



Some Historiographical Aspects about African and Afro-Brazilian Black Men and Women in the Diaspora and in the Formation of Brazil

José Francisco dos Santos¹

ABSTRACT

The teaching of Afro-Brazilian history and culture has become mandatory in 2003 with Law 10,639. Until this date, the history that has been told to us, mainly through textbooks, has impregnated in the collective imaginary the representation of black bodies as bodies devoid of humanity, reified bodies, without any reaction to the system of slavery to which they were subjected. Despite the process of exclusion that they still experience in contemporary times, the history of black women and men in the African and Afro-Brazilian diaspora requires another narrative that will restore to this humanity its place of protagonism and resistance in the formation of Brazil. That is the purpose of this text.

Keywords: Racism, slavery, identity, diaspora, Afro-Brazilian and African history.

Resumo: O ensino de história e cultura afro-brasileira tornou-se obrigatório a partir de 2003 com a Lei 10.639. Até essa data, a história que nos foi contada, principalmente através dos livros didáticos, impregnou no imaginário coletivo a representação dos corpos negros como corpos desprovidos de humanidade, corpos reificados, sem nenhuma reação ao sistema de escravidão a que foram submetidos. Apesar do processo de exclusão que ainda vivenciam na contemporaneidade, a história das negras e negros na diáspora africana e afro-brasileira exige outra narrativa que venha restituir a essa humanidade o seu lugar de protagonismo e resistência na formação do Brasil. Esse é o objetivo desse texto.

Palavras-chave: Racismo, escravidão, identidade, diáspora, história afro-brasileira e africana.

Resumen: La enseñanza de la historia y cultura afrobrasileña se hizo obligatoria en 2003

¹ PhD in History from the Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo – PUCSP, professor of History of Africa/Afro-Brazilian History and Culture; Master's in Human and Social Sciences - PPGCHS, and Master's in Teaching PPGE from the Universidade Federal do Oeste da Bahia - UFOB. Email: jose.francisco.puc@gmail.com/ jose.santos.@ufob.edu.br.

con la Ley 10.639. Hasta esa fecha, la historia que nos contaron, principalmente a través de libros de texto, impregnaba en la imaginación colectiva la representación de los cuerpos negros como cuerpos desprovistos de humanidad, cuerpos reificados, sin ninguna reacción al sistema de esclavitud al que fueron sometidos. A pesar del proceso de exclusión que todavía experimentan hoy en día, la historia de las mujeres y los hombres negros en la diáspora africana y afrobrasileña requiere otra narrativa que restaure a esta humanidad a su lugar de protagonismo y resistencia en la formación de Brasil. Este es el propósito de este texto.

Palabras-clave: Racismo, esclavitud, identidad, diáspora, Historia afrobrasileña y africana.

Introduction

It is true, of course, that African identity is still in the process of formation. There is no final identity that is African. But at the same time, there is a nascent identity. And it has a certain context and a certain meaning. Because when someone meets me in a store in Cambridge, he asks: "Are you from Africa?" Which means that Africa means something to some people. Each of these labels has a meaning, a price and a responsibility. (ACHEBE apud APPIAH, 2014, p.112).

The Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe, when he makes this reflection about the "African being", highlights the issue of African identity as an identity under construction, while also showing how abstract it is. When we ask a Frenchman if he is European, in general, this interlocutor will not hesitate to answer yes, although, in most cases, his French identity comes first. A Brazilian, when identified as a Latin American will find it strange even though Brazil is the largest country in South America, while an American will find it normal to be called an American. Starting from this premise, we realize that the construction of identities goes through complex issues. It is about such issues that we intend to discuss in a specific way, in particular, about the Afro-Brazilian and African identity in the colonial period until the present day.

Brazil is notoriously known for having, in absolute numbers, the largest black population in the world, second only to Nigeria, however, its descendants coming from the African diasporas know little or almost nothing about their ancestors. This non-recognition has to do with the process orchestrated by the Brazilian State, which in its history has tried not to value the cultural products coming from these populations. One of these devaluation strategies is in formal education, in the way the black population was narrated and represented in specific curricular components, a fact ratified by Ferro (1983, p.11 apud SANTOS, 2019), "let us not be deceived: the image we make of other peoples and ourselves

is associated with the History that we were taught when we were children. It marks us for the rest of our lives”.

With the implementation of Law 10,639 of 2003, sanctioned by then-president Luís Inácio Lula da Silva, black and African representation, albeit timidly, has begun to be changed in school benches and, thus, in Brazilian society. It is recorded that the struggle for another history has been going on for a long time, and the law itself is a result of the struggles of black social movements, among others, that precisely have been wanting to see their history told in another way and, therefore, to be recognized and valued.

