

LATE PORTUGUESE COLONIALISM AND FREYRE'S LUSOTROPICALISMO

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VRBATA, Aleš. Pozdní portugalský kolonialismus a Freyreho *lusotropicalismo*: Brazílský antropolog a sociolog Gilberto Freyre se původně obíral otázkou identity své vlasti či úžeji, jejích severovýchodních regionů. Jeho profesní dráha však měla výrazně kosmopolitní kontury a Freyre se již ve 30. letech stal intelektuálem s globálním renomé. Také jeho myšlení se posunulo od čistě brazilské tematiky k řadě otázek spjatých se specificky multirasovým charakterem portugalské kolonizace. I když stál původně na okraji zájmu portugalských intelektuálů i politiků, výsledek Druhé světové války a dekolonizační tlak z něj – a především z jeho teorie lusotropikalismu – v Portugalsku učinily vítaného spojence, který Salazarovu režimu od 50. let poskytoval legitimizační mýtus o přirozeném a bezpředsudečném sklonu Portugalce mísit se s nejrůznějšími rasami (zejména v tropech). Freyre tedy podpořil portugalské úsilí přesvědčit světové veřejné mínění o tom, že portugalská katolická kolonizace je vpravdě christo-centrická a nikoli etnocentrická a vymyká se tak z modelu obecné evropské kolonizace. Freyreho fiktivní lusotropikalistická mytologie byla v Portugalsku rychle zpolitizována a stala se jednou z posledních opor oficiálního diskurzu skomírající Salazarovy diktatury.

Klíčové slová: Gilberto Freyre; lusotropikalismus; rasa; hybridismus; Portugalsko; kolonizace

Keywords: Gilberto Freyre; *lusotropicalismo*; race; hybridism; Portugal; colonization

Gilberto Freyre (1900-1987), Brazilian intellectual, anthropologist and sociologist, is a multifaceted personality of Brazilian and world intellectual history whose political/ideological acting provokes different reactions even today. Starting his intellectual career in the USA and Europe Freyre's mindset was continually exposed to various intellectual/ideological trends of the 20th century (social darwinism, racism, decolonization, Cold war bipolar political paradigm). That is why his work experienced very different receptions.¹

¹ Number of topics associated with Gilberto Freyre is introduced by proceedings by KOSMINSKY, Ethel Volfzon – LÉPINE, Claude – PEIXOTO, Fernanda Areas (orgs.). Gilberto Freyre em quatro épocas. São Paulo: EDUSC, 2003.

In his homeland, Brazil, Freyre occupies quite exceptional and unique place. His thought is not easy to classify within local intellectual currents of his time. His background itself shows an interesting combination of 1) north-eastern white planter origin, 2) cosmopolitan, i.e. Euro-American education, 3) persistency on his Pernambuco planter identity, Recife inhabitant and conservative Brazilian modernist and 4) man of cosmopolitan career from 1930s onwards. In this study I am going to pay attention to Freyre's role in Portuguese decolonization process, but his role was much more complex and far-reaching, i.e. permeating various disciplines, social work and policy. That is why it needs to be contextualized.

First part of this study expounds racial thought in Brazil, especially from 1880s onwards. In the second part I am going to introduce Freyre's cosmopolitan intellectual mindset as a true source of his theory of *lusotropicalismo*. The third part is devoted to basic principles of this theory. The fourth part pays attention to *lusotropicalismo*'s reception in Portugal and in the final part to Salazar's adoption of Gilbertian perspective.

As we will see, during 1930s and 1940s Portuguese Salazarist authorities did not view Freyre's work as a beneficial or favourable but their attitude underwent significant shift in early 1950s. It was then when *lusotropicalismo* theory became a significant footing of Portuguese foreign policy and got many supporters in so-called Portuguese Colonial Empire. Freyre's theory was supposed to legitimize empire outwardly, bind it inwardly and defend overseas heritage against rising tide of decolonization. Therefore one can conclude that Freyre's ideas turned out to be a valuable part of Salazarist legitimizing mythology.

Race in Brazilian thought before Freyre

In the last quarter of 19th century Brazilian racial thought was dominated by whitening ideology (*branqueamento*) or, as Thomas Skidmore put it, by determinism of race and climate.² This ideology went hand in hand with local abolitionist movement. Both movements formed two dominant theoretico-political currents at least since 1880s. *Branqueamento* was a mild form of racism.³ Its protagonists rejected straight and clear biological-moral differences between races but believed in malignant effect of racial hybridism on cultural development and general well-being. Adherents of *branqueamento* theory were mainly abolicionists and liberals who believed that abolition of slavery would enhance Brazil politically, morally and culturally and make it closer to civilized, i.e. white European world. In other words, their liberalism was rather political than philosophical. At that time *bran-*

² SKIDMORE, Thomas. „Raízes de Gilberto Freyre“. In: KOSMINSKY – LÉPINE – PEIXOTO (org.), ref. 1, p. 43.

³ Brazilian theorists preferred discussions on possible abolition but not on race itself. SKIDMORE, Thomas. „Brazilian Intellectuals and the Problem of Race, 1870-1930“. Nashville: The Graduate Center for Latin American Studies, Vanderbilt University Occasional Paper N.º 6, 1969, pp. 1-7. In some way this slight difference as expressed in 19th century political discourse still influences racial consciousness of today's Brazilians. Some thinkers claim that slavery was replaced by social exclusion (GAMBINI, Roberto. *Outros 500. Uma Conversa sobre a Alma brasileira*. São Paulo: Senac, 1999).

queamento theory was read in cultural and not physiological terms. Even though it preached racial hybridism as a way of cultural degeneration, it offered a way out from racial determinism without open segregation. Strength of that theory was based on wide-spread conviction which Freyre helped to transform in scientific theory/ideology, i.e. that „Portuguese enjoyed an uncanny ability to ‚whiten‘ the darker peoples with whom they mixed. At times this view seemed to amount to a faith in the ‚strong‘ genes of amorous Portuguese”.⁴ Until 1888 Brazilian intellectuals believed that black slave constituted a barrier of possible development but left out social consequences of abolition (what are these masses of unqualified and illiterate slaves are going to do after abolition?) and rarely envisaged question of agrarian reform.⁵ Declaration of slavery abolition changed that context significantly.

