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A NATIONAL HISTORICAL EDUCATION NARRATIVE BETWEEN MYTHS: FROM THE FOUNDER TO THE RACIAL DEMOCRACY

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RESUMO: Este artigo tem como objetivo desenvolver um debate sobre as características que consolidaram um projeto nacional autônomo com pretensões imponentes, marcadamente na virada do século XIX para o século XX. Trata de abordar como os diferentes mitos a respeito da igualdade entre as pessoas têm sido tratados historicamente pela educação nacional, até o atual documento da Base Nacional Comum Curricular. Por meio da revisão de literatura, recupera-se uma trajetória histórica em seis etapas. Identifica-se que o mito da "democracia racial" serve como argumento para excluir as medidas compensatórias em nome de uma meritocracia que trata desiguais como semelhantes. Portanto, além de recuperar o silenciamento histórico, busca indicar meios para a construção de um projeto político pedagógico democrático para o sistema de ensino nacional.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: História brasileira. Etnia. Base Nacional Comum Curricular.

RESUMEN: *Este artículo tiene como objetivo desarrollar un debate sobre las características que consolidaron un proyecto nacional autónomo con pretensiones imponentes, marcadamente a la vuelta del siglo XIX para el siglo XX. Se trata de abordar cómo los diferentes mitos sobre la igualdad entre las personas han sido tratados históricamente por la educación nacional, hasta el actual documento de la Base Nacional Común Curricular. Por medio de la revisión de literatura, se recupera una trayectoria histórica en seis etapas. Se identifica que el mito de la "democracia racial" sirve como argumento para excluir las medidas compensatorias en nombre de una meritocracia que trata desiguales como similares. Por lo tanto, además de recuperar el silenciamiento histórico, busca indicar medios para la construcción de un proyecto político pedagógico democrático para el sistema de enseñanza nacional.*

PALABRAS CLAVE: *Historia brasileña. Etnicidad. Base Nacional Común Curricular.*

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ABSTRACT: *This paper aims to develop a debate about the characteristics that consolidated an autonomous national project with imposing pretensions, markedly from the turn of the 19th century to the 20th century. It tries to address how the different myths about equality between people have been treated historically by national education, up to the current document of the National Curricular Common Base. Through the literature review, a historical trajectory is recovered in six stages. It is identified that the myth of "racial democracy" serves as an argument to exclude compensatory measures in the name of a meritocracy that treats dissimilar as similar. Therefore, in addition to recovering the historical silencing, it seeks to indicate means for the construction of a democratic pedagogical political project for the national education system.*

KEYWORDS: *Brazilian history. Ethnicity. Brazilian Common Curricular Basis.*

Introduction

This paper presents the results of a master's thesis, developed in the Post-Graduate Program in Human and Social Sciences, of the Federal University of ABC, Brazil. The main objective is to develop a debate about the characteristics that consolidated an autonomous national project with imposing pretensions, markedly from the turn of the 19th century to the 20th century. An essential period for the creation and consolidation of a supposed homogeneous narrative of "nation", which in turn would be consolidated, according to the interests of the dominant classes, through the incipient urbanization and industrialization of that period. This unitary perspective of a people and territories markedly different from each other disregarded the specificities of our colonial and slave-owning formation, spelling out what Marilena Chauí (2000) called the "founding mythic imaginary." According to the author, this imaginary consists of a fantasy, socially disseminated, that reproduces a national past, in which the different social subjects (black, indigenous, European) lived together in an integrated, harmonious and peaceful way in the construction of the "Brazilian nation". This imagery has endured as an important factor of silencing and non-recognition of ethnic-racial issues, among other subjects, for the understanding of the relation and inheritance present in the discourses about the black and the indigenous, in a country with continental dimensions of enormous inequalities and social, political and economic conflicts such as Brazil.

The purpose of this article is to address how the different myths about equality between people have been treated historically by national education, up to the current document of the National Curricular Common Base, now referred to as BNCC. Moreover, since this document intends to standardize contents and strategies of teaching in a territory

marked by differences, it is necessary to analyze it under the historical perspective of constructing the idea of "Brazilian nation". The understanding, therefore, of who the Brazilian is and his representations, becomes a question of identity and relations of power. The curriculum analysis, in turn, longs to interpret how the process of learning and teaching developed in the Brazilian experience, marked by the exclusion of nonwhite actors in the process of building national memory. According to Nascimento (1978), the negative representations of blacks and indigenous peoples find in the diffusion of the myth of "racial democracy" a determinant condition for the questions that involve the struggle for the identity recognition suppressed in this process. However, the attempt to create a unit, through a multicultural territory, becomes central to the understanding of issues involving curriculum, race, and ethnicity. The search for civility or "Brazilian nation", in this perspective, did not consider or contemplated the diversity of indigenous and African peoples, being these, submitted to the colonial yoke under the aegis of the European.

The civilizational model imposed by the Europeans was considered superior in relation to other peoples and models of society. In this case, education and the curricular field are instruments that allow the dissemination and questioning of representations about blacks and indigenous peoples, politically and ideologically submitted to the systems of European settlers. According to Silva (2007), public education in Brazil was born excluder and racist, making it necessary to relate the dispute over the curriculum as a possible unfolding of the struggle for rights and recognition of groups, whose identities were violated violently in the name of a country project that was intended to be white and European. Still according to the author, black and indigenous identities defend the emphasis on the difference vis-a-vis the historically produced segregation in the country.

In this direction, Gomes (1995) explains that identity must be understood as a way of being in the world, expressing practical activities such as languages, celebrations, rituals, eating behaviors and popular traditions that are references and marks of a group. It is not enough, therefore, to contemplate, in the official documents, the questions that deal with ethnic-racial relations. In this sense, attributed by the author, as a curriculum is a dispute (political, ideological, social, etc.), education for ethnic-racial relations intends to enter this contest in an active and protagonist way, becoming the center, not periphery, of the debate.

In order to carry out the discussions proposed in this article, we try to recover a historical trajectory in six stages, beginning with the construction of the Brazilian nation, passing through the (2.) slave nation, (3) by the place of the indigenous peoples, (4.) by the

proclamation of the republic and the abolition of slavery, (5.) by the origin of Brazilian racial thought, until the last stop, (6.) which concerns a possible myth of Brazilian racial democracy.

On the construction of the Brazilian nation

The issue of ethnic-racial relations in the construction of the Brazilian BNCC allows us to recover the process of formation in Brazil of a society built, according to Faoro (2000), on a slave-owning and latifundia perspective. This history was based on aristocratic bases, with full control of public and private institutions, as well as political and economic control by the local elites. The slave model, however, is not restricted to the colonial and imperial past, and part of the recent disputes are a recognition by the country's institutions of this process and its social, political, economic and cultural developments. In this context, we seek to analyze the meanings and intentions in the disputes involving the construction of the BNCC, which seeks to unify contents for basic education, making it imperative to follow the historical process of organization and struggle of Afro-Brazilians and indigenous people through recognition and access to rights by the institutions that make up the Brazilian State.

These foundations, which form and sustain a territory marked by the exclusion of social, cultural and economic orders, are still present in contemporary debates and demands; among the exclusions, the ethnic-racial question and the curricular field allow a contextualized rescue of this process. According to Chauí (2000), Brazilian society is the product of a myth, created by the country's intellectual elites, which, in turn, has been able to keep them linked and aligned in the long process of formation of the nation. Therefore, it is necessary to seek, in the history of Afro-Brazilians and indigenous peoples, the recognition and challenges that permeate the incessant struggle of these groups for recognition and access to rights, of which they were historically denied to them in this country.

The history of the black and indigenous in the formation of Brazilian society is now part of the official school curriculum of the nation, through the publication of Federal Law 10.639 of January 2003 which, in turn, changed the LDB 9.394 of 1996. Among the objectives of this curricular insertion, is the search for recovering and valuing the protagonism of these subjects in the formation of the Brazilian nation. This achievement sought to bring into the field of curriculum and education a counterpoint to the Eurocentric vision, historically consolidated in national educational institutions, in order to dispute and re-significate the social function of the school.

