




## Chapter 11

# Dismantling the Discourses of the Master's House: Counterpositions to Lusotropicalism from the Perspective of Lusophone Africans

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### Introduction

The last decades in Brazil have been marked by a severe rupture in the way of thinking about the formation of the country and the racial violence resulting from this process. Through political struggle and contestation, the Brazilian Unified Black Movement managed to build reparatory public policies to the black population, such as affirmative action to enter universities and the federal public service; the mandatory teaching of Afro-Brazilian and African histories and cultures in basic education, through Federal Law 10.639/2003 (which aims to include the subject of “Afro-Brazilian History and Culture” in the official school curriculum); as well as the expansion of disciplines and postgraduate courses in the afore-mentioned contexts in higher education.

Thus, since then, we have been breaking with the myth of Lusotropicalism, an idea solidified by the Brazilian sociologist Gilberto Freyre (1933:197) based on the conception that the Portuguese were the colonisers amongst the European ones who was the least cruel with indigenous and black folks. This conception was used to sustain colonial domination in the African and Asian worlds invaded by the Portuguese empire



during the twentieth century. It comes from Freyre's view of Portuguese colonialism in Brazil, whose main fruit would be the production of a *racial democracy*.

According to the Afro-Brazilian intellectual Abdias do Nascimento (2016:47-48), racial democracy would supposedly reflect a certain concrete relationship in the dynamics of Brazilian society: that black and white people coexist harmoniously, enjoying equal opportunities of existence, without any interference, in this game of social parity, of their respective racial or ethnic origins.

This, for some authors, would be the reason for greatest national pride. However, Nascimento shows us that, in fact, there was a naturalised segregation in Brazil based on anti-black and anti-indigenous racism that promoted the genocide of both populations. Thus, Nascimento (2020:196) argues that racial democracy is non-existent; in fact it is a "racial demagoguery". The Afro-Brazilian sociologist pointed out that the Lusotropicalist discourse of "affable" Portuguese colonialism "in the tropics" would be a way of silencing and perpetuating the racial violence produced by this system of exploitation.

It is important to emphasise that Lusotropicalism is not only a historical perspective marked by gross errors in its narrative, but it is actively harmful. By silencing the violence promoted by Portuguese colonialism around the world, Lusotropicalism continually acts as a way of continuing colonial alienation (Fanon, 1967; 2022), as it prevents the construction of reparation measures in the face of the crimes committed by the colonial system - as can be seen with the violent reaction to the current Portuguese president's statements about reparation measures for colonial crimes.

Despite the fact that, as mentioned above, there is a series of federal laws that make it compulsory to introduce discussions on race, African studies and related issues, the hegemonic discourse that Brazil was one of the first countries to recognise the independence of Portuguese-speaking Africa continues to operate in International Relations (IR) classrooms, while the continuous support that the Brazilian diplomatic mission has

given to the Portuguese government in the field of international politics is erased (Nascimento, 2020)

Contrary to this perverse hegemonic narrative, different academic initiatives have emerged to contest it and, thus, to understand the violence caused by the persistence of race and racism on Brazilian soil. One of them was the discipline of Race, African Diaspora and Race Relations (known by its acronym, RADARI), created within the scope of the Laboratory of Afrocentric Studies in International Relations (LACRI) of the University of Brasília. LACRI, in their turn, was created in 2016 by black undergraduate students in IR at that educational institution. The purpose of LACRI was to recover, produce, and discuss knowledge about racial inequalities and their relation to the IR field, using race as a central analytical category.

From this perspective, the main objective of the course was to analyse the contributions of historical and contemporary black - and non-white - thought in IR studies; to understand the racial relations within the IR - which were historically erased in the discipline, even though race was the guiding element of the emergence of IR as a field of study (Acharya, 2022; Henderson, 2013; Sabaratnam, 2020); as well as to centralise the African Diaspora within global flows and discourses. The course aimed to present to the students theoretical-methodological references to (re)think the field of IR from the structuring element of modernity that is the category of 'race', going against the silencing fostered about the racial issue in IR (Rutazibwa, 2016).

The students gathered at LACRI began the political mobilisation so that the course of Race, African Diaspora and IR would be offered as an elective subject. The course was first taught by Marcos Vinícius Lustosa Queiroz in 2019. At that time, part of the students' work consisted of the production of material in the form of texts for the LACRI blog (LACRI, n.d.), whose purpose was to serve as input for subsequent versions of the course. The course was offered again in the Semesters 2/2020 and 1/2021 by Professor Bruna Jaquetto Pereira. Between the Semesters 2/2021 and 2/2022, I convened the course. Throughout the three semesters in which I was in charge, the

course had as its target audience the IR student body, although it was not restricted to them. An important fact to mention is the racial diversity of the students during the three editions of the course that I offered. Classes were fairly balanced between black and white students, and I also received indigenous and Asian-descent students. This made it possible to look at race in a more complex way than just black and white.

