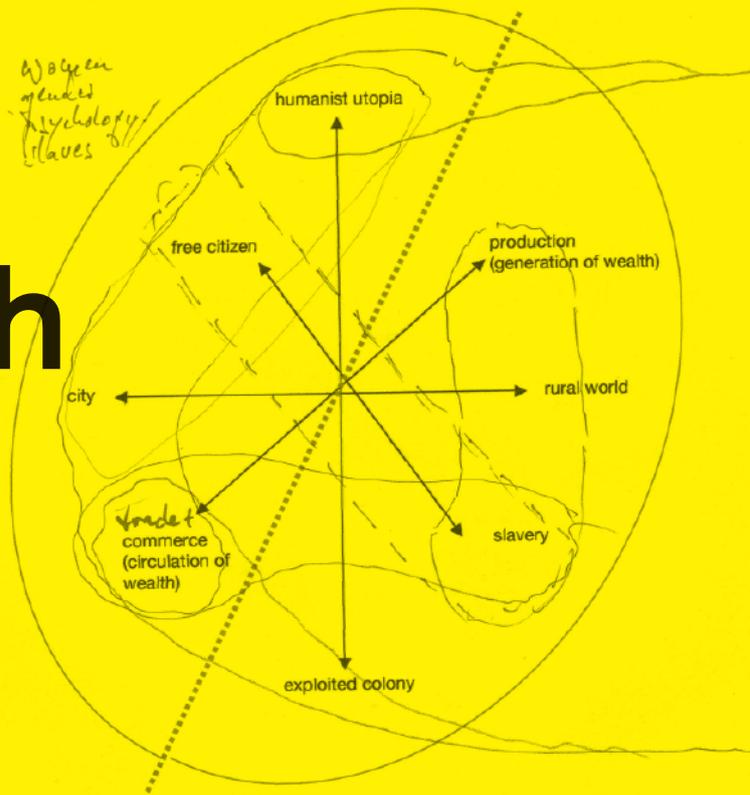
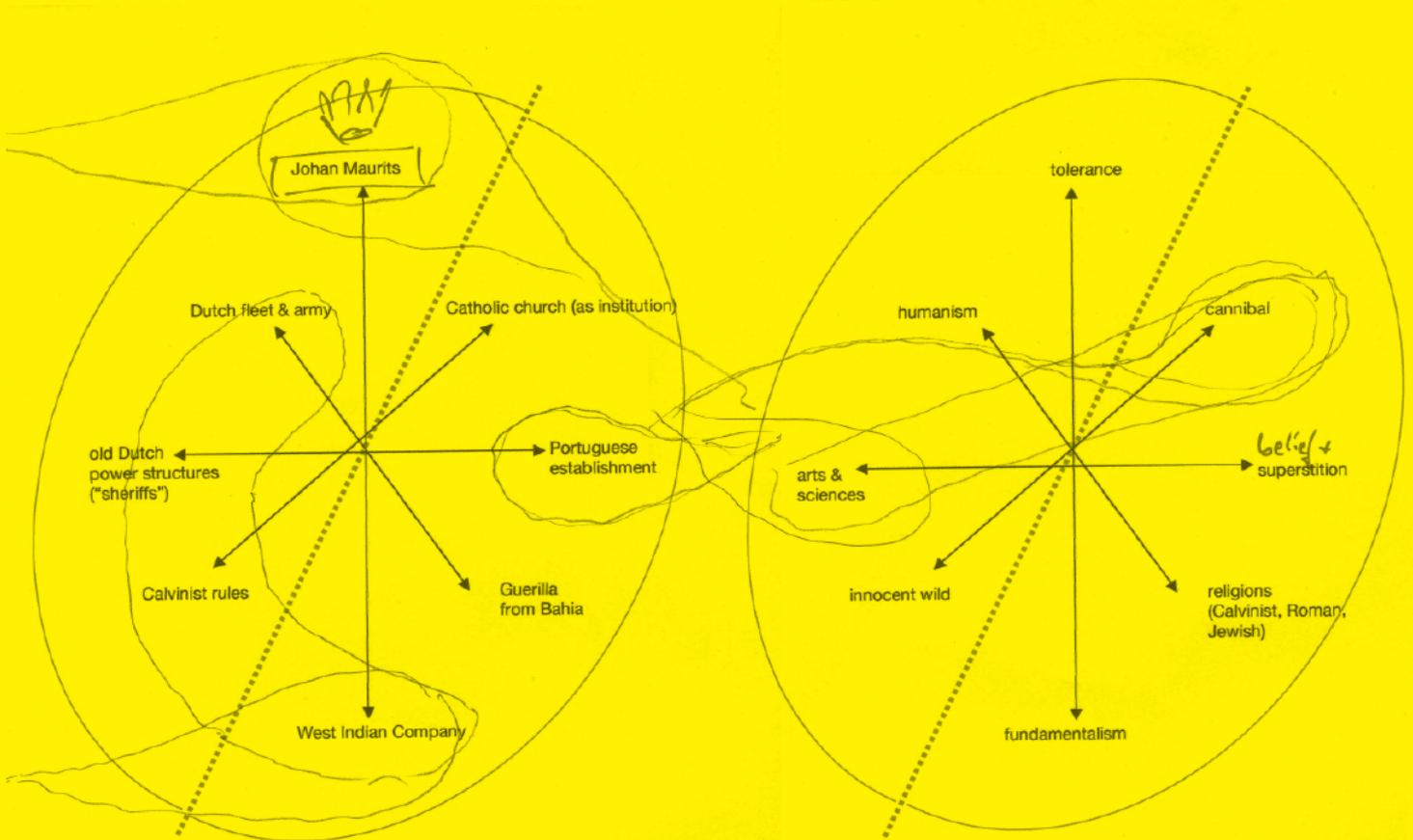


Wendelien van Oldenborgh

Maurits Script



2 faces of the coin 1: politics & economy



2 faces of the coin 3: law & power

2 faces of the coin 2: morals & knowledge

gender psychology

Wendelien van Oldenborgh

Maurits Script

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Introduction

Maurits Script forms the third part of Wendelien van Oldenborgh's ongoing project, 'A Certain Brazilianness'.

