

## TRIANGULAR MIRRORS AND MOVING COLONIALISMS

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Though there does not exist an undifferentiated colonialism category because of specificities relating to historical time conjunctions, the interfacing of such conjunctions with metropolitan projects, and the modalities of contesting colonial hegemonies and transformations in the structural/institutional relations between (ex)colonial and (ex)colonised, there is, however, the exigency for an ongoing contemplation and analysis of the reflections and refractions in the mirrors of empire and colonialism. By focussing on contradictions that characterize present-day relations between African countries and Brazil, there is the possibility for unraveling inter/intra colonial/racial contradictions and how they impact on structures of power. Brazil, because of the widely recognized and increasingly proclaimed "africaness" becomes a mirror that simultaneously reflects and refracts multiple images of colonialism, race and empire.

**W**hy is Brazil in this discussion, especially in view of the fact that my concerns pertain to colonialism and decolonization in Africa in the post-World War II period? Is there an implicit suggestion that there is a colonial tinge about Brazil's African relations? Could it actually be the case that specific Brazilian articulations have veered in the direction of "colonialist" practices/perceptions? What, after all, constitutes colonialism?

For the purposes of this discussion I do not propose to offer (an)other definition for colonialism, nor do I propose to use "postcolonialism" as an analytical or descriptive concept save to note, following McClintock, that the term postcolonial suggests or imposes a certain linearity, a centering of colonialism (Euro) as the actual starting point of the life and development of societies and political economies of those areas that became entangled with or ensnared into European expansion overseas, and the creation of "colonial" models of life and governance in these sites. Postcoloniality suggests a terminal point in a process whereas, in fact, the consequences of colonialism spawned in conjunction with or opposition to specific local patterns of behavior do not simply melt away. Postcolonial sounds less confrontational than neo-colonial and appears to privilege cultural and literary constructions, highlighting formalistic processes of decolonization (flag, national anthem, heads of station). Further, it does not interrogate the continuity of the political culture and political economy constructed and left as a legacy by colonialism (see McClintock 1995).

Focussing on Brazilian-African relations offers the distinct advantage of (re)visiting Brazil's own efforts at carving out a niche for the country,

drawing upon specific historical, cultural, economic and political assests presented as a demonstration of the possibilities of South-South relations rendered even more manifest because of Brazil's bona fides as an ex-colony – one inextricably linked to “Africa” and African polities seeking new modalities of change and development in the “post-independence” or decolonized new age.

Here, precisely, enter the mirrors of the empire. The colonial mirror of Luso-Brazil at the point of Brazilian independence in 1822, and the reflections of Brazil for Continental African eyes taking place in the middle to late twentieth century become refracted not because of the political and economic virtues, but because of visual, cultural and racial images, due to the perceived lack of fit between the stylized and idealized presentations of Brazil “*para o africano ver*” and what “*os africanos*” saw both inside and outside of Brazil.

If the uniqueness of Brazilian decolonization set Brazil apart from other American countries, in the nineteenth century, continuing colonialism and Brazil's relations with Portugal presented further complexities for Brazil's proclaimed Africanness. This did not necessarily “de-Europeanize” Brazil, given the nature of Brazilian representations abroad, and their perceptions at least, on the part of Africans. What the colonial and independent mirror presented to Africans was more of a triangular than a two-way view.

If Brazil claimed a privileged africanity because of sheer demographics and yet continued to manifest distinct unafricanness in terms of representation, the mirror appeared to offer multiple images which were not easily grasped by Brazilians.

It is at this point that local, national and international images and perspectives jostle one another for attention in our (re)considerations of empire and end of empire. These discussions then cannot be demarcated by any specific ending of the empire because of the co-existence of past mirrors. Not that all of Africa is directly engaged with Brazil to the same extent or with equal intensity. In the following pages, an effort is made to analyze the multiple dimensions of Brazil-Africa relations without necessarily privileging the Portuguese connection but without loosing sight of its fundamentality for both Brazil and Africa. The role of race, specifically how race manifests itself in international relations – with specific reference to the representations of African-American concerns – provides a mirror for Brazil-Africa relations. Hence the attention paid to USA/Afro USA in this essay.

This examination of Brazilian-African international relations and the critical role race plays in these relations is predicated upon the recognition of a linkage between Brazilian domestic race relations and their resonance in relations with African countries. It is argued that although Brazil might not have privileged the racial factor, choosing instead to emphasize history and culture, history and culture as presented to continental Africa could not

escape African perceptions of racial connections. Brazil's African initiatives confronted a problem which could not be easily resolved. Understanding the gravity of the problem involves a direct engagement with domestic Brazilian race relations.

It has been noted by some scholars that there is general neglect in seriously incorporating cultural factors into the analyses of relations among states, and that conflict capabilities, security matters and issues relating to the political economy have tended to be privileged in such discussions (see Falk 1992: 37-51).

Though Brazil emphasizes multiracialism and race mixture as emblematic of the nation's culture, there is very little evidence of the much-celebrated racial kaleidoscope in the relations with Africa in terms of the presence of Afro-Brazilians.

Though this gap between image and reality might not be a source of concern in Brazil's multi-lateral relations with the Euro-American worlds, it takes on a different import in any consideration of Brazil's relations with continental Africa.

Brazil provides a contrast to the US. In the US ethnic influences are considered important determinants of American foreign policy, in tandem with a certain decline in the influence of professional elites in foreign policy-making. This stands in marked contrast with Brazil where the prestige and influence of the Ministry of External Relations (Itamaraty) and its professional corps have continued to play a prominent role in foreign policy.