Throughout the course, it was imperative to take a path that would address the three central topics of the discipline: race, the African Diaspora, and IR. Thus, the discussion began with a reflection on the conceptualisation of race and racism, with the purpose of understanding the concept of race as a social and sociological category (Munanga, 2003); as well as the result of the advent of modernity and the consolidation of European whiteness as a civilising model to be followed (Acharya, 2022). From this initial contextualisation, it was possible to perceive how race and racism – or *the r-word* (Rutazibwa, 2016) – are systematically erased, neglected, and euphemised to the detriment of other systemic forms of oppression, such as geolocation, within the scope of race relations (Zvobgo & Loken, 2020).

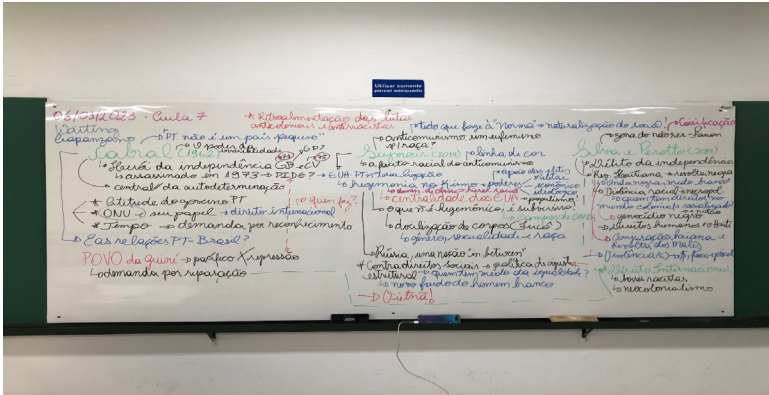
By focusing on canonical authors from the African Diaspora, we brought to the centre of the debate marginalised discussions in Brazilian academia, such as the one on racism and sexism in Brazil and America, based on the writings of the *American* author Lélia Gonzalez (2021), who pointed out that Latin America is, in reality, an *América Ladina*, that is, African and Amerindian America, produced and founded by black and indigenous hands, like hers. On the other hand, if the discussion of racial issues in Brazil is moving towards a process of consolidation in the university space, the presence of Africa and Africans was still relatively minimal. Although the African continent serves as a contrast for “Europe” and the “West”, especially in terms of human development (Mills, 1997:13), the social sciences of the Black Atlantic continue to fail to give the necessary attention to the impacts of the conjunction between colonialism and racialisation that have historically occurred

across even the most different African contexts (Pierre 2019:1), as well as for the production of African intellectuals.

In this sense, when I took the responsibility for teaching RADARI, I understood that it was essential to bring Africa and African intellectuals into the debate. In this way, I introduced readings from works by different authors from the Luso-African world. They were Amílcar Cabral (2011; 2013), the agronomist and militant for the colonial liberation of Cape Verde and Guinea Bissau; Alcinda Honwana (2012; 2023), Mozambican anthropologist; Eufémia Rocha and José Carlos Gomes dos Anjos (2022), Cape Verdean anthropologists. We also read African authors outside the Lusophone space, as Achille Mbembe (2018). But here, I am going to focus on the Luso-African ones.

Regarding the teaching practices and methodologies applied to the learning process, the classes were structured as follows: the semester included double classes, i.e., two consecutive classes of one hour and fifty minutes each. In each session, a theme ran through the discussions and the bibliographical references to be discussed (between two or three articles). Students were expected to conduct the readings individually before class. Thus, the first hour of class was devoted to the presentation of the strengths, weaknesses and doubts of the articles by three or four students. This didactic proposal consisted of a combination of brainstorming and seminars, teaching strategies presented by Anastasiou and Alves (2004:80, 90) to make the students' presentations more dynamic and less protocol-based. During the classes, I used to write some of the comments made by the students on the whiteboard, as illustrated by Figure 11.1.

At the end of the students' presentation, the debate was opened up to the rest of the class and, once the interventions had been completed, I started to comment on each of the points indicated by them on the whiteboard. In the second part of the lesson, I returned to each of the compulsory readings using the logic of the dialogued lecture (Anastasiou & Alves, 2004:79).