In the attempt to find an alternative mode of production, 'A Certain Brazilianness' became the title of a multidisciplinary process, based on relations and resonances. From a heterogeneous Brazilian culture a number of significant strategies, partly stemming from the social sphere, have led to impressive moments of cultural production. As a way of working, A C_B__ transfers these possibilities into the production of film, drawing on the basic language and roles in a film production to set up situations that lead to new relations.

Prior to 'Maurits Script', two performative stages took place in Rotterdam, 'Polyphonic Stage', 2005, which was situated in a parasite building in Hoogvliet, and 'A C_B__ Sound Track Stage', 2006, at Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen. These involved active encounters between groups of participants who took the roles of performers as well as viewers and listeners, and created a script and cinematic material during the event. This method of open production was developed further in *Maurits Script*, where a film was produced in a one day live event that took place during the opening hours of the Mauritshuis museum, Den Haag, which is situated in the house that was built by Johan Maurits van Nassau during his period of government in Brazil.

'Maurits Script' leads out of an inquiry into Johan Maurits van Nassau's period as governor of the North East of Brazil (1637–1644). Maurits has often been credited as being an early modernist ruler and humanist. When he went to Brazil he took a team of artists, geographers and naturalists with him to document the newly conquered lands. His victorious story was written after his return to the Netherlands by the historian Caspar Barlaeus, creating what can now be seen as an 'official' history – one that did not fully acknowledge all aspects of his governorship, such as his dealings with the slave trade. Van Oldenborgh created a film script that pieces together excerpts from numer-

ous different sources from the period, creating a narrative that blends the official history with other 'unofficial' accounts. Through this she reveals the paradoxes and inner conflicts of a history that has been written from multiple viewpoints, throwing up questions on the art of governing, the institutions of the period, and personal relations at a moment when many different groups found themselves living together with clashing interests.

The film shoot took place in the Golden Room of the Mauritshuis – a central conduit of the museum. Van Oldenborgh invited a group of participants to each play the part of two characters, and assigned each character two actors in order to destabilize identification with a single character. The participants were chosen because of their various relationships to subjects that arise from the script, either through their personal or working lives. While each took their turn to read their parts the others convened around a large table on the other side of the room and engaged in a conversation that departed from different themes that arose from the script, and their personal experiences of these subjects. The film shoot and conversation were left entirely open to the public and were subject to the comings and goings of visitors and museum tours, the resulting interferences and interjections adding to the richness and complexity of the final work. The resulting two channel video work creates a poignant reflection on the legacy of colonial histories in contemporary society, and the ways in which many people's lives are infused with the spectres of the past.

This booklet contains an introduction to the context of the work, the script, and details of the characters and participants of the project.

Emily Pethick

Historical context

The Mauritshuis was commissioned by Johan Maurits van Nassau-Siegen during his period in Dutch Brazil, where he governed the region for the Dutch West Indies Company from 1637. After disagreements over the priorities and needs of the colony the WIC called him back to Holland in 1644. The Directors spoke cynically about Maurits' house as his 'sugar palace'.

After a failed attempt in 1620 to conquer Bahia – the political centre of Brazil at the time – the West Indies Company undertook a second attack on the Portuguese in Brazil in 1630, this time going for the economic centre, which was the main port of the North East and the city of Olinda. It took them five years to secure the region of Pernambuco as its inhabitants defended it rigorously. A Dutch colony was finally established that reached from the River São Francisco in the South (which made a natural border to Bahia, staying in Portuguese hands) and – after the expansion efforts of Johan Maurits – reached as far as Maranhão in the north.

Dutch Brazil was inhabited by a number of groups with conflicting interests. The Luso-Brasilians mostly stayed true to their Catholic Portuguese origins and kept the majority of the sugar production in their hands. Amongst them there were people from Jewish backgrounds that had converted to Christianity under the inquisition, and were called the New Christians. Under the Dutch rule, religious freedom was implemented politically and many of this group converted back to Judaism. The Dutch were mostly Calvinist and came either through the employment of the WIC, or on their own accord. French, German, English and Scottish soldiers from various religious backgrounds were also working for the WIC's Dutch army. There were various groups of native Indians, some of them called Brazilians. They lived in *Aldeas*, villages close to the cities, where they worked on the fields, their lives and habits being controlled by the colonizers. Besides these groups there were other tribes who were living nomadically. They were called Savages, or 'Tapuyas'. A large population of Africans has been brought over in slavery. Those that managed to escape organised themselves in communities in the back lands, called *quilombos*, some of which became very large and were successful in their social organisation.

After Maurits' departure in 1644 the Dutch rapidly lost control and finally lost the colony to the Portuguese in 1654. Since the Netherlands and Portugal were disputing various other regions that they were both colonising around the globe, the Dutch managed to gain a huge sum of money for the loss of Brazil, even years after they were actually expelled.

Characters

Johan Maurits (1604–1679)

Johan Maurits was the Count of Nassau-Siegen and the second nephew of Frederik Hendrik of Orange-Nassau, the '*stadhouder*' of Holland. Born in Dillenburg, Germany, he joined the army of the Dutch Republic at the age of sixteen, and went on to pursue a successful military career and hold high positions in government. In 1636 Maurits was appointed by the West Indies Company as governor of the Dutch colony in Brazil. He proceeded to establish order there, creating a climate in which trade thrived, and he also initiated a number of large-scale building projects. Maurits took a great interest in knowledge and had an open-minded approach to the new and the unknown. He was also interested in the changing ideas of the 17th century, including the idea that through the study of nature in all its forms, man could learn to control it. In Brazil Maurits employed scientists to study the new terrain and also brought in painters, such as Albert Eckhout and Frans Post, to record the country's inhabitants and its landscape.

At the end of his Brazilian mission, Maurits returned to The Hague. A few years later he was appointed *stadhouder* of Cleves (Germany), but continued nonetheless to serve the Dutch army.

Zacharias Wagener (1614–1668)

Zacharias Wagener was born in Dresden. In 1633 he entered the atelier of Willem Janszoon Blaeu, head of the Map-Drawing Workshop of the VOC (Associated Company of the East Indies) in Amsterdam. In 1634 he entered into the service of the WIC and embarked to Recife as a common soldier. When Johan Maurits arrived as Governor in 1637, he employed Wagener in his household as a '*Küchenschreiber*'. During this time he enjoyed contact with the artists and scientists in Maurits' staff, and started to draw and write his important manuscript, *Thierbuch*. With more than one hundred illustrations, this book contains descriptions and comments on the exotic flora, fauna, and people of Dutch Brazil. On his return to Europe in 1641, he delivered some of the exotica that Johan Maurits had offered to several of his friends in the Netherlands, and took his *Thierbuch* with him to Dresden, where it can still be found in the Kupferstichkabinett.