After 1888 racial thought went through considerable changes resulting not just from new social status of black ex-slaves, absence of agrarian reform or fall of monarchy. It resulted from weak immunity of Brazilian thought in relation to that of Europe.⁶ During 1890s Brazilian thought got dominated by racial question. Attention of Brazilian intelligentsia turned from abolitionism to race and after 1888 Brazilian intellectual started thinking in terms of “racial inequality”.

European „scientific” racial theories together with social darwinism formed a powerful theoretical mix resulting in the conviction that coloured people were fated to inevitable extinction. That is why dark-skinned population became – for the first time in Brazilian intellectual history – object of detailed studies. Late 19th-century „scientific” wave influenced number of significant writers and scientists like Euclides da Cunha, Graça Aranha, foreign minister baron Rio Branco and others. Nina Raimundo Rodrigues, well-known expert in criminal medicine from Bahia, studied blacks in the light of Lombrosian theory. Aspiring to elaboration of a new penal code, Nina Rodrigues embarked on a new definition of penal responsibility. Even though he differentiated various levels of miscegenation, he viewed it always as a degenerative factor and vigorously opposed famous Sílvia Romero’s thesis: „every Brazilian is mestizo, if not in his blood, then at least in his ideas”.⁷ Nina Rodrigues started applying Lombrosian racial theories on social

⁴ SKIDMORE, ref. 3, p. 3.

⁵ André Rebouças (1838-1898), a very important thinker and engineer of late Brazilian empire, one of those rare thinkers who not only advocated abolition of slavery but agricultural reform as well (among Brazilian 19th century liberals not really common claim). Inspired by Jeffersonian concept of nation composed of small farmers, this black monarchist was convinced of disastrous consequences of republican revolution (1889). In his view republican revolution was made by new landlords who thwarted imperial agrarian democracy project. His main work *Agricultura nacional* (1883) did not reach any significant repercussion. For further study: REZENDE DE CARVALHO, Maria Alice. André Rebouças: Questão de liberdade. In: BOTELHO, André – MORITZ SCHWARCZ, Lilia (orgs.). *Esse Enigma Chamado Brasil*, Companhia das Letras, São Paulo 2009, p. 46-59.

⁶ Brazil was slower than other Latin American countries as far as adoption of European intellectual trends is concerned. Absence of universities helped to maintain Brazil’s relative isolation. Increase and obvious victory of liberal cosmopolitan ideology in 1880s, however, indicated that there was a growing interest in the latest European ideas. Brazil was quite vulnerable regarding imported European racial theories. Ironical aspect of such development is that two decades after slavery abolition (1888) Brazil witnessed peak of racist theories production.

⁷ “*Todo brasileiro é mestiço senão no sangue pelo menos nas ideias*” (theses from Rodrigues’ work His-

events of his time (Canudos revolt between 1896 and 1897)⁸, likewise Euclides da Cunha and others believed that „race“ was a criterion opening ways to objective „measuring“ of society.⁹ At the turn of the century race, racial theories and the question of miscegenation got all visible both in Brazilian official foreign policy and literature (Graça Aranha, Lima Barreto¹⁰).

It seems that as far as „racial period“ in Brazilian cultural history is concerned there is no agreement among intellectual historians. According to some (Skidmore) „racial phase“ constituted a short period with its decline already before the Great War. According to others (Tucci Carneiro, Lippi de Oliveira¹¹) such a period took much longer and decline of „racial phase“ started not until 1945. In addition, it got enriched by the strong anti-Semitic and Aryan element. In spite of disagreements between Brazilian intellectual historians and Skidmore¹², there is no doubt that such an amalgam became a determinant matrix of later Freyre's theories as well.¹³ On the other hand Brazilian historians do not deny phenomena of Brazilian nationalism and the profound need to dive into the question of national identity already before the Great War. In Brazil the strict racism had its opponents and it was them who finally became dominant intellectual force.¹⁴ Their

tória de literatura brasileira, 1888). MORITZ SCHWARCZ, Lilia. „Nina Rodrigues: um radical do pessimismo“, in: BOTELHO – MORITZ SCHWARCZ, ref. 5, p. 99-103.

⁸ Canudos revolt (*Guerra de Canudos*), 1896-1897 was a social-religious insurrection of rural inhabitants of small interior town Canudos in the state of Bahia. The revolt was led by religious leader Antônio Conselheiro.

⁹ Euclides da Cunha (1866-1909). Brazilian engineer, writer and journalist, member of Brazilian Literary Academy (Academia Brasileira de Letras). In his most famous work *The Backlands* (*Os sertões*, 1902) Euclides called attention to Brazilian backlands (Canudos campaign) and made use of social darwinism. In 1920s and 1930s Euclides became a favourite reference of Brazilian nationalist authors (mainly because of his invoking of virtues of inland population).

¹⁰ MAROTTI, Giorgio. *Black Characters in the Brazilian Novel*. Los Angeles: Center for Afro-American Studies, University of California, 1987.

¹¹ Carneiro writes about “political thought that constituted itself in doctrine of Estado Novo. If one observes lifelong careers of those intellectuals who acted on the turn of 19th and 20th century, then one realizes (regarding history of ideas) that many of them joined politico-cultural project of Estado Novo or – if not – they (...) they adapted their ideas to the needs of regime. Among them one notices two – Oliveira Viana and Alberto Torres. Many of them assumed roles of bearers and disseminators of ideology inspired by racists theories at that time in fashion and made use of social darwinism and arianism as an instrument of historical explanation. Since 19th century new patterns of European thought – positivism, social darwinism – got sustained by extensive pseudo-scientific literature. (...) Racist theories emerged as a part of such scientific findings (...)” TUCCI CARNEIRO, Maria Luiza. *O Anti-semitismo na era Vargas (1930-1945). Fantasmas de uma geração*. São Paulo: Editora brasiliense, 1995. p. 83-84.

¹² TUCCI CARNEIRO, ref. 11, p. 86.

¹³ NEEDELL, Jeffrey D. Identity, Race, Gender and Modernity in the Origins of Gilberto Freyre's Oeuvre. In *American Historical Review*, February 1995, vol. 100, no. 1, pp.51-77, note 77.

