

Racism in Childhood and the Childhood of Racism: Life and tracks of a Black Child ^{1 2 3 4}

O racismo na infância e a infância do racismo: vida e rastros de uma criança negra

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Abstract

This article, based on an archaeological-type methodology of genealogy, aimed at retrieving and mapping fragments of the life of a black child in a judicial document housed at the Simonense Historical Museum in 1861. Further, it intends to understand this document, its speeches and positions, deciphering how the legal machinery worked in its most expressive concept of power-knowledge, and what views and approaches the local power used to manage lives and bodies. The work also sought to understand how, in that nineteenth-century context, “color” and “race” influenced procedural disentangling. The work led us to find that in the middle of the 19th century a new idea of ‘child’ came into being. This child model, idealized at that time by hygienist medicine, would only serve the white, Catholic, wealthy child. It would not support the black child. It was not just an existing type of racism, but a new type of racism that was born along with the very idea of a child. It was the childhood of this type of racism in Brazil. And this racism would have consequences for legal proceedings involving black children. It would give rise to selective justice, with judicial decisions affected by the racial issue.

Keywords: black child, slavery, anthology of lives

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Resumo

Este artigo, com base em uma metodologia arqueogenealógica, teve como objetivo resgatar e cartografar fragmentos de vida de uma criança negra em um documento judicial alocado no Museu Histórico Simonense no ano de 1861 e, sequencialmente, entender esse documento, seus discursos e posições, decifrando como funcionava a maquinaria jurídica em seu mais expressivo conceito de poder-saber e quais olhares e tratativas o poderio local lançava para administrar vidas e corpos. O trabalho procurou entender também como, naquele contexto oitocentista, “cor” e “raça” influenciavam os deslindes processuais. Concluiu-se, com o trabalho, que em meados do século XIX nascia uma nova ideia de criança. Esse modelo de criança, idealizado naquele momento pela medicina higienista, serviria somente à criança branca, católica, de posses. Ele não ampararia a criança negra. Não se tratava somente de um tipo de racismo já existente, mas, sim, de um tipo novo de racismo que nascia junto com a própria ideia de criança. Era a infância desse tipo de racismo no Brasil. E esse racismo teria consequências nos processos judiciais em que figuravam crianças negras. Ele geraria uma justiça seletiva, com decisões judiciais afetadas pela questão racial.

Palavras-chave: criança negra, escravidão, antologia de vidas

Introduction

This article entails from a thesis⁵ that searched for black children in the collection of the *Museu Histórico Simonense*, in the city of São Simão, state of São Paulo. The ground for this research was a search for infamous in processes and inquiries. The research aimed, among other objectives, at uncovering lives covered by indifference, identifying tiny existences, seeing social events that these lives carried and that went unnoticed. We intend to follow almost imperceptible tracks, traces only identifiable through the encounter of these lives with the legal system - therefore, with power.

The infamous people who lived in that second half of the 19th century also breathed, bled, felt pain, and survived. They left their very few tacks in documents belonging to the Public Power because, somehow, they came face to face with it. They rarely sought the Public Power as beneficiaries. Rarely did they seek rights. They were summoned by the power, forced

⁵ Dissertation defended at the Graduate Program of the Universidade Federal de São Carlos named “*Crianças negras e cotidiano jurídico na Ribeirão Preto do final dos Oitocentos*” (Ferreira, 2019).

to bend to its precepts, its purposes. When in its domain, they used to get a record, were indicted and, not rarely, convicted. The infamous, undesirable beings in the eyes of the powerful, both the municipal elite and the federalized agencies, were victims of a game that Foucault called “power-knowledge” in which knowledge and society, science and State figure in one single strand (Foucault, 1997, p.19).

