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Joaquim Nabuco's "Black Mandate"

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Abstract: Whereas Joaquim Nabuco has been heralded as the "slave's advocate" (Marco Aurélio Nogueira, *As Desventuras do Liberalismo*, 1984), I demonstrate that he is deeply preoccupied with the culturally and genetically "debilitating" effects of the African introduction in Brazil. Moreover, I show that he situates abolition as a means for curbing slaves' transgressive impact on the Brazilian nation. At the same time that I point to the reactionary implications of Nabuco's discourse, I situate his intervention in the context of a trend in Brazilian letters whereby seigniorial figures pose as the articulators of black experience. I do so through a discussion of Freyre's celebratory introduction to *O Abolicionismo* (1883). Privileging Nabuco's seigniorial upbringing as the basis for his embodiment of African influences, Freyre casts him as the origin for a genealogy of authentic interpreters not only of black experience but of the entirety of Brazilian culture.

Key Words: Brazilian slavery, Slavery, Brazilian abolition, Abolition, Brazilian race relations, Race relations, Joaquim Nabuco, Gilberto Freyre.

Unlike abolitionist discourse in the United States, which emphasizes the slave's suffering and the immorality of forced labor, Joaquim Nabuco's appeal for the termination of Brazilian slavery does not center on the slave's release from captivity but, rather, the master's liberation from the compromising effects of contact with slaves. Nabuco's preoccupation with the debilitation of Brazil's white community reflects late nineteenth-century anxiety about miscegenation and the corrupting impact of slavery on white character. It also responds both to Brazil's stigmatization as the last slave-holding country in the Western hemisphere and to the assimilation of European perceptions of the nation as a "model of lack and backwardness" by virtue of its ethnic and racial composition" (Schwarcz 36).

Scholars have declined to address the resonance of Eugenics with Brazilian abolitionists' condemnation of slavery or the implications of their identification with the master class beyond attributing it to the fact that the majority of them owned slaves. This selective reading is particularly marked in the case of Nabuco. In addition to the most frequently-cited studies of his work—a biography by Nabuco's daughter, Carolina Nabuco, *A Vida de Joaquim Nabuco* (1928) and Graça Aranha's *Joaquim Nabuco e Machado de Assis* (1942), an annotated exposition of the correspondence between Nabuco and Brazil's preeminent nineteenth-century novelist and short story writer—even Marxist analyses of Brazilian abolitionism cast him in an heroic light. In *As Desventuras do Liberalismo* (1984), Marco Aurélio Nogueira describes Nabuco as the Brazilian "slave's advocate" (67). Likewise, Alfredo Bosi refers to Nabuco's *O Abolicionismo* (1883) as a "dense and beautiful militant treatise" on behalf of slaves (234) and Celia Azevedo insists that, for Nabuco, "the destiny of slaves was also the destiny of the Brazilian people" (108). In Lilia Schwarcz's intellectual history of the evolution of race discourse between 1870 and 1930, she claims that, whereas "in turn of the century Brazil, scientific racism was the normative paradigm," Nabuco's discourse was an exception to that rule (254).

The present article proposes a close reading of *O Abolicionismo* as a means for investigating the exclusionary implications of Nabuco's thought. At the same time, my study exposes a broader practice in Brazilian letters that is itself characterized by the intersection between Eugenics and discursive appropriation. Cemented by the work of Gilberto Freyre, this practice is the literary counterpart to "whitening" since it contains black voice through the production of

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a white writing authority that purports to speak on behalf of socio-historical blacks. In the first section of this article, I discuss Nabuco's analysis of slavery as a system that has afforded blacks inordinate mobility and had a degenerative impact on Brazil's white community. In the second section, I consider his entreaty for abolition as a means for more effectively delimiting blacks' influence. Finally, I turn to Freyre's preface to *O Abolicionismo* to demonstrate the resonance of Nabuco's appeal to end slavery with the accommodation of scientific racism in Freyre's assimilationist narrative of master/slave relations.

