

**Science and art in the “Dutch Period” in Northeast Brazil:
The representation of cannibals and Africans as allies overseas**

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ABSTRACT

Frans Post and Albert Eckhout painted landscapes and people in Brazil in the period of the optical technical revolution, which marked the “art of describing” in the Dutch Golden Age. Post’s and Eckhout’s pictures of cannibals have to be viewed within this tradition, in which a first modern and scientific model of caste society was represented. These images are not composed in order to shock the viewer but rather to let him repose and have time for studying them as epistemic objects. Although the social text of the body is addressed, this is not done with a critical tone. The cannibals fit perfectly well into the representation of Dutch urban society overseas in the seventeenth century.

Keywords:

Science, Art, Dutch Golden Age, Painting

RESUMO

Frans Post e Albert Eckhout retrataram paisagens e pessoas no Brasil no período da revolução técnica da óptica, expressando a “arte de descrever” na Era do Ouro Holandês. Os retratos de canibais de Post e Eckhout devem ser apreciados no contexto desta tradição, em que o primeiro modelo moderno e científico de casta social foi representado. Estas imagens não foram concebidas para chocar o observador, mas sim para debruçar-se nelas e estudá-las como objetos epistêmicos. Embora haja referência ao tema social do corpo, isso, entretanto, não é feito sem crítica. Os canibais enquadram-se perfeitamente bem na representação da sociedade urbana holandesa ultramarina no século XVII.

Palavras chave:

Ciência, Arte, Era de Ouro holandesa, Pintura

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The art historian Svetlana Alpers remarks in her book *The Art of Describing. Dutch Art in the Seventeenth Century* that the “Dutch record of their short-lived colony in Brazil is an extraordinary case in point”¹. She refers to the so-called “Dutch Period” in Northeast Brazil, from 1630 to 1654, which produced such outstanding paintings as we will see below. The “Dutch period” is very familiar to Brazilian scholars. Sérgio Buarque de Holanda describes the characteristics of its “échec” in his influential *Raízes do Brasil*, first published in 1936². The historian José Antônio Gonsalves de Mello was a specialist on the *Tempo dos flamengos* and kept publishing about this matter during his lifetime³. Evaldo Cabral de Mello wrote the very popular book *O negócio do Brasil. Portugal, os Países Baixos e o Nordeste, 1641-1699* on the negotiations between Portugal and the Netherlands⁴. And other historians such as Luiz Felipe de Alencastro and Pedro Puntoni have laid out the details of the Dutch involvement in the slave trade in that same period.⁵ I could give much more references because Brazilian scholars are utterly aware of this period: It belongs to the cultural heritage of their country. Unfortunately, despite the fact that Dutch scholars also wrote interesting research this Dutch period does not form in the contemporary Kingdom of the Netherlands a part of the common sense about cultural heritage as it does in Brazil.

The “Dutch period” is remarkable for two reasons. It coincided with the time period of the Dutch Golden Age, in which Alpers describes the development of a new scientific optical precision:

“[...]already established pictorial and craft traditions, broadly reinforced by the new experimental science and technology, confirmed pictures as the way to new and certain knowledge of the world”⁶.

She coins this optical precision with the concept “art of describing” and argues that this development of an outstanding visual ability supports the emergence of a descriptive genre of art that relied on scientific and technical expertise. It was exactly then that the military and scientific expedition of Johan Maurits von Nassau-Siegen departed to Northeast Brazil. Artists, artisans, scientists, constructors, gardeners and medical doctors accompanied the Count, in addition to the military troupes. The idea was that they had to build a modern city, different from the Catholic Portuguese townships with their churches and convents. The United Provinces were a modern urbanized country and famous because of its hydraulic craftsmanship. It was involved in an eighty-year war (1568-1648) against Spain, whose Crown was united with Portugal from 1580 to 1640. At the same time, the Seven Provinces were fighting another military battle. In 1618, at the Synod of Dordrecht, it was decided to follow the hard line in the war against the Spaniards. For this purpose, the West India Company was founded in 1621 in order to attack the Iberian possessions overseas. As Benjamin Schmidt has shown in *Innocence Abroad*, the war against

¹ S. Alpers, *The Art of Describing. Dutch Art in the Seventeenth Century* (London: Penguin Books, 1983), 163.