In the context of this childhood, of which few have spoken and from whose mouth - for being infamous and, in some cases, infantile⁶ - almost nothing has been heard. We may accurately admit that, from the Philippine Ordinances of 1603 to the contemporary Legal Codification, disadvantaged child would only gain some rights and some citizenship after the advent of the Child and Adolescent Statute⁷. Secularly identified, classified and stigmatized with the terminology “minor”⁸, this same child that now, in this legal ciphering, is minimally represented by specialized laws, in other times figured in criminal consolidations, juvenile laws, and political charters only as fulfiller of legal duties, and in need of help.

Within the legal statutes, we can say that the Brazilian child has always been ‘labeled’ by their social belonging, in the eyes of legislators. A brief look at the legislations, despite the fact that the law comprises everyone, we clearly notice that in them there is a considerable range of provisions aimed at protecting and especially controlling the poor⁹ and underprivileged¹⁰ child. On the other hand, there are also some provisions for wealthy children, but with somewhat reduced use in legal practices.

In this reasoning, especially since the end of the Second Empire, the stigmatized and poor “minor” has always been considered a public security issue, while the fragile and rich

⁶ According to Rafael Bluteau and Antônio de Moraes Silva (1789 (a), p.716), “infant” would be “the child who does not speak yet ..., an infant boy, an infant girl. Who is at the beginning of their being”.

⁷ Sônia Câmara (2010) says that “the Statute intended to promote the discrimination of poverty, resizing the role of the State in relation to the reorganization of its structures of control and confinement ... at the same time that the idea of ‘full protection’ was being established” (free translation, p.21).

⁸ As Muller (2005) notes, in the colonial period the term ‘minor’ was used only as a synonym for age. In 1830, the Imperial Criminal Code expressly stated that every individual under 14 years of age, without discernment about criminal acts, could not be held criminally responsible, and if they were aware of the crime they would be referred to the famous “Reformatory”. The term ‘minor’ is then established in the legal vocabulary, and the press started to use it as a synonym for poor child.

⁹ This terminology has been used in dictionaries since the 18th century, and its meaning changed little during the 19th century. Bluteau and Silva (1789b, p.210) already defined poor as the one “who is not rich; who lacks the basic for living. The one who has few possessions, unfortunate, a pity” (p. 210, free translation).

¹⁰ For Vieira (1873), underprivileged is the one “who is not valuable to someone; who falls from the grace or privation of a powerful person. Helpless [...]” (p. 959, free translation).

“child” has always been “the object of the family’s special attentions or, at most, the articulating source of a discourse that seeks to mobilize social solidarity” (Pereira, 1994, p. 93, free translation).

Understanding the legal reality where this child was inserted required deeper study of the civil and criminal laws of the period, notably the laws set forth in the statutes of the 19th century. Laws should be studied, because if there were children in lawsuits and inquiries, it would be relevant reviewing legal dealings, the speeches and legal devices that would have placed the poor children in that situation. In this context, the preliminary surveys have shown that until the year 1830 all the criminal laws were disposed in the Philippine Ordinances, and civil laws were ruled by that same law until 1916.

In a first moment, within these legislations, legal provisions dealing with the protection, support and correction of children were found in the criminal area. Thus, making analogy and approximating such legislations to the contemporary ones, we could say that those devices were provided for in the chapters that dealt with crimes against life, crimes against property, and those that provided for the protection of the person and their honor. In the field of civil law, the child-related rights and obligations were found especially in the chapters dealing with Law of Succession, Law of Things, Law of Obligations and Contracts.

This preliminary evaluation of legislations allows us to find and name six types of children: the ‘child heir’, the ‘orphan child’, the ‘victimized child’, the ‘delinquent child’, the ‘naïve child’, and the ‘enslaved child’.

In turn, this child contained in case sheets that were in boxes organized and stored on temporal archive shelves ended up raising many questions. It is worth noting that the research only found enslaved, poor, and underprivileged children in the criminal files and investigations. The elite child was not found. They existed in judicial documents only as a creditor of rights, as an acquirer of inheritances. They were more commonly found in civil cases, but were absent from criminal ones. In other words, it was likely “that the cases did not go beyond the private scope” because “some conducts abstractly subject to sanctions only become punishable when they refer to the poor” (Fausto, 1984, p. 18 and 209, free translation). Indeed, the elite child has almost always been recorded for other reasons.