Slavery and the Debilitation of Seigniorial Control

In a chapter of *O Abolicionismo* entitled "Influências Sociais e Políticas da Escravidão," Nabuco laments the facility with which slaves are enabled to gain free status. While his condemnation of the liberal provision of manumission contracts seems discordant with his appeal for abolition, it reflects the incorporation of a principal concern of his generation: that, by contrast with the United States, Brazil has been socially and genetically compromised as the result of its "democratic" approach to racial and class divisions. At the same time, Nabuco identifies the slave's liberation as diminishing the integrity both of the slave holder and of the Brazilian citizen, equating these figures and situating the recuperation of their violated privileges as his paramount concern:

Não há assim, entre nós, castas sociais perpétuas, não há mesmo divisão fixa de classes. O escravo, que, como tal, praticamente, *não existe* para a sociedade, porque o senhor pode não o ter matriculado e, se o matriculou, pode substituí-lo, e a matrícula nada significa, desde que não há inspecção do Estado nas fazendas, nem os senhores são obrigados a dar contas dos seus escravos às autoridades. Esse ente, assim equiparado, quanto à protecção social, a qualquer outra coisa de domínio particular é, no dia seguinte à sua alforria, um cidadão como outro qualquer, com todos os direitos políticos, e o mesmo grau de elegibilidade. Pode mesmo, ainda na penumbra do cativo, comprar escravos, talvez, quem sabe?—algum filho do seu ex-senhor. Isso prova a confusão de classes e indivíduos, e a extensão ilimitada dos cruzamentos sociais entre escravos e livres, que fazem da maioria dos cidadãos brasileiros, se se pode assim dizer, mestiços políticos, nos quais se combatem duas naturezas opostas: a do senhor de nascimento e a do escravo domesticado (Nabuco's italics, 158).

On the one hand, Nabuco situates both the ex-slave and the ex-master as subjects in whom racial and class identities have become unstable. The ex-slave's condition "in the half light of captivity" suggests not only that he inhabits the murky area between disparate class ranks but also, with the "dusky" connotation of "half light," that he is of mixed-race. In addition, because of the resonance of "half-light" with that which is shaded or hidden, he situates the ex-slave's release as a criminal or transgressive act. For his part, the ex-master's son is also a composite of racial and class identities: the offspring of master and slave, both his relation to the means of production and his race are ambiguous. But whereas the ex-slave's "half-light" denotes his illegitimate ascension to the rank of master, the ex-master's son's hybridity signifies a transgression of a different sort: the introduction of black genes which allows for the reduction of his seigniorial half to the status of chattel.

By extension, when Nabuco claims that the subjugation of the ex-master's son is directly proportionate to the slave's acquisition of "eligibility," "political rights" and "social protection," he aligns the would-be heir's enslavement with the disenfranchisement of what he perceives as the authentic—white, seigniorial—Brazilian subject, now demoted to the condition of "political *mestiço*." Nabuco suggests that the slave's free circulation in society has had the effect not only of violating seigniorial authority but also of robbing the citizen of his "eligibility and rights." In the same way that ill-defined boundaries proscribing the slave's social mobility result in the slave's "non-existence" in society, the citizen, "if one can call him that," cannot even accurately be called by that name.

With his reference to "master by birth" and his description of the sacrilegious "right" of the ex-slave to purchase his ex-master's offspring, Nabuco identifies with the seigniorial half of the ex-slave's new charge. With "domesticated slave," he implies that, unlike the master/citizen, this

figure was not, by birth, entitled to seigniorial privilege. Moreover, by equating the inversion of master/slave relations with the conflictive interplay of "two opposite natures" within the national subject, he situates the breakdown of power differentials as the principal obstacle to national sovereignty.

The extent of Nabuco's investment in regaining the freedoms legitimately accorded the citizen-proprietor is demonstrated by his formula for the nation's future. In the chapter entitled "Receios e Consequências. Conclusão," Nabuco distinguishes the discordant collision of "master by birth" and "domesticated slave" within the national subject from a more felicitous mode of interracial contact. He offers a parable of two boys born on September 27, 1871, one "o senhor do outro." With this date, Nabuco refers to the passage of the Rio Branco or "Ventre Livre" law, conferring free status to all children born thereafter (Conrad 26). While he insists that the two figures will undoubtedly "confuse themselves," his description of the manner in which they should evolve reflects his intention to both racially and socio-economically disentangle them. In effect, he proposes a strategy for liberating the nation's "legitimate" heirs from the slaves whose social mobility has encroached upon their freedoms:

Quem negará que essas duas crianças....se encaminham para um ponto dado em que devem forçosamente confundir-se? Pois bem, a abolição o que pretende é que essas duas correntes não se movam uma para outra mecanicamente, por causa do declive que encontram; mas espontaneamente, em virtude de uma afinidade nacional consciente. Queremos que se ilumine e se esclareça toda aquela parte do espírito do senhor, que está na sombra: o sentimento de que esse, que ele chama *escravo*, é um ente tão livre como ele pelo direito do nosso século (Nabuco's italics, 192-3).