¹⁴ „But these critics remained a minority before the first World War. (...) Nonetheless, they had an affect. They were pointing the way to an escape from the straight jacket of racism. When did these critics begin to represent more than a small minority position among Brazilian intellectuals? I think it was during the First World War. The shift in opinion was connected with the undermining of the liberal cosmopolitan ideology which had emerged during the Late Empire. In the era of Brazilian belle époque, from 1900 to 1914, that ideology seemed to go unchallenged. (...) At the same time, (...), some isolated critics were attacking the dominant ideology, along with one of its principal corollaries – the theory of racial superiority. How

dominance was partly due to nationalism as well. In 1920s nationalism became natural part of different currents of Brazilian modernism including its specific north-eastern version forged by Freyre and his followers in Recife.

It is particularly interesting that Tucci Carneiro's profound study (dealing with anti-semitism, racism or „yellow danger“) does not mention Freyre at all. Even though it deals with number of authors tempted by North-American and European racial production¹⁵ or Brazilian filo-fascist groups, it leaves Freyre aside. Why? Freyre himself exhibited number of conservative qualities already in 1930s but he could not be considered as a racist. Possibly – as we will see further – Freyre was dissociated from those trends in two ways: firstly as a Brazilian with Anglo-Saxon education, Freyre exhibited a cosmopolitan and universalist streak, secondly as a Northeasterner from planter family resisted the southeasten modernizing tide. Freyre spent quite a big part of his life abroad, personally participated in international intellectual and political events on three continents, organized international scientific conferences, made part of international research teams, worked for UN and UNESCO. In this respect his personal and professional profile and background differed significantly from that of contemporary racist theorists and ideologues whose careers overlapped with Brazilian *Estado Novo*.

Freyre's pluri-continental identity

Gilberto Freyre was born in Apipucos, Recife, in the Brazilian northeast. Growing up in traditional planters family, far from modernity driven urban centers of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, he could absorb atmosphere of then still existing colonial patriarchal society. On the other hand he was educated by foreign preceptors, the fact that underscored his lifelong cosmopolitanism and perhaps initiated his early voyages. In 1908 Freyre entered American College of Gilreath (found in Recife by American baptist missionaries), in 1916 read his first public lecture *Spencer and the Problem of Education in Brazil* (*Spencer e o problema da educação no Brasil*) and in 1918 left for Baylor College in Waco, Texas. His stay in the USA took place when US imperialist expansion in Latin America reached its peak and the USA were progressively becoming dominant economic power. Texas itself was a result of American expansionist waves in the midst of 19th century. Freyre's arrival took place roughly two decades after the establishment of US protectorate in Cuba, i.e. another Anglo-Saxon outpost against Spanish/Latino culture in the New World. Explanation of such expansionism included American contempt of „inferiores races“ of Latin America.

did the criticism grow in acceptance? In a manner that should not surprise us: anti-racism became a tenet of the new nationalist thought.“ SKIDMORE, ref. 3, p. 5.

¹⁵ For example Oliveira Vianna, prominent figure of Vargas regime, author of *Race and Assimilation* (*Raça e Assimilação*, 1932). He called attention to racial amalgamation as highly problematic for eugenic and racial selection of Arian ethnics. Oliveira Vianna observes that by virtue of data gathered in New London, Anglo-Saxon race possesses higher exagamous aptitude (the highest miscibility coefficient). Jewish race Oliveira Vianna declared as „indissoluble“. TUCCI CARNEIRO, ref. 11, p. 102.

In the USA Freyre was introduced to important personalities¹⁶ (his American professors or later mentor and Brazilian diplomat Oliveira Lima). In 1920 Freyre graduated from Baylor College and pursued his further studies in New York.¹⁷ Having attained his Master degree Freyre left („attracted by circles of Action Française“¹⁸) for Paris. There it was Charles Maurras, *félibrige* and their regionalism what influenced him most.¹⁹ After short stay in Heidelberg and Oxford Freyre left for Portugal. Meeting republicans from review *Seara Nova*, integralists and monarchists from *Correio da Manhã*, he was particularly impressed by integralist leader António Sardinha with whom initiated short correspondence (1923-1924).²⁰ It is probable that such sympathies coming from all possible ideological corners foretold his later pan-Portuguese reception from 1950s onwards.

Returning to Brazil (1923) Freyre embraced local *regionalismo*, organized regionalist conferences (*I Congresso Brasileiro de Regionalismo* in Recife, 1926), worked for Estácio Coimbra²¹, governor of Pernambuco. In his new function Freyre was an editor of a journal *A Província* and lectured sociology at *Escola Normal do Estado de Pernambuco*.

Outbreak of 1930 revolution led Freyre abroad again. But this time his steps led first to Salazarist Portugal. In addition Freyre spent 1930-1933 period between USA and Brazil to pursue his empirical comparison between Brazilian north-east and Northamerican South, two societies grown out of plantation and slavery.

Freyre deprecated then widespread conception of race as a biological fatality. On the contrary, emphasized determining force of environment. In this respect Freyre resembled other Brazilian researchers of his time. In contrast to them Freyre emphasized old – and for some outmoded – patterns of Brazilian lifestyle associated with patriarchy, plantations, slavery, miscegenation. According to some, being a cosmopolitan Freyre suffered from permanent “Proustian syndrome”.²² Such complex networks of factors made Freyre a true cosmopolitan thinker. It is highly probable that his cosmopolitanism was completed by his frequent journeys abroad

¹⁶ William Butler Yeats, „new poets“ Vachel Lindsay and Amy Lowell.

¹⁷ Franz Boas (anthropology), Franklin Giddings (sociology), Edwin Seligman (economy), William R. Shephard (Latin America history) and John Basset Moore (international law). Franz Boas, German jew settled in the USA already in 1910s was head of Department of Anthropology at Columbia university and it was him who became Freyre's frequent international reference and who taught to “take into account as fundamental a difference and social influences, cultural heredity and environment”. CASTELO, Claudia. *Modo português em estar no mundo. O lusotropicalismo e a ideologia nacional (1933-1961)*. Porto: Afrontamento, 1998. p. 20, note 17.

