equipment the government could buy, Malta used glass plates coated with a gelatin emulsion, incredibly sensitive to light, to photograph the speed of everyday life in Rio. He also had a front seat to political events such as the arrival in 1903 of US Secretary of State Elihu Root to Brazil and the inaugurations of various urban projects around the city. Malta worked for nineteen consecutive mayors of Rio between 1903 and 1936 before retiring. He also maintained, throughout these years, an independent freelance practice photographing Rio's high society and producing images for major corporations. Among his most prominent clients were multinational companies settling in Brazil such as Tramway Light and Power Company, Parc Royal, and Sul América. Malta worked mostly alone, photographing and printing all of his images for both the city and his private clients.

Aside from his dedication to photography, Malta was also an avid collector and producer of postcards, founding the Sociedade Cartófila Emanuel Herman in Rio in 1904. In 1910 he opened the Centro Fotográfico de Propaganda do Brasil, which sold his photographs and postcards. Many of these images widely circulated, because Malta was generous in sharing his work with the press; his photographs extensively illustrated newspapers and magazines, including *O Malho*, *Careta*, *Kosmos*, *Correio da Manhã*, *Jornal do Brasil*, and many others. The extensive production and circulation of Malta's postcards show how they were central to the construction of Rio's image in the first half of the twentieth century.

Photography already had, in 1904, a long and established history in Brazil. As early as 1832, Hercule Florence, a French-born painter who had arrived in Rio in 1824, had started a series of experiments, obtaining a negative nine

44. For a discussion of the rise of the real state speculative market and foreign interests in Rio de Janeiro during this period, see Rocha, "A sedução da luz" and Fischer, *Poverty of Rights*.

years later; he named his method *photographia*.⁴⁵ In 1840, Louis Compté arrived in Rio de Janeiro, bringing the daguerreotype technique to impress Emperor Pedro II and the Brazilian elite. Compté became the first Brazilian photographer and the most avid collector of photographs in the country.⁴⁶ Although both portrait and landscape photography became widespread in the capital of the Brazilian empire, the new method was employed most consistently in the nineteenth and early twentieth century for utilitarian purposes. A few exceptions are the photobooks of Victor Frond (*Brazil Pittoresco*)⁴⁷ and Marc Ferrez's extensive production.⁴⁸ Ferrez, using large format plates that more easily conformed to the established landscape painting tradition, quickly became the most renowned photographer in the country. Malta, like other established names such as Guilherme Gaensly and Militão Augusto de Azevedo, worked for the elite (in portrait studios such as de Azevedo's), institutions (Rio de Janeiro's mayor's office), and multinational corporations such as the Tramway Light and Power Company.

Central to understanding the history of photography in Brazil and Malta's work is its long association with

45. Florence settled in the hinterland region of Villa S. Carlos (today Campinas in the Brazilian state of São Paulo). Through a series of exchanges with botanist and druggist Joaquim Correa de Mello, he quickly learned the properties of silver nitrate and other light-sensitive substances such as submuriate of mercury, prussic acid, phosphorus, silver chloride, and silver bromide. Florence then designed a camera obscura that he used with different sensitized surfaces, including paper, wood, and textiles, thus obtaining a negative. He named his method *photographia*. Florence would also begin experimenting with printing processes in 1830, which resulted in his stencil method of printing called *polygraphie*. Florence's scientific isolation resulted in his achievements in the field of photography not receiving due recognition and being quickly supplanted in the history of Brazilian photography by the arrival of Daguerre's method some years later. For more on Hercules Florence and his contribution to photography, see Boris Kossov, *The Pioneering Photographic Work of Hercule Florence* (London: Routledge, 2017).

46. For more on the history of photography in Brazil, see Annateresa Fabris and Solange Ferraz de Lima, *Fotografia: usos e funções no século XIX* (São Paulo: Editora da Universidade de São Paulo, 2008); Gilberto Ferrez and Stella de Sá Rego, *Photography in Brazil: 1840-1900* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1990); Gilberto Ferrez and Weston J. Naef, *Pioneer Photographers of Brazil: 1840-1920* (New York: Center for Inter-American Relations, 1976); and Luciana Martins, *Photography and the Making of Modern Brazil* (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 2013).

47. Victor Frond's *Brazil Pittoresco* is an important example of the construction of an opposition between modernity and backwardness in the photographic production of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Brazil. This is highlighted in Lygia Segala and Paulo Garcher's study "Prescriptive Observation and Illustration of Brazil: Victor Frond's Photographic Project (1857-61)," *Portuguese Studies* 23, no. 1 (2007): 55-70.

48. For more on Marc Ferrez, see Pedro Vasquez and Robert Myers, "Marc Ferrez: A Master of Brazilian Photography," *The Journal of Decorative and Propaganda Arts*, no. 21, Brazil-themed issue (1995): 26-41.

tropicality and its embedded racial discourses. *Tropicality*, Nancy Stepan tells us, can be defined as the imagined presentation of the tropics in modern geography.⁴⁹ In the first century of colonization, this notion had negative contours meant to transform the tropics into the Other of Europe and justify violence and exploitation. As Livia Rezende has noted, representations of Brazil as tropical often have "exaggerated differences between tropical and temperate climates and vegetations (not to mention the further differentiation of peoples and races)."⁵⁰ Thus, the notion of tropicality has always had a racial connotation that folded into the discourse of the "primeval, purer, abundant, sinister, untamed, sublime, and untouched" that often characterized it.⁵¹ Nevertheless, just like other colonial myths, it was reappropriated after independence and inverted. During the Rodrigues Alves administration, tropicality was reinscribed into the image of the city of Rio as the vision of the "cured" and healthy landscape that recalled the terrestrial Eden.⁵²

THE CORTIÇO AND THE BUILDING OF MALTA'S AFFECTIVE RHETORIC OF CONTAGION

Estalagem localizada na Rua do Senado of 1906 (fig. 5) by Malta shows the beginnings of the articulation of his rhetoric as the official photographer of the city. It is an image of a small and overcrowded dwelling on Rio de Janeiro's Senado Street, shot using a high viewpoint. Composition and tonal contrast are central to the rhetoric of contagion serving the legitimation of the violent process of displacement that had been established earlier, in 1904. Here, Malta cuts the sky entirely out of the frame, the focus resting on the crowded courtyard of an old housing complex in the center of the city. Buildings line the construction on every side, blocking all signs of the sky or the horizon. The ground is also nearly completely obscured by sheets that hang on clotheslines

49. Influenced by David Arnold, Nancy Stepan's discussion of tropicality in *Picturing Tropical Nature* (London: Reaktion, 2001) explores this "imaginative construction."