**Figure 11.1:** In the picture, we can see the whiteboard all written after the students’ presentation about anticolonial struggles and thinking (January 6, 2023).

Based on this pedagogical construction, the students were invited to express their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the readings. This model allowed them to feel more comfortable in expressing their views. Interestingly, most of the students, in a fairly homogeneous way, were surprised by the strong parallels between the African contexts presented in the texts and the Brazilian scenario. On the one hand, the persistence of Lusotropicalism as a silencer of inequalities was a new element for the students. On the other hand, the readings helped to pluralise the African scenarios previously established in their minds, based on the stereotype of ‘poverty’ on the one hand, and the mythical Africa on the other, an idea promoted by Pan-Africanist discourses of the diaspora.

Based on the discussions that I had with the students, I bring in this chapter the dialogues that emerged from the readings of the aforementioned authors. I will present how those readings were received by students, dividing the text into three parts: Reading Amílcar Cabral, Reading Alcinda Honwana and Reading José Carlos dos Anjos and Eufémia Rocha. Next, I tie the analysis to the conclusions, noting the importance of looking to the ‘side’; that is, directing analysis to other Global South contexts, in this case, African contexts. At the end of the paper – inspired by the proposal of Audre Lorde (2003) –

I will show how introducing other theoretical-analytical tools helps us to dismantle the “big house” erected by the “lord” (or colonialists), without using the tools produced for and by colonial whiteness. Thus, from the reading of Luso-African intellectuals, there were more solid and effective tools to deal with and to understand some Brazilian problems and issues, despite the differences between those contexts. This happened because, in general, the readings were critical to the discourse of Portuguese “exceptionality” - or as pointed out by Freyre, the softness of its colonialism system.

### **Reading Amílcar Cabral: a look at Portuguese colonial violence**

“National liberation is, necessarily, an act of culture” (Cabral, 2011:361) is one of the most classic phrases spoken by Amílcar Cabral (1924 - 1973), agronomist, intellectual and leader of the revolutionary process that led to the independence of Cape Verde and Guinea Bissau. The speech in which that quote was present, originally delivered at a ceremony in honour of Eduardo Mondlane, Cabral’s counterpart in the struggle for Mozambican independence, was read in two of the three editions of RADARI.

Even though Cabral left a large number of texts, articles, speeches and reflections, the possibility of reading his texts in Brazilian university classrooms is still very rare. For this reason, and because of the praxis that the text addresses, the discussion about the work was marked by a visible enthusiasm on the part of the students. In addition to the fact that Cabral was the first African author we read in the course - and for many of the students, the first of their lives - having that text in our hands was also a way of unveiling many of the academically consolidated statements about African contexts and Portuguese colonialism.

This canonical phrase of the Bissau-Guinean intellectual that presents the national liberation as an act of culture brooded the horizons - geographically and historically - for the students. It gave other sense to the demands for self-determination that are increasingly flourishing on Brazilian soil by the voices of

the black and indigenous populations. Thus, by overturning the racist myth of “African culture” in the singular, the result of the process of epistemicide – as “the denial it undertakes of the legitimacy of forms of knowledge, of the knowledge produced by dominated groups and, consequently, of their members as subjects of knowledge” (Carneiro, 2005:96) – carried out during colonialism and which persists even with its end, the reading of Amílcar Cabral led us to understand how colonial liberation was more than a political-administrative element.

His proposal for the *re-Africanization of spirits*, a political perspective carried out by the Generation of 50 – the group of young students from Portuguese colonies who went to the Metropolis to study and become the leaders for colonial liberation –, which germinated the anti-colonial struggles in the Luso-African world, was, after all, a process of awareness that “the tools of the master will not help to dismantle the big house” (Lorde, 2003). This is because the *Indigenato*, a legislative system that hierarchised the non-white populations of the colonial world between *assimilated* and *indigenous* with deeply racist foundations, did not fail to act with its formal purpose, continuing to erase black-African populations from Portuguese citizenship (Venancio, 2025).

Likewise, such legislation acted in to annihilate African histories and cultures, in order to produce physical, cultural and psychological domination. Cabral’s perspective was constructed as a function of his interpretation of colonial assimilation as a negation of culture, arising from the “negation of the historical process of the dominated people” (Cabral, 2011:359). In this way, in the midst of the assimilationist project of Portuguese colonialism, seen by Cabral as the most retrograde of colonialisms (Cabral, 2011:355), the struggle for national liberation would also be a way of denying the negative stereotypes promoted by the colonisers, that is, promoting self-determination.