¹⁸ CASTELO, ref. 17, p. 22, note 24.

¹⁹ Armelle Enders in chapter with symptomatic title „la plantation ou la matrice d'un integralisme national“ writes: „Even though our access to detailed information about young Freyre's activities is quite limited, in themes developed by him during following decades one can detect several points converging with concepts conceived both by Maurras and his disciples.“ ENDERS, Armelle. *Lusotropicalisme, théorie d'exportation. Gilberto Freyre en son pays*. In *Lusotopie 1997*, p. 201-210.

²⁰ common theme of their discussions and correspondence was “peninsularismo”. CASTELO, ref. 17, p. 22.

²¹ Estácio Coimbra, Freyre's brother-in-law.

²² NEEDELL, ref. 13, p. 63, note 37.

(sometimes referred as an exile because Freyre probably viewed 1930 Revolution as a threat) and was looking for a creative intellectual outlet.²³

After a short anthropological work in Germany Freyre decided to return to Brazil (1932). Studying in archives and libraries of Rio de Janeiro, he started writing his opus magnum *Casa-grande & senzala* and organized 1st Afro-Brazilian Congress (1.º Congresso Afro-Brasileiro, 1934, Recife). It was for the first time when the African contribution to national culture was openly and worldwidely appreciated. Subsequently, on the third occasion outside Brazil, Freyre formulated his *lusotropicalismo* theory.

Lusotropicalismo: Hybridism as a driving force behind history

In his opus magnum *Casa-grande&senzala* Freyre outlined matrix of Brazilian nation: plantation of Brazilian north-east and miscegenation as a result of master-slave coexistence. According to some scholars (Armelle Enders) it was Brazilian variation of Maurras' integral nationalism (see note 19) whereas others (Gomes de Almeida²⁴) put emphasis on Freyre's regionalistic aloofness towards modernizing and urbanizing southeast or on his „Proustian“ searching for the lost and idealized world of his childhood (Jeffrey Needell). All these motives could form sort of underlying unconscious motivation, but *Casa-grande&senzala* offered an original interpretation of Brazilian national identity and matrix of Portuguese colonization process of Brazilian tropics. As we will see, further development of his theory was to broaden this concept to worldwide Portuguese colonization.

During his third journey (1937) Freyre became cosmopolitan intellectual and significant agent on the field of international relations but times were still not opportune for the worldwide promotion of his ideas. 1937-1940 period Freyre spent as a delegate, professor and visiting scholar. In 1940, back in Recife, he put forth his lecture *A Threatened culture: The Luso-Brazilian (Uma cultura ameaçada : a luso-brasileira)* which later became keystone of his book *The world created by Portuguese (O mundo que o português criou)*.²⁵ Both texts are very important for the present study because here Freyre extended what initially considered as Portuguese colonization features in Brazil and started applying them on the Portuguese colonization as a whole: „Wherever this type of colonization reigned, racial prejudice seemed to be insignificant. Miscegenation, psychological and social, is (...) morally active and creative.“²⁶ These theses led to later widespread fiction of an ideal of racially mixed society of white aristocrats and black serves, a true nation of white planters and black slaves able to assimilate all the cultures of the world. Such vision involving racial and class tolerance Freyre described in *The Masters and the*

²³ Freyre's cosmopolitanism on one hand and his adherence to colonial Brazil on the other form a basic tension which constitutes the background of his theoretical work. See works by Palares-Burke or Jeffrey Needel.

²⁴ GOMES DE ALMEIDA, José Maurício. Regionalismo e modernismo: as duas faces da renovação cultural dos anos 20. In KOSMINSKY - LÉPINE - PEIXOTO (org.), ref. 1, p. 315-325.

²⁵ FREYRE, Gilberto. *O mundo que o português criou. Aspectos das relações sociais e de cultura do Brasil com Portugal e as colónias portuguesas.* Rio de Janeiro: José Olympio, 1940.

²⁶ FREYRE, Gilberto. *O mundo que o português criou.* Lisboa: Edições Livros do Brasil, 1951, p. 43.

Slaves (*Casa-grande&senzala*, 1933) and later in *The Mansions and Shanties (Sombros e mucambos*, 1936). For many it is still reactionary and archaic Utopia. However, it is also true that many believed that Brazil lacked open segregation (such as in the South Africa or in the South of the USA) and that Freyre's theses rested on accurate observations.

Gilberto Freyre's thoughts stood for rehabilitation of Portuguese presence in Brazil and constituted a sensitive point in official historiography of Brazilian regime *Estado Novo* (1937-1945).²⁷ Positive appreciation of Portuguese heritage implied a break up with older analyses of Brazilian intellectuals (especially in 1920s) who attributed Brazilian backwardness and tardy modernization to Portuguese colonization.²⁸ Freyre repeatedly emphasized lack of Portuguese "racial identity" and "plasticity" in relation to other races. In his view Portuguese came from Greeks, Carthagians, Celts, Romans, Visigoths and their "plastic character" explained referring to their coexistence with Moors:

*"Interests of reproduction suppressed not just moral prejudices but also Catholic fastidiousness of orthodoxy; and in the service of such interests one can find Christianity which, in Portugal, so many times adopted characteristics of a folic cult."*²⁹

And Jews:

*"Technicists of usury, such became Jews almost everywhere through almost biological process of specialization that seems to sharpen their character of predator, mimicry and constant gestures of appropriation and possession, hands with clutches incapable of planting and create (...) just able to skimp."*³⁰

"Plastic quality" (*característica plasticidade*) and the indulgence with "women of different colours" (*mulheres da vária cor*) gave Portuguese extremely favourable starting point both for colonization and survival in tropics:

*"In contrast to obvious inability of northerners, it is true that Portuguese reveal so evident ability to get acclimatized in tropics. It is sure that by means of better hybridism than other Europeans: all colonial societies of Portuguese origin are more or less hybrid."*³¹

²⁷ ENDERS, ref. 19, note 9. WILLIAMS, Daryle. *Culture wars in Brazil*, Durham-London: Duke University Press, 2001, p. 227-251.

²⁸ ENDERS, ref. 19, note 10. See: SILVA DA MOTTA, M. *A nação faz 100 anos. A questão nacional no centenário da Independência*. Rio de Janeiro: FGV/CPDOC, 1992.