The Issue of Slavery in the World and in Brazil

Over time, the Brazilian black population has been shown in history books as an object, so that when we talk about slavery, the image of black people chained and being whipped comes to mind. These scenes are still in some textbooks, unfortunately, because it is a true story, but slavery cannot be linked only to the history of black Africans who came to America, in our case specifically, to Brazil. As researcher Jacob Gorender points out in his book, *O escravismo colonial* (2016):

(...) It is tempting to equate colonial slavery with capitalism, and this leads us to a dead end. Equally tempting is to equate it with ancient slavery. Genovese yielded to that last temptation when he wrote that the slave systems of the Americas must be understood as an essentially archaic mode of production, hence it is not paradoxical that the historian takes refuge in the so formless idea of “a specific paradox”. By its scale, American slavery presented the appearance of a resurrection of ancient Mediterranean slavery, especially Roman slavery. In fact, there is in both the common trait of slave labor as the dominant type of labor exploitation. But the structure and dynamics were different in both, so much so that Roman imperial society was faced with the impasse represented by the impossibility of evolving from archaic patriarchal slavery to modern mercantile slavery (...). (GORENDER, 2016, p. 8788).

The different times/spaces of slavery are perceptible in the highlighted quote. The very word slave has its origins in Slavic peoples who were placed in a state of servitude. In this regard, however, the author adds that:

According to Charles Verlinden, the term *sclavus* was used by Germans in a limited period of the 10th and 11th centuries, applying it to captives of *Slavic* origin brought from the European East. *Sclavus* (in German, *Sklave*) therefore indicated the foreign captive coming from a Slavic country, and

distinguished him from the *servus* from the Germanic nationality itself. The new term died with that traffic of Slavs sold in Germany. When, however, in the 13th century, the Venetians and Genoese began to carry a constant flow of captives from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean basin, the term *sclavus* was applied to them again and became current in Italy. From there it spread to other countries, being adopted in French and English texts in order to distinguish native serfs from foreign captives. In fact, however, the distinction, initially related only to an ethnic difference, became a distinction between social categories in a lengthy and irregular process followed by Marc Bloch. (GORENDER, 2016, p. 111).

Also, according to Gorender (2016), the term slave exists before the Atlantic trade, which was even one of the so-called slave trades.

In the Iberian Peninsula, the terms *captivus* and *sarracenus* gradually replaced the term *servus*, which is explained by the increasing number of Muslims reduced to captivity during the Christian Reconquest. But the trade of captives from Slavic countries introduced the term *sclavus* also in Spain during the 14th century. In Portugal, it was in the 15th century that the new term *slave* became significantly generalized, comments Brion Davis, at a time when the slave trade began to take shape. Here too, the distinction of ethnic or racial origin acquired social content. (GORENDER, 2016, p. 111-112).

Thus, the term slave ends up taking shape with the slave trade to the Americas. This trafficking serves as an argument, nowadays, in discussions against affirmative action policies.² The enslavement of Africans by them is a “common sense” argument that reduces a complex issue to a simple exemplification. As already mentioned in this text, yes, there was slavery on the African continent as well as on other continents, such as Europe itself. However, when we make such comparisons, we make a big mistake towards the historical analysis, the anachronism, since these enslaved peoples will only have the consciousness of continent after the exploitation process that culminated in the Berlin Conference, at the end of the 19th century, a process that took place from the outside to the inside, in which different social groups were forced to live in the same territory.

On the issue of trafficking, the Congolese historian Elikia M'Bokolo presents an important argument for our line of reasoning:

We can endlessly wonder what would have been the result of the social,

² The demand for reparations aims at requiring the State and society to take measures to compensate the descendants of black Africans for the psychological, material, social, political and educational damage suffered under the slave regime, as well as due to the explicit or tacit policies of whitening the population, maintenance of exclusive privileges for groups with the power to govern and influence the formulation of policies in the post-abolition period. It also aims for such measures to materialize in initiatives to combat racism and all kinds of discrimination (ULISSES, 2007, p.32).

political, demographic and economic dynamics that Africa showed from the 7th to the 15th centuries, if the slave trade had not taken place. One thing is certain: these dynamics were broken, muffled, diverted by the slave trades. It is necessary to begin by remembering this fact of evidence whose importance is not always taken into account: if slavery was a practice of all human societies at one time or another in its history, no continent has known it for such a long period (7th-15th centuries), a bloodletting as continuous and as systematic as the African continent. Because what makes Africa specific is, even more than slavery, the slave trade, that is to say the regular trade of human beings reduced to slavery to be sold, the whole operation being carried out through the use of violence without precedents (...). (M'BOKOLO, 2009, p. 209).

According to Elikia M'Bokolo, the African continent was the one that systematically suffered from the processes of slave trafficking, both internal and transoceanic. If in a previous period, slavery was not a practice inherent only to black Africa, after the Atlantic trade it will become to be known in this way. The author writes about the religious justifications that in the past already found support in Islam with the "curse of Can". In this same direction, "saving their souls"³ was the justification of the Catholic Church in supporting the Iberian slave trade to the Americas.