² S. B. de Holanda, *Raízes do Brasil*, trad. Marlyse Meyer (Paris: Gallimard, 2002), 91-98.

³ J. A. G. de Mello, *Tempo dos Flamengos: Influência da Ocupação Holandesa na Vida e na Cultura do Norte do Brasil*, prefácio Gilberto Freyre, 1947 (Rio de Janeiro: Topbooks, 2001).

⁴ E. C. de Mello, *O Negócio do Brasil: Portugal, os Países Baixos e o Nordeste, 1641-1699*. (Rio de Janeiro: Topbooks, 1998).

⁵ L. F. de Alencastro, *O Trato dos Videntes: Formação do Brasil no Atlântico Sul, Séculos XVI e XVII* (São Paulo: Editora Schwarz, 2000); P. Puntoni, *A Miserável Sorte: A escravidão Africana no Brasil Holandês e as Guerras do Tráfico no Atlântico Sul, 1621-1648* (São Paulo: Editora Hucitec, 1999).

⁶ Alpers, XXV.

Spain was taken to justify all kinds of cruelties and was accompanied by pamphlet propaganda, whose aggressive icons lasted even after the Peace of Westphalia in 1648⁷. They were still characteristic for the illustrations of the first pirate book ever published, *The Americaensche Zeerovers* (Amsterdam 1678), written by the French Huguenot Exquemelin thirty years later⁸.

Johan Maurits van Nassau-Siegen (1604-1679) was educated at German courts but already served as a young man in the Dutch army⁹. He was a war expert before being appointed to his important mission to Brazil. The professor of philosophy in Amsterdam, Gaspar Barléu, documented in his *História dos feitos recentemente praticados durante oito anos no Brasil* (1647) the military conquest reporting many insider details. He also made clear that the Count was interested in construction, the natural sciences, and gardening¹⁰. Ernst van den Boogaard quotes from Barléu and other authors in his article “Brasilien hofieren” and describes how Johan Maurits directed the construction of Mauritsstad in view of Olinda, the capital of Portuguese Pernambuco. Van den Boogaard maintains that, in comparison to Olinda, Mauritsstad excelled because of its beautiful white palace Vrijburg (Free Bourg) at the entrance of the bay, with a large zoological garden, as well as of the land house Boa Vista more inward, a place for retirement and relaxation for the Count and his courtiers¹¹. People like Franciscus Plante (preacher, poet), Georg Marcgraf (astrologer, natural scientist), Willem Piso (physician, natural scientist), Albert Eckhout and Frans Post (painters) were part of this inner circle¹². Among them, Eckhout and Post were hired by the Count to give visual documentation of his accomplishments on the American continent.

In this essay I will focus on these two artists, Frans Post (1612-1680) and Albert Eckhout (1606-1665/66). Pedro and Bia Corrêa do Lago (2006) and Rebecca Parker Brienens (2006) have dedicated detailed studies to them, but they discuss them separately. Taking into account that both were part of a military expedition, I will inquire their depiction of the cannibals and Africans as Dutch allies in Northeast Brazil. I will first discuss their work from a comparative perspective and, thereafter, interpret this comparison in the context of the debate on cannibalism in Latin American cultural studies and contemporary scientific research on heritage at the crossroads of biology, politics, and culture.

Post and Eckhout

When Post and Eckhout traveled with Johan Maurits to Brazil, from 1637 to 1644, they were at the beginning of their careers. Both were trained in the Netherlands. Whereas the information on the education of Eckhout in Groningen, Amersfoort, and Amsterdam is rather incomplete, much more is known of Post's contacts, due to his birthplace Haarlem and to the activities of his older brother Pieter Post, a leading architect at that time. Frans Post might already have been familiar before with paintings on “West Indian” issues. One of the first known canvasses in this respect, Jan Mostaert's *West Indies Landscape*

⁷ B. Schmidt, *Innocence Abroad: The Dutch Imagination and the New World, 1570-1670* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

⁸ A. J. Arnold, “From Piracy to Policy: Exquemelin's Buccaneers and Imperial Competition in America”, *Review: Literature and Arts of the Americas* (74.40.1) (2007): 9-20.