Returning from his residence in Brazil he spent a short period in Dresden, after which he had a remarkable career in the service of the VOC, the highlights of which were visits to Japan, China and his Governorship of the Cape (of Good Hope) colony. He died in Amsterdam upon his return.

Vincent Joachim Soler (1590–1665)

Vincent Joachim Soler was born in the city of Valencia, Spain, and died in Delft, Holland. Once an Augustinian Friar, he converted to Calvinism in France, married and became a Protestant minister in Normandy. In 1636 he was appointed minister to the large number of French-speaking soldiers of the West Indies Company in Pernambuco. He lived with his wife and daughter, Margarita, in Recife, and later took up residence in Mauritsstad, where from 1636–1643 he wrote many letters to

different people and institutions in Holland. His daughter married the Dutch owner of an *engenho* (sugar mill), who went bankrupt. She left her husband to become the mistress of Johan Maurits for a short period, and tragically died when this came to an end. Soler's son came to Brazil after studying medicine in the Netherlands, but never found any real professional position, and died in an attack by Indians. Soler returned to Holland in 1644. Seventeen of his letters are still known: five in the General State Archive in The Hague and twelve in Leiden University Library.

Frei Manuel Calado (1584–1654)

Frei Manuel Calado was born in Vila Voçosa, Portugal, and joined the order of São Paulo in 1607. Receiving permission from his superiors to go to Brazil, where he intended to earn enough money to support his father and sister, he went to Porto Calvo in the *Capitania* of Pernambuco. After the Dutch invasion he supported the Portuguese (and Catholics), but also befriended Johan Maurits, who even invited him to live in his palace, which he declined. He became a true chronicler of the Portuguese resistance against the foreign invasion of Pernambuco. These stories, rumours and reports were published in Lisbon in 1648 with the title *O Valeroso Lucideno e Triunfo da Liberdade*, which has become an important source of information on the period and is still being reprinted in Brazilian universities.

Gaspar Dias Ferreira (1595–1659)

Gaspar Dias Ferreira was born in Lisbon, and emigrated to Brazil in 1618. He is variously reported on as having been (a) a wealthy planter and (b) only a poor shopkeeper. According to Calado's *O Valeroso Lucideno*, Ferreira was the first *morador* (Luso-Brazilian inhabitant) to voluntarily pass over to the invaders, taking up residency in Recife with his wife and family. He became the Governor-General's principal 'contact-man'. From 1637–1640 he was a town councillor for Olinda and Mauritsstad, and was associated with the construction of the bridge between Mauritsstad and Recife in 1644. Thanks to his whole-hearted collaboration with the invaders, he became a very wealthy man but, as many sources confirm, his actions were corrupt towards both sides. Ferreira also organized a contraband slaving venture to Cape Verde in collaboration with Johan Maurits, which earned the latter a dignified rebuke from the Heeren XIX when the scandal came to light.

Ferreira accompanied his protector back to Holland where he was naturalized as a citizen of the United Provinces in February 1645. Despite all of the favours that he had received from the Dutch, he continued to correspond with Seville and Lisbon, for which he was arrested in October 1645, and found guilty of high treason.

The Political Councils (1635–1654)

When the West Indies Company decided to try to invade Pernambuco in 1630 – after a failed attempt to conquer Bahia (the political centre of Brazil at the time) – Brazil had already been

divided into *Capitanias*. These were the areas that would be governed independently as well from a central point. The Dutch managed to conquer Pernambuco and the surrounding *capitanias* after a five-year battle. The cities were already equipped with a political council – a ‘*Câmara*’ – which, under the Portuguese, consisted of rich landowners who organized the local needs and rules. When the Dutch entered the council was replaced by a Dutch version, which consisted of members that were chosen by the Governor and advisers of both the Dutch and Portuguese bourgeoisie. The Political Councils were headed by the Governor, but had to justify themselves to Heeren XIX (directors of the WIC). The Daily Minutes of the Assembly were regularly sent to Holland, where they are still kept in the National Archive in The Hague.

Heeren XIX, directors of the West Indies Company (1621–1674)

The West Indies Company was founded in 1621 in order to develop the trade routes between Europe, Africa and America as a mirror of the existing VOC (Associated Company of the East Indies). Although the States General of the Republic of the Seven United Netherlands had the final responsibility for military actions, the company was responsible for the overseas expansion of the Netherlands and the first riches were won out of sea battles and piracy. The company was given the monopoly on all trade from the Americas and the slave trade from Africa, and the colonies were organized and run according to their interests and by their employees.

Casparus Barlaeus (1584–1648)

The Antwerp-born minister clergyman, author and poet changed his name from the Flemish Caspar Van Baerle to the Latin sounding Barlaeus. Van Baerle started his career at the Leydse Hoogeschool, after which he became a reformed minister in 1608 in Oude Tonge. From 1617 he also became a Professor in Logics but, in the heavy religious disputes of the time, he chose to take the side of the *Remonstranten*. During the Synode of Dordrecht this doctrine was rejected, which led to his dismissal. In 1641 he was appointed Professor in Philosophy and Rhetoric in Amsterdam. His Latin speeches and poems were very famous in the 17th century and have continued to be published ever since. In 1647 he wrote a book that praised the period in which Johan Maurits had been governing Dutch Brazil, containing numerous important maps and illustrations on the areas of the Dutch colonial empire of the period. He was friendly with Constantijn Huyghens and was a member of the literary circle Muiderkring. He died at the age of 63 in Amsterdam.

Maurits Script

Zacharias Wagener

Thierbuch, Mauricia/Dresden
1640–48, introduction

In 1634 – by the grace of God Almighty – I came from the Old World to the New World of America, to the remote and very famous land of Brazil. As the days passed, I acquired greater knowledge of the new marvels, such as strange fish and unknown birds, useful and harmful animals, beautiful, tasty and wholesome fruits, dangerous and venomous worms, and savages with copper coloured or blackened skins. I decided then that it was not fair just to marvel in the contemplation of these magnificent creatures of God, but to also think seriously about divine omnipotence. Using such free time as my duties permitted, I decided to provide as accurate illustrations of these curiosities as I could, which, in most cases, were received as presents from the local savages...