Whereas terms such as "confusion," "spontaneity" and "affinity" seem to suggest free movement and the collapse of power differentials, by situating those terms in the contexts in which they are employed in the 1880s, it becomes evident that they connote precisely the opposite. In the first place, Nabuco's reference to the "declivity" upon which the two figures are situated reflects Social Darwinist claims about the degenerative effects of racial "interbreeding." Moreover, his admission that the two boys will "confuse themselves" resonates with the Eugenicist perception of racial hybridization as a "tumultuous" or "disordered" condition. Nabuco views the too close approximation of the races as highly undesirable. Indeed, when he contends that their contact should be "spontaneous," he evokes a key term employed by Spencerean evolutionists to describe the survival of the fittest. Since, in Brazil, Spencerean evolutionism gave rise to "whitening," the "spontaneous" process of increased proximity Nabuco entreates denotes the elimination of black "genes" through European immigration and as the gradual but "inevitable" result of miscegenation.

At the same time that "confusion" and "spontaneity" obfuscate Nabuco's appeal for genetic purification, his description of the "illumination and clarification" of the master's "sentiment" that the slave "is an entity as free as he is" obscures his intent to more rigidly demarcate power differentials. Whereas "illumination" and "clarification" seem to suggest that that sentiment should be accentuated, by casting it as "shadowed" he identifies it as an effect of the master's debilitating social and genetic contact with slaves. Thus, rather than enhance the master's perception of kinship with the slave, Nabuco implies that the "illumination and clarification" of the master's "spirit" will enable him to recognize that the ex-slave is by no means his equal and to identify with and defend the welfare of his own racial and socio-economic group.

Nabuco's description of the "conscious national affinity" which should guide the post-abolition interaction between blacks and whites is equally deceptive. Though "affinity" appears to connote proximity and resemblance, in light of Nabuco's commitment to genetic purification and the augmentation of power differentials, it becomes clear that it describes a mode of social interaction on the basis of which the races will become isolated from one another. Moreover, by characterizing the effort to separate blacks from whites as a "national" enterprise, Nabuco universalizes the aims of abolition. In other words, he dissociates the effort to delimit blacks' mobility from the interests of the white elite and suggests that that effort represents the welfare

of all—blacks included.

Abolition and the Restoration of Patriarchy

In addressing Nabuco's call for abolition, I concentrate on the ways in which he proposes to induce blacks' identification with the state and, therein, their accommodation to a subservient rank. I then turn to the question of Nabuco's monarchism, considering the resonance of his dedication to the Emperor Pedro Segundo with his effort to recuperate white patriarchy. A striking dimension of the sections of *O Abolicionismo* in which Nabuco articulates the goals of abolition is his emphasis upon the slave's passivity. This emphasis reflects the effort to assuage slaveholders' fears of uprisings following abolition, as well as his perception—or wish—that abolition will provide an effortless transition to a system that more effectively delimits black agency. At the same time, it is important to point out that Nabuco's discussion of the role of people of African descent in abolition is far from coherent. Whereas in *O Abolicionismo*, he stresses that abolitionists do not invite the slaves to join in the struggle for abolition (71) and claims that such an invitation would be tantamount to inciting them to riot (72), his memoir, *Minha Formação* (1900), reflects the fact that many of Brazil's prominent abolitionists were of African descent, including André Rebouças and José do Patrocínio. Nabuco's admiration for Rebouças and his disdain for Patrocínio is at least partly explained by Rebouças' loyalty to Pedro Segundo by contrast with Patrocínio, whose efforts weighed significantly in the military coup which led to the republic (Salles 21).