In this way, the representation of mixed, gay and plural country gains strength in the popular imagination, after all, the history of Afro-descendants and indigenous people is valued at school. But for Nascimento (1982), this narrative that values mix and diversity also covers the genocide that was imposed by the Brazilian and European ruling classes that occurred in these five centuries of colonial post-domination history. Violence is perpetuated, with a clear ethnic-racial cut, as we can see, for example: in the executions of young people in the outskirts of the big cities, as well as the violence that affects indigenous peoples in conflict with farmers in the land dispute in the Brazilian northeast. According to a report by Pelegrini (2012), for example, data from the international amnesty show that the number of homicides in Brazil in 2012 was 56 thousand. Of these, 30,000 youths were murdered, and most of these lives were wasted on the outskirts of large Brazilian cities. In this genocide of the country's youth, 77% are black youth. These figures reveal the existence of a genocide with a clear profile: young, black and residents of the outskirts of big cities. Another example comes from the state of Maranhão, in Borges and Nossa (2017), in which the journalist recounts the attack of gunslingers suffered by the ethnic group "gamela", in dispute for lands in the State, which ended with about 13 injured indigenous people being some with their hands cut off.

In this way it is also representative of this context of violence and exclusion, the characteristics of the educational system of the country. This is because the system, in turn, historically reproduces Eurocentric discourses and practices that devalue and ignore the knowledge and protagonism of natives and exiles for the history of Brazil, which is why a series of affirmative achievements in different spheres of the educational and social field, should be valued. Malachias, Bento and Silva (2010, p. 143) argue that "Law 10.639 / 2003 [...] crowns a trajectory of struggle that has been waged by the Black Movement in its claims for affirmative educational policies."

Therefore, understanding the narrative that seeks to silence the ethnic-racial conflicts that characterize the past and the present in the curricular and educational field requires a historical perspective on the narrative of an integrated and peaceful nation. Faced with this, it becomes urgent to understand the "founding myth" and its impact for the re-signification of this conflicting past. Myth, as an attempt to mitigate conflicts or explain socially disseminated practices, is present in the history of human relations in various contexts. In colonial, agrarian, slave, and postcolonial Brazil, the invention and consolidation of the National States in Europe would arrive as an imposition for an elite that was claimed to be universal and

modern. The construction of a grandiose and universalizing narrative for an eminently rural and archaic country has become a difficult problem. It was necessary to rewrite history.

The presence of the founding myth is the starting point for the understanding and centrality that this process carries to problematize and understand the current issues that permeate the territory of the curriculum and the disputes involving the construction of BNCC. The myth, in this perspective, acts to consolidate the imagination that naturalizes and idealizes the process of formation of the country. This myth, on the other hand, offers an idealized representation of the reality and the national past and that continues being updated and adapted according to the convenience of the economic elites of Brazil. With this capacity of adaptation and updating, the allegory can be repeated indefinitely. In order to build and consolidate the idea of unity and harmony among the different, in a class society, a conciliatory solution was needed. The apparent departure was to reach a point in common, as emphasized by Chauí (2000, p.17), who aimed to incorporate "in a single belief the rival beliefs, that is, the class appeal, the political appeal and the religious appeal did not need to dispute the loyalty of citizens because all these beliefs could express themselves for one another under the common background of nationality".

This myth and his symbolic strength continue allowing and constructing new meanings that ensure a sense of unity and communion among the Brazilian population. When this harmony was threatened by the social and economic division generated by the model of capitalist production, in a process of consolidation and global hegemony at the turn of the nineteenth century to the twentieth, the idea of nationality acted as a symbolic force in the maintenance of social inequalities in Brazil. The national question is the thread that leads and organizes the narratives during the imperial period as a way to "naturalize" great asymmetries and the conflicts that threatened the current social order. The regent revolts[3], hard-pressed by the imperial government, are examples of the resistance of the excluded and the reactions of the local elites, in defense of the privileges they inherited from the colonial period. The threats were fought in the institutional military field, with the precious aid of political and social identification represented by the idea of nation.

The process of independence of Brazil was negotiated with the metropolis and the local elites as a way of maintaining the social and economic unit unchanged. The Constitution of 1824 guaranteed the privileges of the slave elite and provided for the creation of a national

[3] The different revolts in the regency period should not be framed in the same frame. Each one of them carried a local specificity as unfolding of the social and economic conditions in the different provinces (FAUSTO, 2014). Some examples: Cabanagem, Sabinada and Balaiada.

system of education. As Vidal (2002) puts it, on October 15, 1827, the imperial government promulgated the law that created schools of first letters in cities, towns and populous places of the Empire. The document guaranteed that access to schools would be restricted to citizens who enjoyed full social and political rights. Thus, the vast majority of the population would remain marginalized in access to national public education. The premise of a national curriculum follows, in the nineteenth century, with other common orientations and models, made official by the emperor Dom Pedro II, for the national territory. The exclusionary and racist character, in a slave-like context that historically affects Afro-descendants in Brazil, can be identified in Decree n. 1,331, of February 17, 1854, Article 69 of which states: "They shall not be admitted to enrollment, nor shall they be able to attend the schools: 1 ° children who suffer contagious diseases, 2 ° those who have not been vaccinated and 3 ° the slaves ".

We can see that this decree sought to equate the condition of the slave with that of a contagious patient, exposing, in social, political and economic aspects, the denial of rights to blacks, in the incipient public education system. What is implied in this form of suppression is the idea that both, black and sick, would infect the social body, and it was found that access and the right to education in the newly created Brazilian nation would continue to equate blacks with a category of sub according to the hegemonic thinking that prevailed at that time. The lack of historical approaches and documentary sources about the presence of the black in the institutionalized education of Brazil, during the beginning of the Brazilian "nation", reveals that the memories and the narratives constructed under the idea of a people's unity go through the silencing of non- the formation of the country. Although not massively, layers of the freed black population, during the imperial period and the beginning of the Republic, accessed formal education through networks of solidarity. They created their own schools in quilombos, in partnerships with religious orders directed to blacks, long before the universalization of public education in Brazil.

The struggle of black groups for admission to the official schooling process proves that, even on the verge of citizenship, blacks followed the processes of transformation of the "Brazilian nation" and exerted influence on them. School space for the Negro served as a form of social ascension to the extent that it reinforced discrimination through such exclusion and lack of mass access to the educational system. This right to memory and the need for a look at ethnic-racial issues should be equivalent to the valuation of Europeans and Orientals, as Kabengele Munanga (2008) points out:

> African and indigenous cultural heritages constitute one of the fundamental matrices of the so-called national culture and should therefore occupy the same position as European, Arab, Jewish, Oriental, and other legacies. Together, these legacies constitute the collective memory of Brazil, a plural, non-mestizo or unitary memory. A memory to be cultivated and preserved through family memories and the educational system, for a people without memory is like a people without history. It is precisely here that the problem arises, since the African and indigenous cultural heritages in Brazil have never occupied a position of equality with the others in the national education system. If this were the case, then the laws 10,639 / 2003 and 11,645 / 2008 promulgated by the current President of the Republic, 115 years after the abolition would not make any sense[4]. (MUNANGA, 2008, p. 49-50)

The inflection for the idea of unity around a great people had a sudden repercussion in the intellectual elites, in the transition from the nineteenth to the twentieth century, in Brazil. The thought produced in this period shows the condemnation to the limbo of Afro-Brazilians and Indians as inferior races, which should be extirpated by the natural process of "laundering" that the new great nation would be bound to attain. This historical process of invention of the Brazilian nation is present from the disputes involving the process of colonial independence in the imperial period and enters the Republic, remaining in the debates in a decisive way in the twentieth century.

