OTHER THEMES

Educational Experiences of Black Women in the Second Half of the 19th Century

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ABSTRACT – Educational Experiences of Black Women in the Second Half of the 19th Century. Educational Experiences of Black Women in the Second Half of the 19th Century. This article analyzes the educational experiences of black women in the second half of the 19th century, emerging a historical and cultural reading based on the knowledge and resistance of black women in this period. It is based on anti-racist decolonial feminist epistemology and, methodologically, on cultural history and intersectional praxis. The results reveal that the authors debate the educational training of women in close relation with the political movements for decolonization on the Latin American continent. Their writings constitute a borderline thought that emerges in the dense web of decoloniality.
Keywords: **Educational Experiences. Black Women. 19th century.**

RESUMO – Vivências Educativas de Mulheres Negras na Segunda Metade do Século XIX. Este artigo analisa as vivências educativas de mulheres negras na segunda metade do século XIX, fazendo emergir uma leitura histórica cultural a partir dos saberes e resistências das mulheres negras neste período. Fundamenta-se na epistemologia feminista decolonial antirracista e, metodologicamente, na história cultural e na práxis interseccional. Os resultados revelam que as autoras debatem a formação educacional das mulheres em estreita relação com os movimentos políticos de descolonização do continente latino-americano. Os seus escritos constituem um pensamento fronteiriço que emerge na densa trama da decolonialidade.
Palavras-chave: **Vivências Educativas. Mulheres Negras. Século XIX.**

Introduction

In this article we seek to analyze, from the perspective of the feminism of differences and black feminism, the knowledge and educational experiences of black women in the second half of the 19th century, especially Capoeira and the Afro-Brazilian religiosities and songs. We understand that Educational Experiences take place in the broader field of education, extending beyond institutionalized school spaces. This implies understanding education as something that manifests itself in everyday life, in subjective reflection and in the practice of human and cultural formation activities. The article provides a path that allows us to look at the knowledge of black Brazilian women in the structural dimension of our society, considering the prism of differences in gender, culture, race and education in understanding historical writing, emphasizing the presence and the educational knowledge of black women, until then, marginalized in the official history of education.

To this end, we highlight the following questions: What were the educational experiences of black women during the second half of the 19th century? How did the relationships experienced by these women allow the preservation of knowledge and ancestral memory? How did the pain of enslavement drive educational strategies to confront and survive black culture? These questions drove the search for analysis for this article and the understanding of a resistance and decolonial education, which is still located in a difficult period in our history.

It is essential to problematize the centrality and hierarchy of modern/colonizing knowledge. Contrary to this centrality, we need a science willing to understand and dialogue with the most varied forms of culture, without electing superior and inferior cultures and/or populations, but understanding the different ways of attributing meanings and meanings to the world. Culture, in particular, is the most evident reflection of social transformations. It shapes and establishes new ways of living, both personally and collectively, significantly influencing our daily lives.

We place this study, methodologically and epistemologically, in the field of cultural history, women's history, especially enslaved black women, and also decolonial Education, as a possibility of rewriting history based on educational knowledge and experiences produced by black women. The purpose is to present a story also made with the hands of black women, who in the midst of violence, torture and pain promoted survival strategies, not only in the physical body, but in culture and ancestral memory, producing cultures others from the collision between realities.

One of the methodological structures present in this article is the reconstruction of the experiences of black women based on the comparison to a “weaving”, which, in the face of several threads that are interconnected by a territorial matrix until their dispersion in the diaspora, can be united in a bundle, due to the similarity to Maafa[1] and,

simultaneously, its resistance, thus forming the weave of a piece. The metaphor of threads dialogues with the power of Ananse, a spider deity of the Fanti-Ashanti culture, reiterated by Zélia Amador de Deus:

> Each of the threads woven by Ananse founds a network of resistance capable of guaranteeing, not only the survival of enslaved Africans and later their descendants, but also, beyond simple survival devoid of everything, a survival strengthened by a repository cultural, created in the Americas. It is from this perspective that Ananse will be present in different places in the Americas, uniting and bringing together threads of action, building networks of solidarity, which will strengthen the protagonist of this action, so that he can achieve his goals (Deus, 2019, p. 141).

It was intended to redefine the concept of knowledge no longer as a synonym for "objectivity", "rationality", center, north, norm or hegemony, but now privileging subjective reflection, multiplicity, the margin, the global south, emotions, sensibilities escrevivências (Writing of life or Writing-experience); investigating the "source of authority that supposedly belongs to the West to define and describe, ultimately, the meaning of experience, knowledge and truth on behalf of African peoples" (Ramose, 2011, p. 9).

We resort to the theoretical-methodological strategy of the escrevivências coined by Conceição Evaristo (2006), for presenting the genealogy of the strong idea-force of where and how ethnic and gender experiences are born. The escrevivência is not about individual writing, according to the author, this type of writing is not limited to itself, it is about collective writing, especially enslaved black women. Hence as a methodological tool and a research ethic that focuses on writing as a form of resistance, approaching the lives of black women not as a passive object of study, but as an artistic, inventive power. (Soares, 2017 apud Bartholomeu, 2020).

We understand that escrevivências is located in the decolonial field, as it is a form of writing in constant construction and recovery of the humanity of the black subject. For this, it is essential to strip ourselves of conservative postures and continue the movement of creating differentiated stories, especially in relation to women and their participation in the history of society. It is in the face of denial, exclusion and historical and epistemological silencing imposed on black women that this research seeks to listen to them and see them in another way from feminist studies, questioning the epistemological, historical, social and educational male domination. Rewriting history from another perspective is a great challenge, especially when it comes to understanding the silence, emotions and feelings that permeated the subjectivity of black women in the 19th century. However, it is necessary to take the risk and rewrite this part of history that was harshly denied.