For this article we picked the history of Ritta.

Ritta and Anna

On the fourth day of January 1861, at Feliciano de Castilho e Andrade's home, in the parish of São Simão, before the municipal clerk, was José Martiniano Diniz Junqueira, a diseased person. As an act of last will, the dying man decided to exercise his rights, legalizing his ultimate intentions in the form of a Solemn Testament. In it, José Martiniano would determine which of his relatives would end up inheriting part of his estate, but more than that, the fate of two girls would be then outlined: Anna and Ritta.

Although being a meticulous instrument, the document did not allow vivifying life traces of these two girls. Due to its formality, it highlighted the legal characteristics and just mentioned names. It was in the Inventory that these lives gained some shape. In that kind of document, where objects used to be registered and transferred to the heirs, lives were also listed and labeled, destining them to the end that the law would determine, and that the deceased would desire. And the inventory of José Martiniano¹¹ would be made few days after his death.

And it was exactly on the sixteenth day of March that we got to know the people who surrounded the life of José Martiniano and, therefore, Anna and Ritta. On that date, Gabriel de Souza Diniz Junqueira, brother of the deceased, received at his Moinho farm the Municipal and Orphans Judge, José Alves dos Santos Júnior. The judge solemnly authorized Gabriel to be the executor and trustee of the will in that legal document, so that from then on all acts performed would be authorized by Gabriel. In addition, the judge also requested that the Will made the day before José's death be attached, and ordered the title of heirs to be presented.

Gabriel, in this initial oath, introduced himself as José Martiniano's brother, and reported the existence of a partnership between them since 1854, and that the assets (including "slaves") and debts acquired from that partnership should be shared and settled.

As compliance with the formalities, Gabriel attached the title of heirs required by the judge of the term, according to which, besides his mother 'Anna Claudina Diniz Junqueira', inherited as legatees:

¹¹ The inventory of José Martiniano is a long document (200 pages), and was found in the Museu Histórico Simonense 'Alaor da Matta' in the city of São Simão, in Box 02 - Theme 19. All the sequence encompassing José Martiniano will be based on that inventory.

1 st	José Bento Diniz Junqueira	14 years
2 nd	Gabriel Bento Diniz Junqueira	12 years
3 rd	Manoel Bento Diniz Junqueira	10 years
4 th	Firmino Bento Diniz Junqueira	8 years
5 th	Luiz Bento Diniz Junqueira	6 years
6 th	Joaquim Bento Diniz Junqueira	4 years
7 th	Anna Bento Diniz Junqueira	8 months ¹²

At this point we come across Anna, one of the main characters in our research. Her grandmother, Anna Claudina, was 74 years old at the time, and the girl, named after her grandmother, was only 8 months old. Both women, one in the twilight of life and the other at dawn, had in common, besides kinship, their status and fortune. The matriarch, almost a queen, “managing farms the size of kingdoms” (Freyre, 1936, p. 120); and the granddaughter, a privileged and wealthy successor, incorporated in the sheets of that inventory the figure of the ‘heiress girl’¹³.

And the matriarch’s kingdom was enormous. Solar Lageado, the family’s birthplace, occupied more than seventy thousand acres (Zamboni, 2015, p. 32). This immense equity started being accumulated in the first decades of the nineteenth century¹⁴, and in 1835 Gabriel de Souza Diniz Junqueira (the executor), at the age of 18, started managing all that endless agricultural lands (Monti, 2014, p. 06, free translation). Gabriel, at the time of this registration, had 21 “slaves” and was a large-scale cattle rancher (Martins, 1990). The parish of São Simão, where the Junqueira’s family settled and saw their empire expand, was launched in 1842, and would be linked to the term of Casa Branca until 1865.

¹² On the heirs’ full name, please refer to Mattos (2004).