The constitution of a nation and its national identity were the great concerns of the Brazilian ruling classes between the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century. The reason for such upheaval was in the emergence of a new category of citizens: the blacks remaining from slavery. The mentality of Brazilian elites, influenced by theories of racial supremacy, plus the process of formal abolition of slavery, and the Proclamation of the Republic, in 1889 brought new elements for the understanding of ethnic-racial relations and national education. Given this context, it is necessary to identify the characteristics of the slave system as a fundamental basis for understanding the most recent disputes about national curricular guidelines that demand, among other things, the demystification of ethnic-racial relations in the country's history, as well as the valorization of black and indigenous protagonism in this process.

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[4] Original text: As heranças culturais africanas e indígenas constituem uma das matrizes fundamentais da chamada cultura nacional e deveriam, por esse motivo, ocupar a mesma posição das heranças europeias, árabes, judaica, orientais etc. Juntas, essas heranças constituem a memória coletiva do Brasil, uma memória plural e não mestiça ou unitária. Uma memória a ser cultivada e conservada por meio das memórias familiares e do sistema educacional, pois um povo sem memória é como um povo sem história. É justamente aqui que se coloca o problema, pois as heranças culturais africana e indígena no Brasil nunca ocuparam uma posição de igualdade com as outras no sistema de ensino nacional. Se assim fosse, não teriam nenhum sentido as leis no 10.639/2003 e no 11.645/2008 promulgadas pelo atual presidente da República, 115 anos depois da abolição.

The slave system as the economic base of the "nation"

The slave system, the economic base of the colony and the Empire, was marked by the naturalization of violence by the owners and state control institutions, as well as by the great resistance of the slaves, which was characterized by small daily insubordination, such as the numerous revolts , to the formation of quilombos, like Palmares (AL). Estimates, according to Nascimento (1978), revolved around the arrival of some 5 million captives from various regions of the African continent. Still according to Nascimento (1978), about a third of the slaves who entered the country were Bantu, coming from Central Africa and Angola. The mix also included groups from Senegal, Congo, the Mine Coast and the Gulf of Benin. This diversity was present, in great quantity, in the heavy workings of the field and in the intimate daily life of the big house. The names of baptism were added by color and place of birth. The slave masters preferred heavy labor to a large number of laborers from various parts of Africa, and preferably newcomers, to avoid rebellion and escape - common forms of resistance and present throughout the country the slave-owning cycle of Brazil.

According to Alencastro (2000), in the attempt to uproot the captive of his African origin, the process of de-socialization and depersonalization acted as important resources in the attempt to commodify and commodify the individual in slave systems under different contexts, such as Brazilians. Nevertheless, the diversity of African ethnic groups allowed for great alliances, loyalty ties and cultural exchanges between different ethnic groups. The strenuous crossing of the Malungos (the way the ship's companions and friends were called) represented a great massacre and ethnic genocide, with diseases, suicides and other violence practiced by the colonial slave-owning elites. On the other hand, there was an intense exchange in this process between the cultures that helped to build Brazil.

Throughout the enslaved period, Schwarcz and Starling (2015) explain, the enslaved sought in the breaches of the system ways to recreate their cultures, to maintain the rituals, to reproduce and adapt their beliefs, to invent desires and to fight incessantly for freedom. The Europeans had known slavery since antiquity, with Greek cities and the Roman Empire being great examples of enslaved societies at that time. Modern slavery was the foundation of the colony. In places such as the Recôncavo, in Bahia, slaves made up more than 75% of the population. The African continent, on the other hand, did not have at the height of the slave trade a political or religious unity, the different forms of social organization occurred by lineage and kinship. It should be noted that the African traders organized the mercantile relations taking care of their own economic interests, so they were not passive in this relation.

In order to understand a grandiose model of commerce involving human lives, a moral justification was therefore required. Colonial, export-oriented units based on slave labor and monoculture latifundia produced one of the greatest ethnic genocides in history. Violence was the engine of control of this system. Public punishment, whipping, rape were common in this asymmetrical relationship, always counting on the consent of religious power, disseminating fear and dread as a constant form of control.

A cruel and inhuman practice such as slavery leaves fundamental social marks for naturalizing the differences between whites and blacks in Brazil. This social marker of difference lies today, to stay in some examples of this Brazilian wound, in the violent peripheries of the country, through the programs that spectacularise and trivialize violence against the black, until the disputes over public policies that recognize the genocide and the specificity of the black cause. The enslaved society considered all physical work, or that demanded humiliating effort. In order to meet the demand for specialized labor, urban slaves were leased by day or week for the exercise of multiple activities and trades, such as carpentry, painting, stowage, blacksmithing, barber shop, shoe store, among others. The women were domestic workers, cooks, housekeepers, laundresses, and other crafts. The spread of slavery was not restricted only to large estates, for it shaped social relations in all spheres, defining social inequalities, and placing race and color as fundamental markers of differences. The slave labor was exploited by merchants, military, civil servants, innkeepers, artisans, and even freedmen. Socially disseminated memory by common sense often implies a passive character in the struggle of the Negro for rights and against slavery. This imaginary ignores the black protagonism in the resistance to the condition in which it was, due to great ties of affection, religious associations and other disguises and negotiations that mark this process, as emphasized by Schwarcz and Starling (2015, p. 96] the enslaved did not behave like "things," having always acted their place and condition, struggled to get their leisure time, maintain their family, recreate their customs in strange lands, worship their gods and practices, preserve their children and care their".

According to the authors, this daily violence and resistance, during the period of institutionalized slavery, caused panic in the local elites, with the threats of rebellions and revolts of the slaves. Organized uprisings, mass fugues, and the assassinations of overseers terrified the elites, always preoccupied with maintaining their own privileges. The escapes gave rise to warlike quilombos, where the power of negotiation and resistance became a concrete alternative to the slave order. This threat was systematically fought by the official

authorities, responsible for major massacres in that period, the most well-known quilombo being Palmares, in the region of Serra da Barriga, in the state of Alagoas. The symbolism that the quilombos carried by the leaders of Ganga Zumba and Zumbi during a good part of their existence in the fight against slavery is proportional to the magnitude and the greatness of the hawks present in diverse communities of different sizes, bound by agreements and autonomy for business and the choice of leaders. The extended community housed an organized community life, with its own laws, military structure and religious and cultural principles that strengthened the collective identity. The authors also indicate that the confederation maintained an extensive trade relationship with neighboring towns and cities, as well as promoting assaults on the mills, resisting for a century the counter-offensive of the authorities, who perceived a concrete threat to established power.

In the 1940s, Carneiro (2010) produced the book: "O Quilombo de Palmares". It is an in-depth study of the organization and specificities of the rebels, who transformed the perspective of this phenomenon, which denied and resisted the social structure of the period, as well as reproduced and kept alive the ancestral memory of African roots in a proper model of organization. The quilombo of Palmares, in turn, continues as a mark of resistance against the slave model marked by physical and symbolic violence against slaves in Brazil. This icon event is rescued and revalued in the present generations that seek to insert the protagonism of the black in the construction of the Brazilian society, in order to understand this process.

The educational model, historically constructed in Brazil, is directly responsible for the silencing of these contributions, as well as for the dissemination of the idea of passivity and conformism. With regard to indigenous peoples, the memory silenced and succumbed by the violence of the colonizing process, continues as a central element for the understanding of the ethnic-racial issues that allow to identify the meanings in the discourses that base the national curricular matrices in the present time. In this sense, it is necessary to identify the social place attributed to indigenous peoples in this process.

The place of indigenous peoples

According to Santos (2006), Brazilian indigenous peoples bear the brunt of violence, slavery, genocide and resistance. Intercalating now as the image of the picturesque, of purity and valor, now of servitude, of backwardness and of laziness, the indigenous question continues to be the pattern of the Brazilian imagination in a reductionist, stereotyped and silenced way. One of the pressing questions for the founding myth of Brazil is to think: what

is the social place of indigenous peoples in national society? The main characteristic of Brazilian indigenous peoples is the diversity of peoples, cultures, religions, economies, etc. The great variety of cultures among indigenous peoples was not accompanied by the immediate recognition of identities in the face of European colonization. This process was marked by persecutions and struggles that marked the difficulty of recognizing Indians in a territory that neglected, persecuted and humiliated the Indians most of the time. The hegemonic vision for indigenous peoples has been built ambiguously during the process of creating a common "national" identity.