The impact of Cabral’s proposal was immediate and produced parallels with the Brazilian reality, a country where white people continue to produce racial segregation in different

areas of social life – including university life. In this sense, Mah Freitas (2023), one of the students of the course, resumed the Cabralist proposal to understand the aesthetics and politics of Afrofuturism in the songs of young Afro-Brazilian singers. For the political scientist:

In a context of colonial domination and the existence of a regime of epistemological hegemony, it is in the cultural sphere that the counter-forms of resistance of a dominated people develop, transform and diffuse. And as we have already discussed, with the imposition of the dominant power of the elite on public discourse and, in addition, the removal of black peoples from the mechanisms and institutions necessary for political agency, it is found in culture and cultural production, forms of political agency and recreation of realities and communication of black subjectivities. Therefore, as Cabral (2011) proposes, understanding culture as a powerful counter-hegemonic and anti-colonial movement is essential for transforming the reality of black African peoples (Freitas, 2023:38 – my translation).

On the other side of the Atlantic and in a socio-political context very different from the one for which Cabral wrote his proposal, the revolutionary's words did not fail to echo and make sense as a way to transform realities. This connection emerged as a result of Cabral's proposal that progress should occur, in colonised contexts, on its own terms. By freeing themselves from the shackles of colonialism – and the anti-black racism that would structure the Black Atlantic – it would be possible for black and non-white populations in general to resume the history that was denied to them and, through it, produce and manage their culture for their own purposes.

However, in addition to the emancipatory character that Cabral's readings brought to the students, there was also the unveiling of the Brazilian contribution to the consolidation of such a regime of violence. When we read, in the third edition of the course, his speech about the relationship between the peoples of the then African colonies, the Portuguese and the

United Nations (UN), the violence perpetrated on African territories became more than explicit. By denouncing the absence of a peaceful agreement for colonial liberations, which should have occurred in the early 1960s through the UN, Cabral (2013) shed light not only on the existence and persistence of colonial violence based on racism, but also on the uses – and abuses – of the legislation that allowed them to occur.

This is because, until 1960, the legal basis of international law had not only allowed colonialism, but also the different types of forced labour (Cabral, 2013). The white and metropolitan citizens of the Portuguese empire were protected from the forced labour, while black and mixed populations had to perform it compulsorily. Despite attempts at peaceful agreements to achieve colonial liberation, the Portuguese counterpart was one of violence, carrying out different massacres, such as Batepá (1953) in São Tomé and Príncipe, Pindjiguiti (1959) in Bissau and Wiriamu (1972) in Mozambique.

With the denunciations of physical violence and forced labour perpetrated by the Portuguese government, the question emerged: How did other countries, and Brazil in particular, cope with this situation? How to sustain Lusotropicalism after denunciations like Cabral's? The answers came from reading Abdias do Nascimento (2020) and Seymour (2014). The second, by proposing that the Cold War was, after all, a racial war, helped us to understand the reasons for the persistence of colonialism and the reason for the American alignment with the Portuguese government.

On the other hand, Nascimento shed light on the role of sustaining the myth of benevolence of Portuguese colonialism. At the same time that Brazilian representants denounced South African apartheid – even though Brazilian authorities and economic elite were directly involved with it – the Brazilian votes were like those of a “loyal dog” to Salazarism always that any anti-colonial measures were proposed by the United Nations (Nascimento, 2020:193). The birthplace of Lusotropicalist ideology, through its white, racist and earthly elite, was a crucial key to ensuring the persistence of Portuguese

colonialism – a history of cooperation with colonial and racial violence that is not debated with the necessary vigour in courses such as Africa’s International Relations.

In line with what Fanon (2022:96) proposes that the capitalists have behaved in the Global South as “war criminals”, Cabral proposes an update of the notion of civilisation. For him, colonial violence, whether physical, cultural, psychological or symbolic, would not match the proposal of civilisation. For this reason, Cabral proposed that the liberation struggle is more than a cultural fact, it is also a cultural factor (Cabral, 2011:373). In other words, the colonial liberation would enable the construction of a new model of society for African populations that would break with the structure of violence proposed by European colonialism.

By placing the production of precariousness in the Global South as a “problem of the UN”, or even the “UN as a problem” – since it would be the imperialists who judge the claims discussed there – Cabral shed light on the fact that the structures of global societies are founded on white capitalism, indicating a racialisation of economic-political power prior to what was argued by later scholars (Robinson, 2000). Thus, since alterity is organised by the concept of race as the element that organises the capitalist productive system, postcolonial societies would still live the limits between what was said and what was done in the resolution on decolonisation of 1960, imposing neocolonialism, the last stage of imperialism, on them through the capillary claws of capitalism (Nkrumah, 1973).