¹³ Several cases were found with boys and girls appearing as heirs of enslaved people. Among these we could highlight Case # 10, found in Box 24 A of the *Arquivo Público e Histórico de Ribeirão Preto*. In it, the orphans Antônio and Miguel inherit from Manoel Joaquim, 43 years old.

¹⁴ Ana Claudina married Luiz Antônio Diniz Junqueira in around 1811. Luiz, as described by Carlo Monti, was a “well-to-do” man (2014, p.6) and wealthy before marriage. The couple had seven children, including Gabriel and José Martiniano.

The land-related wealth of the Junqueira's empire was complemented by the money that the fruitful lands generated for the owners. In José Martiniano's inventory we can see the abundant raw material that came from his farm to supply the nearest regional centers.

On March 18 of that same year, the assets started being listed in the legal document. In the listing¹⁵ of all inheritance and debts, it was recorded that, in addition to his personal belongings, José Martiniano owned, in partnership, 375 heads of cattle, 410 pigs, 52 acres of land with corn plantation, and 181 cars of the same crop already harvested, besides six properties or part of properties¹⁶, among other smaller assets to be inventoried. So many heads of cattle, so many pigs, so much culture would require skilled labor for the work. In this context, it is clear that little Anna's father and uncle were not alone in this task. As large landowners, Gabriel and José Martiniano put all their energy into managing and expanding the family empire, but planting the land and feeding the cattle were outsourced activities. To get the "salt of the earth", they relied on subjugated bodies, bodies with only one name, bodies with no surname. Clóvis Moura (2013) teaches that "the African slave and their descendants did not have a family surname. Either they used the surname of the ethnic group from which they came ... or they used the surname of their master with his consent" (p. 378).

They were:

1. **Domingos**, Creole, shoemaker, widower, 65 years old, 500 thousand *réis*;
2. **Francisco Balbino**, Creole, 48 years old, married to a female slave of the executor, one *conto* and six hundred thousand *réis*;
3. **Pantaleão**, Creole, 46 years old, married, one *conto* nine hundred thousand *réis*;
4. **Custódia**, Creole, 31 years old, married to Pantaleão, one *conto* nine hundred thousand *réis*;
5. **Antônio da Piedade**, Creole, married, 38 years old, two *contos* two hundred thousand *réis*;
6. **Claudina**, Creole, 32 years old, married to Antônio da Piedade, two *contos de réis*;

¹⁵ Listing would be the act of registering the goods by formally recording them in the inventory. The appraisers of the act were: Manoel Fernandes do Nascimento and Manoel Carlos de Siqueira.

¹⁶ They were: Part of the Moinho Farm, Property in the parish of São Simão, part of the Sertãozinho farm, part of the headquarters of the Lageado farm, dwelling in Retiro de Tapira, an extension house in São Simão and part of a farm, in addition to two mills and two storehouses according to the inventory's pages 21 and following.

7. **Lourenço**, Creole, 28 years old, single, one *conto* eight hundred thousand *réis*;
8. **Domingos**, Creole, 27 years old, single, with liver inflammation, one *conto* six hundred thousand *réis*;
9. **Francisco da Nação**, known as Veadó, 26 years old, single, one *conto* eight hundred thousand *réis*;
10. **Sebastião**, African, married, 35 years old, one *conto* six hundred thousand *réis*;
11. **Maria**, African, 33 years old, married to Sebastião, one *conto* six hundred thousand *réis*;
12. **Ritta**, Creole, 2 years old, six hundred thousand *réis*;
13. **Mariana**, Brown, 10 months old, three hundred thousand *réis*;
14. **Domingos Pardo**, 10 years old, one *conto* five hundred thousand *réis*;
15. **Benedicto**, African, 30 years old, single, 2 *contos de réis*;
16. **Mattheos**, Creole, 35 years old, married, sold (*sic*), valued at one *conto* six hundred thousand *réis* (Note: he died during the inventory);
17. **Joanna**, Creole, 30 years old, married to Mattheos, one *conto* six hundred thousand *réis*;
18. **Luiza**, Brown, 10 years old, one *conto* four hundred thousand *réis*;
19. **José Barbosa**, Creole, 16 years old, single, two *contos de réis*;
20. **David**, Creole, 26 years old, single, one *conto* seven hundred fifty thousand *réis*;
21. **João**, Creole, 30 years old, single, one *conto* eight hundred thousand *réis*;
22. **Maria Joaquina**, Creole, 23 years old, single, sick, partnership with Anna Claudina Diniz Junqueira and the other half of the partnership, one *conto de réis*;
23. **Joaquim**, Creole, 30 years old, single, is in dispute with the seller Francisco Ferreira de Aguiar, one *conto* eight hundred thousand *réis*.¹⁷