We organize this article into two central parts, in addition to this introduction and final considerations, in which we present an epistemological debate on educational knowledge and experiences from the prism of black decolonial feminism. In the second moment we present

the weaving of the educational historical resignification of knowledge produced by black women.

Educational Experiences and Knowledge of Black Women: necessary dimensions for collective resistance

The knowledge and educational experiences of black women that we defend in this article require the abandonment of the rationalism that permeates modern science, promoting a different epistemology. We understand that reason is in no way dissociated from the emotions and desires that are inscribed in black female bodies. In fact, the relationship between thought and emotion is even more evident in the intimate practices of black women. Therefore, thinking about education, politics, science, economics and culture requires the support of a different epistemology that allows us to capture the nuances and complexities of the world experienced by black women.

In this perspective, we resort to the understanding of culture as a movement of rupture of static knowledge and considered as a single truth, important is the notion of culture as the realization of "the act by which each person marks what others give them to live and think" (Certeau, 1995, p. 9-10), i.e., a cultural act not only accompanies the production of knowledge, but gives meaning to this creation, whose value is experienced in everyday actions. This cultural act only gains meaning and value when it has a practical meaning and sense of life for the subjects of social and educational practices.

It is possible to emphasize, in this sense, that everyday life is the media stage for validating new knowledge within the broad spectrum of the cultural act, as knowledge produced in the spheres of social practice acquires functionality in everyday life and, therefore in the women's life. Put another way, such a fact, that is, creations need to come into everyday life to verify and confirm the validity of the creation. Thus, everyday life does not present itself as a neutral stage, on the contrary, it is the place for meeting and experiencing this creation.

Here we use the sense of culture as 'webs of meanings' (Geertz, 1978), a human production, which arises from the conflicting, diverse and plural relationships in which human beings are constituted. Therefore, it is inappropriate to speak of a finished, immutable, universalist, static and standardized culture, thus conceived by functionalist theory, but complex, feminist, dynamic and historical.

Therefore, the production of knowledge is intrinsically related to culture, as it is linked to the way the world is conceived and, also, forms of survival, as we know that not every human being sees it in the same way, much less experiences it equally, cultural production depends on social conditions, which implies an interdependence between the creation of culture and the concrete economic conditions of life. Thus, knowledge and culture are produced by groups or individuals who occupy unequal positions in the social, economic, gender, historical, educational and political fields.

According to Geertz (1978), the knowledge culturally produced is hierarchized, establishing a degree of importance, which conditions a stratification of knowledge, which makes unequal social relations explicit and reveals the division and dispute between social classes. Relations between classes, for Cuche (2002), are always unequal and, as such, are configured at the birthplace of culture itself, revealing the cultural hierarchy resulting from a social division.

To think that culture is independent of historical-social construction is to affirm that between cultural differences there is no intense, constant and conflicting interaction. Without losing sight, then, that in this relationship of power between the dominant and dominated classes there are overlaps, invasions, silencing and resistance, expressing the political character of culture and the function that culture assumes in political life.

It's in this direction that the authoress Sueli Carneiro highlights the relationship between racism and epistemicide, which happens through the social, cultural, colonial contract of domination between the white world in depriving the black subject of his humanity, as well as the cultural, historical, educational, philosophical productions and cosmoperception, subalternizing it through systematic erasure:

> It is the phenomenon that occurs due to the lowering of self-esteem that racism and discrimination cause in everyday school life; by denying black people the status of subjects of knowledge, through the devaluation, denial or concealment of the contributions of the African Continent and the African diaspora to the cultural heritage of humanity; by the imposition of cultural whitening and the production of school failure and dropout. We call these processes epistemicide (Carneiro, 2005, p. 97 apud Bartholomeu, 2020, p. 5).

According to Sueli Carneiro (2005), epistemicide goes far beyond merely disqualifying the knowledge of subordinated and dominated populations. It is a persistent process of cultural indigence, that is, absolute poverty, due to the denial of access to education, intellectual inferiority, and various ways of disqualifying Black people as intellectuals and producers of knowledge. In this sense, racism exerts its recurring power by ensuring that the inferiorization of Black populations is not forgotten. For this reason, epistemicide is constitutive of racism because it mortally wounds the rationality of the subjugated, mutilating their capacity to learn.

For the authoress, the State needs racism to legitimize the intellectual, physical, and cultural death of Black populations, relating it to other elements that strengthen actions in the process of restricting access to public spaces, such as social and educational banishment. Thus, epistemicide is used as a strategy to protect the hegemonic group, which is associated with white, cis-heteropatriarchal identity, to the detriment of those exposed to violent deaths, such as Black people.

And the action of epistemicide has deep roots; here, we focus historically on the second half of the 19th century, when Black cultural practices were heavily criminalized, demonized, and prohibited, such

as capoeira, samba, and African-derived religious practices, among others. The challenge lies in highlighting that, despite the official history, there are other histories, other perspectives, and interpretations of the same events. Therefore, it would be limiting to choose a single voice, a single historical structure, and a single interpretation. Thus, it is understood that the act of rupture and transgression is both a significant challenge and a painful act of freedom that involves becoming aware and reflecting on the world and our participation in it.

In this sense, how do educational experiences help us understand the loose threads in official history, or are they the forbidden and silenced threads? It is in the interweaving of experiences that we understand the resistance of Black women, as we view experiences as a process of triangulation involving the production of education and the wisdom of women, such as lived practice, felt theory, and pulsating emotions. This triangulation provides meaning and significance to the education of women, especially Black women. The experience represents a force of the collective, of the community of women who understood the pain of the flesh that each Black woman felt during that period, as well as the necessary resistance.