The slavery system in Brazil, according to Jacob Gorender (2016), was "innovative", given it had not been used before, the *plantation*. In the Portuguese American colony, black African slave labor was used on a large scale at a time when the economic system called mercantilism was being monetized. Therefore, such a system required wage labor at least in theory. On this issue, Gorender makes the following consideration:

It is therefore necessary to conclude that the colonial slavery mode of production is inexplicable as a synthesis of preexisting modes of production, in the case of Brazil. Its emergence finds no explanation in the one-sided directions of evolutionism or diffusionism. Not that colonial

³ Regarding these justifications, it is worth noting what M'Bokolo exposes, from the mid-15th century: we witness the formation of the ideological arsenal destined to justify the trafficking and slavery of Africans. When describing the joy of Infante D. Henrique in the face of "the novelty of those servants [...] not because of their number, but because of the hope of others that there could be", Zurara also explained "that the force of the greatest good was theirs, that since their bodies were in some subjection, this was a small thing compared to their souls, which would eternally have true freedom" (1937, pp. 79-80). References to the myth can be found in the same famous Portuguese chronicler, already in force in the countries of Islam, according to which the slavery of Africans was justified by the Holy Scriptures: "And you will notice that these blacks, although they are Moors [i.e., Muslims] like the others [the Arabs], they are nevertheless servants of those by ancient custom, which I believe is because of the curse that after the flood Noah laid on his son Cam, by which he cursed him, that his generation would be subject to all the other generations of the world, from which these descend, as the archbishop D. Rodrigo de Toledo writes and so [Flávio] Josepho in the book of The Antiquities of the Jews, and also Gualtero [Gauthier de Châtillon] with other authors who spoke of the generations of Noah after the departure of the ark" (p. 85). It is clear at this date that the current opinion already found in a fallacious interpretation of the Scriptures the historical and theological justification for the slavery of blacks (M'BOKOLO, 2008, p.262).

slavery was an arbitrary invention outside of any historical conditioning. Quite the contrary, colonial slavery emerged and developed within a strictly defined socioeconomic determinism in time and space. It is precisely from this determinism of complex factors that colonial slavery emerged as a way of producing *new* characteristics previously unknown in human history. Neither did it constitute a repetition or return of ancient slavery, placing itself in a "regular" sequence to primitive communism nor did it result from the synthetic conjugation between the tendencies inherent to the Portuguese social formation of the 16th century and the indigenous tribes. (...). (GORENDER, 2016, p. 85).

Authors such as Stuart Hall (2003), Paulo Gilroy (2012), Kwame Anthony Appiah (2007), Achille Mbembe (2018), among others, deal with the issue of the African or black diaspora, which brought many people from the African continent to the Americas, in their studies in which they reflect beyond the objectification of these people who were forced to cross the ocean in tomb ships⁴.

These people came in a coercive way for forced labor and were not considered human beings, but an "instrument", "a piece" for carrying out the production of agricultural products in the *plantation* system, or for domestic services. Black people will be treated like animals, even if this expression seems strong, since the sociologist and anthropologist Gilberto Freyre in his work speaks of a pleasant relationship between whites and blacks if one thinks about other places where there was slavery. The "Escola Paulista de Sociologia", led by Florestan Fernandes, will call this relationship "Racial Democracy", a topic that we will address later.

Returning to the question of objectification of black people in slavery, in Brazil it is important to highlight another passage from Gorender:

The oppressed can come to see himself as his oppressor sees him. The slave could assume his condition as a possessed animal as his own and natural condition. A borderline case of this order can be seen from the report of Tollenare. In Pernambuco, slaves of an enemy were killed for revenge, as one would kill their cattle. A lord of a sugar mill farm, who gained the enmity of evicted residents from the lands they occupied, had

⁴ Regarding the term tomb, M'Bokolo points out: Portuguese slave ships were called tombs. One description, among others, by the Italian Franciscan Carli, shows the conditions of travel from Angola to Brazil (35 days to reach Pernambuco, 40 days to Bahia, 50 days to Rio de Janeiro) at the beginning of the 17th century: The men were piled up at the bottom of the hold, chained, for fear they would revolt and kill all the whites on board. The women were put in the second bridge. Those who were pregnant were concentrated in the aft cabin. The children were stacked on the first bridge like herring in a barrel. In case they wanted to sleep, they fell on top of each other. There were bilges to satisfy their needs, but, as many feared losing their place, they relieved themselves where they were, especially the men cruelly accumulated in such a way that the heat and the smell among them became unbearable (Quoted by Frédéric Mauro, *Le Portugal et l'Atlantique au XVIIe siècle, 1570-1670, Étude économique*, Paris, SEVPEN, 1960, p. 171) (M'BOKOLO, 2008, p.294-295).

assigned a black man to the French visitor in order to accompany him on the tours. The black man did not dare to approach the village of the hostile residents and justified himself: "What would my master say if they kill me?". (GORENDER, 2016, p. 94).

Nevertheless, this example is extreme, but it highlights the “thing” condition of black people. The author comes to a sad conclusion:

Similar borderline cases were possible, but they were not characteristic of slave behavior at all times. Their behavior and conscience would have to transcend the condition of a possessed thing in the relationship to the master and to free men in general. And they transcended, above all, by the criminal act. The first *human* act of the slave is the *crime*, from the attempt against the master to the escape from captivity. On the other hand, by recognizing the *criminal* responsibility of slaves, the slave society recognized them as men: in addition to including them in the law of things, it submitted them to penal legislation. This kind of knowledge had, of course, a high price. Slaves have always suffered the heaviest and most infamous punishments. Mutilations were not only provided for by Roman law but also by the Portuguese Filipino Code and by the various penal legislations of the American colonies, at one time or another, including in Brazil. But the cruelest punishment, precisely because it was a punishment, implied the recognition that a human being was being punished. (GORENDER, 2016, p. 94).