¹⁷ This list of slaves is on pages 19 and 20 (back) of the inventory. The values assigned to each slave matched the average that each one reached in a respective table that assigned them prices. These values accompanied the slave and, when they pleaded for freedom in court, this was the amount they had to pay for their freedom. It is worth

Apparently, for the executors, it is a common per capita list, based on the law¹⁸, nothing exceptional. Gathering enslaved bodies for registering and counting was a commonplace act, and there would be no dissatisfaction in it. For heirs, it was a gathering of 23 bodies fit to produce wealth, a trivial act of entire families who had grown used to “the idea of sacrificing human life to the god of increased yielding” (Williams, 2002, p. 32, free translation).

But, if we take a closer look, if we shed light on this classification, we will see names of people, and people - their colors, their ages, and, in some cases, their origins -, and we may notice that in the center of the list there is a name that has already been said a moment ago: Ritta, the second protagonist of this work.

Although here in this text only a few lines separate Ritta from Anna, if we go back in time, precisely 159 years, we will see the immense social abyss that existed between these two girls. Anna, an eight-month-old girl, loses her uncle, José Martiniano, a former justice of the peace, the first Justice of the Peace in the parish of São Simão in 1857 (Almanak, 1857, p. 324). His father, executor and trustee, former deputy chief of policy and large local producer, despite the disappointment caused by the death of his brother and friend, sees his offspring (including little Anna) inherit part of the decedent’s capital. Ritta, 2 years old, is part of that fortune, and sees herself, in the act of commendation, surrounded by 22 bodies, all gathered in a brief and disturbing legal ritual for counting and assigning values to their lives. Ritta would be worth ‘six hundred thousand *réis*’.

However, what most distressed those 23 individuals at that moment certainly was the uncertainty of their destinies, because “they perceived the threat of being separated from family members and fellow captives, and there was also the anxiety of adapting to the game of a new master, with a whole unknown procession of whims and wills” (Chalhoub, 2011, p. 137, free translation). And this procession of whims and wills would be measured by the production of their bodies. Worn out and aged bodies, lower value; robust and healthy bodies,

pointing out that from number 14 to the end of the list, the slaves appear as partnership property, i.e., they belonged to both the executor and the decedent. There is no numbering in the original, and emphasis is ours.

¹⁸ This provision originated in the First Book of the Philippine Ordinances (Title 88, paragraph 4), which determined the presentation in the inventory of all property of the couple with the most scrupulous accuracy; and that “furniture and livestock must be described with particular signs that distinguish them from others, and the location, size and boundaries of properties should be disclosed” (Carvalho, 1879, p.7, free translation).

higher profit, higher productivity, higher income. That's what they were. Just bodies worked to yield the maximum, while receiving a minimum. And in this circle of valuing lives, Domingos, the first to be listed, would emerge negatively. In his 65 years of age, his value was quoted downwards, below that of Ritta, who was only 2 years old. Domingos is dismissed, Ritta is the becoming, the income that could become. Domingos will produce little and, for this reason, would top the list. He would be the first to be traded, if necessary. Ritta would be watched, she would try to grow, she was an investment. According to Marcus Vinícius da Fonseca (2011), due to the high levels of infant mortality, until the age of 4 the survival of the enslaved child was “much more a bet than a reality. When the child overcome this stage, they were at the mercy of the market that assigned a value to their skills as a worker” (p. 243, free translation).