In the chapter, "Caráter do Movimento Abolicionista," Nabuco claims that slaves' subordination must not be taken for granted but should be actively sustained by convincing them that the state represents their welfare. He situates abolition as the means for accomplishing this goal. Indeed, rather than cause slaves to rise up against their masters, Nabuco argues that such "unnatural" transgression would not result from abolition but, on the contrary, from the state's failure to symbolically intervene on their behalf:

Isso, por certo, não é natural, e se tal porventura acontecesse, a explicação verdadeira seria: não que esses fatos foram o resultado da disseminação das ideias abolicionistas pelo país; mas sim que, fechados nos latifúndios, os escravos nem tinham consciência de que a sua sorte estava preocupando a Nação toda, de que o seu cativeiro tocara por fim o coração do povo, e havia para eles uma esperança, ainda que remota, de liberdade. Quanto mais crescer a obra do Abolicionismo, mais se dissiparão os receios de uma guerra civil, de insurreições e atentados (74).

Nabuco warns that "insurrections" and "assassination attempts" would only ensue from the erosion of slaves' belief in the state's desire to defend them. On the other hand, "the dissemination of abolitionist ideas throughout the country" will persuade slaves that their "destiny preoccupie(s) the entire nation" and, therein, prevent them from seeking retribution. Abolition thus constitutes a type of nominal release that will ensure slaves' inaction. Nabuco underscores this idea when he states that, as soon as the slave is convinced that his captivity "touches the heart of the Nation," he will be instilled with the hope, "however remote," of liberty. While on the most obvious level, "remote" suggests a temporal delay; it also implies inaccessibility and indefiniteness. It is this latter connotation that most succinctly describes Nabuco's appeal. He does not propose that the slave should be granted real, material freedoms. Rather, he insists that he should be made to believe that his liberty is plausible and that that belief will forestall his pursuit of tangible rights.

At another moment in the same chapter, Nabuco identifies the slave's illiteracy as a further means for promoting his compliance with white authority. He first claims that, following abolition, the slave will not abandon his master but will continue to serve him. Nabuco then proceeds to describe the slave's apathy, asserting that he is both aware of his "hardship" and passionately attached to his captor. What is ultimately revealed by this contradiction is Nabuco's anxiety about the slave's acquisition of reading and writing skills:

Os escravos, em geral, não sabem ler, não precisam, porém, de soletrar a palavra liberdade para sentir a dureza da sua condição. A consciência neles pode estar adormecida, o coração resignado, a esperança morta: eles podem beijar com reconhecimento os ferros que lhes apertam os pulsos; exaltar-se, na sua triste e tocante degradação, com a posição, a fortuna, o luxo de seu senhor; recusar a alforria que este lhes ofereça, para não terem que se separar da casa onde foram crias (73–4).

The image of the slave “kissing the chains that bind his wrists” seems to suggest that he should be awakened and made aware of his subjugation. On the other hand, the slave’s “dormant consciousness” prevents him from violating his master’s rights. Nabuco claims that the slave’s attachment to his master and to the house in which he was raised will induce him to refuse the master’s “offer” of manumission. By situating the master as the agent for emancipating slaves, he not only encourages slaveholders to identify with abolitionism but also casts abolition as an act of generosity that will efface the slave’s desire for freedom and augment his perception of indebtedness.

Nabuco’s perplexing reference to the slave’s illiteracy further exposes the effort to sustain the slave in a condition of unknowing resignation. Whereas he claims that the slave’s inability to write or to “spell the word liberty” does not diminish his awareness of his “sad and touching degradation,” by proceeding to a description of the slave’s love of captivity and his pride in his master’s affluence, Nabuco repudiates not only his contention that the slave is self-aware but also his assertion that the slave’s illiteracy does not inhibit recognition of his inferior status. Indeed, as long as the slave remains “asleep” and illiterate, he will not only be resigned to but will find joy and comfort in his confinement, “kissing” the “familiar” chains that bind him and “exalting himself” with his captor’s luxury. The inadvisability of the slave’s acquisition of writing is underscored by Nabuco’s oblique claim that the “slave does not need to write”: he admonishes that the slave should by no means be encouraged to do so.

Nabuco’s rejection of black writing has tangible political connotations and, at the same time, reflects the production of his own narrative authority on the basis of his symbolic incorporation of black discourse. On the one hand, it is interesting to situate his association of literacy with resistance in the context of João José Reis’ discussion of the role of the written word in Brazil’s most important slave uprising, the “Malê Revolt” in Salvador, Bahia in 1835, organized by Africans of Moslem descent. Though the rebellion was organized principally by word of mouth, in the inquisition that followed, “The police found many pieces of paper with Arabic writing, and these papers made a deep impression at the time. In a society where even the dominant whites were largely illiterate, it was hard to accept that African slaves possessed such sophisticated means of communication” (100).