The understanding of Educational Experiences in the broader perspective of the educational field, that is, beyond the institutionalized school spaces. We comprehend education that occurs in everyday life, in subjective reflection, in cultural knowledge, and in the practice of educational activity (Freire, 1987).

Thus, we highlight four dimensions that weave together the Educational Experiences of Black women: 1-Life, as a universal feeling of defense and belonging to a culture, material-human existence, and resistance to the condition of enslavement imposed on Black women in the 19th century; 2- Subjective reflection, which aligns with the desire to transform the feelings and pains caused by the violence of the slave system, in confronting historical and identity erasure; 3- Socio-educational praxis, as the embodiment of the first two dimensions, enabling the materiality of action and relocating Black educational knowledge and experiences; 4- Collectivity, as a necessary action for the survival of Black women.

The understanding of educational experiences from Black women of this historical period is the complex interaction of counter-colonial theory, feminist pedagogies, and pedagogy of liberation, which allows us to grasp the movement of producing ancestral wisdom and resistance. As bell Hooks (2013) aptly highlights, the interaction of critical/radical theories (decolonial and feminist) produces educational practices capable of fostering ruptures in the system of domination.

According to Beatriz Nascimento (2021), Black history cannot be summarized solely through the perspective of white people, or even by the official white history, because it denies the knowledge of Black populations. In this sense, the educational experiences of Black women

fulfill a decolonial task, which is to bring forth the knowledge and educational experiences of Black women from historical and identity perspectives.

Bodies, Songs, and Religion: Educational Wisdoms Lived and Felt by Black Women

It is essential to note that the knowledge and experiences are particularly circumscribed in the socio-cultural context of the city of Belém do Pará, around the second half of the 19th century, when the city was undergoing a series of intense transformations, both urban and architectural, as well as cultural and social, resulting from the golden age of rubber, as a result of the modernization project and the spread of conceptions of progress and development, organized by the white elite. The city of Belém produced a space along the lines of Rio de Janeiro and Europe, becoming the main port for transporting products and a gateway for countless immigrants.

At the same time that Belém was experiencing the myth of modernity, large pockets of poverty and misery were being produced, characteristic of the salvationist discourse of modernity/coloniality, which caters to one race and class. The consequent increase in population aggravated the inefficiency of public services and excluded the poor and black population from urban reforms. As a result, black men and women ensured their livelihoods through retail and manual trades, living in collective housing or tenements, located in various peripheral areas of the city.

The job market, specifically, was not wide for black women, being rare the job offers in taverns, grocery stores, bakeries or stores, and the domestic work becoming the only salaried market. Even their presence in public spaces as sellers of açaí, flowers, sweets or prostitutes was associated with disorder and indiscipline, and they were systematically criticized, criminalized, denounced and fought against for not fitting in with the elitist white wealth of the rubber boom.

In this same direction, the newspaper reports circulating in the city of Belém helped to propagate stereotyped representations of black women: sometimes as mothers and guardians (the blame always falling on the mother), sometimes as protagonists in scenes of passion and violence (the black woman as a troublemaker), sometimes as victims of abuse by their masters, bosses or partners (the woman who offered herself to men and provoked them sexually) and sometimes by turning to the police authorities (criminals and promoters of disorder).

It is well known that the ideal model of woman in this society was the white lady, whose behavior was marked by modesty, elegance, haughtiness and education, as well as the ideal image of the working person: white, educated, with good manners and an exemplary life. These official discourses called for mass immigration of a moralized class and industrial growth in line with scientific progress, in order to "civilize" and whiten the population through the characteristics of healthy, robust, mechanical and hard-working immigrant workers.

What a Capoeira Woman!

At this time, capoeira was a common environment for black women, although it was characterized as belonging to the "male universe". In the state of Pará, we have the oldest historiographical evidence of women's participation in capoeira, not just as spectators, but as active contributors to the tradition, construction and transformation of an educational experience. We have the black woman Jeronyma, considered the first capoeira woman in the historiography of Pará (Passos; Leal, 2021). This and other women used capoeira knowledge such as versatility, agility, movement, lightness and the ginga of their bodies to resist and counteract the elements of repression and control imposed on their actions and daily lives. Capoeira is an *quefazer* (intervention in the world in the sense of our action as educators or citizens inserted in a concrete social context) that meets the material needs and also the resistance needs of black women and can be taught and learned collectively.

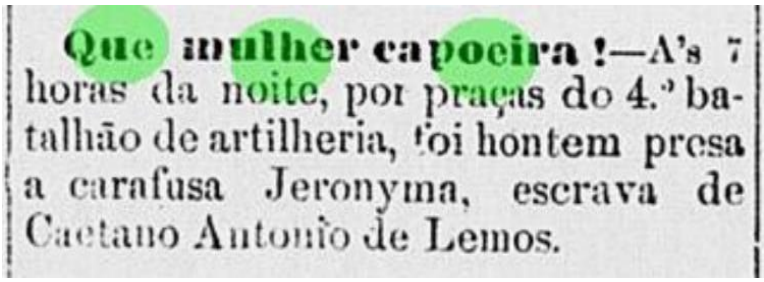
However, there has always been a great deal of concealment in the writing of stories about black women who, in turn, are constantly imagined, represented and never described or told as protagonists and social producers. Therefore, these narratives are rarely seen or spoken about, the sources are silenced and the chroniclers reduce them to stereotypical views. According to Lelia Gonzalez (1984), black women were subordinated, their humanity was taken away, they were transformed into objects, denied as subjects of knowledge. They were constantly exploited and raped by their white masters and mistresses, with the place of domestic servants, *Mães pretas* (Mammies) and "permitted" *Mucamas* (slave woman maid of goods and services) being reserved for them. If we draw a parallel with the present day, we can still notice that manual work (housework, general cleaning) is reserved for black women.