The 2011 census survey of the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics estimated the indigenous population of Brazil at 4%, or around 700,000 people. The arrival of the Portuguese and European invaders in the territory occupied by about 5 million people between the XIV and XV centuries, organized in a decentralized way, based on practices of coexistence and sacred symbols completely different from the "civilized ones", represented one of the biggest shocks cultural aspects of modern history. The peoples of the Tupi matrix, for example, inhabited where today is the coastal part of the national territory, formed a myriad of distinct groups without, however, constituting themselves as a political unit. Throughout the process of consolidation of Portuguese colonization, different ethnic groups warred and confronted Europeans, demanding in their turn great efforts to achieve domination. The resistance to imposition and domination imposed by the invader marked the process of conquest and is still present in the Brazilian territory, as Darcy Ribeiro (1995, p. 34) points out in stating that "this is what is happening today, five hundred years later, with the Yanomami of the northern border of Brazil. "

The fiction of the unified territory, as a legitimating presupposition of the State, and composed of a single great people, was the modern basis that would justify the greatest atrocities in the name of territorial unity, tradition and the great Brazilian nation. For Brazil, which carries in the history of the massacres of colonization and the slave model as the central base of the economy and social organization, it remains a problem to define the concept of Brazilian people, especially for the dominated and silenced of history. The destruction of ethnic minorities, which threatened national unity, was the object of practical actions by institutional power concerned with the nation-state, while it was ignored for years by scholars of the human sciences, who prioritized the class clipping to the detriment of ethnic minorities, treated as a second-order issue. According to Santos (2006), in view of this context, attention is drawn to the actions taken by the Brazilian power to protect indigenous peoples, who are

considered "friends" by the colonizer. Throughout the transition from the Colony to the Empire and then to the Republic, the Indian oscillated between a model of Brazilianness as an example of delay and annoyance to national "development."

One possible explanation for such variability lies in the question of labor, after all, indigenous peoples were not central to the consolidation of the colonial production system. At that time, excluding possible imprisonments, the indigenous arm was marginalized in the economic sectors during the colonization. In this context, Oliveira draws attention to the ambiguous role attributed to the Indian in our history, because, faced with the indigenous "problem", the indigenous question should not be dissociated from the structural aspects of the nation that need confrontation, such as: corruption, impunity and other social ills that mark the history of the country. This "problem", on the other hand, must be regarded as a persuasive force because:

> When speaking of an indigenous problem, the impression of most listeners is that this is only a common expression, without any more precise content, a simple act of pointing, without anticipating any interpretation on the subject. Things, however, do not happen this way: what often appears as innocent creation of common sense, in reality constitutes a powerful instrument of unification of ideas, facts and domains, that otherwise would not be seen as related of necessary or even habitual[5]. (OLIVEIRA, 1995, p. 64)

According to the author, in this perspective, the category "Indian" must be understood as the creation of the invader, in order to generalize and "domesticate" the myriad groups that inhabited the territory we now call Brazil. The transition in the country to peoples who recognized themselves as ethnic groups, such as the Xavantes, Bororo, among others, to the uniform identity of "Indians", implies new forms of recognition, resistance and differentiation of the European invaders and subsequent construction of a nationality unified. All these forms must be considered when thinking about the place of the indigenous in the national imagination. In this process, indigenous peoples become understood as a minority that appropriates and builds a new collective identity, of indigenous peoples, who struggle to access rights and political achievements within the State and public policies. This identity resource continues to mark the relationship based on the tutelage of indigenous peoples in an

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[5] Original text: Quando se fala em problema indígena, a impressão da maioria dos ouvintes é que isso constitui apenas uma expressão corriqueira, sem qualquer conteúdo mais preciso, um simples ato de apontar, sem antecipar qualquer interpretação sobre o tema. As coisas, no entanto, não se passam dessa forma: o que frequentemente aparece como inocente criação do senso comum, na realidade se constitui em um poderoso instrumento de unificação de ideias, fatos e domínios, que de outra forma não seriam vistos como relacionados de modo necessário ou mesmo habitual.

elitist and authoritarian way, becoming an element of great tensions and violence in the countryside and in the great Brazilian cities. Historically, guardianship sought to consolidate an official political practice, which acts to avoid, or at least disrupt, the coordination of groups for collective action. This process, in turn, would help to overcome their fragility in the face of power. Thus, the indigenous battle develops in the state arena, benefiting from the political divide, consisting of a technique in which the different groups learn that they are Indians, discover that they have rights and seek to find group ways to consolidate these rights.

The European ethnocentric view of indigenous peoples, predominant in the Western world, remained ambiguous about the struggle for rights, national citizenship and self-assertion of identity. This ends up competing with the view of inferiority and backwardness of some cultures over others. In general, Santos (2006) explains that there are three great looks on the indigenous issue, built historically. In the foreground, the idealized and romanticized gaze on the "native" peoples stands out, which produces a puerile, tutelary and dependent view of whites for the conflicts and struggles involving indigenous causes. The second perspective imputes to the indigenous peoples a kind of impediment to the great economic development in the construction of the great "Brazilian nation". This perspective, which has been present since the conquest of the territory in the middle of the 16th century, continues strongly in the 21st century, involving the massacre promoted by some ruralists, interested in the expansion of agribusiness, on ethnic groups that defend the lands in which they are against this model of development that ignores the identity and cultural character in relation to the land. The third view starts from the prerogative of extended citizenship, which understands the indigenous peoples as autonomous, with rights that must be guaranteed by the country's institutions. It is in this field of extended citizenship that rests the relationship between the indigenous issues and the achievements and demands in the educational area.

In this context, the colonization process, imposed on the American continent, must be emphasized as a permanent deployment of Latin America in which, according to Galeano, everything became capital for the Europeans. The characteristics of this domain imposed a historical cost to the nations and ethnic groups that inhabited the usurped territory. In this sense, beyond Brazil, domination represented an impact that lasts for much of the American continent as a cost to the consolidation of world capitalism, as highlighted by the author:

> For those who view history as a dispute, the backwardness and misery of Latin America is the result of its failure. We lost; others won. But it turns out that those who won won thanks to what we lost: the history of the underdevelopment of Latin America integrates, as has already been said, the

history of the development of world capitalism. Our defeat was always implicit in the victory of others, our wealth has always generated our poverty to feed the prosperity of others: the empires and their native agents. In colonial and neocolonial alchemy, gold turns into scrap and food becomes poison. Potosí, Zacatecas, and Ouro Preto fell from the top of the splendors of precious metals to the bottom of empty voids, and ruin was the fate of the Chilean pampas of saltpeter and the Amazon jungle of rubber; the northeastern sugarcane plantations in Brazil, the Argentine jungle forests, or some oil-producing settlements in Maracaibo have painful reasons for believing in the mortality of the fortunes that nature bestows and imperialism usurp. The rain that irrigates the centers of imperialist power drowns the vast suburbs of the system. In the same way, and symmetrically, the well-being of our dominant classes-domineering inwards, dominated from without- is the curse of our multitudes, condemned to a life of beasts of burden[6]. (GALEANO, 1992, p. 5-6)

As much as the imposition of a system and economic model gestated in Europe, the ethnocentric perspective marked the Brazilian educational model. Just as the African peoples sent as goods to the colony were ignored in the construction of the "Brazilian nation," according to the founding myth. To the natives, as such, a secondary role in the formation of the country was established. The diversity of pre-Columbian peoples' knowledges and actions has been and remains solemnly ignored by society at large, with the exception of scholars specializing in the subject. The denial of this past continues to be one of the main mechanisms of oppression and silencing of Brazilian and Latin American indigenous groups, who are marginalized in most of the national territories, such as blacks and other socially excluded minorities. By observing this historical process of denial and identity reconstruction, in different periods of Brazilian history, we are faced with the recent changes that value self-recognition as a possible way to access the rights violated in this process.