The problem is that, inserted in the world-system built on the ballast of the racial contract (Mills, 1997), Portuguese colonialism has left deep marks on the territories on Lusophone Africa – and its tentacles are still operative. This is because, during late colonialism, Portuguese power and agency operated from a double ideological apparatus of repression: the material, through the concentration and slow death camps where political prisoners were sent, and the PIDE (International and State Defence Police), on the one hand; and on the other, the cultural apparatus, founded on Lusotropicalism.

All the events narrated by Cabral occurred during Salazarism, a dictatorial regime that lasted between 1933 and 1974 and whose collapse was accompanied by national dissatisfaction in the face of the colonial liberation wars fought in Angola, Guinea Bissau and Mozambique, was structured, based on Lusotropicalism, in the logic of the “3 Fs”: Fascism, Fatima (Our Lady of Fatima) and football, having engaged in mass popular culture (Cardão, 2020).

For these reasons, for Cabral it was undeniable to read colonialism as a crime. Although he was assassinated even before seeing the independence of Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde, the impacts of colonialism on post-independence life without a severe rupture were already glimpsed by the intellectual. Reading the following authors helped us to better understand this issue.

### **Reading Alcinda Honwana: understanding the persistence of colonialism**

Our (reading) meetings with Alcinda Honwana were marked by the understanding that, as stated by António Costa e Silva (2003), the Atlantic Ocean is like a river, a river that circulates common experiences through its course. This is because, when we came into collective contact with the book *The Time of Youth* (Honwana, 2012), the similarities between the Mozambican, Senegalese, South African and Tunisian contexts, and ours in Brazil, jumped out at us immediately. Her work gives its name to a phenomenon very similar to that found in Brazil, marked by a high number of young people who are unable to fully become adults because of the deepening of social precariousness caused by the current neoliberal austerity policies. This phenomenon, present not only in the Global South, but also in the peripheries of the North of the world (Honwana, 2023), the author referred to as “waithood”. As a result of the combination of profoundly unequal strong economic growth, political exclusion, corruption and rising unemployment associated with inefficient public education, the:

Waithood, a portmanteau term of “wait” and “-hood,” is the best way to describe this period of suspension between childhood and adulthood. It represents a prolonged adolescence or an involuntary delay in reaching adulthood, in which young people are unable to find employment, get married, and establish their own families. [...] Waithood suggests the multifaceted nature of the transition, which goes beyond securing a job and extends to other aspects of life, such as access to learning opportunities, household formation, and civic participation. Young people in waithood are increasingly unable to become social adults and full-fledged citizens (Honwana, 2012:4).

In Brazil, this phenomenon became known as *generation neither in* (employment nor in education or training) and, as in the different African contexts in which the Mozambican anthropologist carried out her research, it is marked by being a local reflection of a global phenomenon that associates citizenship with consumption. By introducing the topic into the classroom with a non-moralising perspective of the lives of these young people – contrary to what we saw happening in Brazil, reproducing racial stereotypes related to “laziness” – we were able to begin to understand the structural facet of the phenomenon from the prism of countries with histories of colonisation and exploitation based on racism that are close to ours.

However, if Alcinda Honwana, by bringing four African scenarios that are racially more homogeneous than Brazil, shows us the racialised character of waithood, we could, in class, ask ourselves: who are the disadvantaged young people who are suffering in waithood? In our country, the answer followed precisely the intersectional path that we followed in the discipline: black women were about half of the young people aged 15 to 29 who would like to study or work, but they could not because they were focused on performing the housework. At the same time that the Brazilian scenario was close to the South African one, in which young black people are proportionally

more unemployed than white people (Honwana, 2012:13); it also helped us to stress in a gendered way the data from Honwana, which dialogued mostly with male youth.

The male youth interviewed by Honwana, as the author herself demonstrated, went through a greater lack of responsibility in the world of domestic and family compared to women (2012:89), something very similar to what happens in Brazil. Still, in realities close to ours, the emergence of this generation on the “gap” between youth and adulthood was, in South Africa, Mozambique, Senegal and Tunisia, also the result of the “failures” (more purposeful than intended) of neoliberalism and the impossibility of a welfare state in the Global South imposed because of the austerity policies carried out in the field since the 1980s, generating underemployment and precarious works.