As a result of the precepts inflicted on white women at the end of the 19th century, as the height of the disciplinarization of the female body for the formation of the identity of the Brazilian nation, the yoke of taboos, ritualizations, assumptions and social control of Western European culture also fell on the body of black women. The body, according to African cosmoperceptions[2], is configured as a mark of social values, in which society fixes its meanings and values. Its gestures and body language were repressed and removed from the black body, and capoeira was configured as liberation for these bodies, so much so that the cunning of black women went beyond "behavioral stigmas; thus, news involving fights, arguments and brawls led by them in Belém's daily life were frequent" (Passos; Leal, 2021, p. 35).

Black capoeira women – and capoeira men in general – were constantly persecuted and seen as dangerous and social transgressors of civility and modernity/coloniality. The culmination of this persecution occurred with the criminalization of capoeira following the promulgation of the Penal Code of 1890, which provided for two to six months in prison for anyone who carried out dexterity and body agility

exercises, “capoeiragem”, with weapons in the streets and public squares. or instruments that cause bodily harm, causing riots, threats, disorder or fear (Passos; Leal, 2021). If there was resistance, the punishment would be three years of imprisonment in penal colonies. Below are some newspaper clippings that represent some of the news that was circulating at the time.

Image 1 – “What a capoeira woman!”. A constituição, november 21th,1876


Que mulher capoeira !—A's 7 horas da noite, por praças do 4.º batalhão de artilheria, foi hontem presa a carafusa Jeronyma, escrava de Caetano Antonio de Lemos.

Source: Hemeroteca Digital do centro cultural- Centur – Belém – Pará[3].

This fragment of the newspaper A Constituição of 1876, entitled “What a capoeira woman!”, reports the arrest of carafusa Jeronyma, mentioned at the beginning of this subtopic, a slave owned by Caetano Antônio Lemos, by soldiers of the fourth artillery battalion, at seven o'clock at night. The excerpt does not contain much information, but it can be interpreted, implied, that she broke with some imposition or control placed on her actions, thus constituting a revolutionary act, as this excerpt itself reveals the oldest recorded evidence of black women in capoeira (Passos; Leal, 2021). As no form of infraction is reported, it can be assumed that she was arrested solely for practicing Capoeira.

The next excerpt from the newspaper Diário de Notícias, dated January 12th, 1893, called “História pândega”, describes the story of the capoeira woman who confronted a firefighter with a slap, after he wanted to attack a *menino ganhadeiro*[4] (*ganhadeiro* boy)- supposed to be black-. This leads us to reflect on how she used her body and her gestures as an instrument of defense, but furthermore, how despite the productive function imposed by the colonizer, the black body managed to express through this individual body-segregated by slavery, the collective ancestral wisdom imprinted in their movements and solidarity with the boy. This body, even when monitored and controlled, expressed a collective and community ethic, even with non-consanguineous African peoples, victims of colonialist attacks.

Image 2 – "Fun story"– Diário de Notícias, january 12th, 1893

Historia pandega

Era uma vez um bombeiro muito mettido a sebo e que tinha vontade de prender um pequeno que levava na cabeça um taboleiro quando passava junto do palacete.

Uma mulher ia atraz, e o menor, vendo a intenção do bombeiro, pôz-se de atalaia, resmoneando :—Se tu fores capaz de encostar, encosta, cabra !

O bombeiro armou o bóte e n'um abrir e fechar d'olhos botou os gadanhos no pequeno, que assustou-se e deixou cahir o taboleiro da cabeça.

A mulhersinha, que estava com a pulga na orelha, cresceu como uma furia para o bombeiro e, quando este quiz botar valentia levantando a mão para applicar-lhe um *trunfo*, ella extranhou o corpo, fez uma pequena pruêta e uma tremenda bofetada estrondeou na cara do bombeiro.

Nova menção do *valiente*. Nova capoeiragem da mulher e... *zás* ! tome bofetada na cara, *seu* bombeiro...

Ahi o cabra fraquejou. Vendo que não era mulher p'ra homem, tirou o capacete da cabeça, fez a pontaria e arremessou-o contra a mulher.

Errou o alvo ainda d'esta feita.

A bichinha abaixou-se, torceu o corpo, deixou o capacete passar e, emquanto este rolava pelos perallelipipedos, ella botava de novo os 5 mandamentos na cara do bombeiro.

A lucta era desegual. O *valiente* conheceu a sua fraqueza; pôz sebo ás canellas e *azulou* para o quartel, debaixo de tremenda vaia.

Isto aconteceu ao *lusco-fusco* de terça-feira desta semana.

O' mulherzinha badeja !

Source: Hemeroteca Digital- Centur – Belém - Pará[5].

Community ethics, organized based on our collective bodily memory, portrays the essence of this territorial body that forcibly ascends, on the individual boat (slave ship) and carries this solidary and participatory organizational memory that was already experienced in Africa, a memory that crosses with us and is later reproduced within black territories. It is living proof of ancestry as a relationship of continuity of this bodily memory, which is continually perpetuated through our ancestors and elders and not as a space-time limit or heredity.