⁹ D. Wolfgang, “Eine Karriere in den Niederlanden”, in *Aufbruch in Neuen Welten: Johann Moritz Von Nassau Siegen, der Brasilianer (1604-1679)*, ed. G. Brunn et al. (Siegen: Siegerlandmuseum, 2004), 17-24.

¹⁰ G. Barléu, *História dos Feitos Recentemente Praticados durante Oito Anos no Brasil* (1647), pref. Mário Ferri, trad. Mario Brandão (Belo Horizonte; São Paulo: Itatiaia; Editora da Universidade de São Paulo, 1974), 149-58.

¹¹ E. van dem Boogaard, “Brasilien hofieren- Johann Moritz' politisches Projekt sichtbar gemacht”, in *Aufbruch in Neuen Welten. Johann Moritz Von Nassau Siegen, der Brasilianer (1604-1679)*, ed. G. Brunn (Siegen: Siegerlandmuseum, 2004), 73-103; 73-75.

¹² *Ibid.*, 75-77.

(ca. 1520-30), hung in the house of Mostaert's grandson, Nicolaes Suyker, the mayor of Haarlem, Post's home city¹³.

Eckhout and Post arrived in Recife in the second half of January 1637. There is no evidence that any of them had produced significant work before going to Brazil. Much more remarkable, therefore, is the fact that they painted in the seven years of residence such outstanding canvasses, on which people and environment in this overseas territory were depicted. Post produced allegedly eighteen canvasses in Brazil of which seven are conserved. He is the painter of the different stages of the "ordered Dutch city" with its hydraulic techniques¹⁴. After his return to Holland, Post successfully continued painting Brazilian landscapes until the 1670s. In contrast, almost everything known from Eckhout's work derives from his Brazilian residence. He produced only a few more works after his return to Europe, of which the eighty Brazilian bird paintings on the ceiling of bourg Hoflössnitz - when he was in the service of the Elector of Dresden from 1653 to 1663 - are the most famous ones.

As stated by the descriptions of Barléu¹⁵, for overseas military enterprises native allies were highly significant. Johan Maurits found competing indigenous groups in the Pernambuco area who were eager to ally against the Portuguese in exchange of privileges. Good contacts with the West-African native allies also were of utmost importance in view of the fact that the slave trade was the driving force for the plantation economy.

Of Post's seven Brazilian paintings the canvas showing the view on Fort Frederici is well-known (figure 1).



Figure 1 - View on Fort Frederik Hendrik, 1640, Frans Post, oil on canvas, 66 x 88 cm, in: Pedro & Bia Corrêa do Lago, *Frans Post 1612-1680. Obra completa* (Rio de Janeiro: Capivara, 2006), 108.

¹³ "There is [...] a landscape, essentially a West Indies landscape, with many naked people, a jagged cliff, and a strange construction of houses and huts", see Schmidt, 1.

¹⁴ See, I. Phaf-Rheinberger, "La Utopia Moderna en Brasil en el Siglo XVII: Los Pinceles Descriptivos y el Diccionario Visual de Frnas Post", *Revistaidea* 2, No 4 (2004); <http://www.usach.cl/revistaidea>.

¹⁵ Barléu even reproduces a vocabulary of the Araucan language in Chile, see, Barléu, 296-303. He speaks about the Tapuyas on various occasions, *Ibid.*, 76; 189; 260-69 and 329.

It depicts the island Antonio Vaz which lies in front of the port city Recife at the other side of the river Beberibe. Three figures stand together in a marshy landscape, apparently the backward land of the newly built Mauritsstad seen at the horizon surrounded by a palisade. Each of the three figures belongs to a different cultural group – African slave, *mestiza* woman, European – and Post paints them more or less at the same level, leaving them all without shoes. The difference between the urban environment at the coastline in the back and the marshy land in front decides about the composition of this canvas, together with details about flora and fauna.

A second canvas, painted after Post's return to Haarlem, displays several cultural groups in Mauritsstad-Recife.



Figure 2 - View on Mauritsstad-Recife, 1653, Frans Post, oil on wood, 48.2 x 83.6 cm, in: Pedro & Bia Corrêa do Lago, *Frans Post 1612-1680*, 144.