The adjective “cruel” used by the author suffices to summarize the illustrated slave behavior. Regarding the supposed passivity of the enslaved, the researcher Clovis Moura, in his book *Quilombolas* (1989), argues that, although considered a “thing”, the slaves had various forms of revolt against this condition. However, in the classic historiography of colonial Brazil, following the example of authors such as Caio Prado Jr, the justifications for the enslavement of the black people and not the indigenous people do not find an argument to this day. In some textbooks before Law 10,639/03, and unfortunately even after this law, authors argue that black people were enslaved because they were “stronger”, because they did not know the land and “therefore could not escape” and, also because the “Indian [would be] lazy” because “he would run away to the forest and was not strong”.

Caio Prado Jr., in his book *História Econômica do Brasil* (1981), strengthens this prejudice by stating that:

(...) Unlike Mexico and the Andean countries, there were only sparse populations of very low cultural level in Brazil. Therefore, the service they would render to the colonists would not be great, so the colonists were forced to supply themselves with labor in Africa. Brazilian indigenous people did not easily submit to the organized work that colonization demanded of them; they were little used to sedentary occupations (they

were semi-nomadic peoples, living almost exclusively from hunting, fishing and natural harvesting); they resisted or were decimated on a large scale by the discomfort of a life so averse to their habits. Others defended themselves with weapons in hand; they were gradually eliminated, but not before considerably embarking on the progress of the nascent colonization that, in many places and for a long time, had to advance fighting and defending itself against a persistent and active aggressiveness of the gentiles. (PRADO Jr, 1981, p. 12).

This renowned historian, considered by Antônio Candido, Sergio Buarque de Holanda and Gilberto Freyre as the “interpreter of Brazil”, when arguing the reasons for the use of “labor” coming from Africa due to the small amount of the indigenous population and for all the other considerations made here, legitimizes the idea of a subservience and passivity of the peoples coming from the African continent.

Black and African Revolts and Resistance in Brazil

Clovis Moura, still little studied and referenced in historiography, was an enthusiast of a history in which the protagonism of black populations coming from Africa was demonstrated. In this sense, opposing the “classics” that in the reading of the author do not seek to research in depth the black presence on Brazilian soil, or that many times “mystified” their presence in the Brazilian ethnic-cultural formation. This author, mainly, discusses the resistance of African peoples enslaved in the Americas, putting himself in opposition to Caio Prado Jr. regarding the lack of knowledge of Africans about the Brazilian colonial territory, although it was true, this did not prevent the emergence of a phenomenon that was already occurring on the African continent: the quilombos⁵.

About the quilombos, Moura explains:

Quilombo was, according to the definition of the King of Portugal in response to the consultation of the Overseas Council dated December 2, 1740, "every dwelling of fugitive blacks that exceed five, in part depopulated, even if they do not have raised ranches or do not have pestles on them". Thus, in Brazil, as in other parts of America where modern slavery existed, these gatherings proliferate as a sign of protest by black slaves to the inhuman and alienated conditions to which they were subjected. (MOURA, 1989, p. 11).

⁵ The term quilombo is mentioned by several authors and is in the reports of Portuguese travellers in the 16th century: according to Antônio Cadornega, the Mpûmbu of this block is composed of Musûmbe (Sumbis), Nkûmbe which begins the Nkênge (Gemgue) which was considered one of the countries from where the Jagas warriors originated, called by him Quilombos [Kilômbo (Cardonega, III:168-169)]. This author, already in the 17th century, stressed that this country belonged to the “Quinbundu” (BATSÏKAMA, 2011, p. 21).

We can think of this definition, roughly speaking, that Brazilian favelas are large “quilombola communities”, since a significant part of the black population lives in them often unassisted by the State and viewed in a prejudiced way by society in general. The author makes clear the group resistance of slaves who sought to free themselves from the condition of “thing”, and adds that this type of rebellious organization occurred throughout the Americas:

In Colombia, Cuba, Haiti, Jamaica, Peru, Guyanas, finally wherever slavery existed, the brown black, the quilombola, therefore, appeared as a sign of permanent rebellion against the system that enslaved him. In Cuba, they were the palenques, many of them famous. Sometimes, writes Fernando Ortiz, runaway slaves gathered in hidden, mountainous and difficult-to-reach places with the aim of making themselves strong and living free and independent, managing, in some cases, to establish cultures in the African way and even to form colonies when they managed to unite with some black forras cimarrones, which was frequent. The slaves, in such a state of rebellion, were said to be pawned and the retreats, palenques. (MOURA, 1989, p. 12).

There were other forms of rebellion by the slaves, such as the direct attack on their “masters”; the abortions performed by women when raped by the colonizers; the boycott of field work, breaking work instruments, notwithstanding:

The Metropolis did not accept what it considered an insult to its authority. It took action. In 1741, it ordered that the charter of March 7 of that year should be strictly complied with - where - it was ordered: to brand (red hot iron) with an *F* on the forehead (Fugitive) every black person who fled and was found in a quilombo, and to cut off an ear in case of recurrence. (MOURA, 1989, p. 19-20).