In this way, even though she analytically explored realities beyond those existing in the Lusophone world located in the Global South, Alcinda Honwana (2012) showed us how the different types of racially motivated colonialism and domination, even if produced in distinct historical-geographical contexts, had a common core: the production of the continuous dehumanisation of non-white populations living around the world. By giving a name to the phenomenon that we see, but did not know how to call beyond the hegemonic meritocratic discourse, the author indicated, from the African worlds, creative ways to deal with this situation of precariousness.

By looking at the contexts described by Alcinda Honwana (2012), the result of the precariousness produced by neoliberal fiscal adjustment policies that did not generate the promised jobs, Honwana perceived the existence of what was called “System D” (“*Débrouille*”, “*débrouillardise*” or “*démerde*”). It denotes a set of practices, actions and quick responses to the challenges imposed by everyday life (Dimé, 2005). In this sense, the young Africans interviewed by Honwana pointed out ways of subsistence that are very common to young people from other parts of the Global South: street commerce, intra and

intercontinental migration, call centre service, smuggling, and even life on the streets rummaging through garbage.

Still, the author indicated to us more than individual solutions to this problem, which is collective and structural. When I introduced another text of hers (Honwana, 2023), which marks a leap of almost a decade to the first, we were able to discuss together the collective responses sought by young people in African countries. In contexts of the Global South in which political leaders build close ties with the rich and powerful in the Global North; in addition to the fact that it is common for anti-democratic, incompetent, and corrupt leaders in the South to be tolerated as long as they do not challenge the hegemonic neoliberal agenda of powerful nations in the North (Honwana, 2023:36); young people take to the streets to demand change.

However, this happens not without confronting something very common to the Global North and the Americas dominated by white elites: a truculent police force that kills and represses protesters. To make their voices echo, these young people appropriate rap music and social networks (Charry, 2012), as in the other peripheries of the world. Thus, even in non-Atlantic African contexts, music emerges as a politics of realisation, as Gilroy (1993:95-7) postulates for the Black Atlantic. In other words, music fulfils the function of uniting and producing proposals for the possible future and for less violent and precarious lives, as we see in the Brazilian case, uniting young people in the construction of other possibilities of political confrontation.

Thus, by naming the problem – beyond the attempt at social pathologising seen in Brazil – and identifying ways to circumvent it, Alcinda Honwana (2012; 2023) provided us, in a similar way to what Cabral did, the union between theorisation and practice, resulting in a proposal for praxis.

### **Reading José Carlos dos Anjos and Eufémia Rocha: demystifying Lusotropicalism**

The last authors from Lusophone Africa read by us during the course were José Carlos dos Anjos and Eufémia Rocha

(2022), both anthropologists born in Cape Verde islands. They were introduced to the students through the text *Traces of Antiracism in Cape Verde*, in which, by addressing the relations of Cape Verdeans with Africans born on Continental Africa, the authors shed light on a silent - and thorny - theme in African studies: the persistence of race and racial tensions, even in contexts of a black majority (Pierre, 2019).

By adhering to the notion of anti-blackness in place of “racism” to address these relationships, the authors point out that this feeling presupposes an incomplete humanity in bodies overloaded with traces of Africanity and blackness, even in spaces and situations where white people are not present (Anjos & Rocha, 2022:111). And, for the authors, anti-blackness in Cape Verde would emerge in different relationships, encompassing the internal tensions between *badius* (people from the island of Santiago) and *sampadjodus* (from the island of São Vicente), in which the latter consider themselves whiter - and more civilised - than the former; to the construction of the homogenising category of the *mandjakus*.

It is important to explain the Cape Verdean racial vernacular. *Badiu* is a word from the Cape Verdean Creole, which has as its root the Portuguese word “*vadio*”. This term was used in Cape Verde to describe individuals who were recently released from slavery or who “became free” by escaping the plantations. Deprived of the possibility to develop reintegration adjustments, they had to live under a state of material, social and moral heteronomy (Fernandes, 2002:91).

According to Lima and Robalo, the purpose [of the use of the term *badio*] was to stigmatise a group of freed men loaded with a strongly marked African identity, characterising them as useless, party-goers, aggressive, and vagrants (2019:89). Although *vadio* existed on all the islands of Cape Verde, the word *badio* is used to designate the inhabitants of the island of Santiago, no matter their status or economic insertion (Fernandes, 2002:92). Still, the expression maintained its pejorative connotation from the colonial period, associating the *badius* with the idea that they were blacker, less civilised,

and, therefore, closer phenotypically and culturally to what an African stereotype should be (Furtado, 2013:9). *Mandjaku*, in its turn, is a word used to stigmatise African immigrants from other West African countries, such as Nigeria, Guinea-Bissau, and Senegal. It is a homogenising and pejorative word that comes from Manjaco, the name of one of the biggest Guinea-Bissau ethnic groups, being used in Cape Verde as a way to call all the “black people”, all the Africans who came from the mainland Africa (Anjos & Rocha, 2022).