Johan Maurits

From a letter to the Prince of Orange, 1636. Cited in: Caspar Barlaeus, Amsterdam, 1647

The people here are wild, barbaric and have very disorderly and cannibalistic tendencies. The Portuguese call them 'Tapuyas'.

Zacharias Wagener

Thierbuch, Mauricia/Dresden
1640–48

And this is how the Tapuyas dance: completely naked with terrifying yells, standing one behind another in a circle for two to three hours without stopping. This is seen with pleasure and appreciation, and as something worthy of great admiration.

Barlaeus

From a report by Jacob Rabe cited in: Caspar Barlaeus, Amsterdam, 1647

Fighting and spear throwing are honourable. The aim is to satisfy the spectators, and in particular, their mistresses. These women decide on the bravery and victory of each. The loved ones stay in the vicinity, lending stimulation for the battle, as well as performing the role of announcers of courage and facilitators, bringing nourishment and drinks. The Romans kept them far away from their camps, because in times of peace they induced loveliness, and in war-time, fear.

Barlaeus

Jacob Rabe

Also in dreams. Their interpreters are well respected; they interpret for the King, who gains favourable predictions from them. From this it becomes clear how the crowd likes to be ruled by superstition more than anything, and that, under its influence – however irrational the predicted may be – they prefer to follow their sooth-sayers than their leaders. In his political writings, the highly knowledgeable writer Aristoteles calls this 'the secret of the State and of the Art of Governing'. You see, after Minos, Lycurgus, Midas, King of the Phrygians, Numa Pompilius, Drusus, and others, the Savages in the New World – to whom not a puff of wind has been blown over from the Greek or Roman World – act likewise.

Zacharias Wagener

Thierbuch, Mauricia/Dresden,
1640–48

When one among them dies, be it a man or woman, they do not bury the body, but cut it up and divide it into many small pieces, some of which they eat raw and some roasted, claiming that their friend is better protected in their bodies than in the heart of the black land.

Barlaeus

Jacob Rabe

Women gnaw the flesh off the bone with their teeth, not as a token of savagery, but out of devotion and fidelity. Bodies of the Great are devoured by the Great. The head, hands, feet, and bones are carefully kept until the occasion of a specific feast. Then, after grinding them into powder and diluting them

with water, they are swallowed. The same thing happens with the hair, which the closest relatives drink. They don't resume their singing and dancing until all that is left of the dead body has been digested.

Zacharias Wagener

Thierbuch, Mauricia/Dresden, 1640-48

What is truly horrific, and for many ears abominable, is that when a child is stillborn the mother immediately cuts it up and eats as much as she can on the pretext that it was her child, which came from her belly and, as such, it will be best protected by going back to the place it came from. In the meantime, the husband becomes very sad and weak and lies down to be looked after and served by the women, remaining like this for six, seven, eight, or as many weeks as are needed to await his wife.

Elias Herckmans

From *Generale Beschrijvinge van de Capitanie Paraiba*, 1639

These people are very competent in following the fleeing enemy as they are generally very strong runners; they would outrun a horse and, in case of victory, they are inclined to kill without distinction.

The young children among them start to walk after nine or ten weeks, which is most surprising...

In general they also live to an old age, some of them one hundred and fifty, one hundred and sixty to two hundred years...

When the soldiers under the commandment of Artizoszki (under service of the West Indies Company), were assisted by the Tapuyers of King Jan Duwy in their conquest of Barra Canhou in Rio Grande, some of the commanding officers witnessed the Devil coming to them in the figure of a Tapuyer. He had only one leg and spoke in a very fine voice, like a woman, which is what enabled them to recognise him. When he vanished in front of their eyes, all of the women began to cry and scream, with this they seemed to honour him.

Johan Maurits

In a letter to the Prince of Orange, 1636, cited in: Caspar Barlaeus, Amsterdam 1647

Seven hundred of them are two miles from my encampment. They have installed themselves and have sent over envoys of representatives that were asking for peace and for an agreement in arms against the Portuguese. Their language was such that it could be understood by none of our people, nor by any of the Brazilians or the other Tapuyas, who were subject to us. However, through gestures and signs, we have made ourselves understood, and the main point is that they prevented the Portuguese, who live on the other side, from crossing the river. Thus if they were to attempt this, they would be murdered.

Barlaeus

Jacob Rabe cited in: Caspar Barlaeus, Amsterdam, 1647

They have a good name with the Dutch Brazilians because of their hatred of the Portuguese.

Vincent Joachim Soler

From a letter to André Rivet in Den Haag, Recife, 6 March, 1638

The country is good and very pleasant, and if it were free, it would be the home of our dreams.

Please bear in mind that the Company owns a big country full of enemies; unstable people leading a dissolute life to the highest degree, accustomed to surviving like rats in the hay,

and consequently unable to digest the exercise of good justice, like that which we have begun to establish and execute.

Johan Maurits

In his farewell speech, 1644

One has to govern over three types of people: the military, the merchants and the citizens – Portuguese as well as Dutch. Likewise, the way of governing is threefold: civil, religious and military. As far as military justice is concerned, I would advise strict rule, rather than a soft hand. They live amongst the Savages, where there is unlimited opportunity for wrongdoings, and through their daily contact with the Savages they sin, following their example.

A Dutch member of the council: Balthasar van de Voorde

Cited in *Tempo dos Flamengos*, José Antonio Gonsalves de Mello, Rio de Janeiro, 1947

We rule the country and its inhabitants, but the Portuguese rule all of our means.

Zacharias Wagener

Thierbuch, Mauricia/Dresden, 1640–48

The inside of the sugar cane or sugar-reed is full of sweet juice; on the outside it has many knots and joints. It is planted twice a year in the months of August and January. All along the fields they make long rows, one palm high from the ground, as many as the land can bear, but always leaving the space of half an arm between two of them. Then, the sugar cane is planted in small pieces all along the length of the top of the rows so that the pieces reach and touch each other, and then it is totally covered with earth. After eight, ten or twelve months, when the proper season arrives and the sugar cane is big and plentiful, the plant is cut and taken to the factory where the juice is squeezed out and boiled in large pots to prepare the sugar. It is made with a strong fire, using great heat and much toil.