Men with prices determined by their physical condition, and destined to serve their master. Enslaved blacks were treated this way because the law reduced them to mere “working livestock” (Bluteal & Silva, 1789b, p. 389, free translation). Thus, “from the tamable body of the slave, tamed by punishment and overwork derived the disposable body, rendered useless by the same reasons and by diseases” (Lobo, 2008, p.143, free translation).

But if Anna's family was highlighted in the inventory process unequivocally, making clear the individualization and the social role of each entity, the same cannot be said of Ritta's relatives. What can be stated with relative precision is that, of the names offered by the evaluators, five couples were emphasized and, by the way the list was drawn up, Ritta could have father, mother, and siblings in the same squad. Sebastião and Maria are her probable parents, and Mariana and Domingos Pardo, her possible siblings. Africans, Sebastião and Maria could have landed in Brazilian lands shortly before the prohibition of the slave trade in the year 1831, or illegally transported to Brazil after that law, in their tender years¹⁹. Domingos Pardo, perhaps the oldest son of the couple, at the time of the listing in the records, was 10 years old, and Mariana was only 10 months old. In this scenario, we can assume that Maria still

¹⁹ This law was promulgated on November 7, 1831. It prohibited new landings of Africans into the country for slavery, and declared free all enslaved persons who entered the country after its enactment. Furthermore, it imposed on “slave importers the corporal punishment of article 179 of the Criminal Code (referring to reducing a free person to slavery), and a fine of 300\$ per head of slave imported, in addition to the payment of re-exportation expenses” (Moraes, 1916, p.32). See also Luiz Gama (1880). As Sebastião and Maria were highlighted as Africans in the procedural listing, the possibility that both came to Brazil at the ages of 5 and 3, respectively, cannot be ruled out.

breastfed her daughter Mariana, and perhaps also Anna, as it was common for female slaves to do so.

It is also interesting to note that, from that classification carried out in the inventory, the values assigned to the enslaved women, on repeated occasions, ended up being equivalent to those of the men. This particularity usually occurred due to the fact that, although male labor had a higher value than female, it considered “the fact that female slaves had an additional component in their pricing: the ability to generate new captives” (Garavazo, 2006, p. 179, free translation).

Domingos and Ritta had no other faith. Born of a slave mother, they were already marked by the heavy Roman stigma of “*partus sequitur ventrem*” (The birth follows the womb) and certainly, in a short period of time, Ritta would go from being her masters’ amusement and pleasure - the true toy of her “*sinbozinhos*” (little masters) -, to henceforth “performing functions specific to her age” or being trained for functions that she would end up performing all her life (Mott, 1989, p. 88, free translation).

And here a fundamental difference between Anna and Ritta operates and becomes evident. While the white girl, upon reaching an appropriate age, would probably be led to studies²⁰, Ritta would be directed to work (Priore, 2016, p.101, free translation). And to Ritta, as Fonseca (2002) reminds us, an education would also be applied, which, however, would aim at understanding the work to be performed, the pairs that would practice it, and the environment where it would be exercised, that is, “the way in which this worker was trained was centered on coexistence.... In a hierarchical world, education itself had a pedagogical sense that sought to transmit ... the contents necessary to their condition as slaves” (2002, p.140). Ritta, thus, figured in the inventory process of José Martiniano Diniz Junqueira, along with the others listed in the inventory, as mere “merchandise”, because, for the legal system of her time, objectified that she was, she was equal to a movable good, a semi-movable good, a livestock asset²¹ suitable to be sold or transferred, but unsuitable for learning the first letters (Article 69, § 3 of Decree No. 1331-A of 17 February 1854 prohibited the registration and attendance to schools by slaves).

²⁰ Decree 1331-A in its article 64 already provided for fines for parents, guardians, curators or protectors who did not offer the first grade to those under their care.