We see the Count escorted by his consultants and non-European groups of the population. Apparently, deliberations about a bridge serving as a connection with Recife at the other border of the river are at stake. The Count is discussing with Europeans but they, in their turn, also discuss with other people. In fact, everybody seems to speak with each other on this canvas: a group of trader women with African slaves at the left front; the Europeans with a group of almost naked Tapuyas standing at the right front. They are clearly included in the inner circle. A marketing woman, a beautiful person, often placed at an outward position in order to call the attention of the viewer and to embellish the design of the composition, draws the division line at the right below¹⁶.

Post also portrays the Tapuyas at other occasions but never again in such a public urban place. He certainly knew that the Tapuyas were anthropophagous people, because this was common knowledge, but he does not address this issue in his peaceful sceneries. His Tapuyas are a part of Dutch construction and solidarity against the Brazilian-Portuguese.

¹⁶ I. Phaf-Rheinberger, "Mauristaad-Recife in Seventeenth-century Brazil", in *The Air of Liberty: Narratives of the South Atlantic Past* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2008), 3-28, on 21.

Eckhout also painted the Tapuyas. Besides a series of still lifes and animal illustrations – often not signed and therefore difficult to identify as Eckhout’s works– we find his eight outstanding canvasses of four different groups of the population: the mestizo-mulatto, the African, the Tupinambá, and the Tapuya.

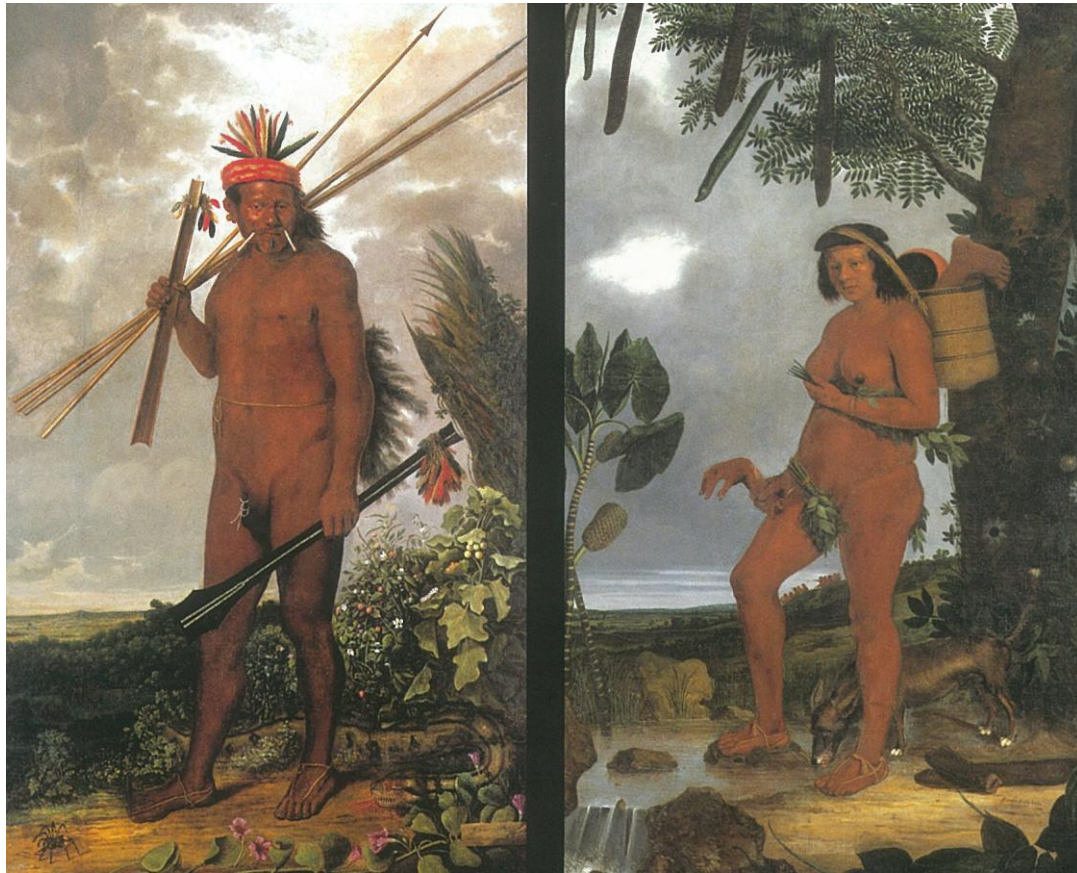


Figure 3 - The Tapuya or Tarairiu Man and Woman, 1641, Albert Eckhout, oil on canvas, 272 x 161 cm, in: R. Parker Brienen, *Vision of Savage Paradise. Albert Eckhout, Court Painter in Colonial Dutch Brazil* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006), 212-213.