Other cases that we can list is that of the newspaper "A Semana", dated March 17th, 1890, which describes a certain night of police discussion with three "debauched black girls", involved in capoeiragem – associated with the practice of vagabonds, thieves and criminals. – that threatened the moralized society, of the good citizen who "happily" governs this State; and the one from the newspaper "Diário de Notícias", dated August 23th, 1896, which addresses the "disorder" in Travessa do Atalaia (Atalaia bystreet), caused by Leopoldina Gonçalves and Sisters Conrada and Antônia Garcia, arrested for "disturbing" the families.

In all these incidents raised, there is a common threat to order and morality due to their black bodies expressing themselves self-sufficiently in society and, to be accepted in it, they must follow specific norms. Both Legislation, the press and Postural and Penal Codes were configured as mechanisms used to regulate and order the various aspects of the city's social and cultural life. Their gestures signified a

break with a social model based on reactions and resistance to the impositions of control over their lives and bodies.

Black women's religiosity

The idea that matriarchy is linked to the origin and essence of Afro-Brazilian religions as primarily female spaces contrasts with the assertion that matriarchy did not exist "in all ancient terreiros and persists today in a generalized way in Brazilian terreiros" (Ferretti, 2007, p. 2). However, it is possible to say that there is a greater presence of female power in Afro-Brazilian religions, compared to other Brazilian religions and social contexts, and that this power is especially noticeable in the Jeje and Nagô "nation" terreiros (Nogueira; Ferretti, 2012).

In Maranhão, since the 19th century, the practice known as pajelança de negro, also called Cura or Pajé, has been present among the black population. Although the terms pajé and pajelança are widely used to describe religious and therapeutic rituals and specialists associated with indigenous or cabocla culture, mainly in rural areas of Northern Brazil, in Maranhão, since the mid-nineteenth century, these terms are also used to describe rituals and black religious specialists (of African origin and Afro-descendants) who are dedicated to "healing spells" or communicating with spiritual entities, such as King Sebastião, princesses, caboclos and others, sometimes represented in animals (birds, fish, reptiles and mammals). Although they commonly relate Cura (pajelança de negro or terreiro) with indigenous culture, in the Maranhão context it is closer to Tambor de Mina, a tradition recognized as having African origins (Ferretti, 2014).

The Brinquedo de cura takes the form of a public ritual, in which the pajé or curador (healer) goes into a trance to communicate with various spiritual entities. During this ritual, songs are performed in Portuguese with the aim of encouraging the participation of attendees through clapping, using instruments such as the matracas and performing dance steps. The Cura's musical repertoire is broad and covers songs passed down from generation to generation, including songs "inspired" by the pajés or "taught by the enchanted ones" during the rituals (Ferretti, 2014).

This pajelança, common in Pará and Maranhão, was harshly persecuted and reprimanded with arrests of male and female pajés, including Amélia Rosa, a freed black woman who became known as "Queen of the Pajelança", the first black pajé to have her name widely publicized. in São Luís newspapers – such as "Diário do Maranhão" on October 15th, 1876 –, due to reports of witchcraft practices and rituals at home, being prosecuted in 1876 and sentenced to 10 years in prison, which provoked a procession formed by the black population in the city. As previously stated, pajelança is considered an indigenous practice, due to the word "pajé" coming from Tupi and instruments such as maracás and cigarettes being used to produce smoke during the rituals, in addition to techniques for extracting substances from the body. However, these elements were not used by Amélia Rosa, also known as

"Rainha de Toba" (Queen of toba[6]), thus raising the hypothesis of an African and indigenous matrix in pajelança, with the former possibly having greater influence in the terreiros of Maranhão. This hypothesis gained more emphasis with the discovery and publication of Amélia Rosa's Crime Process (Ferretti, 2008).

The state of Maranhão, for example, stipulated several laws to contain and repress these "heretical" practices, such as Law nº 241 – September 13, 1848 (Municipal code of Codó Village.). Art. 22: "Anyone who intends to cure spells, being free, will pay a fine of twenty thousand reis, and will suffer eight days in prison, and if he is a slave, there will only be a fine that will be paid by the master of said slave" and Law nº 400 – August 26th, 1858 (Municipal code of the village of Guimarães). Art. 31. "Those who cure by spell (which the common people call shamans) will incur a penalty of five thousand reis, and in the absence of means or repeat offense, 10 to 20 days in prison".

This is largely due to the fact that this activity was seen by the elites as "healing", considered a "crime against public health" to this day. As established in Article 284 of the Penal Code, promulgated in 1940, such crime involves: I) prescribing, administering or habitually applying any substance; II) use gestures, words or any other means; III) carry out diagnoses. The penalty is imprisonment for six months to two years. Furthermore, if the crime is committed with remuneration from the "client", the "healer" is also subject to a fine that varies between one and five contos de réis (Ferretti, 2008). Furthermore, pajelança suffered great persecution, in comparison to Tambor de Mina and other Afro-Brazilian spiritualities, because they had the "support" and "protection" of white intellectuals, such as Nina Rodrigues, considered one of the pioneers of studies of the black population in Brazil. But therein lies the trap: the exaltation of the stereotype of the "white savior", to the detriment of centuries-old actions of resistance and autonomy by black people. It is essential to highlight that this same scholar shared eugenicist ideas, that is, the whitening and genocide of this same people, in fact the discourse in force at that time – Joaquim Nabuco's abolitionist discourse, for example – revolved around "defense", of black people against slavery, since they were incapable or too passive to defend themselves (Nabuco, 1883). We need to be careful with the black people's unfeasibility of their own history and the annulment of their protagonism, which has always been present throughout society, including through resilience strategies converted into independence and organization.

Image 3 – "Mãe Doca's terreiro, 1891"

Source: [Pai] Euclides Ferreira (in memoriam, a partir da cessão de Alfredo Benevides).