Barlaeus

Adriaan van der Dussen, cited in Caspar Barlaeus, Amsterdam, 1647

The landowner leaves his land to several *lavradores*, and contracts them to plant it with sugar cane so that they are obliged to deliver to the mill every twenty-four hours. Each *terefa* contains as much cane as the *engenho* can grind in one day and one night. That is for an oxen-mill between twenty-five and thirty-five carloads and in a water-mill between forty and fifty cars.

Furthermore, the division of the profits is usually two-fifths for the *lavrador* and three-fifths for the lord of the *engenho*. For the maintenance of one *partido* – which obliges to deliver forty *terefas* of cane to the mill – a *lavrador* needs twenty Negroes along with their mattocks, machetes and axes, as well as four to eight cars depending on how close the field is to the mill. On his own account, the Seignor has to build all of the houses – such as the mill, *casa de calderas*, *casa de purgar*, and the pottery etc. – as well as pay all of the officials that handle the mill, the sugar, the Negroes and the oxen.

Frei Manuel Calado

O Valeroso Lucideno, Lisboa, 1648

The Dutch always treated the Portuguese from Pernambuco with smiling words but with thieving hands. They were full of tricks and strategies, which were profitable for them, but harmful for us. After all this stealing, they wanted our ships to

come to the port of Recife, and after paying all the rights and entrance taxes, we were obliged to sell them the merchandise for the price that the Council wanted, so that they could earn a good deal when reselling it to the *moradores*. Thereafter, so as not stay in the port too long, incur expenses, or leave the port without freight, they would have to buy the sugar, Brazil wood and other nonsense from the Supreme Council, who would let them have them only against excessive prices.

Vincent Joachim Soler

Letter to the Directors of the Zeeland Chamber of the WIC, Recife, 8 June, 1636

The disorder and confusion here is unimaginable. Everybody thinks only of themselves and little or nothing of the wellbeing of the Company. There is no sign of the fear of God, no justice, and vices thrive. In one word, I seem to be in Sodom or worse. The respectable people, who are but a few, are ridiculed and despised. This is demonstrated by Mr. Soorskerk, who even as a political counsellor, colleagues show him as much respect as they show me, which is almost none, because most business is concluded without him being informed of any of the details. Those who should suppress vices are the most addicted. Thus it looks as if they have come to introduce the reign of Satan and destroy that of the Son of God.

Johan Maurits

In his farewell speech, 1644

Nothing gives more irritation to the Portuguese than the daily extortions made, in disguise of the law by ‘sheriffs’ in the *capitanias*, who ransack the community over and above that which is owed.

Vincent Joachim Soler

Letter to André Rivet in Den Haag, Recife, 16 July 1636

My God, among what kind of people am I? I have seen a lot, but never have I found myself in such a situation. What we have here is the scum of Holland, Zeeland, etc.; people who do not know what civility or honour is, and even less so, fear of the Lord. These people take such offence of this that it would be better to go to a dance than to persuade them to embrace religion.

Gaspar Dias Ferreira

From an undated report originally in Portuguese

The *moradores* blame the Company for her tyrannical measures and unbearable management and describe her incongruities and errors so explicitly that everyone would be astonished as to how such an insane regime is possible anywhere in the world.

Johan Maurits

In his farewell speech, 1644

Don't think that Government is a matter of fortifications and ramparts, it lies in the middle of all sentiments and in the hearts of the people.

The Political Councils

Daily Minutes, 14 November 1639

Since it became a very fitting occasion to construct a town hall, the people built it with all the more pleasure, whilst Mauricia and Recife grew into a renowned city. Now that it has finally been decided that the Councils will meet there, and that, along with the five current serving aldermen, they will elect another four. There will be nine in all, consisting of five Dutchmen and four Portuguese. The current Council consists of three Portuguese and two Dutchmen, therefore three Dutchmen and one Portuguese will be elected.

Frei Manuel Calado

O Valeroso Lucideno,
Lisboa, 1648

The Portuguese inhabitants of Pernambuco went back to their houses, imagining that, with the war being lost, there would be new laws every day, as well as impositions to rob their farms and take their lives. Not two weeks had passed when the Dutch ministers of justice and war, who lived at their bases in the communities of the *Capitanias*, returned to their old habits of stealing and finding faults with the *moradores*, humiliating them and arresting them to take them to Recife. There it was expected that the Prince would solve the matters in the best way he could. However, to free themselves from the other ministers, the poor *moradores* had first to leave the wool to the ferocious tigers, feathers in the claws of the eagles, or blood and life in the hands of the hangman.

Dona Jerônima de Almeida, the wife of Rodrigo de Barros Pimentel (who had escaped to Bahia), had to pay for ninety boxes of sugar through the mediation of Gaspar Dias Ferreira, in order to escape her death. She had been taken as a prisoner in Porto de Calvo and brought to Recife, guilty of giving food to a troop of guerrillas from Bahia who had been carrying letters from her husband. There was no proof of this fault besides the testimony of one of her slaves – a black man whom she had punished with lashes over a robbery. For the Dutch the word of one black man was enough proof against the *moradores*, so they put the aforementioned lady – mother of nine daughters, all almost perfect women, and three sons – in a rough prison where she was forbidden to speak in Portuguese, and condemned her to be beheaded. For the Prince to forgive her after this sentence was passed, it was necessary for the wives of noble and important men that lived in the area of Recife to come together and lay themselves at the Prince's feet. In addition to this they surrounded his palace with heaps of boxes of sugar in order to attain their goal.

The Prince, Johan Maurits van Nassau, received these women with a smile (which he had for everybody) and courteously made them get up from the ground. He told them that if he had known that he would have received such famous and honourable guests, he would have prepared a banquet. However, as they had taken him by surprise, he invited them to share his dinner at his ordinary table. They kissed his hand for his mercy and favour, and answered that the banquet that they had come to seek at his house was to find grace in his eyes so that His Excellency would serve to aide Dona Jerônima in the face of such cruelty, and to grant her a pardon. As for dining at his table, they could not accept the honour, as among the Portuguese there was no custom of women eating at the same table as men, other than their husbands, and even then, only when there were no other guests, aside from fathers or brothers. However, they would put the favour that His Excellency was offering in the most intimate part of their hearts. The Prince was satisfied with the polite and honourable answer and bade his farewell, promising them that he would do everything he could when handling the request.