²⁹ FREYRE, Gilberto. *Casa Grande & Senzala. Formação da família brasileira sob o regime de economia patriarcal*. Lisboa: Edições Livros do Brasil, 1957, p. 242.

³⁰ FREYRE, ref. 26, pp. 226-227. Jeffrey D. Needell observes Freyre's anti-semitism as something generally unnoticed but still present in all his works. See „Freyre's egregious anti-Semitism, which goes generally unremarked“. Needell underscores various terms Freyre used to condemn financial activity of Jews. NEEDELL, ref. 13, p. 31, note 72.

³¹ FREYRE, ref. 25, p. 24.

It was that gift that predestinated Portuguese success in tropics. This quality was to led to what Freyre called “world created by Portuguese” (being aware of Brazilian Lusophobia he avoided expressions like “Portuguese world” or “Portuguese America” behind which the idea of Portuguese nationalism was lurking). Freyre did not want to attribute formation process of such civilization to Portuguese crown, dynasties or Portuguese politics but to Portuguese Christo-Catholic ethos. For him such Christo-Catholic ethos formed a basis of Brazilian nation. In his view Luso-Brazilian element was predominant in Brazilian culture, formed a basis of Brazilian identity and as such should be protected by official authorities.³² For Freyre Brazil is: “*the most vigorous and most remarkable part of the world created by Portuguese with the use of European and Christian elements by means of cross-breeding and considerable mutual cultural intersections.*”³³

It was in 1950 when Freyre, during his trip around Portuguese empire, introduced his theory of Luso-tropical civilisation:

*„that sort of Lusitanian civilization which, victorious in tropics constitutes today, (...). This expression – Luso-tropical seems to correspond with the fact that Lusitanian expansion coming to Africa, Asia and America manifests plain inclination of Portuguese man to both acclimatization and lasciviousness and not just interest in tropics as such.”*³⁴

There is no doubt that in times when the „racial cross-breeding“ (*mistura de raças*) was considered to be one of main causes of both physiological and cultural degeneration (*degeneração*) Freyre swam against the tide of his time.

Colonial myth: From Armindo Monteiro to Gilberto Freyre

Brazilian declaration of independence (1822) constituted a significant damage for Portuguese empire. Nevertheless, Portuguese imperial policy managed to sail through unquiet waters of 19th century without significant losses. Portuguese diplomacy succeeded in international negotiations concerning its African dependencies and kept small enclaves in India, China and East Timor. Tight and vulnerable bond between metropolis and overseas territories was laid bare with so-called *Ultimatum* (1890). The British royal government thwarted Portuguese ambitions to so-called Rose map (*Mapa Cor-de-Rosa*)³⁵ and nationwide psycho-so-

³² Applying concept of „culture wars“ on Varguist Brazil, American historian Daryle Williams demonstrates that Brazilian cultural-political scene is a constant battlefield of two or more cultural policies whose goal is to legitimize national and international Brazilian policy. According to Williams even Brazilian modernist movement was split into at least two camps: modernists (inspired in Northamerican and European modernity) and conservatives (inspired by Luso-Catholic traditon, colonial and imperial culture). WILLIAMS, Daryle, *Culture wars in Brazil*. Durham-London: Duke University Press, 2001.

³³ FREYRE, ref. 29, p. 41.

³⁴ FREYRE, Gilberto. *Um brasileiro em terras portuguesas. Introdução a uma possível Luso-tropiologia, acompanhada de conferências e discursos proferidos em Portugal e em terras lusitanas e ex-lusitanas da Ásia, África e do Atlântico*. Lisboa: Edições Livros do Brasil, 1954, p. 134.

³⁵ The Pink Map or the Rose-Coloured Map (*Mapa Cor-de-Rosa*) was a project resulting from a document from 1885 that constitutued Portuguese claim of sovereignty over a corridor between Portuguese West (Angola) and East (Mozambique) Africa. The corridor included today’s territory of Zimbabwe and large parts of Zambia and Malawi. British government (presided by Lord

cial shock led to the virulent criticism of ruling dynasty and monarchy. Growth of republican opposition, assassination of royal family (1908) and fall of monarchy (1910) followed. Portuguese overseas continued intact part of national identity, but newly established republican regime suffered from chronic financial problems, unstable political scene and considerable part of illiterate population.

After the fall of liberal Republic (1926) and introduction of Salazarist regime, overseas became essential part of nationalist propaganda. Alongside Salazar himself, there was António Ferro, chief figure of propaganda machine SPN (later SNI) and Armindo Monteiro, author of regime's foreign policy. Together with Salazarist intelligentsia all of them contributed to the progressive formation of Salazarist discourse.

Salazarist regime renewed traditionalist myths that were supposed to legitimize its policy. As Fernando Rosas puts it, all this set of myths was to „(...) establish a mythic idea of transpersonal and trans-class ‚Portuguese essence‘, that *Estado Novo* reassumes when closing ‚black century‘ of liberalism (...)”³⁶ Next to „palingenetic myth“ and „myth of new nationalism“, Rosas refers to „imperial myth“ which was „to certain degree inherited from previous monarchist and republican traditions in its double historical-providentialist aspect (colonization and evangelization)“.³⁷ Imperial myth constituted a significant part of long-lasting national heritage, and as such it was duly cultivated. In 1950s and 1960s it was Freyre who was supposed to enrich in a very significant way.

Salazar's general aim was to eradicate both republican and Pombalian (Enlightened) tradition and to re-introduce traditionalist counter-revolutionary principles. Colonial policy made an important part of such a change. In July 1930 – even before *Estado Novo's* constitution was adopted – Salazar approved so-called *Acto Colonial*, i.e. re-introduced centralized colonial administration, restricted limited colonial autonomy and instituted official term Portuguese Colonial Empire (*Império Colonial Português*). Here Salazar clearly defined burden of white Portuguese: „It is an organic essence of Portuguese nation to enact a historical function of owner and colonizer of overseas domains and to civilize indigenous populations (...)“ (2nd article of *Acto Colonial*).³⁸ Salazar's colonial policy put an end to republican

Salisbury) in its memorandum known as Ultimatum of 1890 (January 11, 1890) forced Lisbon to resign from such policy. Memorandum demanded withdrawal of Portuguese troops from territories in today's Zimbabwe and other areas where Portuguese and British interests overlapped. Ultimatum led to mutual treaty signed in Lisbon on 11 June 1891. All these events provoked number of riots and apocalyptic sentiment among Portuguese and contributed to the overthrow of the monarchy (1910).