In short, it can be seen that the ethnic-racial question is a determining condition for the understanding of the formation of the Brazilian homeland, as well as the place historically conditioned to the indigenous as part of this debate. In a territory projected as a "great

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[6] Original text: Para os que concebem a História como uma disputa, o atraso e a miséria da América Latina são o resultado de seu fracasso. Perdemos; outros ganharam. Mas acontece que aqueles que ganharam, ganharam graças ao que nós perdemos: a história do subdesenvolvimento da América Latina integra, como já se disse, a história do desenvolvimento do capitalismo mundial. Nossa derrota esteve sempre implícita na vitória alheia, nossa riqueza gerou sempre a nossa pobreza para alimentar a prosperidade dos outros: os impérios e seus agentes nativos. Na alquimia colonial e neocolonial, o ouro se transforma em sucata e os alimentos se convertem em veneno. Potosí, Zacatecas e Ouro Preto caíram de ponta do cimo dos esplendores dos metais preciosos no fundo buraco dos filões vazios, e a ruína foi o destino do pampa chileno do salitre e da selva amazônica da borracha; o nordeste açucareiro do Brasil, as matas argentinas de quebrachos ou alguns povoados petrolíferos de Maracaibo têm dolorosas razões para crer na mortalidade das fortunas que a natureza outorga e o imperialismo usurpa. A chuva que irriga os centros do poder imperialista afoga os vastos subúrbios do sistema. Do mesmo modo, e simetricamente, o bem-estar de nossas classes dominantes - dominantes para dentro, dominadas de fora - é a maldição de nossas multidões, condenadas a uma vida de bestas de carga.

nation", it becomes imperative to identify national thinking between the end of the imperial period and the advent of the Proclamation of the Republic. During this period, debates about what would be the Brazilian people, or the great nation of the future, revolved around racialist theories, which would transform the national-ethnic profile as well as the territory, consolidating the ideal of a racist and Eurocentric miscegenation , to think of the newly proclaimed country as a Federative Republic.

The process of abolishing slavery and the transition to the republic

The ethnocentric perspective, of superiority between different peoples and cultures, reaches the apex in the transition from Brazil Empire to the Proclamation of the Republic. In this period, the defense of the idea of forming a superior white race, inherited from the Europeans, served as a pretext for maintaining the social, economic and political orders that kept blacks and Indians in degrading and exclusionary conditions between the abolition process of slavery and the ruin of imperial rule. European liberalism, in the nineteenth century, coexisted with a series of battles and conquests of the popular layers and European workers in the struggle for rights. Political instability, linked to the development of the productive forces of industries, brought to the fore in Brazilian society the incompatibility between the slave model and the modernization of the national economy.

According to Skdimore (1976), the penetration of English capital, and the urban growth of places like São Paulo and the region of the Paraíba valley, put the slave model in conflict with some sectors of the intelligentsia, educated in the European continent, with ideals incompatible for the social and economic base of the Empire. In Brazil, the process of independence, negotiated by the elites, kept the country tied to the old metropolis. The economic structure remained essentially agricultural and enslaved. The fact that it was an Empire with a hereditary monarchy, surrounded by Hispanic America, recently liberated by republics, in which the elites sought to erase the features of the Spanish administration, made Brazil, in the author's words, a kind of aberration as a nation of the century XIX. Local elites go through the nineteenth century in a conciliatory pact that would collapse from the tensions caused by the War of Paraguay (1865-1870). The agreement between the elites and the centralized power of the emperor was based on multiple bases. Example of this was the hunting promoted by the army and the police to capture fugitive slaves and, to a lesser degree, rebel natives, with the support of the great landowners. This sustained peace in the emperor's violence and supercentralization began to cause discontent in some sectors and regions that

had more dynamic economic growth, such as São Paulo and the incipient coffee economy of that state.

The conflict in Paraguay occurred in a fratricidal manner, extending beyond what was expected and arousing many civilians to the national backwardness. Republican thinking was beginning to gain support in organized sectors of the country, such as the army, involved in the battle that forced them to live with slaves enticed to the conflict, while maintaining the role of chasing and hunting fugitive slaves throughout the country. The aspirations for change grew in the regions of the country where urbanization and the penetration of thought chains such as positivism became pressing in the press, in associations and in the intelligentsia; sectors in which the members identified with the ideals inherited from the "great capitalist nations". In the author's words, the political impact promoted by the war, in line with economic transformations, broke the conciliatory pact built by the aristocratic elites, with the emergence of dissident groups, inspired by the Liberal triumph in France and England. The dissatisfaction spread through pulsating cities and urban transformation, such as Recife, Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo, led by young people who adhered to the positivist ideology, which exalted scientific progress and the maintenance of social order. This rupture within the order grounded the abolitionist thought of this period.

It is up to this moment to reinforce the active aspect of the Negro and the indigenous in the fight for their own freedom. The multiple revolts, the formation of solidary networks among freedmen, the small sabotages in the productive units, and the other actions of resistance of that period should be emphasized, so as not to run the risk of imputing to the kindness of some the abolition of 1888. Thus, the combination of some external factors, such as the influence of liberal thought on the largely urban elites, the changes in the capitalist production model that reorganized the world of labor and world consumption, the condemnation of the great capitalist powers against the slave trade, helps to understand the spread of abolitionist ideals throughout the Brazilian territory in the late 1880s. There was no plausible justification for maintaining the slave system, or for support of the imperial government. According to Skidmore (1976), this transition sought, once again, to maintain social and political control of the country's economic elites without altering the asymmetries and privileges of the ruling classes.

But Brazil came to the formal abolition of slavery slowly, without a bloody civil war. Controllers of the policy have taken every precaution to stifle the impending social conflict, using legal parameters. Another factor that contributed to a less traumatic passage for the

dominant elites was the absence of a critical mass questioning the unequal model of land tenure, with the exception of a few abolitionists - like André Rebouças. The abolitionist process, in turn, did not fail to reproduce, in the intellectual elite of the country, a racist view on the inferior condition of the Negro as emphasized by Skidmore (1976):

> This was the conception that reigned in the elite: Brazil had escaped the prejudice of color. As Nabuco wrote in O abolicionismo: "Slavery, for our happiness, has never sourced the soul of the slave against you, speaking collectively, nor created between the two races the reciprocal hatred that naturally exists between oppressors and oppressed." Moreover, recent experiences have shown that "color in Brazil is not, as in the United States, a social prejudice against whose obstinacy the character, talent, merit of the person who incurs it cannot do so much." In contrast to what occurred in the United States, abolitionists in Brazil were rarely obliged to discuss the question of race itself, because advocates of slavery practically never turned to racial inferiority theories[7]. (SKIDMORE, 1976, p. 62)

In this context, it seems clear that many abolitionists defended the theories of European superiority and racial inferiority, which would serve as justification and ideological force for the defense of the laundering of the "Brazilian nation", and the consequent marginalization and determination of a place of inferiority for blacks and in the construction of a new imaginary country. This marginal role, in turn, would mark the consolidation of the myth of Brazilian racial democracy by inserting the idea of miscegenation as a positive, valued element that has maintained, however, the specificity of the Negro and the indigenous in secondary conditions.