Corporal punishment was a constant in the Brazilian colonial and imperial period. In public squares, pillories served the population as “entertainment” and as examples for slaves who rebelled. The case of marking a person as if he were cattle and/or cutting off an ear make it clear, unlike what Gilberto Freyre points out in his work, how much the relationship between whites and blacks in Brazil was not harmonious.

In addition to the Brazilian quilombos, of which the “Quilombo dos Palmares”⁶ is certainly the greatest example, and to the spontaneous rebellions, we have throughout the Brazilian territory several examples of revolts organized by slaves or that had their support. The Malê Revolt in Bahia on January 25, 1835, involved slaves who were against captivity.

⁶ Palmares was the biggest manifestation of rebellion against slavery in Latin America. It lasted almost a hundred years and: during this period, it regionally destabilized the slave system (MOURA, 1989, p. 40).

Coming from what is now Nigeria and Benin, the Malês spoke Arabic and were people linked to Islam, a religion to which they belonged in their lands of origin. There are reports that they were part of groups of soldiers in the places where they were captured, so they knew war techniques.

An episode like this weakens the argument of the passivity of African peoples.

Malê Revolt and the Daily Life of Slaves and Former Slaves

The work of historian João José Reis, *Rebelião escrava no Brasil* (2003), is the reference on that revolt. The writer and diplomat Alberto da Costa e Silva, in his book *Um rio chamado Atlântico* (2011), makes some pertinent considerations:

Since the publication of the beautiful book by João José Reis, *Rebelião escrava no Brasil: a história do levante dos malês em 1835*, and its translation into English with the greatly expanded text, *Slave Rebellion in Brazil: The Muslim Uprising of 1835 in Bahia*, few people continue to believe that the so-called Malê uprising in 1835 was, as it was deduced by Nina Rodrigues, an Islamic jihad (SILVA, 2011, p. 189).

Raimundo Nina Rodrigues⁷ was a medical examiner who, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, sought to study the populations coming from the African continent. In his work, *Os africanos no Brasil* (2010), this author tells us about the African populations that were part of the “slave markets” and, among other subjects, reports the Malê Revolt as a religious revolt only linked to the Islamic *jihād*. In his book, João José Reis repositions this issue by saying that that revolt, in addition to the religious issue, had a political and social nature. Anthropologist Francisco Sandro Vieira also warns that at the end of the 19th and early 20th centuries little had been studied about African populations:

During the slavery period there was a total “silence” among Brazilian intellectuals about Africans, their ethnicities and their origins. For this reason, in 1888, Sílvio Romero wrote: “It is a shame for the science of Brazil that we have devoted nothing of our works to the study of African languages and religions. When we see men, like Bleek, taking refuge for decades in the center of Africa just to study a language and collect some myths, we who have the material at home, who have Africa in our

⁷ Regarding Raimundo Nina Rodrigues, the historian Erica Naiara Ribeiro Borges in her course conclusion work entitled *Raça e o mestiço sertanejo no pensamento de Geraldo Rocha* (2019), writes about Nina Rodrigues: “Rodrigues devoted himself to criminal anthropology with craniometry and phrenology. He studied the skulls of blacks to identify possible anomalies that would lead to criminality, he always emphasizes that there was not one mixed race in the country, but several different mixed races and placing them in the same classification would be an arbitrary attitude (BORGES, 2019, p. 20).

kitchens, like America in our jungles, and Europe in our salons, we have produced nothing in this sense!" (ROMERO 1879, p.99 apud VIEIRA, 2010, p.99).

The words of writer Silvio Romero evidence the thinking of the time about the "places" of each ethnic group in the formation of Brazil, however, they call our attention to the scarce interest of the Brazilian *intelligentsia* on African populations, which the thinker emphasizes that at that time a significant number was still living in Brazil. Regarding Nina Rodrigues, it is worth noting, according to Sandro Vieira:

In the introduction to his main work, *Os Africanos no Brasil*, he seems surprised that his previous studies would one day be "face to face" with the sphinx of our future - the "problem of the black" in Brazil. As a doctor, he warns of the "danger" in the future of Brazilian society, the existence in a population with a vigorous appearance of "possible germs of precocious decay that deserved to be known and studied in search of prophylaxis repair". He expressed a desire to intervene in Brazilian social engineering with eugenic concerns, which he – the spirit of his time – considered as a "transcendent issue of social hygiene" (RODRIGUES 1977, p.1-3 apud VIEIRA, 2010, p. 99).