In addition to the possible impact of the Malê Revolt on Nabuco’s perception of the ominous effects of the slave’s literacy, his dismissal of black writing points to a principal difference from United States abolitionism, which employs black-authored accounts of captivity to establish slaves’ humanity and to induce sympathy with their welfare. Indeed, it is this rejection of black writing, and the assimilation of “African” expression in white-authored texts, that distinguishes the Brazilian canon’s approach to racial and class difference from that of the United States. In the specific context of *O Abolicionismo*, Nabuco’s denunciation of the slave’s writing practice reflects both the effort to compel blacks’ consent with white authority and also the symbolic absorption and displacement of black articulation conferred by his entreaty on behalf of slaves. The simultaneously pragmatic and symbolic significance of this substitution is further demonstrated by Nabuco’s reference to the master’s manumission contract: a deed which purportedly liberates the slave while ensuring that he will not abandon his captor.

Nabuco provides another example of this nominal textual absorption of black dissent when he refers to the Emperor Pedro Segundo’s 1831 injunction against the slave trade. He argues that the retroactive implementation of this written mandate will guarantee blacks’ subordination:

Por sua vez, a atual geração, desejosa de romper definitivamente a estreita solidariedade que ainda existe entre o país e o tráfico de africanos, pede hoje a execução de uma lei que *não podia* ser revogada, e não foi, e que

todos os africanos ainda em cativeiro, sendo *bona piratarum*, têm direito de considerar como a sua carta de liberdade rubricada pela Regência em nome do Imperador (Nabuco's italics, 119).

Entreating the execution of the Emperor's mandate, Nabuco situates the slaves' desire for freedom as proper to himself and his abolitionist peers, thus nullifying their autonomous outcry. With his emphasis upon slaves' "right" to "consider" the Emperor's mandate as a "deed of liberty," he reiterates that what matters is their belief in its potential to free them: like the master's unacted-upon manumission offer, the Emperor's written mandate will convince slaves that the state represents them and will increase their sense of indebtedness. Nabuco also employs this appeal to designate Pedro Segundo as the key for absorbing black dissent. By emphasizing Pedro Segundo's engagement with abolition at its inception, he seeks to dissociate him from the "outmoded" slavery institution and to subvert the commonly-held perception of abolitionists that slavery and monarchism should simultaneously be overcome in the name of progress.

Nabuco's promotion of the monarchy is an important dimension of his strategy for recuperating national sovereignty. In addition to "whitening" and blacks' more effective subjugation, he is concerned with retaining the nominal affiliation with European control constituted by the Emperor's mandate. However, by the time Nabuco writes *O Abolicionismo*, the shift to republican governance already seems inevitable. For this reason, his reference to the Emperor's injunction reveals disillusionment with his failure to demonstrate his investment in abolition compellingly. When Nabuco admits that, while Pedro Segundo did not revoke his mandate, he also did not seek to execute it, he censures the Emperor's half-hearted commitment to abolition that he believes has diminished his chances of remaining in power.

Nabuco acknowledges the demise of the monarchy—and, together with this, the ultimately irrevocable African influence on Brazil—when he describes the slave's suffering as a "curse" that permeates Brazilian nature:

Dir-se-ia que, assim como a matéria não faz senão transformar-se, os sofrimentos, as maldições, as interrogações mudas a Deus, do escravo, condenado ao nascer a galés perpétuas, criança desfigurada pela ambição do dinheiro, não se extinguem de todo com ele, mas espalham nesse vale de lágrimas da escravidão, em que ele viveu, um fluido pesado, fatal ao homem e à Natureza (155).

The fluid character of slavery's legacy demonstrates the nation's contamination with "black blood." At the same time, the slave's uncontained plea for release suggests that, whereas Nabuco has endeavored to compel blacks' consent with the state, their grievances and transgressive energies will remain ominously unchecked. In light of the Emperor's impending return to Europe, the slave's "mute interrogations to God" denote the absence of a tangible patriarchal figure worthy of ensuring blacks' subordination and of rectifying their debilitating impact on the body politic.