The photograph above shows the terreiro de Mina Dois Irmãos located in Pará, in its second year of operation in 1891, where women, as well as being the majority, held high positions. The history of this terreiro begins in São Luís with Mãe Anastácia, founder of Nifé Olorum, the Terreiro da Turquia in 1889 (she was in charge for 83 years), and irmã de santo (sister into the religion) of Mãe Doca, who was influenced by Anastácia to introduce the mine in Pará. "Both Mãe Anastácia and Mãe Doca were initiated in São Luís by Manoel Teu Santo, a pai de santo who, between 1895 and 1899, appeared several times in Maranhão newspapers as a pajé, although he was introduced by Pai Euclides as African or Nigerian" (Ferretti, 2014). Mãe Doca was the founder of Terreiro Dois Irmãos in 1890 and faced racism and other prejudices, including being arrested several times.

She led the place for 40 years with exclusively female successions after her: her filha de santo (daughter into the religion), Mãe Amelinha; then her biological and filha de santo, Mãe Lulu, until currently Mãe Heloísa, Lulu's biological and saint's daughter, who has taken over the leadership of the terreiro. In other words, the terreiro is in its fourth generation and is always led by a woman, a matriarchy directly linked to African roots, origins and cosmoperceptions; since "because of the matrifocality of many African family systems, the mother is the axis around which family relationships are delineated and organized" (Oyěwùmí, 2004, p. 07).

Image 4 – "Feitiçaria e Manipanso" (witchcraft and manipanso) – Liberal do Pará, february 23th, 1878

Lê-se na «Gazeta de Noticias» :

«Tendo o sr. Manoel Luiz da Cunha, subdelegado de policia de Pelotas, denuncia de que, em uma casa na Varzea, algumas negras entretinham-se no celebre *officio de feitiçaria* ou *manipancio*, para alli se dirigiu na noite de 17, depois de concluido o espectaculo da companhia *Loya'ls*, acompanhado de seu escrivão, do capitão Delfino e de diversas praças da policia.

Ahi chegados, foram recebidos com todas as honras pela *feiticeira*, que dizia ser enviada de Deus para salvar a humanidade !

Em um quarto no interior da casa viam-se espalhadas mais de cincoenta tigelas de barro, contendo um liquido côr de leite, algumas vasilhas de louça com pedaços de carne, pennas de gallinhas, sangue, sapos, e uma infinidade de objectos, estando o quarto illuminado com velas de sebo !

Algumas imagens de barro e outras em quadros completavam o *adorno* desse quarto dos mysterios.

Na sala, em um canto, estavam collocadas duas pedras, ensebadas e salpicadas de sangue, um copo com um liquido côr de leite, um outro com vinho, pennas de gallinhas e tambem illuminado com velas de sebo.

A feiticeira, a todas as perguntas que se lhe fazia, respondia que era enviada de Deus, e que seus trabalhos eram feitos de porta aberta, «*para que todo o mundo os vissem !*

Disse tambem que aquella noite tinha preparado uma *succulenta* ceia de bolos de bacalháo para convidar o sr. delegado de policia, que era muito seu conhecido e que costumava ceiar algumas vezes em sua companhia.»

Source: Hemeroteca Digital[7].

This excerpt, from the newspaper "Liberal do Pará" on February 23, 1878, shows the case in which the sub-delegate denounces black women involved in practices of "witchcraft" and manipulation. The news story ends with several police officers at the house of the "sorceress" on the same night that she had prepared a delicious supper with codfish cakes and was going to invite Mr. Delegado, who was already known to her and had supped with her a few times. The irony lies in the fact that the sub-delegate himself, as the preserver of Christian morals and "good manners", takes part in rituals and doesn't realize it: Catholic liturgies, for example, where everything is dressed up and pre-established by the missal and/or the Bible, which sets out how one should behave, act, speak, eat, dress, both in church and outside of it. However, as philosopher Sobonfu Somé explains, in the West, people tend to standardize everything because they believe that a given type of ritual applies to all situations; African rituals, on the other hand, must be specific to the people involved, because by standardizing, the spirit ends up drifting away and generates insincerity in the performance. We are the ritual. Africa, like a legitimate mother, encourages her children to believe in themselves and, above all, in their ability to listen and hear their hearts (Somé, 1997).

Dance and Songs of Freedom

The valorization of visualities, especially the Tambor de Crioula, has its roots in the history and memory of the construction of Maranhão's identity. Over time, these visualities have influenced the imaginary construction of traditional popular practices for those who participated in the rituals and enjoyed their manifestation. In the context of this popular manifestation, visuality was established through the way they presented themselves to society, weaving new knowledge and know-how. Thus, the way we perceive these manifestations is also a way of recognizing the popular, through what is said and not said, and the way we interpret visuality (Monteles, 2017).

Although the date and place where the practice of Tambor de Crioula – or Punga – "originated" is not known with certainty, scholars have estimated the beginning of the 19th century based on records found. It is believed that it was brought by enslaved people from various regions of Africa such as Angola, Gold Coast (region) and Guinea, becoming references to religious cults, converted into forms of leisure, devotion and resistance:

> Although it is not possible to determine the exact historical origins of the tambor de crioula, in the memory of older players and in historical sources, references to religious cults conceived as forms of leisure, devotion and resistance can be found as far back as the 19th century (Figueiredo; Oliveira, 2012 apud Monteles, 2017, p. 17).