The originality of Brazilian racial thinking

The understanding of the role of racial theories in the transition from the nineteenth to the twentieth century in Brazil cannot be reduced to the influence of European and American theories on white racial superiority. This is because racialist thought in this period has originality that lies in the discarding of eugenicist theories as necessary, in the adaptation and inclusion of explanations that would justify the racial question as central to the social explanation of the country. In a country mixed as Brazil, the simple transfer of racialist

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[7] Original text: Essa era a concepção que reinava na elite: o Brasil escapara ao preconceito de cor. Como Nabuco escreveu em O abolicionismo: "A escravidão, por felicidade nossa, não azedou nunca a alma do escravo contra o senhor, falando coletivamente, nem criou, entre as duas raças, o ódio recíproco que existe naturalmente entre opressores e oprimido". Além disso, experiências recentes haviam demonstrado que "a cor no Brasil não é, como nos Estados Unidos, um preconceito social contra cuja obstinação pouco pode o caráter, o talento, o mérito de quem incorre nele". Ao contrário do que ocorria nos Estados Unidos, os abolicionistas no Brasil raramente se viam obrigados a discutir a questão da raça em si, porque os defensores da escravidão praticamente nunca recorriam a teorias de inferioridade racial.

theories would be impracticable. It was necessary to create something new and to adapt the perspective of superiority and racial inferiority in this context. These scientists believed they carried the responsibility of the destiny of the nation.

The scientific thought of the period did not seek methods of experimentation that proved some theory, according to experimental model prevailing in Europe and the United States. The scientific activity was characterized by debates and discourses valued socially by the national literate elites, with strong influence of the social-Darwinism and the evolutionist model, popularized as theoretical justification of imperialist domination in these regions. These men of "sciences" [8] did not form a cohesive theoretical unity. These national racialist interpreters argued that African inferiority should not even be compared to "higher" races. As a common point, the authors sought theoretical justifications to prove that lower groups, such as former slaves, were unable to become part of a new civilization. The justification for the national backwardness was, in the current thinking, tied to the presence of the Negro in the formation and history of Brazil.

In spite of their differences, these thinkers had the stamp of the institutions they represented - São Paulo School of Law, Faculty of Medicine in Bahia, lyceums and art museums in Rio de Janeiro, press offices in São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and Recife - the common objective in the treatment of the great scientific subjects, in the light of the national questions. These self-taught people consumed manuals and theories, such as positivism, social-Darwinism, and evolutionism, often outdated in Europe. These intellectual activities intended to explain Brazil from the racial perspective, in a society marked by miscegenation and miscegenation, constructed in violent ways, according to the characteristics of the slave model that prevailed in the country.

We can briefly divide two great theoretical perspectives that marked Western thought in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: the French perspective, which naturalized human equality; and the view of superiority and capacity of certain genetic types as determinants and characteristics of "higher" moral and intellectual standards. The perspective that sought to naturalize the differences prevailed among Brazilian "men of sciences".

The fact that Brazil was a "mestizo nation" by some of these thinkers brought new dilemmas in the attempt to reconcile the ideals of grandeur and national identity with a mixed and diverse people like Brazil. Equality, as advocated in the new Constitution of 1891, found

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[8] Tais como Tobias Barreto (1989), Euclides da Cunha (2000), Raimundo Nina Rodrigues (2008), dentre outros. Such as Tobias Barreto (1989), Euclides da Cunha (2000), Raimundo Nina Rodrigues (2008), among others.

racialist discourse as an important barrier to the social ascension of the excluded, as Schwarcz (1993) observed:

> The same context that finds in a liberal project the solution to its new political configuration looks for in the deterministic and anthropological theories subsidies to transform social differences in fundamental biological barriers. After slavery and establishment and democracy through the Republic, it takes force a racial discourse, late compared to the liberal model present since 1822[9]. (SCHWARCZ, 1993, p. 240)

The abolition followed by the Proclamation of the Republic has awakened the prospect of a great country. The negotiated transition among economic elites, however, had a major problem. What to do with the mass of free workers facing this new context? How to achieve order by principle and progress at last in the face of so many conflicts and social instability? These and other questions aroused great debate, since the foundation that would justify evolution for a large "Brazilian nation" was supported by the racialist and supposedly scientific discourses of eugenics. Part of the intellectual elite was assured that abolition would not threaten the economic and social hegemony of the ruling classes. According to the author, extinguished slavery would systematically open the path to internalization or recognition of the social hierarchy as an inevitable and deterministic phenomenon.

The immigrant turn-of-the-century project posed itself as the sure justification for building a great nation. In opposition to the reformist thinkers, who admitted the inclusion of blacks in the free labor market, the defenders of laundering, through the insertion of the European in the territory, believed that this would be the guarantee of times of progress. On this aspect, Azevedo (1987) emphasizes:

> This passage, or transition, was conceived as an orderly time of gradual overcoming of serious racial-social problems in which a set of tactics of control and discipline would be applied in order to attain in the future the much-dreamed time of progress. In the meantime, it was hoped that the country could fill a basic need pointed out by almost all authors already seen so far: nationality. For this, it was necessary to forge a population fully identified with the idea of a homeland, of Brazilian society, not only in terms of geographical limits, but especially in the sense of a national ethic. However, the perception of an explosive socio-racial heterogeneity stands out as a considerable hindrance in the thinking of those who sought to transform the newly independent country into a nation[10]. (AZEVEDO, 1987, p. 60).

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[9] Original text: O mesmo contexto que encontra em um projeto liberal a solução para sua nova configuração política procura nas teorias deterministas e antropológicas subsídios para transformar diferenças sociais em barreiras biológicas fundamentais. Finda a escravidão e instaurada e democracia por meio da República, toma força um discurso racial, tardio se comparado ao modelo liberal presente desde 1822.

[10] Original text: Esta passagem, ou transição, era concebida como um tempo ordeiro de superação gradativa dos graves problemas sócios-raciais, em que um conjunto de táticas de controle e de disciplina seria aplicado a fim

In forging this model of nationality, Brazil would enter the twentieth century by reinforcing the founding myth as justification for the silencing and exclusion of black and indigenous protagonism in the construction of the "Brazilian nation." The prestige of racialist scientific discourses, among the layers that defended the immigrant vision to "fix" the nation, provided a new inflection for the condition of inferiority attributed to the descendants of Africans. To the freedmen, our social and economic backwardness was attributed through a type of labor considered incapable of creating or developing a national economy. This resource marginalized blacks, already socially and historically excluded in Brazil, from being dispossessed and impenetrable in the grandiose project led by the ruling elites, embedded in the public and private institutions of the Republic.

The liberal perspective of immigrant theorists directly related the question of free labor to the white 'race'. Progress and civilization should be erected under the model considered superior and apt to practice the great changes foreseen in this "national project". The imaginary built in the period puts us before the extermination of the negro and the indigenous in this process, seeking to naturalize a lower condition that should be extirpated from the "civilization" under construction, without any kind of concession. This ideal of "whiteness" must be related to the large number of mestizos present in Brazilian society, generated by constant violence and sexual abuse against the black enslaved. The extensive reports in Gilberto Freyre's work (2005) allow us to understand the domestic daily life of planters in the relationship of control and oppression over captives. The ideal of laundering was reinforced in a multifaceted society, marked by sexual exploitation markedly in the relations between masters and slaves, between 1880 and 1920 with the predominance of racist thought followed by encouragement to the arrival of European workers.

According to Skidmore (1976), the thesis of innate racial differences counted on three great schools: (a) ethnological-biological, of American origin, that defended the supposed inferiority of the blacks and indigenous people in face of the physical differences in relation to the white; (b.) the historical school, which attributed to the successive triumphs of different peoples who understood themselves as superior; and (c.) social Darwinism, used by racist

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de se atingir no futuro o tão sonhado tempo de progresso. Nesse meio tempo esperava-se que o país pudesse preencher uma carência básica apontada por quase todos os autores já vistos até aqui: a nacionalidade. Para isso, era preciso que se forjasse uma população plenamente identificada com a ideia de pátria, de sociedade brasileira, não só em termos de limites geográficos como, principalmente, no sentido de uma ética nacional. Contudo, a percepção de uma explosiva heterogenia sócio-racial destaca-se como um considerável entrave no pensamento daqueles que almejavam transformar o país recém-independente em nação.

discourses such as the naturalization of "stronger" peoples, who would condemn the disappearance of "inferior" peoples in an irreversible process.