Johan Maurits

In his farewell speech, 1644

The Portuguese will be very submissive to you if they are treated with courtesy and benevolence, and in this way you will

obtain more benefit and obedience from them than from our own people. I know from experience that the Portuguese attribute more importance to courtesy and good treatment than to material benefits.

I carry the opinion that some of the Portuguese, who are highly respected by their own, can be won over by kindnesses or faithful promises, and can be persuaded into secret meetings. The clergymen are the best at conducting these art forms, they share all the secrets and their dignity protects them from the cloud of suspicion.

Frei Manuel Calado

O Valeroso Lucideno,
Lisboa, 1648

Maurits: I am unhappy with the Governor of Bahia, Antônio Teles da Silva, because he disdained my position and is giving me considerable aggravation.

Calado: What aggravation?

Maurits: He wrote me a letter in which he addressed me as 'Excellency'. To answer him properly, I took the advice of a prudent Portuguese friend in the way I should greet him in return. He told me that I should call him 'Sir', which I did. Now I am seeing that in response to this letter he treats me as 'Sir', not once, but many times.

Calado: In Holland, Your Excellency does not have a higher title than 'Sir'. If those who live here in Brazil treat him as Eminency, Highness or Majesty, they do so, understanding that this pleases him. [...]

Your Excellency represents the Heeren XIX, the Directors of the West Indies Company, who are merchants, some of whom are Jewish. The Prince of Orange addresses them as 'you', and the ordinary people as 'Your Honour'. No-one can give that which he has not, how would it be possible that he, who does not have more than a 'Honour' or a 'you', can give 'Excellencies'? The Governor of Bahia represents his Majesty the King of Portugal, Dom João the Fourth, who may give 'Lords', 'Excellencies' and 'Highnesses' to whomever appears before him. Suppose he doesn't give more than 'Lord' to his Governors of Brazil, there is still a large difference between a representative of a Sovereign King and that of merchants. And when the Governor greeted you as 'Your Excellency', Your Excellency would not have lost anything in returning this courtesy in your letter.

Vincent Joachim Soler

Letter to André Rivet in
Den Haag, Via Mauritia,
10 September 1640

The Portuguese – who have received a heap of pardons despite being traitorous and malicious people – loudly exclaimed that only the House of Nassau could have produced such a gentle, humane and friendly Master. Those who were prisoners of war swore to announce this everywhere. Now, after so many unquestionable witnesses, they accuse him of cruelty? How could it have entered their minds that even the slightest trace of this could exist in him? If I am not mistaken, I am rather suspicious that such abominable slander must serve a purpose. Time will show.

Johan Maurits

Letter to the Heeren XIX, WIC,
31 March 1641

[Hereby] the definite image or map of Mauritsstadt and Reciffe, including the bridge.

The Political Councils

To the Heeren XIX, Daily
Minutes, 18 February 1641

Heeren XIX, West Indies Company

Letter from Amsterdam, 19
April 1635, to the Political
Council of Pernambuco

Zacharias Wagener

Thierbuch, Mauricia/Dresden,
1640–1648

Director of Angola, West Indies Company

Report by P. Morthamer, having
just been appointed director of
Angola, 29 June 1643, address-
ed to the Zeeland Chamber of
WIC, Middelburg

Johan Maurits

Political testament of 1644

Balthasar de Fonseca promised to carry out the aforementioned work. Having had this type of work in his hands before, Fonseca was a man who had the insight it took, so after much bargaining, it was agreed that he will construct the bridge and complete it within a period of two years for the sum of 240,000 guilders, as well as an honorary one thousand *patacas* (=2,500 guilders) to his housewife when he married.

We also consider that it would be better if the *engenhos* would be worked by white folk. However, we cannot expect the appearance of such workers, from Holland no more than of Portugal, so one is obliged to use Negroes.

These blacks are brought to Brazil from Africa, taken from the neighbouring and adjacent territories to Guinea, Angola, Cape Verde, the Congo river and others. They have had great wars between each other, using swords, shields and long *assagai*. According to an ancient right of the people, those that defeat the others in battle take them and consider them as their slaves and servants. Thus, some blacks come to have thirty, forty, fifty or more captives, which they use repeatedly in the warlike expeditions or for other work. Most, however, are sold to the Portuguese, who live there, and then [sold] again to our people, who immediately bring hundreds of them to Brazil in order to trade them for a high price with the wealthy sugar factory owners. [The blacks] are treated very badly by them, receiving little food and are forced to work without rest in the mills and cane-fields, hardly having time to breathe. They are not allowed to carry any sort of weapon except for the wooden clubs, called '*canodzen*', which they wear on their waists when they dance on Sundays.

The Portuguese are much better slave traders than we are. They can easily carry five hundred blacks on a small Caravelle, whilst our larger ships can hardly transport three hundred at a time. Through their care for the Negroes, with good sanitation, nutrition, and blankets, the Portuguese seldom have deaths on their ships. Besides this, they let the blacks get used to the life of a slave in Africa, so that they don't feel the lack of freedom when they get to the New World. When we follow their example, we maintain better goods, have a lesser death toll during transport, and can obtain higher prices in Brazil.

It will be for the benefit of the Company if the Negroes are better looked after. From the six thousand four hundred people that were sent over from Africa six months ago, one thousand five hundred and twenty-five have not reached their destination alive. I cannot attribute this to anything else other than their wretched treatment in the ships, where they are kept dirty, badly fed, and end up perishing.

According to the size of their bodies, they differ in price. They should be given time to gain strength after the sea journey; without that, these emaciated beings sink below all prices. Weakened by the journey, they soon die after disembarking.

To sell them in the usual manner, with payments in instalments, will prove to be less desirable. In the dense and tumultuous stampede of the bystanders – where no attention can be paid to the buyers and their warranties – it happens that a large faction of the Negroes are allocated to those who care less about the settling of their debts, or who hide in the woods and live from robbery and theft.

That is why I would like that the bodies of the Negroes are given the mark of the Company, so that our deceitful people will not exchange the worse ones for the better ones.