What Sandro Vieira points out about the research of Nina Rodrigues will be known as the process of "whitening the Brazilian population". Returning to the issue of the Malês, studied by Nina Rodrigues and which had another reading based on the work of João José Reis, Costa e Silva explains:

I am one of those few who was not defeated by the arguments of João José Reis and here I tell why. To tell the story of that rebellion — which he did in a convincing and passionate way — Reis reviewed not only the documents to which those who had dealt with the subject before him, such as Nina Rodrigues, Etienne Ignace Brazil and Pierre Verger, had already had access, but many more papers, and weighed them at length, and read and reread them with eyes accustomed to Bahia of the 19th century, and interpreted their voices and intentions with the exceptional intelligence he has of slavery, Brazilian slavery and the black men of Bahia. The characters in his account move through the pages of his book so naturally that we would not be surprised if, at a glance, we saw them on a street in Salvador. Or if peering through a crack in a door or window, we came across a handful of barefoot men prostrate in the direction of Mecca. (SILVA, 2001, p. 189).

This author does not agree with João José Reis arguing the apologetic way that he deals with the subject, however, the reflexes of the uprising are treated by Costa e Silva in his book in which he talks about a diaspora of Bahia that takes place to Rio de Janeiro:

(...) Muslims sought to live together in the same places. But what decided the place where a family was settled on was not being a believer in the Orixás nor a Muslim, Catholic, Yoruba, Jeje or Hausa, but rather have

come from Salvador, being part of what we can define as a diaspora of Bahia. It was from this new identity that new webs of solidarity were woven. It was through Salvador that kola nuts, cowries, palm oil, soap and cloth from the coast were imported from Lagos or from Ajudá. Thus, in Rio de Janeiro, something very similar to what happened to the Africans who returned from Brazil to Africa took place, and they formed their own neighborhoods in Acra, Anexô, Ajudá, Badagry, Porto Novo and Lagos, and they developed a new group identity, that of “Brazilians” (SILVA, 2011, p. 183).

Costa e Silva (2011) in another passage writes about the group of insurgents who survived the Malê Revolts and who were not expelled or killed. These groups ended up leaving Salvador and the region because of the stigma they suffered after revolt. It is noticed that in this “diaspora of Bahia” other people also came who did not participate in the uprising and brought with them culinary and cultural contributions, new forms of socialization and economy. We infer that these former slaves also went to Rio de Janeiro, which was the capital, so they had more opportunities. This migration influenced the sale of books, as the author points out:

On September 22, 1869 the Count of Gobineau, at the time Minister of France in Brazil, wrote in a political report to the Quaid'Orsay that the French booksellers Fauchon and Dupont used to sell every year in their store in Rio de Janeiro almost one hundred copies of the Quran. Although very expensive (between 36 and 50 French francs), the book was bought almost exclusively by slaves and former slaves, who had to make great sacrifices to acquire it. Some of them bought the book on installment and took a year to pay for it. As the Qurans were written in Arabic — and by hand, as at that time they were not yet printed (and John O. Hunwick called my attention to this fact) — Fauchon and Dupont also imported grammars of that language with explanations in French because slaves and former slaves wanted to learn Arabic in order to read and understand the holy book in the original. (SILVA, 2011, p. 177).

A curious fact about having the “Koran” as the best-selling book, given that the work was written in Arabic and the explanations in French, is that part of the people who purchased it was multilingual because in addition to the mother tongue of their group in Africa they still had to speak the Portuguese of the colonizer, and the Arabic and French. If Brazil still has a small group of readers, attention is drawn to the sacrifices that this population made to acquire such an artifact, especially for the high price. This particular issue denotes another point about this migration:

Many of its members were sent back to the African coast by the Brazilian authorities, others returned to Africa by their own will and initiative for not accepting to continue being governed by infidels, or dissatisfied with the

restrictions that their cults suffered in Brazil, or dissatisfied with the distrust mixed with a kind of fear and respect that Muslims inspired in other black men. Most of them died. Some of them, already in their old age, experienced the disappointment of seeing their children and grandchildren gradually abandon Islam and join other religious groups. As happened in Salvador, where some old Muslims complained to Nina Rodrigues that their descendants were exchanging Islam for the cults of the Orixás and Catholicism. (SILVA, 2011, p. 186).

Costa e Silva explains that the “diaspora of Bahia” brought drastic changes to this group that over time has been transforming its sociocultural aspects, one of the most striking was religiosity, since some passed to Catholicism or to Afro-Brazilian cults, what Costa e Silva calls “Orixás” probably to refer to Candomblé or Umbanda.

The author does not only write about the changes of the “peoples of the Malês”, in traditional historiography little or nothing is written about the daily lives of the peoples coming from Africa, who as we have seen were often treated as “things”, or not protagonists of their own history. Costa e Silva states:

When someone mentioned an African in Brazil in the 18th and 19th centuries, it was most likely that he was talking about a slave, as this was the condition of most of the men and women who coming from Africa lived here. But he could also refer to a freedman, that is, a former slave. Or to an emancipated one, that is, a black man taken from a ship caught in the clandestine traffic. Or, more rarely, a free man who had never been held captive. Slaves, freedmen, emancipated or free, few of them would find Brazilian landscapes strange because they were often similar to what they had left in Africa and which had become even more similar thanks to the circulation of numerous plant species between the Indian Ocean and the Atlantic Ocean, such as manioc, corn, yam, okra, coconut, mango, Brazil was like crossing a wide river. (SILVA, 2011, p. 157).