From the analysis of the uses (and abuses) of these terms, we saw how the grammar of difference (Cooper & Stoler, 1997) based on race persists on Cape Verdean soil, despite the continuous denial by the national elite. Although Cape Verde is a country with a majority of black people in its population (Anjos & Rocha, 2022:, 110), the emergence of anti-blackness amongst black populations was not new to Brazilian students. From the text, students were able to reflect both on personal experiences of racism coming from other black people, and on broader issues, such as Europe’s refusal to receive Arab and African refugees, while quickly welcoming Ukrainian refugees with the discourse that “they are white, blond and have blue eyes like us”.

Still, by thinking about the experience of the persistence of race as a category of domination in a Luso-African context, we were able, together, to outline the understanding that Lusotropicalism only existed in discourse. In Cape Verde, Lusotropicalism was consolidated with the myth of Cape-Verdean “Creole exceptionalism”. Within the narratives of the construction of the Cape Verdean nation, creolisation was elected as the defining mark of Cape Verdeanity. Nevertheless, the creolity, originated by Cape Verdean slave formation, would produce a tension between Africanity and (Lusitanian) Europeaness. In other words,

the organizing matrix of this racial formation [i.e., of Cape-Verdean society] is a racialized Creole continuum, a scale of value with multiple gradations and notations between the figures of “Africa” and “Europe” through

which the social status of subjects was ascertained and different formations of Cape Verdean Creole identity or “creolity” were historically produced that reach postcoloniality (Cidra, 2021:23).

By this way, because of the persistence of anti-blackness, we saw that the violence produced in the “Brown Atlantic” – an ironic designation created by Almeida (2004:109) to characterise the narrative of the Portuguese miscegenation project that would create the Portuguese exceptionalism – was not so different from that produced by other colonial empires, such as France and England. By overthrowing the so-called “racial democracy” in the “Creole paradise”, idea that was built deeply inspired on Brazilian social thought – especially Gilberto Freyre’s works – Anjos and Rocha also help to destroy the proposition of an alleged absence of racial discrimination in Brazil. This is because both contexts are marked by the non-being zone, as pointed out by Fanon (1967), this zone marked by racism and anti-blackness where life and death mean nothing (Anjos & Rocha, 2022:115).

In this way, Anjos and Rocha’s proposal brings Cape Verde closer to the Brazilian realities observed by the students, not because of the absence of racial violence, as proposed so far for both contexts. The approximation happens, in reality, through the sharing between people from both countries of what Lélia Gonzalez (2021) called *cultural neurosis*. In other words, this would be the result of the repression of the black contribution, in the form of anti-blackness, that would emerge through this desire to consume this other black-African. In Cape Verde, for example, although popular, sorcery is seen in a negative light and attributed as something exclusive to immigrants from the African continent, Cape Verdeans from the most different social classes seek out this type of service.

The same works with sexual desire, which portrays immigrants as people with whom you must not have a long relationship, while at the same time creating racial stereotypes that they are sexually “hotter”. This duality, that desires and forbid black(er) bodies at the same time, is a long-term

characteristic of Portuguese colonialism – but also can be found in other colonial systems, as Fanon (1967) pointed out. At the end of the day, by overturning the Lusotropicalist myth of the former colony, which, despite being founded by the transatlantic slave trade in Africans, became a “post-racial” paradise, Anjos and Rocha (2022) offer us the opportunity to review and question the historiography on Portuguese colonialism on both sides of the Atlantic – and elsewhere.

### **Final remarks**

To consolidate the proposal of this chapter, I return to the idea presented by José Carlos dos Anjos (2008), also read in all the three editions of the course. By returning to the collectivist perspective and without hierarchy proposed by Afro-Brazilian religions, as well as the preservation – with modifications, of course – of the ritual practices carried out by Africans who were enslaved, the author draws a common parallel to the studies of Afro-Diasporic communities, which is to think about the contribution that they can provide to the (re)construction of the black-African world – in general.