²¹ “It is said of that which moves by itself, such as cattle, slaves, etc..., which are livestock assets” (Vieira, 1874, p. 468).

For the law and society of the mid 1800s, the uniqueness of two girls and two worlds was clearly seen: the world of the “heiress” girl - Anna -, and that of the “enslaved” girl - Ritta - with all the specificities and peculiarities inherent to each one’s way of living. Anna, niece of the executor and daughter of the trustee, would figure in the process as an heiress, and would go through its pages as a privileged girl. For the society of her time, she represented the white, Catholic girl, with family, status, and wealth. Ritta, also presented in some lines of that expository text, in contrast to Anna, was a black and captive girl.

In fact, two differences of concrete (and also legal) situation eminently separated Anna from Ritta: there were, in those pages, an “heiress” and an “enslaved” girl. On this specific point, jurist Perdigão Malheiro (1866), when examining the reality of the captive in the second half of the 19th century, and stating that the enslaved people were “equated to things by a fiction of the law” (p. 44), was mistaken. The law was not fictitious. It was real. It imposed a condition of inferiority on the black captive. It stigmatized, racialized and immobilized them. The law only allowed Ritta to appear in the process as a “thing”. The legal legislation pierced the enslaved body, and tore the life out of it. Ritta was a mere body that, belonging to an “inferior humanity” could only be used to perform inferior work.

Vito Giannotti (2004) informs that

there was a consensus in the western Catholic world that black people had no soul. And there were those who thought that yes, black people had souls. There were those who thought they did not. Black people were like animals, horses, monkeys, chickens, something like that. No soul, in a nutshell. They were not people (p.74, free translation).

And Gianotti (2004) adds that “until 1870, the first year of the Vatican Council, in the Western world, whether Catholic or Protestant, there was no consensus as to whether Africans could be considered human beings” (p.74).

Thus, the State, supported by the discourses of the Church,²² institutionalized the slavery system, endorsing a ‘juridical’, ‘political’ and ‘economic’ alliance for its permanence.

²² "Justified by religion and sanctioned by the church and the state - God's representatives on earth, slavery was not questioned. The church was limited to recommending patience to slaves and benevolence to masters" (Costa, 1982, p.17, free translation).

On page 59 of the Inventory Process, José Martiniano Diniz Junqueira would record and defined the fate of Ritta's life with the following words: "I further declare that I leave to my goddaughter, daughter of the said brother of mine, the *crioulinha* (black girl) named Ritta".

Ritta could only be followed until the end of the Inventory. If she left other footprints, these were erased by time.

Lives and Traces

Notwithstanding the legal reality imposed on the child portrayed, the encounter with Justice allowed the research to bring light and visibility to her life. We named it. An effort to make anthologies of lives that slavery crushed.

In these possible lines, Ritta unveiled the entire justice system of an era, and attested to the immeasurable discontent of the captive element with slavery. Ritta made this perception possible.

While for the Anna, a wealth Catholic white girl a new category of life was being built, with attention, education, and hygienic care (Costa, 1979), due to the legal determinations of the inventory, Ritta's life would be contained within this other life. In clearer terms, while Anna Junqueira became a "child", Ritta became the "offspring" to be inherited by Anna, due to the legal ruses. Two distinct lines of children emerge here: the white and the black. Two childhoods that would never meet: the black childhood and the white childhood.

The inventory procedure would leave no doubt whatsoever as to the abysmal difference between Anna and Ritta's lives. Based on Costa (1979), we can see the emergence of a new idea of child²³ and also of a racism that was singularized²⁴. Now, it is evident that

²³ "In the name of the children, hygiene rose up against the prevailing insalubrity in houses... The house asepsis of the house was a condition of the newly born woman and the newly discovered child" (Costa, 1979, pp. 120-121, free translation).