In the quote above, the author brings several issues of the African diaspora to Brazil, addressing a subject little addressed in specific books, for example: not all Africans who arrived here were slaves, some of them were free men or freedmen who worked in the trade between the two shores of the Atlantic. He writes about commercialized foodstuffs that are now part of our food culture, adding that an African, when crossing the Atlantic, would not be surprised by the Brazilian scenario, according to the author, due to the similarity with that continent. Regarding the freed Africans who came to Brazilian lands, the author emphasizes:

And who were the Africans who had never been slaves and lived in Brazil? There were few. They were those African traders who arrived from Africa with fabrics from Ijebu, Benin, Cape Verde, kola nuts, soap from the coast, palm oil, certain species of pepper and all kinds of goods that found an easy

market in the huge community of Africans and in the even larger community of blacks and mulattos born in Brazil, but who kept faithful to Africa affectively, religiously and culturally. They were also children and teenagers that their parents sent to study in Brazil. It was not uncommon, between Ghana and Cameroon, for defendants, chiefs and African traders to send their children to attend schools in Bahia, as the Oba of Lagos, Kosoko, did with three of them in the mid-twentieth century. (SILVA, 2011, p. 160-161).

The issue of freed Africans is a subject that is rarely addressed, precisely because classical history did not stop at the daily life of these Africans, as we saw in the first part of the article. Another little-addressed and complex issue is the issue of slaves who were owned by other Africans. At first, this situation seems somewhat inexplicable, given the fact of thinking about the “objectification” of the group by the group itself. However, this creation of the feeling of Africanity, as already mentioned, came only at the end of the 19th century after the Berlin Conference. These issues even serve as arguments for “common sense” in the sense of going against affirmative action policies, for example.

However, we cannot reduce the matter to this form, even because the Brazilian colonization process used the slave trade to the Atlantic in a systematic way, removing vital force from the African continent, making its development impossible and a large part of the descendent Brazilian population was excluded. For now, we emphasize the arrival of free Africans who brought slaves. We emphasize the issue of kings and slaves, as Costa e Silva explains:

At the end of the 18th century, the notorious slave trader Archibald Dalzel told us in a few lines the story of who had been, until recently, the jengen or chief of the Awhanjigo neighborhood and, for some time, the most powerful dignitary in Badagry. He called it Guinguém, taking what was a title as his personal name, and spelling the word as he heard it. This Guinguém or jengen experienced two different types of life in Bahia. First, as a student, as a young man, probably during the rule of his father, who had held the same title. With the death of his father, he disputed the primacy in Badagry with another chief, Sessou, emerging victorious from the clash in 1776. But a few years later, the akran, head of the Ijegba neighborhood, became the dominant force. And in 1782, the jengen was deposed and exiled to Brazil. Twenty slaves were boarded on the same ship to ensure his subsistence, which would confirm his status as a political deportee. Free Africans who came to Brazil often brought with them a certain number of slaves instead of money. Slaves could be sold one by one, according to the needs of their owners, as if they were traveler's checks or bills of exchange. (SILVA, 2011, p. 168).

Firstly, we emphasize the presence of “complex societies” in Africa, a dynastic dispute common in any kingdom. The second part we have to pay attention to is about the

deportation of this member of the kingdom who brought twenty slaves with him for subsistence.

Costa e Silva states that it would be a type of *traveler's checks*, strengthening the idea of "objectification" as well as the high value of this "product" by the arguments exposed by the author.

The Post-Abolition Black Man in the Republic

In addition to the reflections presented here, the Brazilianist historian George Reid Andrews in his book, *Negros e brancos em São Paulo (1888-1988)* (1998), makes a systematic analysis of the way in which Brazilian society sought to cover up the mistreatment of the period of slavery. Andrews notes that the post-abolition black population barely appears in Brazilian historiography:

In the course of that century, the retractions of that history had a remarkable evolution. Despite the fact that it enslaved more than any other American nation and was the last country in the Christian world to abolish slavery (in 1888), between 1900 and 1950 Brazil successfully cultivated an image of itself as the first "racial democracy" of the world, a land in which blacks and whites coexisted harmoniously under conditions of almost complete equality. This image was only seriously questioned in the 1950s, when UNESCO-funded researchers seeking to explain the racial idyll in Brazil documented instead strong racial inequality and a wide spread of anti-black attitudes and stereotypes. And after a hiatus in research on racial issues imposed by the military governments of the 1960s, new work carried out in the 1970s and 1980s was even more critical of Brazilian realities, some of which went so far as to characterize Brazil as a South Africa without *apartheid*. (ANDREWS, 1998, p. 22).

The author points to a fact pertinent to our work already mentioned that would be called "racial idyllic" (racial democracy), which he himself points out that through research carried out by UNESCO they will find the opposite of this harmonious relationship to the point of comparing it to South Africa during the *apartheid* period, without *apartheid*⁸.