50. Livia Rezende, "Manufacturing the Raw in Design Pageantries: The Commodification and Gendering of Brazilian Tropical Nature at the 1897 *Exposition Universelle*," *Journal of Design History* 30, no. 2 (March 2017): 132.

51. Rezende, "Manufacturing the Raw," 132.

52. Stepan argues that tropicality's negative contours that were meant to transform the tropics into the Other of Europe and justify violence and exploitation, just like other myths, required "periodic reinvestment in times of change and challenge." Stepan, *Picturing Tropical Nature*, 19. For other studies exploring the notion of tropicality in Brazil, see Cribelli, *Industrial Forests*; Katherine Manthorne, *Tropical Renaissance: North American Artists Exploring Latin America, 1839-1879* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian, 1989); Le Blanc, "Building the Tropical World."



FIGURE 5. Augusto Malta, *Estalagem localizada na Rua do Senado*, 1906, gelatin photograph, 6 $\frac{7}{8}$ × 9 $\frac{1}{8}$ in. (17.5 × 23.3 cm). Museu da Imagem e do Som, Rio de Janeiro. Photograph in public domain, image provided by Fundação Museu da Imagem e do Som do Estado do Rio de Janeiro.

across the courtyard. Malta places the children who supposedly live in this *cortiço* (slum tenement) at the bottom of the image. By cutting some of them out and showing them corralled between the bottom of the image and the row of sheets hanging from the clothesline above, he emphasizes the cramped space of the housing complex and the poor living conditions. This sequestered space evokes confinement, and the absent sky highlights the lack of space and the staleness of the atmosphere. The sheets hanging from every line reinforce the notion of an overly crowded, filthy, and claustrophobic space. The triangular composition privileges the ground. The overhead shot results in a pit-like space containing the *cortiço*'s children; much like animals, they are surrounded from all sides by the old building structure.

Malta's compositional strategy in *Estalagem localizada na Rua do Senado* emphasized the lack of air and the overcrowded nature of the dwelling, while repeating the notions of filthy, diseased, and contagious bodies denounced in the texts and illustrations circulating during the Revolta da Vacina of 1904. Alternatively, Malta inverted the logic established a few years earlier by locating the disease not in the vaccine, but the run-down lower-class dwellings and

bodies of its inhabitants. The black children trapped at the bottom of the photograph reinforce this racist narrative, reminding us of Lallemand's assertion that the epidemics were the deadliest for white bodies, sparing those of African descent.⁵³

In another example from 1906, *Interior de um Cortiço* (fig. 6), Malta privileged, as in the *Estalagem* photo, a viewpoint that intensified the sense of claustrophobia through the absence of the sky. *Interior de um Cortiço* pictures a narrow corridor that stretches in front of the camera, the concrete ground stained and cracking. It bathes under the intense Rio de Janeiro sun, and one can almost feel the heat that emanates from below. The precarious building in the background overtakes the composition. On the left, a clothesline crowded with sheets carries our eyes diagonally to the center of the image. It calls attention to the dingy and moldy wall running to the left and the wooden log that holds the front part of the second-floor veranda. Next to the improvised wooden beam, a thin man holds a piece of

53. Benchimol, *Pereira Passos*, 114.



FIGURE 6. Augusto Malta, *Interior de um Cortiço*, 1906, gelatin photograph, 6 $\frac{7}{8}$ × 9 $\frac{1}{8}$ in. (17.5 cm × 23.3 cm). Museu da Imagem e do Som, Rio de Janeiro. Photograph in public domain, image provided by Fundação Museu da Imagem e do Som do Estado do Rio de Janeiro.

paper (possibly a newspaper). As he attempts to read it, his right arm rises to touch his neck. He stands opposite the small child in the middle ground. She is barefoot, holding her hands in front of her, looking back toward the house, with her back to the camera.

As in *Estalagem localizada na Rua do Senado* and the later *Morro do Castello*, children play a vital role in the narrative constructed by *Interior de um Cortiço*. Children were undeniably crucial components of the discourse of the period, exemplified in the article of *Correio da Manhã* and Soares Rodrigues's condemnation of obligatory vaccination, which *ripped children from their mothers, and mothers from their children, to throw them in horrible hospitals*. Children were, within this broader debate, central nodes of affectivity, as they represented the future of the people, both as healthy and diseased subjects. Unsurprisingly, not all children were equal within this discourse. While they were all bodies threatened by the environment and the “dangerous components” who could infect them

with diseases, the predominantly mulatto children living in the *cortiços* and other poor regions of the city were also future transmitters of contagion. The children in *Interior de um Cortiço*, whether curiously looking from the veranda, crowded in the background of the image, or turning their backs to the camera, enunciated the continuation of the threat to the body politic. They were the menace to the white children of the Carioca elite, who were the real subjects of Soares Rodrigues and other hygienists' concern, manifested in newspapers and political speeches of the period.

The increasingly dark background in *Interior de um Cortiço* makes it hard to know how many people stand in this space; they meld into the building, making the play of light and shadow on the different levels of the image even starker. There is a rhythm dictated by the white rectangular cloths and thin cardboard walls that repeat and carry our eyes throughout the structure. This rhythm guides us through the damaged surface of the building, passing the unstable load-bearing elements

to center on the bodies in the darkness. Women and children stare back at us from the background; they pull our gaze farther toward an opening in the construction and the *cortiço* extending beyond, an endless maze of contagious elements. On the bottom right of the image is Malta's inscription, one of his common practices. It tells us this is the back of a group of buildings that run from numbers 17 to 44 Senate Street, a central area bound for demolition to open the way for the Avenida Central, the epitome of the government's reforms.

The adults in *Interior de um Cortiço* do not wear fashionable Belle Époque garb like the bourgeoisie that Malta often photographed in his studio and government events. There are no hats, no elaborate dresses. They are static bodies holding their hands in front in apprehensive gestures; the children in the upstairs veranda stare curiously but maintain their aligned position; the man in the middle ground attempts to conduct his daily business, possibly at Malta's request, but is rigid in his stance. These families are most likely descendants of enslaved peoples or poor immigrants, the bare feet of the children and their simple clothing pushing this association. Again, as in *Estalagem localizada na Rua do Senado*, in *Interior de um Cortiço*'s triangular composition, the lines converge on the *cortiço*, no horizon at the escape point and no sky or bay referring to the healthy Rio.