²⁴ Regarding the white child's awareness of the concept of class and race, Jurandir Freire Costa (1979) points out that

Ritta and her peers were, in that slavocracy order, surrounded by a traditional and theological racism (Carneiro, 1995). But it was more than that. When we investigate Ritta closely, what we see is not only a 2-year-old girl surrounded by racism, but we see that, with her, racism takes on traits of its own. And here we are not talking only about racism in childhood, but about the very childhood of racism in Brazil. It is born together with the new idealization of the child, and further disjuncts those two lives even more.

Thinking in these terms, we could say that these two children, who belong to this universal “child” just for their size, weight, age, etc. ..., will have no common denominator at social level. Their stories describe two paths, which will never meet. The white girl, from this stage on, will be cared for, spoiled. She will be treated as a child in the processes and in life. The black girl, on the other hand, will still be the “*cria*”²⁵, the “little slave”, the “*criolinha*”. And, with the passing of time, with the Free Womb statute, she will be called “naïve”. And, at the end of the 19th century, she will be sometimes called “minor”.

And so, as time goes by, the black child - from birth to puberty -, will always be excluded from this idea of “being a child”. Ritta will be nothing but a merchandise transferred to others. This is where racial thinking is structured in the formation of capitalism, and in the idea of the child. Anna, at eight months of age, on receiving a gift from her godfather, receives Ritta as a gift and becomes her legal owner. About this custom, Madame Durocher (1871) - midwife of the Imperial House in the distant year 1871 - said: “Handsome men,... bought little black girls or brats to be toys for their children, who, already by the genius of imitation, typical of children, exercised in a small way, the despotism and tyranny that their parents gave them as an example” (p. 07, free translation).

In school, more than at home, children were slowly programmed to react with extreme sensitiveness to every failure or, conversely, to every physical and spiritual virtue. This hypertrophy of individual consciousness with regard to their body and affections was part of the plan for building the consciousness on class and race necessary for the national state to advance. ... The awareness about class predicates began in childhood, through the awareness of the body. At the same time, the consciousness of race or racism was created. The strong body, sexually and morally ruled, was medically identified with the white body. For that, the figure of the slave was commonly used as an example of physical and moral corruption (pp. 208-209, free translation).

²⁵ According to mid-nineteenth century dictionaries: “*Cria*: animal that still suckles ... the cow with the - The slave with her *crias*” (Constancio, 1836, p. 330, free translation).

In this procedural act, law itself registers, gives birth, and gives legal life to this facet of racism. Anna, even if she wished, would never see in Ritta an idea of a child.

All that remains, to conclude, is the denunciation of those who witnessed everything:

Yes! Millions of free men born, like beasts or like angels, on the shining sands of Africa, stolen, enslaved, lashed, mutilated, dragged, in this classic country of sacred freedom, murdered with impunity, without rights and without family, without a country without religion, sold like beasts, plundered in their work, turned into machines, condemned to struggle every hour and every day, every moment, for the benefit of cynical speculators, of impudent thieves, of nameless robbers; they suffered and still suffer in face of an opulent society, of the wisest of monarchs, in the divine light of the holy catholic, apostolic, Roman religion, in face of the most generous and selfless of peoples; who received a carbine wrapped in a letter of freedom, with the obligation to kill themselves with hunger, thirst and bullets, in the Paraguayan marshes; and who, in the hospital beds, died, turning their eyes to the Brazilian territory; these victims, who with their blood, with their work, with their sweat, with their own misery, constituted the greatness of this nation, have never found someone, directing a spontaneous, disinterested, supreme movement, to break the shackles of captivity! (Gama, 1880, p. 05, free translation).

Ritta, when we take her name and her history from the forgotten and dusty archives located in the *Museu Histórico Simonense* in the year 1861, we do not want only to denounce the childhood of racism, but to affirm that Ritta was a life, a kind of synthesis: neither visible nor hidden (Abramowicz et al, 201) of the lives of enslaved children of the 19th century. When we bring her to the luminosity of the present, we do not leave such life without a trace, her name Ritta is the affirmative history of black people.

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