Nabuco's description of the slave's condemnation to forced labor "at birth" underscores his perception of the impossibility of restoring power differentials along racial lines. Rather than convey concern with the slave's lack of opportunity, he employs the slave's condemnation as a metaphor for the nation's damnation as the result of blacks' social and genetic impact and the inescapable termination of the Emperor's mandate. The slave child's "disfigurement" by ambition for money further attests to what Nabuco contends are the irremediably degenerative effects of slavery on white patriarchy. Whereas it would seem logical that the "ambition for money" refers to masters' exploitation of slave labor, he does not attach it to an identifiable agent: in light of Nabuco's recurrent characterizations of the slave's unwieldy appetite for power, that ambition appears to describe the slave himself. In other words, the slave's disfigurement suggests that his relation to the means of production has forever been altered, that the unseemly shape he has acquired is that of the *senhor*.

At the same time, the "spread" of the slave's utterances to the "valley of the tears of slavery" anticipates Gilberto Freyre's neo-Lamarckian paradigm of "gênio de lugar," the process by which Africans "transfuse" an ephemeral black substance to the Brazilian landscape. Whereas

Nabuco perceives the transmission of the slave's "fluid" to nature as "fatal," fifty years later, Freyre employs the metaphor of Africans' disembodiment to redefine "genetic" blackness as an ethereal property that is absorbed by seigniorial figures. In other words, the slave's foreboding inundation of the Brazilian terrain is resolved by Freyre's optimistic interpretation of the transference of the slave's lamentation to nature: containing that which Nabuco could not, he employs that disclosure to universalize a seigniorial figure who speaks on behalf of blacks. In the section that follows, it is to Freyre's celebratory rereading of blacks' impact on white authority that I will direct attention. I consider this rereading through an analysis of Freyre's preface to *O Abolicionismo*, first published in 1977. By shifting my discussion from Nabuco to Freyre, I demonstrate the impact of Nabuco's tract on Freyre's conceptualization of seigniorial figures' symbolic black inheritance. Because this preface has been widely influential, I also elucidate the manner in which Freyre heroizes Nabuco and cements his position as the original white advocate of black Brazilian desire.

Freyre on Nabuco: a Celebration of the Original "Slave's Advocate"

In his preface to *O Abolicionismo*, Freyre rectifies what Nabuco perceives as the debilitating impact of blacks on whites. He also situates Nabuco's abolitionism as the heroic antecedent for his own narrative of plantation relations and rereads Nabuco's commitment to revitalizing white patriarchy as a regionalist endeavor. In other words, he establishes a correspondence between Nabuco's privileging of the master figure, and of Pedro Segundo, with his own effort to dignify the northeastern *senhor*.

Freyre commemorates Nabuco's northeastern plantation upbringing, casting him as the symbolic offspring of the female slaves who cared for him and as an innocent master who assimilates slaves' experience of distress. In so doing, he refers to a section of *Minha Formação*, wherein Nabuco identifies a fugitive slave's entreaty to purchase him and rescue him from his cruel master as the origin for his commitment to abolitionism (184):

Formou-o pelo leite de escrava que amamentou o menino branco de Massangana, pelos braços de escravos que lhe afugentaram os primeiros choros e tédios de criança, pelas mãos de escravos que lhe levaram à boca as primeiras comidas, talvez pelos beijos de escrava que primeiro lhe deram sugestões de outro amor de mulher além do de mãe e, ainda, pelo gesto daquele escravo adolescente, fugido do outro engenho, que, uma tarde, surgiu diante de Nabuco menino, sentado no patamar da casa-grande de Massangana, para abraçar-se a seus pés, suplicando ao sinhôzinho que pelo amor de Deus o fizesse comprar pela madrinha, senhora de engenho (15–16).

Freyre justifies Nabuco's seigniorial origins on the grounds that he is "formed" by the breast milk, food and kisses he received from slave women. Likewise, with his reference to the fugitive slave, kneeling and embracing Nabuco's feet, and begging Nabuco to purchase him, he produces Nabuco as a charitable patriarch who acquiesces to the slave's entreaty for humane discipline. Freyre also qualifies most of the elements that comprise Nabuco's formation as orally transmitted. By situating him as the recipient of the slave's supplication, along with black women's food, kisses and breast milk, he suggests that he is not only the symbolic progeny of slaves but, specifically, that he absorbs black discourse.