Again, similar to Frans Post, the inclusion of Eckhout’s Tapuyas occurs at the same size and level as that of the other three pairs of people. All the men are portrayed as armed, wearing gifts, and prepared to go to battle for the Count. Parker Brienen suggests in her book on Eckhout, *Visions of Savage Paradise*, that this cycle seems to have been especially important to Johan Maurits. In the last year of his life he wrote a letter to the secretary of Frederik III, his cousin and King of Denmark. The Count – then Prince – had donated Eckhout’s work to him in 1654, the year the Dutch were defeated in Brazil and had to leave¹⁷. The Count now asked if he could have Eckhout’s ethnographic series back if it was “not appreciated”. Unfortunately for him, that was not the case, so Johan Maurits ordered half-size copies, because he wanted to be surrounded by the “nations he had ruled in Brazil”¹⁸. These copies are lost and no more information is available on them.

¹⁷ “It is telling that in 1654, when the Dutch formally relinquished their Brazilian colony to the Portuguese, Johan Maurits gave these images to the king of Denmark. At that moment the paintings lost their function as a cycle endorsing the stability and prosperity of the colony and its people; Johan Maurits’s Brazilian empire was lost forever“. R. Parker Brienen, *Vision of Savage Paradise: Albert Eckhout, Court Painter in Colonial Dutch Brazil*, (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006), 199.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 207.

Cannibalism and Epistemic Things

Parker Brienen quotes from another letter of Johan Maurits in 1679 to Copenhagen, in which he characterizes the eight pictures / portraits as being of “wild nations” (wilde natien).¹⁹ This is an intriguing quotation because these figures on the pictures seem exotic, but far from wild or savage people. They are obviously composed with the same “air of liberty” as quoted in the painter’s handbook by Karel van Mander from 1611. Van Mander argued that you have to give your figures the ‘air of liberty’ to avoid making them look like slaves.²⁰ Of course, this iconographic lesson does not imply the consciousness of equality. In the Christian world of the seventeenth century, the difference between the philosophical and the real world was a natural given. The “wild nations” belonged to the natural world and were subject to natural science; they are depicted in the same order as the flora and fauna, as epistemic things that have to be studied.

It is clear that Eckhout’s and Post’s view on the Tapuyas differ greatly from the pictures of wild and savage people since Hans Staden’s and De Bry’s copperplate prints on Brazil.²¹



Figure 4 – Hans Staden’s Illustration in De Bry’s Edition on America, 1593.

¹⁹ R. Parker Brienen, “Albert Eckhout’s Paintings and the Vrijburg Palace in Dutch Brazil”, *Nationalmuseet* (2002): 81-91, on 82.

²⁰ Phaf-Rheinberger, “Mauritsstad-Recife”, 21.

²¹ Reproduced in Carlos Jáuregui, *Canibalia, Canibalismo, Calibalismo, Antropofagia Cultural y Consumo en América Latina* (Madrid: Iberoamericana; Frankfurt: Vervuert, 2008), 547 and 554.

This becomes very clear when looking at the illustrations included in *Canibalia. Canibalismo, calibanismo, antropofagia cultural y consumo en América Latina* (2008) by Carlos A. Jáuregui.²² His selection of naked images of “savage” people without arms or without pose designed “*naer het leven*”²³ show that they were not considered being allies against a common enemy as was the case in Northeast Brazil. But Jáuregui – although he reproduces some images of Eckhout²⁴ – is not interested in this difference. His argument is to apply the concept of Cannibal / Caliban as a destabilizing factor for the inside/outside of the *body*, his point of departure for the interpretation of the “social text”:

“The body constitutes a deposit for metaphors. In the body’s economy with the world, its limits, fragility, and destruction, the body serves for dramatizing and, in some way, writing the social text. Cannibalism is a radically destabilizing moment of this bodily inscription and, as Sigmund Freud supposed, one of those images, primarily expressing desire and fear, according to which subjectivity and culture are imagined. In the cannibalesque scenario, the devouring and the devoured body, as well as the act of devouring itself, produce models of the constitution and dissolution of identity”²⁵.