In the period in question, racially concerned scholars were strongly influenced by these three racialist currents, condemning the Negro to extinction or subjugation by the "higher races." The mestizos, on the other hand, obtained in the negation of their own blackness or indigenous blood a real possibility of ascension and social acceptance in elitist circles that had few representatives of that mixture at the top of the social and political hierarchy.

The stimulus to free immigrant workers came accompanied by the marginalization of the black in the process of building the Republic. In this context, racial discourses were directly linked to the idea of nation. A paradox present in this discourse was the very mixed composition of the Brazilian population; the reduced academic universe would need to justify theories of racial superiority without, however, denying national miscegenation. The racial argument would play an important role in maintaining social inequalities and in the lack of access to the rights and citizenship of the excluded layers in the process of construction of the country. Another common justification in this context, for the exclusion of blacks and the encouragement of immigrants, was that blacks, as well as Indians, were lazy, vagabond and with tendencies toward social marginalization.

Conditioned on marginalization, black became an ideal criminal type for racist elites of the period. Immigrants, in turn, became the example and the model to be followed, which could reconcile work and freedom, for the money laundering project proposed in the period. The conception of freedom and work, under the perspective and hegemony of nationalist thinking, would have the immigrant the main protagonist in face of the inability of the Negro and the indigenous to lead this process according to the racist and class mentality of the period. The racial debates in Brazil began to lose force, in a context after the World War I, concentrating the intellectual productions in the field of the national sovereignty. According to Clóvis Moura (1988), this inflection represented a new theoretical framework, with the dive of scholars interested in redefining Brazilian national identity, bringing to the fore the inheritance and a more detailed study on the relationship and daily life of Afro-Brazilians in the structure colonial, valuing our miscegenation from the myth of Brazilian racial democracy.

About the myth of Brazilian racial democracy

In the 1930s, racial themes continued to be central to Brazilian social thought. It is important to point out, however, an important change that would displace miscegenation as a problem or obstacle to the construction of a great country for the positive anthropological field of the search for a national identity, centered on the mixture of whites, blacks and Indians. The biological factor of the miscegenation was transplanted to the social field as an example of harmony and coexistence between the Brazilian population diversity. The rootedness of the myth of peaceful coexistence is the fuel for the "great" civilizing process intended during the Vargas era. Whitening as a dominant ideology remained on the fabric of the mixture that acted as the negation of the black identity in that context, as Clóvis Moura (1988) observes:

> Whitening as the ideology of power elites will be reflected in the behavior of much of the dominated segment that begins to flee from its ethnic matrices, to mask itself with the values created to discriminate against it. With this the Negro (the mulatto, therefore, too) did not articulate at the level of an ethnic identity consciousness capable of creating a neutralizing counter-ideology manipulated by the dominator. On the contrary. There is a process of accommodation to these values, a fact that will determine the emptying of these Negroes at the level of their ethnic consciousness, thus placing them as simple objects of the historical, social and cultural process[11] (MOURA, 1988, p. 69-70)

Racial democracy serves as a justification for a new exclusion, which seeks to keep the exploitation of the black hidden in the name of the friendly coexistence that keeps it in the impossibility of social ascension. From this conception, it emerges that class and race have never been established in the same way, after the dismantling of the slave society and the mode of slave production according to Florestan Fernandes (1989). The racist political structures, present in the institutions of power in Brazil, promoted and promoted the mass extermination of the black and indigenous population in the country. Asymmetrical relations also produced, in an imposed way, the so-called Brazilian syncretism in a violent and forced manner, resulting in a systematic denial of the atrocities committed in the slave-era by idealizing a harmonious model of society under the leadership of white moral and cultural

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[11] Original text: O branqueamento como ideologia das elites de poder vai se refletir no comportamento de grande parte do segmento dominado que começa a fugir das suas matrizes étnicas, para mascarar-se com os valores criados para discriminá-lo. Com isto o negro (o mulato, portanto, também) não se articulou em nível de uma consciência de identidade étnica capaz de criar uma contra ideologia neutralizadora manipulada pelo dominador. Pelo contrário. Há um processo de acomodação a estes valores, fato que irá determinar o esvaziamento desses negros no nível da sua consciência étnica, colocando-os, assim, como simples objetos do processo histórico, social e cultural.

standards. This model of racism is typically Brazilian, that is, it is not confronted, exposed, but hidden, silenced. Acting in multiple spheres of Brazilian social and institutional relations, Brazilian racism is described, according to Nascimento (1978):

> We must understand "racial democracy" as meaning the perfect metaphor for Brazilian-style racism: not as obvious as United States racism, nor legalized as apartheid South Africa, but effectively institutionalized at official levels of government as well as diffuse in the social, psychological, economic, political and cultural fabric of the country's society. From the crude classification of blacks as savages and inferiors, to the exaltation of the virtues of blood-mixing as an attempt to eradicate the "black stain", from the operability of religious "syncretism"; to the legal abolition of the black issue through the National Security Law and census omission - manipulating all these methods and resources - Brazil's unofficial history records the long and ancient genocide perpetrated against Afro-Brazilians. Monstrous machine ironically designated "racial democracy" that only gives blacks a single "privilege": that of becoming white, inside and out. The password of this imperialism of whiteness, and of capitalism inherent to it, responds to bastard nicknames like assimilation, acculturation, miscegenation; but we know that beneath the theoretical surface remains the belief in the inferiority of the African and his descendants[12]. (NASCIMENTO, 1978, p. 93)

Belief in the harmony between blacks, whites and natives acts as a barrier that hinders the antiracist struggle in Brazil. The fact that the concept of race was abandoned by scientists in the mid-twentieth century does not eliminate racism in Brazil's social relations, institutions, politics, and mentality. According to Munanga (1999), the struggle against racial discrimination continues to be hampered during the first half of the twentieth century, through the built division of blacks and mestizos as separate groups devoid of unity, which hindered the identitary recognition of both. The manipulation of the biological by the ideological through the cognitive categories that sought to name and signify society in a great unity ignores and devalues diversity, making difficult the understanding and the historical dimension of this process of national construction that marked this period. The search for

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[12] Original text: Devemos compreender "democracia racial" como significando a metáfora perfeita para designar o racismo estilo brasileiro: não tão óbvio como o racismo dos Estados Unidos e nem legalizado qual o apartheid da África do Sul, mas eficazmente institucionalizado nos níveis oficiais de governo assim como difuso no tecido social, psicológico, econômico, político e cultural da sociedade do país. Da classificação grosseira dos negros como selvagens e inferiores, ao enaltecimento das virtudes da mistura de sangue como tentativa de erradicação da "mancha negra", da operatividade do "sincretismo" religioso; à abolição legal da questão negra através da Lei de Segurança Nacional e da omissão censitária – manipulando todos esses métodos e recursos – a história não oficial do Brasil registra o longo e antigo genocídio que se vem perpetrando contra o afro-brasileiro. Monstruosa máquina ironicamente designada "democracia racial" que só concede aos negros um único "privilégio": aquele de se tornarem brancos, por dentro e por fora. A palavra-senha desse imperialismo da brancura, e do capitalismo que lhe é inerente, responde a apelidos bastardos como assimilação, aculturação, miscigenação; mas sabemos que embaixo da superfície teórica permanece intocada a crença na inferioridade do africano e seus descendentes.

social development as the central motor of the incipient political project made the racialist theories obsolete in this context.

