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Brazilian history begins with a gesture of inverted generosity: civilizing the native population, exploiting their labor and obliging them to convert their souls to a religion foreign to them. After four centuries, Brazil began to show generosity towards its African slaves: it enacted the Lei do Ventre Livre, stating that the newborn children of slaves would be free.

Their mothers, however, continued as slaves. There was also generosity shown the elderly slaves, when they could no longer work.

The Lei Áurea, the abolition law, was another of our acts of generosity: the slaves now could no longer either be sold or subjected to forced labor, but we did not give them land to produce their own food or schools for their children.

More recently, almost on the 500th anniversary of our country's existence, we generously established a minimum salary. But the salary was so minimum that it was always insufficient to cover the basic costs of the essential goods and services.

To prevent a worker shortage, we made yet another generous gesture: the vale-refeição, or meal ticket. While their families went without food, the workers received the meals that their salary would not cover.

During slavery, we generously offered "housing" to the slaves: the fetid, unhealthy slave quarters. When industrialization put the workers in housing distant from their workplaces, and their salary did not permit them to pay bus fare, we generously offered the vale-transporte, or bus pass, even if the worker and his or her family could not visit relatives or stroll around the downtown area during the weekend.

We have been generous in offering income tax breaks to finance private schools, inclusive of the children of the wealthy, at a value greater than the average annual expenditure for a child in public school, above all for the children of the poor.

Generously we offer the Bolsa Família, a Conditional Cash Transfer program, but we do not commit ourselves to emancipating the poor from the need for such programs. We generously do not offer childcare or preschools for our children, causing despair in thousands of mothers who need to work and are obliged to leave their children in the care of other children or neighbors.

Generously we also offer quotas to facilitate the university admission of young Brazilians of African descent, but we do not make the necessary effort to eradicate the illiteracy that tortures nearly 11 million Brazilians, the great majority of them black or of mixed race.

We are generous in facilitating the indebtedness of families in Class C, the rising middle class, who can buy cars to be paid off in up to 100 months, without sales tax, but we have not eliminated taxes upon the basket of basic necessities, nor have we improved public transportation for all the classes, including Class D and Class E, the lower-income classes.

Our generosity culminates in spending many billions of reais to host the World Cup and the Olympics in Brazil, which our poor are going to watch on television, while we are not making the commitment to invest our petroleum royalties in the education of our future generations.

We are a coherent country, with five centuries of selective generosity that is inverted, or perverted.

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