The low angle from which Malta shot the destitute dwelling in *Interior de um Cortiço*, removing any sense of the landscape—sky or vegetation—served to exploit the anxiety over these constructions that were a stone's toss from the *sobrados* of the Rio de Janeiro elite. Disgust, fear of contagion, and claustrophobia are emotions that attach and circulate through these images. The low ceilings implied stale air and the concentration of miasmas, which was the central reason for the spread of disease and the contamination of healthy bodies, according to hygienists' narratives. Thus, the Rio de Janeiro elite found in Malta's images of the *cortiços* the materialization of their anxieties about *dangerous components of the social body* living in unhealthy conditions, breathing stale and contaminated air in small, hot, and humid environments, threatening the body politic. It was those of African descent that this narrative framed as especially dangerous, because they were—according to racist discourses already established at the time—able to survive the disease and become carriers of contagion. Afro-Brazilians were the hosts and spreaders of disease, the focus of contagion, according to the medical theories used to justify the government policies, and obligatory vaccination was the avowed cure for this epidemic.

The lack of the expansive sky served in Malta's images to consolidate the discourse of the "wrongness" of these spaces and the bodies that inhabited them: evoking fear at the possibility of contagion and disgust at the diseased bodies. This slipping of affective registers—the object of disgust—from the vaccine to the living space and body of the poor Afro-Brazilian population configured the response of the Rodrigues Alves government to the oppositional ideas that had triggered the Revolta da Vacina a few years earlier. This new adherence between affects and bodies created a new coherence, and photography, rather than texts and illustrations, became the central node of the circulation of these affects. As with the article in *Correio da Manhã* of 1904, adherence and coherence were articulated in Malta's photographs through difference.⁵⁴ While the clean, smooth, and beautiful skin of the man corrupted by the vaccine was central to the 1904 rhetoric, in the photographs of Malta of 1906, the diseased spaces of the city and the contagious bodies inhabiting them threatened the "cure" of the city. The answer proposed by the government was modernization through urban and sanitary reforms, which in turn were the justification for the violence enacted against the lower-class population that lived in the center of Rio.

The affects mobilized by these rhetorics of contagion and fear are what Brian Massumi describes as qualified affects—or emotions in Ahmed's terms—rather than intensities.⁵⁵ There is a significant difference between qualified affects and intensities, but both circulate through nodes in chains of affectivity. While qualified affects can at times work through differentiation within semantic and semiotic

54. Ahmed, "Affective Economies," 119.

55. There are many critiques of Massumi's discussion of affects and their structure. Among the most prominent are Ruth Leys, "The Turn to Affect: A Critique," *Critical Inquiry* 37, no. 3 (Spring 2011): 434–72; William E. Connolly, "I. The Complexity of Intention," *Critical Inquiry* 37, no. 4 (Summer 2011): 791–98; Ruth Leys, "II, Affect and Intention: A Reply to William E. Connolly," *Critical Inquiry* 37, no. 4 (Summer 2011): 799–805; and Todd Cronan, "The Aesthetic Politics of Affect," *Radical Philosophy* 172 (March/April 2012): 51–53. The premise of my analysis is that Massumi and Ahmed's traditions find common ground when we take under consideration the differentiation between qualified (emotions) and unqualified affects. Both scholars see this differentiation as part of a system of affect that is a multilayered process and includes moments of qualification (or literalization) that do not escape the known elements that structure cognition. Nevertheless, they also both recognize that affects also circulate as unqualified intensities, and these "signs in excess" of traditional systems of signification also impact the coherence, adherence, and the movement and attachment of bodies to their environment. See Brian Massumi, *Parables of the Virtual* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002) and Ahmed, *Cultural Politics of Emotion*.

systems, intensities continually slip through the molds of these structures. Intensities are not stable but in constant flux and, most importantly, in excess of the images and texts through which they circulate. Massumi defines these intensities as “a system that is not organized through difference, one that is not semantically or semiotically ordered. . . .”⁵⁶ Intensities, he argues, are registered and remembered by the body but are not stable signs. This flux prevents the signified from being attached to a single signifier. Ahmed is more critical of this structure and argues in *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* that “the distinction between sensation and emotion can only be analytic, and as such, is premised on the reification of a concept.” Nevertheless, she concedes that this distinction “allows us to associate the experience of having an emotion with the very effect of one surface upon another, an affect that leaves its mark or trace,” despite its lack of stability.⁵⁷ Qualified affects or emotions are those impulses that have been literalized, thus becoming signs. The affects—disgust, angst, and fear—that I have traced through Malta’s images are all qualified affects/emotions.

It is important to note, however, that the process of literalization happens through a sort of colonization, because affective signs do not circulate alone, but inhabit other signs, circulating through them and gaining affective value as they move. Ahmed argues that “it is this lack of residence that allows [emotions] to slide across signs and between bodies. This sliding becomes stuck only temporarily, in the very attachment of the sign to a body, an attachment that is taken on by the body.”⁵⁸ When arrested and literalized, emotions become associated with the body they temporarily inhabit, but while they slide, these intensities are more amorphous. As affects fluctuate, they carry traces of the previous semantic and semiotic systems they inhabited, creating new associative chains that lend affective signs the potential to be vast reservoirs for discourse. Gibbs’ discussion of the circulation of affect—what is *smuggled along*—relates directly to this question of excess:⁵⁹ that which is *smuggled along* as intensities become literalized and recognizable as emotions even though they are in excess of these emotions. Within this slippage, adherence and coherence are strengthened by the vast chains of signification

that are *smuggled along* the moment an affect is arrested.⁶⁰ Consequently, it is vital to point out how affects can become communicable and usable insofar as they are arrested and given meaning within a system of affect: when they become qualified affects. It is in their form as qualified affects that they can most contribute to cultural theory. Nevertheless, it remains the fact that intensities, always in excess of the qualified affect, contribute by providing an amorphous quality that prevents rigidity, giving affective systems the possibility to become infinite and malleable reservoirs of signification.