Andrews points out that, when searching for information about Brazilian historiography, he found more information about the period of slavery:

A logical place to look for the elements of these pictures is the work of

⁸ A segregationist regime created in South Africa in the 1940s and perpetuated until the 1994 elections for president of Nelson Mandela, leader of the anti-apartheid movement who was imprisoned for almost thirty years, a regime that through the State prevented the minimum conditions of access to citizenship, or rather survival, for the black population, privileging the white minority.

historians who studied Brazilian relations before us. When one researches this historiography, one finds that it tends to focus on the experience of slavery. Both as the most obvious and evident expression of the racial hierarchy in the national experience of Brazil, and as the most important determinant of the racial situation of Brazil in the present. This approach is not unfounded, since, as these authors have conclusively demonstrated, slavery was widespread in Brazil during the colonial period and the 19th century, and was so present at the heart of society and the economy prior to 1888 that it had an even greater impact in the conformation of modern Brazil and in the problems that this country faces from what happened in the United States. [...]. (ANDREWS, 1998, p. 25-26).

Andrews (1988) adds that historians have focused more on the period of slavery, mainly because of their effects on Brazilian society, unlike the American society that also had slavery and suffered from this process. However, Andrews states that in the United States the enslaved population was not greater than the Brazilian population:

[...] Slavery was in effect in Brazil for one hundred and fifty years before it became an important component of North American society and economy, and was only abolished twenty-five years after emancipation in the United States; in the course of the existence of slavery, nine times as many Africans were imported into Brazil as those imported into the United States; and at the time of their respective independence, the proportion of slaves in the Brazilian population was more than twice as many slaves in the North American population. (ANDREWS, 1998, p. 25-26).

For this author, the process of slavery in Brazil was greater than in the United States and, moreover, he states that the marks of this slavery in Brazilian society are pressing. In this way, the presence of the black population in the sociocultural configuration of this country is greater than in the USA. The author wrote about the positions of Gilberto Freyre, the main exponent on “racial democracy” and his opposition with Florestan Fernandes as the main figure:

During the last decades of his life, Freyre moved visibly to the right, supporting the post-1964 military dictatorship and uniting himself in denouncing as communism and anti-Brazilian anyone who questioned the concept of racial democracy. Among these questioners stood out the sociologist Florestan Fernandes (1920-1995), a vigorous critic of almost all aspects of Brazilian society, and particularly of its system of race relations. One of the coordinators of UNESCO-funded research in the 1940s and 1950s, Fernandes and his collaborators produced many books and articles attacking the “myth” of racial democracy and revealing racial inequality and discrimination in his country. As the 1960s military defined this criticism as an act of subversion, in the academic purge of 1969, Fernandes was removed from his professorship at the Universidade de São Paulo, and later taught in the United States and Canada. In the late 1970s, when Brazil began its gradual transition back to democracy, he was able to resume teaching in São Paulo, and in 1986 he was elected federal

deputy for the Workers' Party, and in this capacity he worked in the Constituent Assembly, which wrote the Constitution. (ANDREWS, 1998, p. 28).

Final Considerations

The profile outlined by Andrews (1998) of the two researchers, Florestan Fernandes and Gilberto Freyre, makes clear their distinctions, not only intellectual but also political and ideological. As we have seen throughout this article, the "racial democracy", or other theories that sought to soften slavery and its effects for the configuration of inequality between blacks and whites in Brazilian society, like these distortions in Brazilian society, we recorded this excerpt from the historian Adelânia Rocha de Souza (2019, p.9):

And what about our Brazil? (...). There is still the famous "mutt complex" here in our country, unfortunately. We have to get over it. There is this political, economic and psychosocial crisis. We have a cultural heritage, a heritage that has many people who like privilege. But there is a tendency for the comrade to want that privilege for him. It cannot be like that. This heritage of privilege is an Iberian heritage. We have a certain heritage of indolence, which comes from indigenous culture. I am indigenous. My father is from Amazon. And trickery, nothing against it, but trickery comes from the African. So, this is our cultural melting pot. Unfortunately, we like martyrs, populist leaders and the Macunaímas. (MOURÃO *apud* ALBUQUERQUE, 2018).

This statement by the current vice president of the Republic, reserve general Antônio Hamilton Mourão, comes from an idea prior to the ideas of Gilberto de Freyre in the period of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, with Raimundo Nina Rodrigues and the phrenology, thought long abandoned by contemporary sociology and anthropology, as it links "racial" and "biological" issues, in which the behavior of ethnic groups would be predetermined. A statement like this shows that although progress has been made with Law 10,639/2003, with an entire bibliographic production, there is still a long way to go. Vice President Mourão makes an anachronistic statement, even though he represents a population in which at least fifty percent are descendants of this black African diaspora to Brazil. President Jair Messias Bolsonaro himself during the election period, reinforced these anachronistic concepts. Rocha de Souza explains:

(...) The latter, [Jair Bolsonaro] by the way, was denounced by the Attorney General's Office for offenses made against the black population and quilombola communities during a lecture at the Clube Hebraica in Rio de Janeiro, in April 2017, a process that was later closed by the justice system.

(SOUZA, 2019, p. 09).

In both actions, indigenous and black social representations demanded reparations in court for the racist pronouncements made. However, the lawsuits were filed. This says a lot about the Brazilian society we live in, which unfortunately maintains a structural racism. There are several authors and black and social movements who stand against a racist historiography that perceives the black population as an object and with victimist discourse, as we have seen throughout this article. The fight against racism is a constant struggle that cannot be slowed down.

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