³⁶ ROSAS, Fernando. O Salazarismo e o homem novo: ensaio sobre o Estado Novo e a questão do totalitarismo. In *Análise social*, vol. 35 (157), 2001, p. 1031-1054.

³⁷ ROSAS, ref. 36.

³⁸ *Acto Colonial* was a constitutional law promulgated by Decree n.º 18 570 (8/7/1930), i.e. pre-existed *Estado Novo* regime (introduced by constitution that came into force April 11, 1933 and served until 1945) but later it was incorporated in it. It was elaborated by Salazar, Armindo Monteiro and Quirino de Jesús. It introduced a new stage of Portuguese colonial administration, or imperial, nationalist and centralized stage that was in force until 1951. *Acto Colonial* defined relations between metropolis and its dependencies. It applied term Portuguese Colonial Empire (*Império Colonial Português*) on all overseas territories (3rd article of *Acto Colonial* states: “The Por-

tradition in three main aspects: administrative autonomy was substituted by centralization; opening to foreign capital was substituted by nationalization; autonomous development was left out in favour of imperial economic integration and financial equilibrium. As far as indigenous policy is concerned, however, there were no significant differences.

It was exactly at that time when Freyre formulated fundamental theses of his masterpiece *The Masters and the Slaves (Casa-grande&senzala, 1933)*. Its publication coincided with approval of *Estado Novo* constitution and traditionalist push in Portuguese internal and colonial policy. First, Freyre paid attention to Brazilian black slave, multiracial coexistence in Brazilian plantation and culture in general (*Casa-grande&senzala*) but soon after his attention turned to pan-Portuguese colonization project (*O mundo que o português criou*). Freyre believed and preached that Portuguese were both biologically and culturally endowed with unparalleled gift for racial hybridism and, by extension, specific type of colonialism. Promoted by internationally acclaimed intellectual, such theses could not pass unnoticed in Portuguese medias. Whereas during 1930s and 1940s Portuguese authorities observed Freyre's thoughts with reservations, in the 1950s *lusotropicalismo* became essential part of official Salazarist doctrine. Post-war time seemed to be more opportuned for Freyre. Portugal persisted in its idealized vision of pre-modern Catholic rural Occident, but post-war world started opening itself to racial tolerance, multi-racial coexistence, principle of self-determination and decolonization. Brazil enjoyed reputation of multi-racial paradise. Time proved to be more opportune for Freyre than for Salazar.

Freyre's ideas were appreciated by Portuguese already in 1930s. José Osório de Oliveira referred to Freyre's „new“ look at black and coloured people in 1934 in following manner: „*from this new way of looking at black, as it was adopted by Brazilians, results that a mysterious soul of this race has been revealing itself.*“ Impressed by Freyre's perspective Osório recommended Portugal to „*carefully observe Africanology studies made in Brazil because of their already visible progress in knowledge of black's psychology – an element of our overseas activity and an important value of our empire.*“³⁹ Adopting *lusotropicalismo* theory, Osório arrived at conviction that miscegenation constituted both cultural and racial *modus operandi* between Portuguese colonizer and tribesmen. At the same time, Osório started preaching theory of progressive disappearance of both whites and blacks in Brazil. In his eyes Brazil was destined to be mestizo country: „*And this is the great work of hybridism, a true form of Portuguese colonization in American territory. With some reason and (...) with sympathy Brazilians say: ,God made the white and the black; Portuguese made mulatto'. With sympathy of course because Brazilian does not despise mulatto.*“⁴⁰

Osório was probably the first public promotor and supporter of Freyre's work in Portugal,⁴¹ but he was not the only one. In the very same year Carlos Malheiro

tuguese overseas dominions are declared colonies and constitute Portuguese Colonial Empire“).

³⁹ OSÓRIO DE OLIVEIRA, José. O Negro. Contribuição brasileira para o seu estudo“, In *O Mundo Portugues*, vol. I, no. 4, Abr. 1934, p. 138.

⁴⁰ OSÓRIO DE OLIVEIRA, José. A mestiçagem. Esboço duma opinião favorável. In *O Mundo Português*, vol. I, no. 11, Nov. 1934, p. 367-369.

⁴¹ „I believe (...) I have read, in some of our chroniclers of India or in the very ,Comentários de

Dias published a book where one chapter is dedicated to Freyre's work. Here, monarchist intellectual appreciated Freyre's work and recommended Portuguese intellectuals to pay attention to his ideas. Freyre's was supposed to participate in conservative but at the same time innovative colonial politics: „his words corroborate all of what we were able of in America. Let's use them as an impulse for laborious work that awaits us in Africa, work that will save us from sterility of the century of liberalism and individualism (...).“⁴²

In the second part of 1930 Freyre's reception in Portugal included both intellectuals and journalists.⁴³ In 1937 Freyre participated in Portuguese Ist Congress of Portuguese World Expansion History (*I Congresso da História da Expansão Portuguesa no Mundo*) and in 1940s his ideas stimulated intellectuals of various ideological background: ex-integralists converted to Salazarism, conservative monarchists, progressive Catholics or oppositionist republicans. Freyre's concept was accepted but reading of his works was not always convergent. Many Portuguese interpreted in terms of nationalism.⁴⁴ In addition, one should not forget that Freyre's work reception took place also in Africa and was appreciated especially in Cape Verde.