Malta’s photographs are cases in point. The flexibility of the affects that circulate through them, and their position as nodes within larger affective systems, allow the elaboration of the nuanced and complex rhetoric of contagion that communicated clearly in the early twentieth century and has continued to change in the following decades. Malta banked on affects already consolidated as larger reservoirs for diverse discourses such as eugenics, social medicine, tropicality, modernity, and backwardness to consolidate rhetoric that played a vital role in the changes to Rio’s urban fabric during this time. Nevertheless, the building of this rhetoric of contagion grounded in Rio’s lower classes as the locus of Brazil’s “disease” and its backwardness could only exist in opposition to the image of a modern and healthy city. Malta’s photographs that I will discuss next are examples of the other collection of images the photographer produced in the first decade of the twentieth century and the interplay between backwardness and modernity he looked to establish.

AVENIDA CENTRAL AND THE NEW RIO

Malta’s images of the “cleansed” Rio de Janeiro of the early twentieth century, such as *Avenida Central* of 1906 (fig. 7), provide a counterpoint to his images of the cortiços and impoverished areas of the city. *Avenida Central* shows an idealized image of Rio—and Brazil—marching toward modernization: the cure for the diseased city. In this photograph, Malta evokes cityscapes of Belle Époque Europe that were the models for Pereira Passos’s reforms to Rio de Janeiro.⁶¹ He elevates the newly constructed Avenida

56. Massumi, “Autonomy of Affect,” 85–87.

57. Ahmed, *Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 6.

58. Ahmed, *Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 64.

59. Gibbs, “Contagious Feelings.”

60. In turn, this discussion cannot but evoke Barthes’ *punctum*, understood as in excess of the message transmitted by an image and manifested in Malta’s photography. Barthes, *Camera Lucida*.

61. For thorough discussions of the project for the Avenida Central along with its political and social circumstances, see Benchimol, *Pereira Passos* and Jeffrey Needell’s work on what he terms the tropical Belle Époque.



FIGURE 7. Augusto Malta, *Avenida Central, atual Rio Branco – um ano após a inauguração da instalação de iluminação incandescente*, 1906, gelatin photograph, 6⅞ × 9⅞ in. (17.5 × 23.3 cm). Instituto Moreira Salles, Rio de Janeiro. Photograph in public domain, credit Augusto Malta/ Coleção Brascan Cem Anos no Brasil/Acervo Instituto Moreira Salles.

Central (soon to be named Avenida Rio Branco) to the role of the heart of Brazil—both symbolically and structurally. The center of the triangular composition, flanked on both sides by rows of buildings and an advancing line of art nouveau electric lamps, is a stark white receding space, expanding toward the upper register. A carefully orchestrated composition, the single-point perspective with its lines—buildings, sky, street, sidewalks, and lamps—converging perfectly to the horizon marks the central focus of the image. While in Malta’s *Estalagem* photograph the escape point of the triangular composition goes nowhere, in *Avenida Central*, the building’s ridged roofs and decorative pointed towers, the wrought-iron lamps and balconies, and the people walking along the street create a multitude of vertical lines that cut across the pyramidal forces of the image running to its center. The composition exacerbates this repetition and cadence. The darker shade of the buildings and lamps contrast with the clean light grey of the street and the stark white of the expansive sky that occupies over half of the composition. The two triangles—street and sky—meet at the central vanishing point in the horizon, where everything in the image converges.

The Avenida Central was the *tour de force* of Pereira Passos’s Haussmannization of Rio de Janeiro. Inaugurated in 1904, the boulevard was 33 meters wide and 1800 meters long and connected the port (now Praça Mauá) to the neighborhood of Glória. It became a crucial circulation artery of the city and its primary business and leisure hub. The construction demanded the expropriation and razing of over six hundred properties. An open competition juried by Mayor Pereira Passos and Engineer Paulo de Frontin adjudicated on the design of the new buildings. The eclectic style preferred by the academy dominated the entries and the chosen designs. Aside from governmental buildings, the boulevard housed newspapers, elite clubs, hotels, large stores, and the headquarters of multinational companies. Among the most important buildings constructed at the time were the National Theater, the Naval Club, the National Library, and the National Museum of Fine Arts, which remain part of Rio’s urban fabric today.

The eclectic style of the buildings and the art nouveau wrought-iron design of the public lamps are the main features of Malta’s *Avenida Central*, in a composition that emphasizes the symmetry and orderliness of the space while



FIGURE 8. Marc Ferrez, *Avenida Central*, c. 1906, gelatin photograph, 4 × 5 $\frac{7}{8}$ in. (10 × 15 cm). Instituto Moreira Salles, Rio de Janeiro. Photograph in public domain, credit Marc Ferrez/Coleção Gilberto Ferrez/Acervo Instituto Moreira Salles.

lending the boulevard a symbolic cachet by calling on associations with Haussmann's Paris.⁶² In the foreground of the photograph, two women in light-colored dresses walk down the street flanked by two men in dark frocks. They are the material manifestation of the movement proposed by the composition, as they march toward the central point in the horizon, just like every other running line in the scene. With their upright positions, these four individuals also echo the vertical lines repeated throughout the composition. The men's hats formally relate to the top of the rooftop ornaments, and the interlaced arms of the two women mimic the top of the arc lamps. From these central figures, our eyes are carried forward to all the others in the image as they walk toward the horizon, backs to the camera, heads facing forward.

Malta's *Avenida Central* in many ways is related to his *Vista do Corcovado* in its ode to orderliness, control, and Rio's newfound modernity. Nevertheless, in this photograph the upper-class Carioca couples framed by the composition face a white emptiness, a future that has no precise shape or form. This shapelessness makes this photograph extremely

62. Needell, "Rio de Janeiro at the Turn," 85.

ambiguous, destabilizing the traditional narratives of Rio's idyllic image and the future afforded by the orderliness of modernity. The white opening in the image represents the intensities flowing through the composition; it shapes the narrative escaping the arrest proposed by the qualified affects of awe and wonderment that the scene is meant to convey.