What I propose, based on my experience in the discipline of race, African Diaspora and International Relations, is to take the opposite path. Instead of starting from the Diaspora to understand the African continent, I invited students to use the analytical-theoretical tools produced by African social scientists, on African contexts, to understand the realities of the black Diaspora in Brazil – and in the world. This proposal was made for three reasons. The first of these had, as its central purpose, to look at the contributions of African thinkers and at some African realities in the present, as opposed to the historical freeze that we usually make when we read the continent only through the understanding of the transatlantic slave trade towards the Americas. As Saidiya Hartman (2012) proposes, it is necessary to look at Africa and how Africans exist beyond the legacies of slavery.

Although, I aimed to produce (and introduce) gazes towards the Global South. I believe that by doing so, we will

find more answers to understanding our problems than if we continue seeking our answers and using analytical tools solely in Global North academia and experiences. Ultimately, the dialogue with African social scientists (contemporary or not) helped us to better understand different African contexts, as well as the place of our country and our present. Africa is not only part of our nation's past, but it is also the place where we need to take a contemporary comparative look to find the best analyses for our present. If the imperialist division of Africa by the European colonial powers at the end of the nineteenth century is the mark of the true birth story of International Relations (Henderson, 2013) and the first modern genocide took place in Namibia (Gewald, 2003); how could we leave the continent out when talking about the centrality of race and African diasporas to the construction of the disciplinary field? Starting from the behaviour change that this question proposes, we were able, through the readings of Amílcar Cabral, Alcinda Honwana, Eufémia Rocha and José Carlos dos Anjos – as well as Achille Mbembe – to understand how the introjection of colonialism is multiple, cultural, symbolic and physical, persisting to this day.

Also with them, through different forms, we have seen how self-determination, a term that dominates racial studies nowadays (Collins, 2000), appeared in different forms and with different proposals. Cultural self-determination, through Cabral's revolutionary thought, was the interpretive key for Mah Freitas (2023) to understand the political role of the production of Brazilian music that follows the aesthetic-political of Afrofuturism. It is the same self-determination, which does not appear with these terms in Honwana's work, led the anthropologist to indicate how youth is a geographical-racial product, since the current model of *being an adult* is the result of the same modernity that produced racial and gender hierarchies. In this way, if cultural practices can be used as a producer of violence, as Anjos and Rocha (2022) point out for the contemporary Cape Verdean case, it is also envisioned as the way to transform the legacy left by Portuguese, English and French colonialism in the Global South. From the use – in a critical way – of the bibliography in the final papers of

the course; as well as in the final monographs, as in the case of Freitas; and even in the options for translation, one of the possible forms of final work, I could see the assimilation of the debate and the effervescence of the gaze against the perspectives that misinformed future internationalists about Lusophone Africa.

The third – and last, but not least – reason why I chose to read these authors concerns my own formative trauma. During my training as an anthropologist at the University of Brasilia, I rarely had the opportunity to read black and/or African authors as a required bibliography. The usual justification is that either there was no production available, or it was not relevant. Even though Amílcar Cabral himself was one of the main influencers of Paulo Freire's liberating pedagogical proposal (Malott, 2022), his importance to the world continued to be silenced in classrooms.

As I progressed in my education, I discovered that this whole narrative was nothing more than a fabrication. Breaking with this profoundly harmful academic practice was necessary, once we need to break with the narcissistic pact of whiteness, “which implies the denial, the avoidance of the problem with a view to maintaining racial privileges” (Bento, 2002:7) which is still in force in universities. Thus, from the literature discussed in this article, we were able to consolidate how the anti-blackness and dehumanisation of African populations continues to be “the oil in the colonial power system that makes discrimination and violence against certain people not only possible, but also invisible and acceptable” (Rutazibwa, 2016:6). Thus, when the hands that excavate the ruins left by colonialism are those that descend from the people who were violated by it, other tools for dealing with its continuities emerge.

To identify with contexts that seem so distant, but whose realities are so close to us, is to enable us to share the tools that will break with the hierarchical structure that currently prevails amongst people who share the nefarious legacy of colonialism. Thus, by bringing these questions and these authors to the classroom in a Brazilian university, we were able to produce a

new look at the emergence and function of IRs in Brazil and in the world, exposing the open wounds left by the ancestors of the discipline and that continue to be poked by its current members. Thus, from the (re)reading of African authors and contexts, it was possible to think together with the students: what can we do differently from now on within our university?

By now, the most important thing that I take away from this experience is the confidence that by bringing debates like this into the classroom, we are building a path with professionals who are aware of the racist and colonial biases that are still directed at the African continent today. Only by dismantling the colonial discourses of the big house will we be able to understand the present and plan less hierarchical diplomatic futures between Brazil and African countries. And the classroom is the best place to start this endeavour.

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## Chapter 11

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