It is noteworthy that Osório's appreciation of *lusotropicalismo* coincided with introduction of Portuguese constitutional law *Acto Colonial* accompanied by official discourse of „imperial mystique“ (*mística imperial*), whose author, Armindo Monteiro (1896-1955), was a colonial ideologue and political figure of considerable prestige. As a foreign minister (1931-1935) Monteiro adopted principles of social darwinism, i.e. Portuguese colonial policy from 1930s onwards was in strict contradiction to Freyre's theses. Monteiro himself did not conceive interracial relations as harmonious and fraternal. In his 1930s texts Monteiro did not recognize African cultures as such. Paternalist way Monteiro spoke about „historical duty“ (*dever histórico*) to conduct natives (*indígenas*) to Christianity, cultivate them through work, morals, intellectually and materially did not leave any room for Freyre's fraternal hybridism. Even though official discourse repeatedly emphasized „national unity“, Monteiro drew very clear line between „natives“ and „civilized“.⁴⁵

Albuquerque' that our talented governor facilitated by all possible means marriages between Portuguese and Indian women. And Jesuit missionaries in Brazil never opposed such marriages and fought just against (...) concubinage.“ OSÓRIO DE OLIVEIRA, ref. 39.

⁴² MALHEIROS DIAS, Carlos. Gilberto Freyre. In *Pensadores Brasileiros*, Lisboa: Livraria Betrand 1934, p. 117.

⁴³ From 1935 onwards journals like *Diário de Notícias* and *Boletim Geral das Colónias* published various articles where excerpts from *Casa-grande&senzala* were published. These excerpts are present also in Malheiro Dias' studies.

⁴⁴ CASTELO, ref. 17, p. 80.

⁴⁵ „then dominant imperial conception was not compatible with the idea of fusion of various elements in some new Luso-tropical civilisation. Portugal was supposed to have a historical role of giving Western values and Christianity to ‚raças inferiores‘ but such cultural contact was supposed to take place without Portuguese being contaminated. (...) The possibility of Africa being a place of balanced ethnical and cultural symbiosis opposed roused Lusitanian nationalism. In the name of ‚racial purity‘ of Portuguese religion and culture, Brazilian experience cannot be repeated in Portuguese colonial empire.“ CASTELO, ref. 17, p. 86.

No doubt that the very idea of *lusotropicalismo*, i.e. racial and cultural fusion and cultural reciprocity, was in sharp contrast with Portuguese colonial policy and ideology. Freyre's *Lusotropicalismo* encountered many reserves among Portuguese public. It was especially his thesis of hybrid character of Portuguese people (Freyre's emphasis on Afro-Arabian substrate of Portuguese „race“ and national character)⁴⁶ that was sharply rejected. In contrast, Salazarist authorities underscored „Christian reconquest“, i.e. European essence of Portuguese identity. On the other hand Lisbon easily accepted his thesis of special talent of Portuguese to colonize tropics. It was Armindo Monteiro who used such an idea for elaboration of his „imperial mystique“. In his view colonization requires exactly what Portuguese possess: *“a specific talent, an intimate force (...) liking for adventure and unknown, scorn for immediate welfare and at the same time desire to conquer fortunes in spite of thousands of sufferings and dangers”* and requires *“specific kind of being where, next to infinite tolerance and devoutness to what is inferior in people from backlands (...)”*.⁴⁷

Another widely accepted idea was that of predominant Christocentric/spiritual character of Portuguese colonization as opposed to other European colonization projects that were ethnocentric in their nature. In his works Freyre linked *lusotropicalismo* with the thesis of „Christocentric“ (and not „ethnocentric“) character of Portuguese colonization. The latter thesis was not originally forged by Freyre. It was rather a national myth legitimizing Portuguese *reconquista* and overseas conquests. The myth was later incorporated into „evangelic mission“ (*missão evangelizadora*) of Portuguese monarchy and church, documented in literature already in 16th century. This doctrine was frequently adopted by conservative political currents (legitimists, integralists, ultramontane Catholics), and later inspired Salazar's *Estado Novo*. Already in 1940 Salazar stressed „spiritual“ character of Portuguese colonization: *„having a small territory, population, strength or material means it is not limited in its civilizing mission: people can create on its own steering principles a universal activity (...) that illuminates the world.“*⁴⁸ *Estado Novo* discourse made use of old national myths (nation founding, 1140; overseas discoveries; independence restoration 1640), used anachronic, mythological, and religious language aiming at self-legitimization. Let's not forget above mentioned set of mythic „truths“ Rosas uses to interpret Salazarist spirit (notes 36, 37). Exactly in that sense Armindo Monteiro interpreted national history in 1934:

⁴⁶ “it [Portuguese race] can be explained (...) by its ethnic past or rather cultural past of an undefined people somewhere between Europe and Africa”. FREYRE, ref. 25, p. 13. Freyre repeats this thesis on numerous occasions but it is available in Portuguese intellectuals as well. Anthropologist Jorge Dias observed: “A perfect Portuguese unity results from an amalgam of various peoples: Iberians, Celts, Romans, Teutons, Jews, Berbers and Arabs with Phoenician, Greek, Carthaginian and Norman influences on coastal populations”. DIAS, Jorge. *A expansão ultramarina portuguesa à luz da moderna antropologia*. Lecture given November 12, 1956 and originally published in *Boletim Geral do Ultramar*. CASTELO, ref. 17, p. 115.

⁴⁷ MONTEIRO, Armindo. *Os portugueses na colonização contemporânea*. Lisboa: AGC, 1933, p. 6.

⁴⁸ OLIVEIRA SALAZAR, António de. “Discurso pronunciado pelo senhor presidente do Conselho, em 4 de Junho de 1940 no alto do Castelo de Guimarães”, quoted by Henrique Galvão, *Álbum comemorativo das festas centenárias de Guimaraes, do cortejo do Mundo Português e da secção colonial do Mundo Português*, p. 4. In CASTELO, ref. 17, p. 132.

„(...) nation preferred to be sacrificed in the sea to enlarge limits of faith and the EMPIRE. During 15th and 16th century soldiers and missionaries link name of Portugal with all the corners of the Earth and with its heroic spirit and apostolic mission which opened a new cycle of relations and even in the ideas of nations. But in the epoch of, timorous and mean sadness‘(...) the Christ was denied as if whatever latin nation could live without his spirit. Instead of creative unity, miserable struggle of fractions. Instead of the very dignity of a nation that is the third colonial power, a disgrace of a miserable way inserte din revolutions and insurrections.“⁴⁹

Spiritual mission became a robust link between Freyre's *lusotropicalismo* and Salazarist colonialism. During 1950s idea of „spiritual mission“ became frequently repeated in both prominent intellectuals and Salazar.