At the same time, because Nabuco's "formative" absorption of black oratory culminates with his dedication to abolition, Freyre employs it to collapse the white arrogation of black voice with the struggle for slaves' liberation. Referring again to Nabuco's encounter with the fugitive slave, he claims that while such exchanges were common in colonial history, Nabuco's assimilation of black desire is unparalleled. With his emphasis on the primary quality of Nabuco's identification with blacks, Freyre produces his abolitionist intervention as the noble antecedent for his own paradigm of assimilationist master/slave relations and, by extension, for his own authority to depict black experience:

É certo que milhares de outros escravos fizeram o mesmo com centenas de outros meninos brancos, que

poderiam ter sido outros tantos redentores dos Africanos no Brasil; é, porém, das Escrituras que a semente precisa de cair no terreno certo, para frutificar plenamente. Joaquim Nabuco foi mais que qualquer outro, branco ou preto, o redentor dos cativos no Brasil, porque mais do que ninguém absorveu.... toda a dor, todo o sofrimento, todo o desejo imenso, embora nem sempre claro em todos eles, de liberdade e de redenção até ele próprio, Nabuco, transbordar dessa dor, desse sofrimento e desse desejo (16).

"Overflowing" with black feelings, Nabuco's absorption of the slaves' sentiments effaces his coercive possession of the black body and inaugurates a model of benign seigniorial control. Moreover, with his emphasis on the superlative, even biblically-foreordained quality of Nabuco's boyhood identification with slaves, Freyre claims an heroic antecedent for the white spokespersonship on behalf of blacks. At the same time, he insists that Nabuco incorporates the "pain, suffering and desire" which is "not always clear" to blacks themselves. Freyre thus establishes Nabuco's authority not only on the basis of his formative interaction with black nurse-maids and his acquiescence to the slave's entreaty for a humane master, but also on the grounds that blacks are unable to think and speak for themselves.

At another moment, Freyre further dissociates blacks from the desire for freedom and confers that desire as proper to white authorities:

E mais de uma vez teve que lamentar que dos próprios homens de cor muitos se encontrassem, não entre os abolicionistas mas por um como masoquismo (como se veio a explicar depois) do lado contrário, entre os que queriam a continuação do regime de chicote e de tronco (18).

On the one hand, Freyre situates slaves' identification with their masters and their opposition to abolition as evidence of their failure to articulate their own socio-economic interests. On the other hand, when he attributes blacks' support for "the continuation of the regime of the whip and the stake" to their masochism, he suggests that their subservience is innate. Freyre thus employs two contradictory assertions to justify whites' authority to represent black experience: not only do whites give voice to sentiments which blacks themselves are unable to express but also, in the act of speaking for them, they comply with blacks' desire to relinquish power to a seigniorial figure. By extension, Freyre legitimates his own discourse: when he claims that blacks' masochism "later came to be explained," he implicitly refers to his own analysis of slavery as a system that originates with the slave's desire to be dominated.

As indicated, Freyre also devotes significant energies to the question of Nabuco's monarchism. While he criticizes the abolitionist's "outmoded" allegiance to the crown, his tacit approval for Nabuco's loyalty to Pedro Segundo reflects the simultaneity of monarchism with the pre-republican slavery economy Freyre has dedicated his career to justifying.

In the passage which follows, Freyre refers to the lapse in Nabuco's political education which led him to support the monarchy and to resist the transition to the republic: "Dos que tanto lhe devem ter ensinado da ciência ou da arte da contemporização não apreendera o bastante para deixar de repente a Monarquia pela República" (26). Whereas he appears to censure Nabuco's disinclination to "suddenly abandon" the Crown, his emphasis on Nabuco's non-opportunistic loyalty to Pedro Segundo suggests admiration for his dedication to Brazil's "original" patriarchy. Likewise, when Freyre claims that "surgindo de repente a República, deu-lhe também de repente o título de homem do passado ou de *ancien régime*" (25), his reference to the dated quality of Nabuco's monarchism is misleading. Indeed, in light of Freyre's idealization of Brazil's pre-abolition aristocracy, the title of "man of the past or of the *ancien régime*" is wholly ennobling.