Ferrez's *Avenida Central* (fig. 8), which just like Malta's photograph circulated extensively on postcards during the first decade of the twentieth century, most clearly manifests the traditional representation of Brazilian futurity during this time.⁶³ Ferrez's image is shot from a birds-eye viewpoint

63. While Malta was actively engaged in establishing the rhetoric of the diseased Rio cityscape, Ferrez was taxed with exalting its new cleansed landscape. Already in 1906, Ferrez was a renowned photographer, hired by the *Comissão Construtora da Avenida Central* to register the changes brought forth by the opening of the boulevard, in order to create a luxurious album at the end of the project. Ferrez photographed the modern and clean façades of the new buildings, the electric posts being installed, as well as the large and airy public space of the avenue associated with the clean and expansive Guanabara Bay that often appeared in the background of his images. See Mauad, "A inscrição na cidade"; Entler and Oliveira Jr, "Augusto Malta e Marc Ferrez"; and Marc Ferrez, *O álbum da Avenida Central: um documento fotográfico da construção da Avenida Rio Branco, Rio de Janeiro, 1903-1906* (Rio de Janeiro: João Fortes Engenharia; São Paulo: Ex-Libris, 1983).

atop a roof in the middle of the avenue. The street cuts diagonally through the center of the composition, and the buildings flank it on each side. Unlike Malta's lower and central vantage point, this composition presents the diversity of the buildings' design, showcases the extension of the boulevard, and, most importantly, frames the monument toward which the avenue converges: the bay, the ultimate symbol of the city of Rio. The organization of space in Belle Époque Paris included not only the opening of broad boulevards but the framing of symbolic monuments. In Haussmann's Paris, at the vanishing point of every boulevard was a monument: a straightforward, impressive symbol of French cultural dominance. They were the focus of the web of ordered avenues of Paris's urban composition. Ferrez takes a cue from this already established visual vocabulary, adapting it to Rio de Janeiro's most iconic symbol: the Guanabara Bay.

It is at this point that the representational language of Ferrez's *Avenida Central* and Malta's diverge, and the latter photograph exceeds the discourse it was meant to support. Malta also pulled from Parisian models, but Brazil did not have such monuments to call upon, and its most iconic vista was its natural landscape. While Ferrez framed the Guanabara Bay, dominated its natural wilderness through the isolationist power of the camera, in Malta's image, this was not enough. The mastery over nature, over the chaos and the wilderness that consumed Rio de Janeiro, had to be total. Malta's photograph framed a more amorphous future, encompassing all of the ideals of *brasilidade* and modernity in one great picture of enlightenment. It was an ideal of futurity that the Guanabara Bay, as an idyllic symbol of Brazil, could not represent, so it too had to be cleansed by the powerful light of the expansive sky. The bay is powerfully absent in Malta's *Avenida Central*, and the rhetorics of awe and contagion it feeds remain open-ended and in flux, the future simultaneously qualified (as modernity) and unqualified (as pure light). Light and the sky—metonyms for health that were excluded from Malta's *Interior de um Cortiço* and *Estalagem localizada na Rua do Senado*—overwhelm the composition of *Avenida Central*; the sky, grounded in Lamarckian eugenics and theories of miasma, evoked airiness, safety, and comfort. It stood as the ultimate symbol of the healthy Rio, pulling from the already consolidated connections established between Rio's bay and the myth of the terrestrial Eden, but Malta's *Avenida Central* also denies this Edenic motif and locates Rio's modernity beyond its natural landscape.

There were other challenges to Malta's narrative of Brazilian futurity. Beyond the images, the intensities circulating through Malta's photographs increasingly exposed the violence of this rhetoric: the precarious living conditions of the lower-class population of Rio and their vulnerability to diseases revealed years of government neglect. To counter this affective and semiotic challenge, Malta inscribed most of his photographs, attempting to ground the meaning of the images. In curbing their excess, the textual additions were meant to ground their roles in support of the ongoing biopolitics of the time. These inscriptions, as Mauad points out, were more than informational passages, part of a dialog established between the photographer and his employer and friend, Pereira Passos.⁶⁴ This dialog speaks to Malta's dedication and the mobilization of his photography to the rhetoric of contagion supporting government policies. For Malta, as for Pereira Passos, Rodrigues Alves, Frontin, Cruz, and others, the narrative established by the photographer's images was clear. The textual and verbal rhetoric of these specialists was largely supplemental within the media war, because the images alone already contained a broad spectrum of affective registers and incited strong emotions in the Carioca elite. Malta consolidated this rhetoric when his inscriptions asserted the necessity of modernization and reform. These small texts inserted directly upon the image were an added layer of textuality to his elaborate semiotic and affective messages. In images such as *Interior de um Cortiço* and *Estalagem localizada na Rua do Senado*, Malta's inscriptions indexed these spaces of the city while advocating for their erasure.

In *Avenida Central*, however, Malta's inscriptions guide the narrative, framing key elements and conducting the eye through the image. Here, Malta inscribed his handwriting next to the lamp post on the bottom left corner of the photograph. This gas lamp symbolized the Rio of the past, while the symbol of the future stood at the center of the avenue and of Malta's composition: the newly installed electric lamps. As Sophie Beal tells us, "streetlight became a synecdoche of the modernization effort"⁶⁵ in Pereira Passos's Rio de Janeiro, and the play of dark and light in Malta's repertoire responded to this context. The expansive white sky that overwhelms Malta's *Avenida Central* takes a cue from the lamps, and the inscription shows us

64. Mauad, "A inscrição na cidade," 392.

65. Sophia Beal, "The Substance of Light: Literature and Public Space in Belle Époque Rio de Janeiro (1894–1914)," *Luso-Brazilian Review* 49, no. 2 (2012): 7.



FIGURE 9. Augusto Malta, *Vista aérea do Rio de Janeiro, da Praça Mauá para a zona sul, tendo ao fundo o Pão de Açúcar*, c. 1929, gelatin photograph, 6 $\frac{7}{8}$ × 9 $\frac{1}{8}$ in. (17.5 × 23.3 cm). Instituto Moreira Salles, Rio de Janeiro. Photograph in public domain, credit Augusto Malta/Coleção Brascan Cem Anos no Brasil/Acervo Instituto Moreira Salles.

the way to interpret this image. The 1.1-mile-long Avenida Central, with its 174 arc lamps, was the embodiment of Brazilian “enlightenment”; its French aesthetic and nod to new technologies were everything the Brazilian elite understood as modern during this time. The electric lamps illuminating the boulevard overlaid the demolished *cortiços* and symbolized the domination of progress over the stale, suffocating darkness and the “undesirable” bodies that had inhabited it. The Avenida Central had opened a new path, a light and airy way at the heart of the city of Rio: Brazil’s path to modernity. Malta photographed this central boulevard extensively throughout his career. The circa 1929 image from the archive of Instituto Moreira Salles (fig. 9), one of later examples of Malta’s depiction of the Avenida Central (by then already renamed Avenida Rio Branco), shows how it cuts across the center of Rio, a sanitary artery allowing air to flow from the new port to the Santa Luzia beach. It was also a stream of light stretching across the center of the colonial city. Electrification and the elaborate design of the

streetlamps installed in 1905 were the most recognizable feature of the Avenida Central and, together with the eclectic architecture of the buildings that lined it, announced the vision of the republican government for Brazil’s future.