It is a dance performed exclusively by women, in which the dancers, known as coreiras, perform circular whirling movements, considered "sensual", in the center of a circle and with an umbigada[8] invite another coreira to position herself in the center and replace her in the dance, and so on. The music was sung in choral chants by the male drummers and repeated by the coreiras. The person who starts the chants is called the Solista (soloist), and the lyrics contain descriptions of work stories, the origin of the event, daily life and devotion to the saint being celebrated, especially São Benedito (St. Benedict the Moor), the protector of black people. Women built up and consolidated their role in this practice, since historical records from the 13th century show that it was a predominantly male practice. So much so that, later on, "in the ritual, in the composed circle, men were still not allowed to dance in the drum roda, this was always a space exclusively for the coreiras" (Monteles, 2017, p. 4).

The female figure became so important and indispensable that it became impossible to perform Tambor de Crioula without women (Monteles, 2017). In this way, the practice has been given a new look, a new perspective for recovering the truth, this matriarchal heritage that has transformed and interfered in the prevailing relations of power and knowledge, which were elitist, Eurocentric and male chauvinist.

The transmission of knowledge among practitioners of the Tambor de Crioula ritual, linked to the umbanda terreiros in Maranhão, occurred mainly through oral narratives, in which the participants have

been initiated since childhood. In addition, another way of learning about this practice was through direct involvement and oral education, by listening to the music and observing the dance in different spaces, both in the terreiros and at popular festivals.

> I burned sugarcane fields,
> I burned sugarcane fields,
> At the break of dawn
> I burned sugarcane fields.
> (Santos; Silva; Costa, 2021, p. 7).

The toada (a song style) expressed and expresses all the emotions that black people felt and continue to feel in the face of the countless abuses they suffered during the colonial era. The lyrics of this toada carry with them the memory of a painful past, in which black people nevertheless rebelled against the system in force at the time. In the darkness of the early morning, they would set fire to their masters' cane fields as an act of rebellion and resistance. Nowadays, the "sugarcane plantation" is represented by the state and the large enterprises underway in Brazil, which follow a logic of oppression and violence against non-white people in the name of economic development (Santos; Silva; Costa, 2021).

> Leather groaned on the ground
> Leather groaned on the ground
> My lord São Benedito (leather groaned in the air)
> I've just arrived (leather moaned in the air)
> I'm singing and I'm saved (leather moaned in the air).
> (Ferretti, 2002, p.105 apud Costa; Oliveira, 2018, p. 56).

There are several references to the word "couro" (leather) both in the old songs, which have been lost over time, and in the current songs, which are commonly played. These references may relate to the *Coureiro*, who is the man responsible for playing and singing, but also to leather, the material used to make whips and floggers to punish and discipline enslaved blacks. In this song in particular, the expression "moaning on the ground" alludes to the lashes already received as punishment, while "moaning in the air" refers to the feeling predisposed to the movement of impulse to apply the next lash (Costa; Oliveira, 2018).

Another important aspect to highlight is the syncretism present in the image of São Benedito (St. Benedict the Moor), who was revered by both Christians and slaves as the protector and lord of the drums. Both captive and free blacks always mentioned and paid homage to him in their songs, and in the Tambor de Crioula they celebrated and highlighted him as a saint of defender, savior and liberator, because he himself was black and had been enslaved (Costa; Oliveira, 2018).

> My São benedito
> I am your slave
> If I die at your feet
> I know I'll be saved
> My São benedito / I know I'll be saved (chorus)
> Your devotee has arrived / I know I'm saved
> Whoever wants to talk to me / I know I'll be saved
> Come to a drum party / I know I'll be saved

> If I die I'll ask him / I know I'll be saved (chorus)
> It's something I value / I know I'll be saved
> When it's not prayer it's drumming / I know I'll be saved.
> (Ferretti, 2002 apud Costa; Oliveira, 2018, p. 57).

These folguedos (folk festivals) were opportunities for black people, both captives and freedmen, to remember and reaffirm their beliefs and traditions. Through dance, music and conversation, they passed on their knowledge, memories, stories and teachings to the younger generations in order to strengthen their identities and help rebuild their perspectives. These narratives not only revered and paid homage to the saints, but also included songs that exalted the singers and players of the people of the circle. In addition, the songs made satires, recalled situations already experienced, love affairs, paid homage to women and described everyday events (Costa; Oliveira, 2018).

In synthesis, oral history is configured as a counterpoint to official history, as it seeks to tell the life story of a people, their struggle, their attempts at autonomy, liberation and survival, as well as keeping their traditions and beliefs alive in memory, even in situations of subjugation and coercion (Costa; Oliveira, 2018). The drums from the slave quarters strengthen black bodies, which are political instruments that question and intervene in Brazilian society as a whole. In the drum circles, we are diverse and at the same time connected by Africa and Maafa: communities and ancestral political beings who sing, dance, play, gingam[9] and express counter-colonial movements, seeking liberation of the mind, bodies and territories (Santos; Silva; Costa, 2021).

Final considerations

The educational experiences of nineteenth-century black women, represented by the practices of capoeira, religion and songs, exemplify decolonial knowledge and resistance, because in all the experiences surveyed, there were always repressions, conflicts and persecution by the police authorities or the “masters”, but amid adversity, they managed to build their bodily memories very well sedimented in black territories and in their own orality. Furthermore, these experiences constitute the very demystification of the passive and invisible black person in Brazilian historiography, by addressing their protagonism in all the daily actions of identity reconstruction, producing escrevivências or a “history made by black hands.