In addition to the simultaneity of the monarchy with slavery, the transition to the republic consolidated the authority of the southeastern planters. As Freyre's work is motivated largely by the effort to vindicate the interests of his own class against the cultural and socio-economic hegemony of the southeast, his references to the Second Empire intertwine with his nostalgia for the apex of northeastern dominance. Freyre discusses Nabuco's exit from politics following the shift to Republicanism. In addition to empathizing with the abolitionist's loyalty to Pedro

Segundo—which, as suggested, Freyre aligns with pre-abolition, pre-republican patriarchy in the broadest sense—he also expresses intense disdain for the regime that subsequently came to power:

Mas muito deixara de fazer pelo Brasil nos dias dedicados a uma autobiografia prematura por um precoce morto político. Vira-se então obrigado a viver parasiticamente da contemplação do próprio passado, quando seu entusiasmo, seus impulsos, seus pendores eram todos no sentido da luta viril e da ação criadora. Da ação de federalista que continuasse a de abolicionista. Da ação de socialista que continuasse dentro da Monarquia paternal ou maternal, mas não paternaesca ou caudilhesca, o esforço do pioneiro do trabalhismo no nosso País. Da ação de renovador de tradições da Monarquia que tornasse inútil ou supérflua a República dos positivistas e dos estadualistas, ao seu ver, salva dos excessos dos sectários pela ação do Exército Nacional, por ele consagrado por essa sua intervenção superpartidária na vida brasileira em momento crítico, substituto da própria Monarquia (25–6).

Like Nabuco's indisposition to "suddenly abandon the crown," his "premature" departure from politics testifies to his loyalty to the *ancien régime*. At the same time, though Freyre calls Nabuco's contemplation of his past "parasitic," it resonates with his own backward glance in *Casa-Grande e Senzala*, where he identifies the northeastern plantation economy as the origin for Brazil's unique "racial democracy." Indeed, Freyre's insistence that the monarchy to which Nabuco remained loyal was not "paternalistic or autocratic" but "paternal or maternal" and "socialist" further reflects his own portrait of the northeastern plantation as a kingdom-like site in which people perform their duties at varying levels of a harmonious hierarchy.

Freyre underscores the connection between his own project and Nabuco's monarchism when he describes the abolitionist's attempt to "renovate" the Crown. Whereas Nabuco situates this effort in the context of sustaining blacks' identification with a white patriarchal figure, he does not specifically identify with the northeastern *senhor*. For Freyre, the regional dimension of this figure's identity is paramount. With his claim that had such renovations been realized, the republic would not have "become necessary," as well as his reference to the "sectarian, partisan" excesses brought to bear through military intervention, he denounces the consolidation of southeastern socio-economic control of the nation. Moreover, the "renovation" of monarchic traditions that would have made the republic "useless or superfluous" suggests Freyre's own reinvention of the northeastern plantation master as Brazilian archetype.

Indeed, when Freyre claims, "there was much that (Nabuco) failed to do for Brazil," he situates his own work as taking up where Nabuco left off. While, with the publication of *Casa-Grande e Senzala* (1933), Freyre does not dismantle southeastern hegemony, he does produce a model of "racially democratic" plantation history that becomes canonical. Characterizing the northeastern *senhor* as a figure who is symbolically "Africanized" by his contact with slaves and whose authority to articulate black sentiments derives from blacks' desire to relinquish control, he not only inverts Nabuco's bleak view of the plantation economy but constitutes the northeastern descendants of slaveholders as the inheritors of a symbolically mixed-race, superlatively Brazilian legacy which is theirs alone.

In this way, Freyre makes an important gesture toward rectifying what he situates as Nabuco's failed attempt to sanctify and universalize *northeastern* seigniorial authority. Indeed, Ricardo Salles describes Freyre's model of master/slave relations as most closely approximating the nineteenth-century "foundational myth" of benevolent patriarchy during the Second Empire (33–34) and Carlos Guilherme Mota situates it as the "crystallization of an ideology which, until today, to a greater or lesser extent, continues to inform the notion of *Brazilian Culture*" (57). Nabuco's pessimistic analysis of the impact of master/slave relations anticipates and informs this foundational myth. Whereas abolitionism seems to connote the expansion of black's mobility and influence, Nabuco's tract proposes a means for more effectively containing the slave by purporting to articulate his desire. Freyre seizes this duplicitous strategy for mobilizing black consent and casts it as the origin for a representational practice—and, by extension, an affirmation of cultural superiority—that remains current to this day.

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