At the same time fundamental changes were taking place in the world politics. Progression of anti-colonial pressures made Portuguese regime to abolish *Acto Colonial* (1951) and to significant change of constitutional terminology (for example term „*colónia*“ is substituted by more neutral „*ultramar*“) and promoting „Portuguese pluri-continental national unity“ (*unidade da nação pluricontinental portuguesa*). Salazarism got progressively closer to the spirit of Gilbertian doctrine. It is no coincidence that official visit of Brazilian sociologist in Portugal and its overseas provinces started two weeks after constitutional revision (August 1951), i.e. abolition of *Acto Colonial*. Salazar understood Freyre's *lusotropicalismo* as an effective instrument of legitimization and started, at least outwardly, incorporate it in the official discourse. In 1960s Salazar adopted *lusotropicalismo* almost completely:

„Harmonic relations between races, as it was always understood by Portuguese, do not always require just absence of discrimination, but also laws and certain social practice. Such absence of discrimination is exactly what we call today racial coexistence (...). For 16th century Portuguese – and in this, I believe, we have always been, (...) lofty heirs of an enviable tradition – inter-racial relations were inspired in Christian ideal of equality; (...) our ancestors obstinately fought for true racial coexistence and even assimilation that next to the absence of discrimination (...) expressed absence of racial feeling as well. Such was perhaps our ambitious goal (...). One cannot deny that in some cases we have been successful: Goa and Cape Verde are the best examples of societies where the racial factor was and still is irrelevant.“⁵⁰

Such sort of discourse seems to be typical for Salazar's speeches throughout 1950s and 1960s. Dictator defended ideals of United Nations⁵¹ and constantly invoked Portuguese „natural inclination“ (*pendor natural*) „towards other peoples, contacts that always lacked whatever concept of superiority or racial discrimination.“⁵² Proportions of *lusotropicalist* thesis in the official discourse was growing proportionally

⁴⁹ MONTEIRO, Armindo. O pensamento do ministro das Colónias. Reconstrução do Império. Lisboa: SPN 1934.

⁵⁰ OLIVEIRA SALAZAR, António de. Entrevistas 1960-1966. Coimbra: Coimbra editora 1967, p. 155-156.

⁵¹ Salazar defending ideals of UN Chart. OLIVEIRA SALAZAR, ref. 50, p. 3-4.

⁵² SALAZAR OLIVEIRA, ref. 50, p. 84.

with the threat of decolonization. Salazar and his foreign minister Franco Nogueira made its use especially when interviewed by foreign journalists. Salazar's speeches in 1960 were almost interchangeable with those of Freyre's when saying that Portuguese nation „was a sort of multi-racial society that, eight hundred years ago, we constituted as a nation in the end of various invasions coming from the East, North and South, i.e. from the very Africa.“⁵³

Such speeches were heard after the abolishment of *Acto Colonial* (1951), Bandung conference (1955) and loss of Portuguese India (1962). At that time number of Third world's countries reached independence.⁵⁴ Portuguese foreign office adopted *lusotropicalismo*, disseminated it in overseas (distribution of Freyre's books, indoctrination of diplomats), and even scientific „lusotropical“ institutions were introduced.⁵⁵ Salazar tried to get sympathy and support of international public opinion.

Both Salazar's 1950s and 1960s speeches and Freyre's voyages around Portuguese overseas territories contributed to politization of *lusotropicalismo*. It is worth noting that Freyre won sympathies of both Salazarist élites and anti-Salazarist opposition.⁵⁶ All of them agreed on „natural inclination“ (*pendor natural*) of Portuguese colonization. Freyre also allowed (and perhaps helped) *lusotropicalismo* to be politicized – concept that was originally antropologico-sociological theory. The very fact of Freyre travelling across Portuguese empire and presenting *lusotropicalismo* made him legitimizator of *Estado Novo*. Freyre's travelling resulted in two significant works: *A Brazilian in Portuguese lands (Um brasileiro nas terras portuguesas)* and *Adventure and Routine (Aventura e Rotina)*. Here Freyre nobly misses out racism in Diamond Company of Angola (*Companhia de Diamantes de Angola*) and ascribes it to aberration of „Portuguese tradition“ (*desvios à tradição lusa*) that ensues from „unfortunate influence“ (*influência nefasta*) of Belgian Congo and South African Union. No doubt, here Freyre left field of science and entered political engineering.⁵⁷

From today's perspective it is surprising that Freyre's myth of luso-tropical community was received as trustworthy. As Claudia Costelo underscores, it was invented „with its back turned to historical facts and concrete reality.“⁵⁸ In spite of all what countered Freyre's theoretical construct, Freyre considered his model valid. In spite of all the texts written by Portuguese social scientists about

⁵³ Ibidem.

⁵⁴ Indonesia (1946), India (1947), Sri Lanka (1947), Burma (1948), Marroco, Tunisia, Sudan (1956) etc.

⁵⁵ in school year 1955-1956, Adriano Moreira introduced study of *lusotropicalismo* in the program of his own department of overseas policy (*política ultramarina*), in the second year of the course High Overseas Studies (*Altos Estudos Ultramarinos*).

⁵⁶ It does not mean, however, that all opposition representatives agreed with Freyre's concept (see Norton de Matos).

⁵⁷ Freyre's legitimization of Salazarism is apparent from his African diaries (*Aventura e Rotina*, 1953) where Freyre accused *Companhia dos Diamantes de Angola's* director Ernesto de Vilhena of a system that is not truly Portuguese (because of its racist attitudes). At the same time Freyre declared authoritarian and racist attitudes of Portuguese company as of Belgian and South African origin.

⁵⁸ CASTELO, ref. 17, 140.

racism in Portuguese overseas, Freyre defended its thesis of „traditional Portuguese behaviour“ (*tradicional comportamento português*) as multi-racial and not ethnocentric. Freyre's *lusotropicalismo* never ceased to be a fiction, myth and aspiration. Nevertheless, it seems that such a fiction won sufficient number of supporters among Salazarist élite and was efficiently used to keep Portuguese overseas dominion. At least till Salazar's death in 1970.