A fundamental work of the period is Casa Grande and Senzala, by Gilberto Freyre (2005). The thinker from Pernambuco dissected the private universe and the intimate relation present in the social, political and economic structure of the mills. The contribution of the author is great, in showing the enormous presence of blacks and Indians in the Brazilian culture, something ignored or despised of majority form until then. Miscegenation, formerly the origin of all national evils, became something positive and valued. This author, in his studies, starts from the idealized and naturalized view of the violent process of colonization, positively emphasizing the adaptability and purity of the European without, however, problematizing the brutality of miscegenation, as the author points out:

> Portuguese does not: for all those happy predispositions of race, of mesology and of culture to which we refer, not only did it manage to overcome the conditions of climate and of soil unfavorable to the establishment of Europeans in the tropics, as to supply the extreme penury of white people for the colonizing task uniting with woman of color. By intercourse with Indian or black women the colonizer multiplied in a vigorous and ductile mestizo population, even more adaptable than he was pure to the tropical climate. The lack of people, who afflicted him, more than any other colonizer, forcing him to the immediate miscegenation - against which they did not have, besides, scruples of race, only religious preconceptions - was to Portuguese advantage in his work of conquest and colonization of the tropics. Advantage for its better adaptation than biological, social[13]. (FREYRE, 2005, p. 74-75)

This classic text, written in the 1930s, helped to construct an ideology of Brazilian culture that excluded class conflicts, inherent to the slave model, because it confused the concepts of culture and race, presenting a mythical and idealized version when dealing with relations between opposites, slaves and masters, as something devoid of conflict between different. The analysis of this author did not seek to understand the organization of power in the different performances in which it was exercised, characteristics of the patriarchal society. This contribution consolidated a harmonious perspective, which would make it possible to sew the desired quest for a national unity, as Munanga points out (1999):

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[13] Original text: O português não: por todas aquelas felizes predisposições de raça, de mesologia e de cultura a que nos referimos, não só conseguiu vencer as condições de clima e de solo desfavoráveis ao estabelecimento de europeus nos trópicos, como suprir a extrema penúria de gente branca para a tarefa colonizadora unindo-se com mulher de cor. Pelo intercurso com mulher índia ou negra multiplicou-se o colonizador em vigorosa e dúctil população mestiça, ainda mais adaptável do que ele puro ao clima tropical. A falta de gente, que o afligia, mais do que a qualquer outro colonizador, forçando-o à imediata miscigenação – contra o que não dispunham, aliás, escrúpulos de raça, apenas preconceitos religiosos – foi para o português vantagem na sua obra de conquista e colonização dos trópicos. Vantagem para a sua melhor adaptação senão biológica, social.

> Freyre's great contribution is to have shown that blacks, Indians and mestizos made positive contributions in Brazilian culture; profoundly influenced the lifestyle of the lordly class in matters of food, clothing and sex. Miscegenation, which in the thought of Nina and others caused irreparable damage to Brazil, was seen by him as an immense advantage. In other words, by transforming mestizaje into a positive, non-negative value under the aspect of degeneracy, the author of Casa grande e senzala allowed the definitive completion of the contours of an identity that had long been drawn. Freyre consolidates the original myth of the Brazilian society configured in a triangle whose vertices are the black, white and Indian races. This is how the mixtures came about. The three races also brought their cultural heritages parallel to the racial crossings, which gave rise to another mestizaje in the cultural field. From the idea of this double mix, the myth of racial democracy slowly grew; "We are a democracy because the mixture generated a people without a barrier, without prejudice" [14]. (MUNANGA, 1999, p. 79-80)

The documents, such as the curricular guidelines of 2004, Law 10.639, among others that deal with ethnic-racial relations in Brazilian education, identify, in this process of silencing of blacks and indigenous people, one of the central arguments for curricular change, historically, reproduces the idea of mixing as a factor of recognition and inclusion of these segments in the rhetoric of contribution to the construction of Brazil. The organized reaction, which sought to denounce this condition, was marked by the foundation of several initiatives for the reconstruction of a new image for the Negro, as in newspapers, in the experimental theater of the Negro and, in 1931, in the "Black Front", being the education its main field of activity. In these movements, there were simultaneously ambiguous aspects of the black struggle, since the educational model of the period was marked by the white and Eurocentric conception of education. The African element was discarded and omitted in search of an acceptance that obeyed criteria consolidated and embedded in the hegemonic white mentality of the period. According to Kabengele Munanga, the denunciation against discrimination, violence and prejudice coexisted with the denial of African cultural identity, seen as inferior by the descendants themselves.

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[14] Original text: A grande contribuição de Freyre é ter mostrado que negros, índios e mestiços tiveram contribuições positivas na cultura brasileira; influenciaram profundamente o estilo de vida da classe senhorial em matéria de comida, indumentária e sexo. A mestiçagem, que no pensamento de Nina e outros causava dano irreparável ao Brasil, era vista por ele como uma vantagem imensa. Em outras palavras, ao transformar a mestiçagem num valor positivo e não negativo sob o aspecto de degenerescência, o autor de Casa grande e senzala permitiu completar definitivamente os contornos de uma identidade que há muito vinha sendo desenhada. Freyre consolida o mito originário da sociedade brasileira configurada num triângulo cujos vértices são as raças negra, branca e índia. Foi assim que surgiram as misturas. As três raças trouxeram também suas heranças culturais paralelamente aos cruzamentos raciais, o que deu origem a uma outra mestiçagem no campo cultural. Da ideia dessa dupla mistura, brotou lentamente o mito de democracia racial; "somos uma democracia porque a mistura gerou um povo sem barreira, sem preconceito".

The recovery of the African elements, the recognition of this heritage and the overcoming of the racial democracy myth are central arguments in the contemporary political struggle that arises in the disputes involving the construction of the BNCC. Identity, understood as a process negotiated and renegotiated by ideological and political disputes, according to the established context and power relations, becomes the driving force of the disputes around ethnic-racial issues and the Brazilian education system. In a context of disputes and conceptions that seek to diverge from the commercial consensus imputed to the national curricular model, the BNCC is the scene of disputes that defend the multifaceted and plural recognition of the Brazilian people and its right to memory and to multiple national identities. In this clipping, we can understand the importance of the founding myth and racial democracy as theoretical foundations that today seek to be deconstructed by the curricular guidelines that deal with ethnic-racial relations in the documents that organized Brazilian education historically and which, today, underpin the dispute and the discussions on the feasibility and relevance of a BNCC for the country.

In order to analyze the symbolic meanings present in the BNCC discourse, it becomes necessary to understand the field about curriculum. In spite of their disputes and disputes, ethnic-racial issues find their point of interest and search for centrality in the post-critical perspective of the curricular field in this proposal that intends to establish a national standard for the organization of Brazilian basic education. Understanding the history of the curriculum as a field of study, identifying the different perspectives, such as technicalist, critical and post-critical visions, is necessary for the understanding of ethnic-racial relations and the disputes for meanings that characterize this analytical gaze for the curricular field.

Final remarks

As I went through the construction of the idea of a homogeneous and grandiose nation in the crossing of the nineteenth century to the XX in Brazil, as well as the trajectory of struggles and resistance on the part of the Brazilian blacks and Indians, I was able to perceive the importance and the presence of this debate that seeks deconstruct the founding myth and the myth of "Brazilian racial democracy" as a central condition for any educational project of national character. Shifting the rhetoric and the discourse of the field of tolerance and respect to the area of confrontation and conflict of narratives and ideas is fundamental to advancing in the construction of a more egalitarian and less violent society.

This perverse Iberian Eurocentrism remains strong in the minds of the economic elites in the 21st century. Resistance against any compensatory policy for blacks and natives, which seeks to settle accounts for the past and present genocide and slavery, continues to be harshly reinforced in the legislature and in the large media corporations. In a way, the myth of "racial democracy" serves as an argument for excluding countervailing measures in the name of a meritocracy that treats dissimilar as similar. In Brazil, curricular policies must be conceived with the objective of guaranteeing the recognition of our differences, for the construction of a democratic pedagogical political project for the national education system.

Therefore, the conflict must be exposed not by rhetorical form, but with active and central participation of the groups that share and experience in their daily lives the historical silence, reinforced by the mythical narratives that characterize our history.

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