Jáuregui argues that, with the expansion of the Dutch capitalist mercantilism to Brazil, new semantic variations of the trope of cannibalism emerged. The Tupinambá, in the sixteenth century depicted as cannibals, are now represented by Eckhout as peaceful and happily integrated into civil life, whereas the Tapuyas are far more behind in this respect (p. 128). They are almost naked and wearing human parts in a basket. Their skin color is also much darker and perforated. Jáuregui even uses the word “monstrous” to make his argument on cannibalism stronger in accordance with the title of van den Boogaard’s article on the “Infernal Allies. The Dutch West India Company and the Tarairiu 1630-1654” (1979). Within the tradition of the Dutch “art of describing”, however, Eckhout’s Tapuyas are not monstrous at all. They are allies and armed, like the Tupinambá, the mulatto, and the African man (figure 5).

The discussion on the whereabouts of their ornaments and clothes, which testify their transatlantic connections, is eloquent²⁶. The Dutch West India Company WIC, of course, was globally connected and ships from Asia used to pass through the harbor of Recife on their way back to Europe or the other way around. The contacts with the West-African coast were also frequent, as shown in the discussion about the basket and the dress of the African woman. Even if some of the pictures could be portraits, the individuality of the person is less pronounced than the typical ornaments and appearance giving them their adequate representation within the order of caste society.

²² Jáuregui; also Parker Brienen dedicates a long chapter of *Visions of Savage Paradise to “Cannibalizing America: From the Ethnographic Impulse to the Ethnographic Portrait”*, reproducing many pictures, 73-93.

²³ Parker Brienen, *Vision of Savage Paradise*, 205.

²⁴ Jáuregui, 360.

²⁵ “El cuerpo constituye un depósito de metáforas. En su economía con el mundo, sus límites, fragilidad y destrucción, el cuerpo sirve para dramatizar y, de alguna manera, escribir el texto social. El canibalismo es un momento radicalmente inestable de lo corpóreo y, como Sigmund Freud suponía, una de esas imágenes, deseos y miedos primarios a partir de los cuales se imagina la subjetividad y la cultura. En la escena canibal, el cuerpo devorador y el devorado, así como la devoración misma, proveen modelos de constitución y disolución de identidades”. *Ibid.*, 13.

²⁶ Parker Brienen discusses the pipe, clothing, arms, and other ornaments largely assuming that they show attachments to different regions of Africa, see her *Vision of Savage Paradise*, 146-154.



Figure 5 – The African Man and the African Woman with Child, Albert Eckhout, 1641, oil on canvas, 273 x 167 cm, in: Parker Brienen, *Vision of Savage Paradise*, 214-215.

However, African allies are not always depicted in this ethnographic mode. In the case of the portrait of Miguel de Castro, the ambassador of Congo in Recife, the outfit of the African man has changed completely (figure 6).

The ambassador is dressed in European clothes in the same way as his slave-servants, of which two other portraits reveal that they wear presents from Africa: an elephant boon tooth and a carved box.²⁷ Obviously, this official delegation that came for negotiating conditions with Recife deserved another appearance as that tied to their ethnic ancestry. Nothing points to caste society, rather the images of the delegation are more like the Rembrandt and Rubens drawings of Africans.

Eckhout's references to caste society call even more attention because his work is from the seventeenth century, whereas the *Casta* iconography as a pictorial genre in America is situated in the Enlightenment period of the eighteenth century²⁸. The historian of science Renato Mazzolini starts his essay on interracial crossing and caste society with

²⁷ There is some mystery hanging around these images. Parker Brienen does not include them in her book on Eckhout, although she discusses extensively the contacts of Johan Maurits with the King of Congo. In Nationalmuseet, *Albert Eckhout volta ao Brasil / Albert Eckhout returns to Brazil*, 1644-2002 (Copenhagen: Nationalmuseet, 2002), the images are reproduced in the catalogue as by Albert Eckhout? Jasper Beccx?, 35. Parker Brienen gives her reasons for excluding them as following: "First, it is not certain that these unsigned and undated images of Africans should be attributed to Eckhout. Second, even if they were painted by Eckhout, the modest scale of these paintings, their panel support, and the fact that they are bust-length portraits, not full-scale ethnographic images, set these three paintings apart from Eckhout's other works, which demonstrate closer affinities to natural history and ethnography"; see Parker Brienen, *Vision of Savage Paradise*, 174.