In fact, a parallel can be drawn between the Amazon region and Ananse's web in Maafa, in which the former organized a path of communication, experience and solidarity that stretches from the state of Pará to the state of Maranhão, for example, through the pajelança of Amélia Rosa, who consequently influenced the terreiros in Maranhão, including Mãe Anastácia, founder of Terreiro da Turquia, who in turn took her influence to Pará through Mãe Doca, who brought the meaning of Mina with Terreiro Dois Irmãos. In fact, the very practice of Tambor de Crioula is inextricably linked to the Terreiros de Mina do Maranhão. In other words, the threads woven in the face of the tangles of experience have guaranteed

and continue to guarantee the survival of black bodies, as well as a large African cultural structure.

The examples discussed show that, despite the brutality of the colonizing project, the epistemological, cultural and social resistance of Afro-diasporic groups has always been strong and present against the domination strategies of the past and present, and is currently a fundamental tool in the process of confronting structural racism.

Our intention in this article is not to resolve the questions, reflections and observations that may arise, but rather to corroborate this discussion for future research, because, based on the assumption of subjective reflections, everyone has a desire to change the feelings and pain caused by racism, which hurts us in a unique and particular way, through the escrevivências, which in itself is a revolutionary act.

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Notes

[1] Maafa is, in this way, the process of kidnapping and physical and mental imprisonment of the black African population, in addition to the forced emergence of the Afrodiaspora. This term was coined by Marimba Ani (1994), and corresponds, in Swahili, to the "great tragedy", the terrible occurrence, the misfortune of death, which identifies the 500 years of suffering of people of African heritage through slavery, imperialism, colonialism, apartheid, rape, oppression, invasions and exploitation. It is the historical and contemporary global genocide against the physical and mental health of African people, affecting them in all areas of their lives: spirituality, heritage, tradition, culture, agency, self-determination, marriage, identity, rites of passage, economy, politics, education, art, morals and ethics. In this way, Africans suffer the historical trauma of their dehumanization and reproduce violence, contributing – and often facilitating the work – to genocide" (Njeri, 2019 apud Ankh; Mene, Njeri, 2019).

[2] Refers to the reflection of Oyèrónké Oyěwùmí, who "points out that Western politics is centered on the empire of the sense of vision, thus producing a 'worldview'. While traditional African societies, such as traditional Yoruba society, have a broader relationship between all the senses, which leads these societies to produce not a worldview, but a "cosmoperception" of the world" (Bezerra; Mendes, 2021).

[3] "Yesterday, at seven o'clock in the evening, police officers from the 4th artillery battalion arrested Carafusa (a mixed-race person of indigenous and black descente) Jeronyma, the slave of Caetano Antonio de Lemos."

[4] Ganhadeiro or Ganhadeira were commonly former slaves or their descendants who provided a series of services to survive. This means of survival was a underemployment, it was practiced by these subjects as an alternative for survival after the abolition of slavery in Brazil. This mean generally involved services such as water carriers, clothes washers, delicacy sellers, among others.

[5] Fun story: Once upon a time, there was a fireman who was very "metido a sebo" (an unsympathetic person) who wanted to arrest a little boy who was carrying a tray on his head when he passed by the palace. A woman was following, and the minor, seeing the fireman's intention, "pôs-se de atalaia"(stood guard) and muttered: :-"If you're capable of pulling over, pull over, "cabra" (man)! The fireman "*armou o bote*" (prepared the attack) and in the twinkling of an eye put his "gadanhos" (claws) into the little one, who got scared and dropped the tray on his head The little woman, who

was suspicious, grew furious with the fireman and, when he wanted to show his courage by raising his hand to strike her, she awkwardly turned her body, did a little pirouette and slapped the fireman in the face.New mention -of attacking- from the brave man. New capoeiragem from the woman and *zás*(onomatopoeia for a blow) – *tome bolacha* (slap) in the face, you fireman... Then the *cabra* (man) weakened. Seeing that she wasn't a woman for a man, he took his helmet off his head, took aim and threw it at the Woman. He missed the target. She bent down, twisted her body, let the helmet pass and as it rolled down the cobblestones, she put the "5 commandments" (hand) back in the fireman's face. The fight was unequal. The brave man knew his weakness, *"pôs sebo às canelas"* (he ran) and "*axulou*" (which can be understood as "fled") to the barracks, under tremendous booing This happened at *"lusco-fusco" (*dusk) on Tuesday of this week. The little woman "*badeja*" (can be understood as virile).

[6] Word derived from 'tapa' (African ethnicity) - Ferretti (2007).

[7] Read in the "gazeta de noticias": When Mr. Manoel de Pelotas, the deputy police chief of Pelotas, reported that some black women were practicing witchcraft or manipanso in a house in the várzea (flooded marginal areas), he went there on the night of the 17th, after the Loya'ls show had finished, accompanied by his clerk, Captain Delfino and several police officers. When they arrived, they were greeted with every honor by the sorceress, who claimed to be sent by God to save humanity! In a room inside the house, more than fifty earthenware bowls containing milk-colored liquid were scattered around, as well as some china pots with pieces of meat, chicken feathers, blood, frogs and an infinite number of objects, and the room was lit with tallow candles! Some clay figures and others in paintings completed the adornment of this room of mysteries. In the room, in one corner, there were two stones, caked and splattered with blood, a glass with a milk-colored liquid, another with wine, small chickens and also lit with tallow candles. The sorceress answered every question he asked her that she was sent by God and that her work was done behind open doors, "for all the world to see! she also said that that evening she had prepared a succulent supper of codfish cakes to invite Mr. Deputy police chef, who was very well known to her and who used to dine with her sometimes."

[8] The act of touching another person's belly button with your own belly button, when the bellies are facing each other.

[9] Swinging the body with dexterity, mischief, resourcefulness. Ginga is associated with capoeira movements.

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