Just like the Guanabara Bay and the bright sky of Rio, electricity became associated with health and safety. Beal points out that “doctors of the time thought that electricity ‘provided nourishment for depleted nerves’. . . . Electricity was viewed ‘as a sort of vitamin’ that was ‘a means of restoring exhausted energies.’”⁶⁶ Electricity was an essential part of the discourse of modernization and cleansing of Rio’s urban space at the beginning of the twentieth century. It was both a discourse Malta mobilized—like the medical discourses and earlier ideas of contagion in his work—and a tool the government used to control the lower-income population living in the center and the outskirts of the city.

66. Beal, “Substance of Light,” 19.

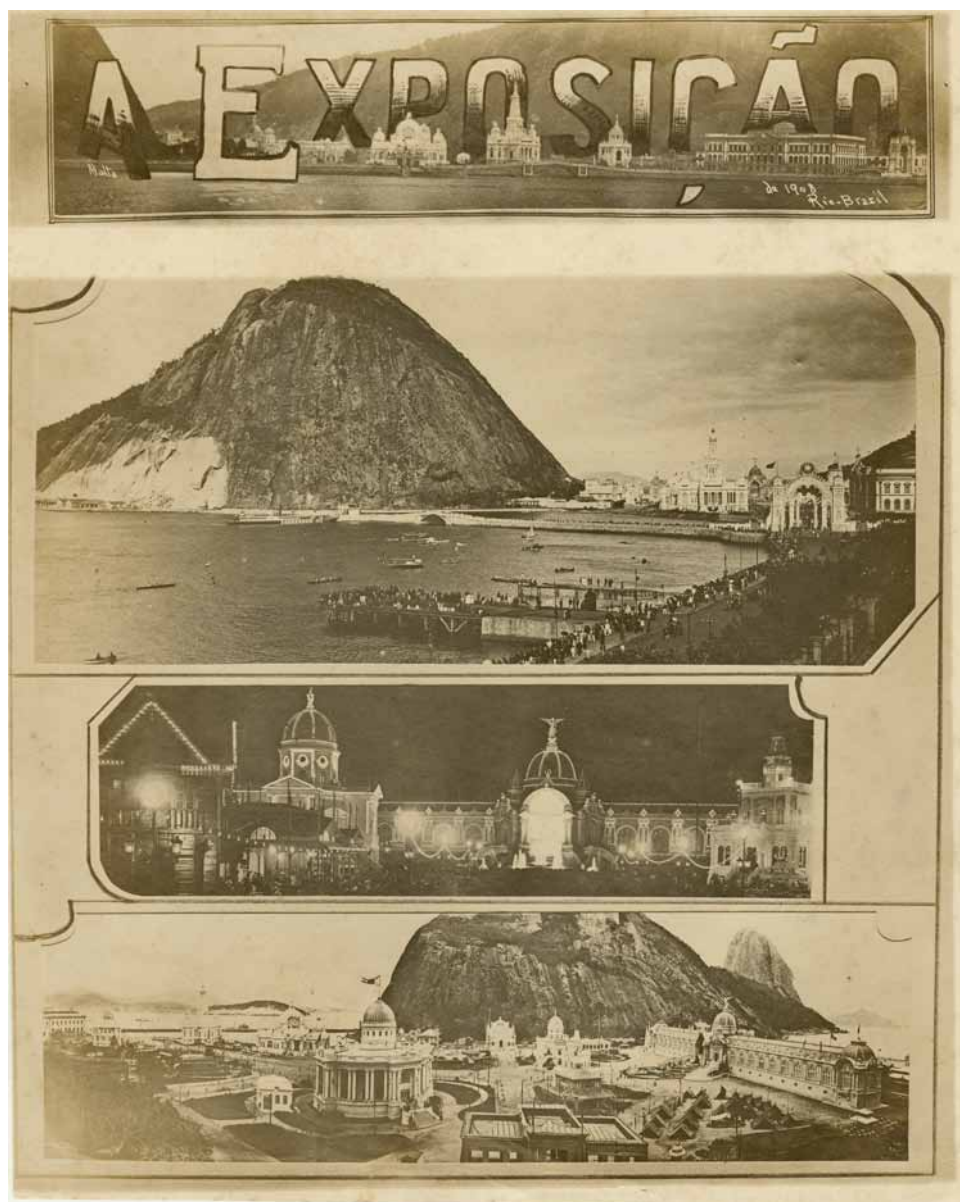


FIGURE 10. Augusto Malta, *Exposição Nacional de 1908*, 1908, postcard, 4 × 5 $\frac{7}{8}$ in. (10 × 15 cm). Museu da República, Rio de Janeiro. Work in public domain, image provided by Museu da República, Instituto Brasileiro de Museus, Ministério da Cidadania.

During the early twentieth century in Rio de Janeiro, “as breaking public lights became a symbol of civic fury, replacing them became a symbol of state stability. . . . A streetlight at the time was a beacon of the positivist motto ‘Ordem e Progresso’ [order and progress], which has waved on the national flag since the proclamation of the Republic in 1889.”⁶⁷ During the *Revolta da Vacina* of 1904, for example, 106 gas lamps were destroyed in Copacabana by protesters, which left the region of Botafogo and several areas of the

city center entirely in the dark. As soon as the rebellion was under control, the first measure of the Rodrigues Alves administration was to repair the streetlamps that had been destroyed and install temporary electric lighting in the poor neighborhoods of Saúde and Gamboa, which had been central hubs of the revolt.⁶⁸

Malta was cognizant of these associations and made electrification a recurrent feature of his photographs. His

67. Beal, 14.

68. Needell, “*Revolta Contra Vacina*,” 252; also discussed in Beal, “*Substance of Light*,” 13–14.

images of the electrification of Rio became so symbolic that the Tramway Light and Power Company, the company holding the monopoly for electrification, hired him to be their official photographer. Malta worked for Grupo Light from 1905 to 1930, work that complemented rather than challenged his position as the official photographer of Rio de Janeiro.⁶⁹ His photographs of the 1908 Exposição Nacional (National Exhibition), which were assembled in a postcard (fig. 10) for the occasion, showcase the mobilization of electricity in the discourse of Rio's modernization, the "enlightenment" brought to the darkness of the Brazilian capital.