²⁸ M. C. García Saíz, *Las Castas Mexicanas: Un Género Pictórico Americano* (México: Olivetti, 1989).

two questions: “What happens when individuals belonging to different populations mix and have off-spring? And how do the offspring look when this mixture goes on for generations?”²⁹.

The author emphasizes that Buffon used de Pauw’s information in order to classify the “variétés dans l’espèce humaine”³⁰ and laments the absence of reference to his authorities. Therefore, Mazzolini guesses that de Pauw probably gathered his information from Gumilla, Santacilia and Ulloa, whose work was translated into French. According to Mazzolini, most naturalists in those days used the social classifications that the Spaniards and the Portuguese had developed and implemented as early as the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Alexander von Humboldt introduced the concept of extreme inequality in his 1811 book on Mexico: “Le Mexique est le pays de l’inégalité” and Mazzolini continues saying that Humboldt considered all “economic power [...] in the hands of the whites, and only the *Indios* and the colored castas did the hard manual labor”³¹ (p. 353). Mazzolini mentions that the translator of Humboldt’s text into French explained the concept of *castas* with *race*, not being completely aware that he was dealing with an administrative system, known as *las castas*, set up to be the Spanish colonial government in South and Central America.



Figure 6- Ambassador Dom Miguel de Castro from Congo, attributed to Eckhout but unsigned, oil on oak panel, 72 x 62 cm, in: Museet , 60.

²⁹ R. Mazzolini, “*Las Castas: Interracial Crossing and Social Structure, 1770-1835*”, in *Heredity Produced: At the Crossroads of Biology, Politics, and Culture, 1500-1870*, ed. H.-J. Rheinberger and S. Müller-Wille (Cambridge: MIT, 2007), 349-73, on 349.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 350.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 353.

This system was intended to establish the ancestry of each individual in such a way that he or she could be included in a specific caste with a specific name in order to create a hierarchical social structure based on place of birth and, especially, ancestry: “The most important clues to establishing the caste into which newborn children fell were the castes of their parents and their skin color”³².

Eckhout’s paintings prove that this hierarchical identity system of ancestry and skin color already was adopted in the Dutch colonies in the seventeenth century. With that, from the point of view of the history of biology, the Dutch adopted one of the “earliest models of heredity”³³. Ancestry and skin color are inscribed into the Dutch view on urban society overseas “that had, at the time they were used, a biological as well as a political meaning”. It implies that these “epistemic things” also possess a “social text”³⁴. This social text is increasingly viewed in a critical way in cultural studies. In the case of the “Dutch period”, however, its social meaning does not stand for itself. Its relationship with the optical revolution in natural sciences challenges the concept of the “world of wonders in nature” before Enlightenment³⁵ and is conceived according to the rationale of explosive military expansion overseas. Even cannibalism does not destabilize the scientific and social order of the Dutch urban communities in America, because as epistemic things and “exotic” allies their practitioners are perfectly well integrated into the contemporary optical conceptions. The playfulness of their composition fitted in the Count’s *Kunst- und Wunderkammer*, “either in the Dutch Republic or Brazil”³⁶. For comparison, Parker Brienens refers to Jan van Kessel’s painting *America*, completed in 1666, which “displays an elegant space filled with exotic people, *artificialia*, and *naturalia*”³⁷. However, van Kessel’s work is not representative for the pictorial genre of *casta* painting as Eckhout’s paintings are. They represent a pre-Enlightenment period, in which a first visual model of heredity was put in place with a biological and a social-political meaning, which consequences are still felt today.

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³² Ibid., 358.

³³ Ibid., 365.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ L. Daston & K. Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature 1150-1750* (New York: Zone Books, 1998).

³⁶ Parker Brienens, *Vision of Savage Paradise*, 169.

³⁷ Ibid., 182.