Zacharias Wagener

Thierbuch, Mauricia/Dresden,
1640–1648

Black women are no less slender and well-proportioned than the men. Yet they are not spared, having to work in an exhausting manner in the mills and cane-fields just as the men and children do. Some of them know Spanish and Dutch money well, so their owners send them into the streets to sell chickens, birds, dried fish and all sorts of magnificent fruit, all well counted one by one. If the black is careless and takes false money, or only a small amount, when she returns home and gives poor account to her master she is immediately bound and soundly whipped. Thus they prefer to be employed in other more tiring service than to be involved in such dangerous trade.

Our people, like the Portuguese, recently decided that it would be a good idea to put certain signs or marks on men, women and children, by using a hot iron on the chest or on the neck. If they run away from their masters (which frequently happens), the field captains in charge of finding them are able to recognize them as soon as they lay their hands on them. They tie their hands behind their backs and hand them over to their owners in return for a fixed reward. They are welcomed back with many a sound beating.

The Political Councils

Daily Minutes of 24 January
1636

Otto Heytmeijer's housewife was so stubborn in her wish to take her black nanny (who belonged to the Company) with her to Holland, that her request was reluctantly granted.

The Political Councils

Notes of the Assembly of all
respective Churches, 1648

The assembly is aware that, amongst other reasons, God is wrathful towards us because, until now, no attempts have been made to bring the knowledge of God and his son Jesus Christ to the Negroes, so that the souls of these poor people, whose bodies we use in our service, can be brought from the slavery of Satan. This was judged by a man of learning as a necessary requisition to make the trade of the black people lawful in the eyes of God.

Frei Manuel Calado

O Valeroso Lucideno,
Lisboa, 1648

Finally the merchants met with the preacher, and one of them said: 'Here are some slaves that came from Cabo Verde, which have been mixed in with the other Minas and Ardas. Gaspar Dias Ferreira is going to sell them so that it will not emerge as to how he and the Count had sent the boat to Cabo Verde. However, the Lords of the Supreme Councils know everything. And if they don't insist on their rights now, and accept that the boat is lost for the Company, it will be because they know they will disappear one day, when the Prince is gone. Gaspar Dias

will pay for the damage, and in Holland the Company will ask the Prince for the restitution of the loss that he has caused them.'

The slaves which came from the illegal boat from Cabo Verde, and hadn't been sold, had been sent by Gaspar Dias to the *engenho* of his mother in law, Isabel Cardoso. In order to sell them without being noticed, he bought a group of 'pieces' with the help of a Jew named Gaspar Francisco, and, as always, the Count of Nassau. These Ardas, Minas and Calabares had come from the coast of Africa in a legal Patacho (a small merchant boat with two masts) and had been put up for sale in front of his door in the city of Mauriceia. Between these he mixed in the leftover Cabo Verdian Negroes, and so with this lie – which was well known to everybody – he was able to get rid of all of them.

In front of Gaspar Dias' door, there passed some Dutch and French merchants, who were meeting with the preacher Francês Vincente Soler – a Valencia-born Augustine monk, who had fled from his Religion to France, where he had married and become a preacher of the Calvinist sect, practicing under this title in Pernambuco. At this moment he was annoyed with the Count, who had disdained the love of his daughter Margarita Soler, and accommodated himself with the daughter of Sergeant Major Baía, which had caused his daughter to die of passion and sadness.

Vincent Joachim Soler

Letters to Andre Rivet in Den Haag, Mauritia, 20 March and of 5 June, 1643

[My wife, Maria,] she has never liked this country, especially now that we have been forced to separate our daughter from her husband after living with him for five years without him ever performing his duties as a husband, appearing to be *ex frigidis*.

Since then, God has paid us a visit and taken away our dear daughter. May His Holy Name be praised.

Frei Manuel Calado

O Valeroso Lucideno, Lisboa, 1648

The time arrived for the Prince to depart. Before he went back to Holland he finished the bridge that he had begun to construct between the cities of Mauricéia and Recife. As we are speaking about the bridge, you must know that, to earn more money, the Prince and the Council asked to build the bridge on stone pillars, over the two rivers of Capivaribe and Beberibe, which join each other at the sea. These rivers separate Recife from the city of Mauricéia, named after Prince Johan Maurits, who had built it.

For the price of ninety thousand cruzados, half of the bridge was contracted to Balthasar d'Alfonseca, a perfect man by birth who had now been circumcised and publicly declared himself a Jew, to the great outrage of the Christian people.

Johan Maurits

From his political testament, 1644

In ecclesiastical matters, or in affairs of the Church, tolerance or compliance is more necessary with Brazilians than with any other people that have been granted religious free-dom. If fervour and Christian zeal for true worship urges you to think otherwise, it is better that you do not manifest it. Every one of you should suppress personal feelings in this matter to avoid great inconvenience.

However, you should be strict with those among the Portuguese that have a tendency towards treason. Even so, it is sometimes better – for prudence and certain other reasons – that the punishment is tempered with compassion. In this way you will be loved and feared – a combination of which is very necessary as a Governor. He who leans excessively towards one or other of these will not last long in his governorship.

Vincent Joachim Soler

Letters to André Rivet in Den Haag, Recife, 6 May and 10 September 1640

The Jews multiply, enjoy great freedom, and take on more airs than ever. It is as clear as the sun that they ruin the traffic, suck the blood of the people, and frustrate and violate the Company. In spite of this, they are supported and favoured to the detriment of the Christian merchants; not by His Excellency, who nurtures a deadly hatred for them, but by the Council Members.

Disgrace to whomever calls sweet bitter and light darkness. Good God what diabolic slander. In my opinion, His Excellency always forgives all too much, although I am inclined to do likewise. Few weeks go by without my obtaining forgiveness for someone, especially the French, who are, much to my regret, too rebellious and insolent. I am afraid to bother him so often, but he likes to forgive, above all without being asked.

The Political Councils

Daily Minutes of 11 June 1641 and 13 February 1645

The servants of the Divine Word, as well as the elders of the Gemeente Cristi in Recife, request to prohibit the promotion of the Nation of the Anti-Christ in this land. In the first place, according to the contract made between them and the High Authorities, they don't practice their religion within the walls of their churches, but do it publicly in the streets, in broad daylight, in the face of the whole world. We also add that some spectators of their idolatry – who would rather honour their God than their Idol – are being threatened and beaten.