The 1908 Exposição Nacional celebrated the centenary of the opening of Brazilian ports to ally ships, a significant step toward independence. It showcased to the Brazilian elite and international tourists the sanitation measures in the reconfigured city and featured magnificent illumination of the structures built for the event. Brazilian writers raved about the accomplishments of the last several years, capped by the success of the national exhibition. Olavo Bilac, for example, celebrated the "regenerative picks" that had cured the "filthy, retrograde, colonial city, stuck in its old traditions."⁷⁰ Malta photographed the exhibition extensively, his images made into postcards that traveled widely. These images featured the symbols of Rio de Janeiro's regeneration and health: the expansive bay, the new open and clean urban areas, and the extensive electric lighting of buildings and the streets. As the four photographs of Malta that compose a postcard from Rio's Museu da República show (fig. 10), Malta refined his narrative by grounding it further in specific monuments. Favoring the aerial view in composing the scenes, Malta brings together Rio's natural and manmade wonders. The sky hangs above the amply illuminated buildings standing next to Rio's rainforest. The clear water of the Bay, the clear night skies, and the pristine new buildings stand together as marks of Rio's resurgence from chaos and darkness.⁷¹

69. For more on Grupo Light and its relationship with the governments of Rodrigues Alves and later presidents of Brazil, see Silva de Souza Rocha, "A sedução da luz."

70. Olavo Bilac, quoted in Beal, "Substance of Light," 9. Translation mine.

71. I use the example of the photographs of the 1908 Exposição Nacional here to help showcase the opposition constructed in Malta's oeuvre between modernity and backwardness. But I am unable to give the exhibition of 1908 itself the deeper analysis it deserves in this article. The 1908 Exposição Nacional was in the model of other international exhibitions that happened all over the world, especially at the end of the nineteenth and early

Consequently, Malta's photographs cannot be fully grasped without speaking to the broader cultural field of production, which encompassed them and its ambiguity. These images can only be meaningful when considered together with other nodes in the field of production, such as Ferrez's images of the Avenida Central, and the images of the *cortiços* constructed textually in literature and the popular media of the time.⁷² Most importantly, Malta's photographs continually exceeded their intended narrative, and analysis of his oeuvre benefits from comparisons that

twentieth centuries. Among the pavilions constructed for the 1908 event in Rio de Janeiro one could find examples of the country's flora and fauna, primary export goods such as coffee, and the recently installed urban electrification system. The bibliography on international exhibitions is extensive; for important examples, see Paul Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas: A History of the Expositions Universelles, Great Exhibitions and World's Fairs, 1851-1939* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1988); Werner Plum, *World Exhibitions in the Nineteenth Century: Pageants of Social and Cultural Change* (Bonn-Bad Godesburg: Friedrich-Ebert Stiftung, 1977); Alexander C. T. Geppert, *Fleeting Cities: Imperial Expositions in Fin-de-Siècle Europe* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); and Robert W. Rydell and Nancy E. Gwinn, eds., *Fair Representations: World's Fairs and the Modern World* (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 1994). Similarly, in the last twenty years the study of the Brazilian presence in international exhibitions has risen substantially. Key examples include Noah C. Elkin, "Displaying Brazil: National Expositions and the Forging of a 'Modern' Nation, 1861-1922," *MACLAS Latin American Essays* (March 1996): 19; Livia Rezende, "Of Coffee, Nature and Exclusion: Designing Brazilian National Identity at International Exhibitions, 1867 & 1904," in *Designing Worlds: National Design Histories in the Age of Globalization*, ed. Grace Lees-Maffei and Kjetil Fallan (Oxford, UK: Berghahn Books, 2016); Rezende, "Manufacturing the Raw"; Lília M. Schwarcz, "Os trópicos como espetáculo: a participação brasileira nas exposições universais de finais do século XIX," in *Galerías del Progreso: Museos, Exposiciones y Cultura Visual en América Latina*, ed. Jens Andermann and S. B. Gonzalez (Rosario, Argentina: Beatriz Viterbo, 2006), 195-220.

72. The role of literature and journalism in the construction of Rio's rhetoric of contagion and the discourse surrounding Rio's blackness cannot be overestimated. From Olavo Bilac to João do Rio, and from José de Alencar to Aluísio de Azevedo, these writers participated in building the imaginary of the era in diverse ways, at times igniting revolts and in others echoing elite sentiments. Although closely related to the theme of my study, these literary figures and how their work dialoged with Malta's photographs are beyond the scope of the present article. For more on the subject, see David Brookshaw, *Race and Color in Brazilian Literature* (London: Scarecrow Press, 1986); Afrânio Coutinho, *An Introduction to Literature in Brazil* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969); David T. Haberly, *Three Sad Races: Racial Identity and National Consciousness in Brazilian Literature* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1983); Patricia Acerbi, "'A Long Poem of Walking': Flâneurs, Vendors, and Chronicles of Post-Abolition Rio de Janeiro," *Journal of Urban History* 40, no. 1 (2014): 97-115; Lúcia Sá, "Zola in Rio de Janeiro: The Production of Space in Aluísio Azevedo's 'O Cortiço'" *Portuguese Studies* 26, no. 2 (2010): 183-204; and Rebeca Errázuruz Cruz, "El naturalism en 'O cortiço' de Aluísio Azevedo," *Hispanic Review* 83, no. 2 (Spring 2015): 187-210; as well as the already cited Carvalho, *Porous City*; Beal, "Substance of Light;" and Costa, "Cidade, reformas urbanas e modernidade."

explore the axiologically opposed collections of images he produced: the one of the Rio that had to disappear and the other of the city that was meant to rise in the name of progress.