It is certain that the insolence of our people in this, and on other occasions, is often so great that the Portuguese can hardly refrain themselves from attacking us with words and deeds.

Heeren XIX, West Indies Company

Letter to Maurits and the Political Council, 24 October 1643

In our last meeting it was briefly mentioned how few reports have reached us from Your Excellency and the Gentlemen of the Council on the subject of the bridge, so we are already hesitating to believe that this work will ever be brought to perfection.

Heeren XIX, West Indies Company

Letter to Maurits and the Political Council, 10 October 1642

From our side, we confirm that there is no way that the Company will apply its means to complete the work on the aforementioned bridge, and that, frankly, if the inhabitants are not easily persuaded into bringing the necessary contributions to this work, Your Excellency and Honourable Sirs will have to count on other facilitators, and exclude the expenses of the Company, or otherwise cease the commenced work and bring the ferryboat into action again.

The Political Councils

Daily Minutes of 29 November 1649

A strict prohibition has been sent out from here that states that nobody should mix with the Brazilians. Their nation is very

jealous, which has led to our nation being expelled. The aforementioned Beem has, however, mixed with a Brazilian woman and has therefore been deported.

Dominee Kemp

Letter to the Council dated
1651

Three of our people wanted to marry Brazilian women, however they were restrained from this by fear. It is my opinion that this does not lead to good ends. If the Brazilian nation is not fit to pair off with us, then don't let us keep their women as slaves or mistreat them, as this only induces hatred between our nations.

Heeren XIX, West Indies Company

Instructions concerning the politics of the regions in the West Indies, both those that have been conquered and those still to be conquered:

The Brazilians and those indigenous to the land will be left in their freedom. They will not be turned into slaves, but will be governed alongside the other inhabitants.

Barlaeus

Caspar Barlaeus, *Nederlands Brazilië onder het bewind van Johan Maurits van Nassau*, Amsterdam, 1647

As the Count had wisely proposed, the authorities of the *Capitanias* have been addressed in order to grant that the Brazilians return to their villages and settlements. Given that our people were living so closely together, and that no fields were available for them to grow the flour from which they must live, the former began to require our welfare. In the meantime, the agricultural workers that had been left to unemployment, have now caused hindrances, and are destroying the fields that were supposed to be protected against damage. In addition to this, the Dutch required the Brazilians to work for them without payment, which resulted in them becoming hostile towards our people. He has certainly granted some rare examples of justice and fairness towards the Savages, by showing them all sorts of benevolences, such as establishing wages in accordance with their labour, and a decent compensation for their services and responsibilities.

Since he has been more moved than indignant over their heathen condition, out of humanity, he has loved those that he could not have possibly loved out of religious conviction or faith.

The Political Councils

Daily Minutes of 29 April 1645

Furthermore His Excellency suggests that it has come to his attention that the bridge between Recife and Mauritsstad – over which the tightness of the Company purse has not been the smallest of the problems we have faced – is being realised very slowly. Taking into account the recent protocols of the Heeren XIX, His Excellency seems to despair over the completion of the work, and has begun to complete the bridge to Recife in wood, being of the opinion that – besides the reasons that motivated the XIX to build the bridge – his honour and respect would be in question if such a large work that was undertaken during his government, remained incomplete. Because of the scarcity of the Company's money, the use of stone pillars, with which an advance is needed, has been ruled out.

Participants/ performers

Anthony Clarke, born in Birmingham (UK) of Jamaican parents. Trained as a visual artist at Goldsmiths' College, University of London. Worked as a pattern cutter for Levi Strauss Europe in Brussels. After specializing in tailoring at the London College of Fashion, he currently works as head of the pattern cutting department of Hilfiger Denim Europe, Amsterdam. Father of a young son.

Mario Campanella, born in Rio de Janeiro, of German mother and Italo-Brazilian father. Artificial Intelligence programmer for architecture and urbanism with an interest in researching self-organized systems, which he practices independently and currently also for the Faculty of Transportation at Delft University of Technology (TU Delft). Father of one daughter.

Romeo K. Gambier, born in Zaandam of Surinamese parents. For some years he served as Corporal First Class in the Royal Netherlands Army. Since 1995 he has been a HipHop DJ, writes lyrics and is active in theatre in Rotterdam. One of the protagonists in 'The Basis For A Song' 2005.

Eunice Landvreugd, born in Parimaribo, Surinam. Has worked as a nurse and home carer in the Netherlands for over thirty years. Mother of three grown up children. Member of the association 'Wi Egi Sani' (our own thing), which aims to keep the oral traditions from Surinam alive through theatre and song and to educate the Afro-Surinam community in the Netherlands in their own history.

Charl Landvreugd, born in Parimaribo. At a young age organised some very successful clubs and parties, such as the EYE and Danssalon in Rotterdam, where he worked with Grace Jones and Nicky Nicole. Started a degree in Fine Art and Contemporary Critical Studies at Goldsmiths' College, University of London in 2005.

Cristiane de Morais Smith, born in Paraguaçu Paulista, State of São Paulo, Brazil. After a Ph.D. in theoretical physics in Campinas, Brazil, she has held positions in ETH, Zürich, Hamburg University, and Université de Fribourg (CH), and is currently Professor in the Institute for Theoretical Physics, University of Utrecht.

Peter Olsthoorn, born in Monster, Westland. Holds a Ph.D. in political theory from Leiden University. He is assistant professor at the Netherlands Defence Academy, where he teaches on ethics. He is the author of a number of articles on subjects such as military honour and the relationship between humiliation and terrorism. Father of three young children.

Nienke Terpsma, born in Wisch in the Achterhoek. Her father was born in Surakarta, which, at the time, was called Solo. She is an artist, photographer and graphic designer. Since 2003 she has produced the independent, critical magazine *Fucking Good Art* together with Rob Hamelijncx.

Alexander Vollebregt, born in Uganda and raised in various African nations by his Dutch father and his mother, who is from the Dutch colony Curaçao. He is an architect and an assistant professor at the Faculty of Architecture at Delft University of Technology (TU Delft). Coordinator of Spacelab: Research Laboratory for the Contemporary City. Just published: *Hidden Places, Hidden Powers* (in 'visualising the invisible', Techne Press, Amsterdam 2006). At the International Visual Sociology Association Conference he chaired the session 'Imaging the City After Humanism'.

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Booklet

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