CONCLUSION

The comparison of Augusto Malta's images of the favelas and his depictions of the "healthy" Rio built on fear and disgust as affective registers. This rhetoric associated the precarious, crowded, and run-down living spaces of low-income families with the spreading of diseases and the contamination of the body politic. Malta's discourse aligned with the government and international companies deeply invested in the region. The photographs made visual the medical and eugenicist beliefs in vogue during the early twentieth century in Brazil and recorded up close the conditions of the precarious infrastructure, as well as the behavior and habits of the inhabitants of Rio's poorest areas.⁷³ Malta took advantage of his position as the city's official photographer to request entry into the low-income homes, which usually housed several families, photographing the intimacy of their everyday lives.⁷⁴ He created compelling portraits of the physical and social—or what some at the time called "moral"—deterioration of Rio de Janeiro. His images, in dialog with powerful men and renowned professionals like Cruz, Frontin, and Pereira Passos, were particularly efficient in colonizing the imaginary of the Brazilian middle and bourgeois class, dissipating their uncertainty and gaining support for the administration and its reforms. Malta's photographs were carefully crafted visual rhetorics of contagion, fear, hope, wonderment, and awe. The affective signs circulating through these images were critical to the political and social debates of the early twentieth century in Rio de Janeiro. As the official photographer of the city, Malta's photographs participated in consolidating policies to solve the problem of the city's image and played a vital role in the dissemination of pseudoscientific discourses

73. For more thorough discussions of social medicine and eugenics discourses during this period and the reasoning behind Malta's focus on environment and behavior, see Schwarcz, *Spectacle of the Races* and López-Durán, *Eugenics in the Garden*.

74. The parallels between the dichotomies backwardness/progress and intimacy (of the poor) / public space is an argument made in Entler and Oliveira Jr, "Augusto Malta e Marc Ferrez." This can be seen as yet another structure through which the rhetoric of contagion constructed by Malta acted visually and affectively, shaping the gaze and the emotions of the Carioca elite.

of miasmas and eugenics that aimed at "curing" Rio's "disease." Malta's images became nodes for the circulating affective registers that were important in the persuasive power of these ideologies.

Malta's images, in many senses, were the driving forces behind the media apparatus that supported the sanitation measures implemented in Rio de Janeiro throughout the first decades of the twentieth century. Malta produced two sets of images. While the images of the "healthy" Rio, of which *Vista do Corcovado*, *Avenida Central*, and the 1908 National Exhibition photographs are examples, circulated in postcards and tourist books, the images of Rio's "degenerate" spaces, such as *Estalagem localizada na Rua do Senado*, *Interior de um Cortiço*, and *Morro do Castello*, found their way into sanitation reports and medical treatises. While the former hoped to circulate internationally and populate the imaginary of foreign investors and potential tourists, the later had a much more restricted audience: the Carioca elite. They are separate yet interdependent parts of well-crafted affective rhetoric—two sets of images with a shared visual vocabulary and discourse. This dialog between Malta's dichotomous sets of photographs supported the rhetoric of contagion that shaped the broader field of production in Rio de Janeiro's Belle Époque. These photographs propelled repeated affective epidemics that sought to colonize the minds and hearts of the Brazilian population, legitimizing the exclusion and violence taking place in the city in a reconfiguration of Rio de Janeiro that continues to impact it today.

Nevertheless, Malta's photographs, although involved in the photographer's—and the government's—successful rhetoric during this period, must not be understood as limited by it. Both collections of images that Malta produced have exceeded their original purpose. These photographs have gained new meanings, new literalizations, across time. The man leaning against the construction at the center of *Morro do Castello* by Malta, for instance, is an awkward portrait of those marked as the contagious bodies living within these spaces; the obliteration of his features and his rigid pose speak to this. Nevertheless, he transcends this connotation. His pristine white shirt and clean clothes echoed in the white dresses of the children to the right contrasts with the rhetoric of filth, contamination, and disease that these photographs were meant to prove. Ahmed points out that affect necessarily works through performativity, in the sense that Judith Butler defines it: the way the signifier, rather than merely naming something that already exists,

works to generate that which it names.⁷⁵ As Malta composed the images of diseased spaces and bodies, he generated them, pinning affective signs of fear and disgust squarely on the low-class Afro-Brazilian population of Rio.

Unexpectedly, he also created convincing portraits of the violence exerted against them, their ways of living, and their bodies, proving right the 1904 opposition's warnings about the invasion of governmental policies. The result is a massive collection of images that are cross-sectioned by different discursive formations and inhabit a field of production in constant flux. Across the decades, Malta's photographs have increasingly become symbolic of the violence enacted against the impoverished population of Rio and proof, rather than justification, of the eugenic policies of the time. These images have enabled the circulation of new affective registers, new crystallizations of affectivity that evoke disgust at the actions of the Carioca elite and anger toward the government's systematic attack on lower-class populations across Brazil's metropolis, especially in Rio, where this population, pushed to the *morros*, inhabit the favelas that remain trademarks of the cityscape today. The violence that continues to be enacted against this population in the contemporary moment, in repeating governmental hygienist projects, make Malta's images a sharp document of this history, evidence of the mechanisms through which the government justifies these attacks, and nodes of resistance to rebranded rhetorics of contagion.

The way Malta's images continue to act beyond their prescribed narratives, exposing longstanding racism and eugenics as well as Brazil's continued hygienist public policies, is a

75. Ahmed, *Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 92.

testament to the power of these images as witness and actors within the historical process. The character of these images as agents in social and historical discourse is shaped by their role as nodes for the continued circulation and mutation of affective chains of signification. Thus, as Massumi and Ahmed note, although affect shares responsibility in the ubiquity of power structures, it may also contribute to their deconstruction. The virulent way in which affects—both as qualified emotions and amorphous intensities—parasitically inhabit other signs can be a tool in the subversion of master narratives. The postmodern and poststructuralist challenge of deconstructing ideologies of power is still a widely unrealized project, despite the invaluable contributions of race and gender theorists. The ubiquity and strength of power structures within the social and political fabric in the contemporary late-capitalist era still perplexes us. I suggest here that affect is the understudied layer within the structural mechanisms of power, which opens new spaces of resistance, especially within the ever-returning nationalist discourse in Brazil and its cornerstone in the myths of *brasilidade*.

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Alice Heeren is a PhD candidate in art history at Southern Methodist University. Her dissertation examines how contemporary artists mine the visuality of the city of Brasília and its role in the national discourse. She has published in *Arte al Día*, *Artelogie*, *Artefacto Visual*, *Art Research Journal*, and *re-bus*.