It has been observed, with greater emphasis on multiculturalism, that "when official America no longer imposes cultural assimilation upon its members, diasporic communities in the United States are less and less inhibited from identifying with original homelands." African Americans, produced one of the most effective diasporic efforts to alter world politics in recent years through mobilization and protest action in the campaign against apartheid, managing to generate a historic shift in US foreign policy towards South Africa. The diaspora lobby succeeded in establishing a symmetry between its own agenda and the American creed of democracy, challenging the Reagan administration through its own rhetoric (see Shain 1994-1995).

The motivations for this African-American direct action were linked to kinship ties and Pan Africanist connections. However, the successful outcome of African-American activities was predicated on the fact that such actors operated within the borders of mainstream politics.

The Carter Presidency and administration had provided an unprecedented opportunity for alumni of the 1960s Civil Rights Movement to mobilize successfully for action. The launching of Trans Africa as the major lobby of blacks aimed at influencing US foreign policy in Africa and the Caribbean

was an example of these efforts. Achieving [racial] integration and political power at home was linked to political developments abroad.

Ethnic organizations such as Trans Africa required a mobilized constituency in order to maximize their impact on governmental policy processes. Ethnic constituencies interested in foreign policy in turn can be empowered through ethnic political organizations that serve as intermediaries with the governmental apparatus. Thus the two independent variables can be mutually reinforcing. Most importantly, perhaps, Trans Africa's emergence and relative effectiveness was enhanced by its close association with the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC), one of whose members, Congressman Andrew Young, Jr., was appointed as the US Ambassador to the United Nations by President Carter. There has, arguably, been no similar period of such conspicuous black public influence in US foreign policy (see Dickson 1996, Moore 1998, Jackson 1982).

The vulnerability of the US to charges of racial oppression of blacks and the exigency of countering this image abroad resulted in the selective use of some American blacks who would act as acceptable spokespersons of the changing state of US race relations to counter negative images abroad presented by outspoken black critics. Images of lynchings of blacks, battles over school desegregation, existence of anti-miscegenation laws became topics of discussion in newspapers around the world much to the discomfort of the United States. This required having conciliatory black voices abroad to counter other critical black voices which insisted on publicly linking domestic race relations to international relations (see Dudziak 1994).

In 1996, Foreign Minister Luiz Felipe Lampreia characterized Brazilian foreign policy stating that its objective was to create a bridge linking domestic political economy and social conditions to the outside world, both regionally and in (wider) international theaters. Africa's financial importance to Brazil is related to Brazil's sharing of the South Atlantic with African countries with which it has economic relations. It also lies in mutual developmental interests, though Brazil and Africa are at different stages of development, as African and Brazilian economies are complementary: Africa is an important international partner, the continent's cultural, political, and linguistic pluralism ensuring a significant presence within the international system (see Campbell 1997, Dickson 1996).

In a recent discussion of Brazilian international identity, former Foreign Minister Celso Lafer (2000) drew attention to a set of circumstances and predicates that characterized Brazil's vision and interests as an actor in the world system. The country's size, geographic, demographic, economic and political data were similar to features that led to challenges encountered by countries such as the USA, Russia, China and India – then Brazil's reference group. Brazil's natural involvement in the shaping of the international order;

Brazil's distance from the front-line of international tensions; and its engagement with a project aimed at systematically correcting original faults in the country's formation (including social exclusion) continue to inform Brazilian national policies.

Some Brazilian social scientists emphasize the fact that Brazil never had the apartheid institutions as South Africa or the United States did; and in Brazil strong legislation forbidding any kind of racial discrimination existed. Racial prejudice, however, seems widespread, and dark skin can affect one's self-perception and the life opportunities of millions. The response of several black organizations and intellectuals to this predicament has been to embrace their racial identity and to press for an agenda of affirmative action in social policies. The main difference between Brazil and the United States, however, is that in Brazil there is a lack of clear boundaries between racial groups and a refusal to accept racial labels among the majority of the Brazilian population (see Schwartzman 2000, Fry 2000).

Although I would only be guessing if I said that the heroic status of Martin Luther King and Nelson Mandela in Brazil is greater than that of the Brazilian national hero Zumbi, black activism in Brazil has been influenced by black movements in the USA and South Africa, pointing to a conception of a unified blackness rather than the Brazilian elasticity which problematizes such a concept of a unified identity. The Brazilian model is nonetheless deemed preferable (see Fry 2000).

Since the mid-1990s African relations in Brazil have acquired a new centerpiece – the Republic of (post-apartheid) South Africa. On the occasion of President Cardoso's visit to South Africa, a special seminar was organized in Rio de Janeiro which brought together specialists from both nations to discuss "Brazil and South Africa risks and opportunities within tumultuous Globalization". Any doubt as to the significance of this issue can be dispelled by considering the sheer weightiness of the 896 pages tome containing the seminar's proceedings. It is a testimony to the range and depth of crisscrossing interests relating to comparative analyses in politics, economics, strategic defense matters, media, foreign relations, national security, mining, issues relating to large scale and small scale land ownership and agriculture (see Guimarães 1997).

Though there are references to race relations in the two countries and their importance for social exclusion and inclusion, there is not a single contribution that focussed on the role of race in international relations.

An astute examination of Brazil's Africa policies concluded that Brazilian lyricism about Africa has continued to exist, (from the early 1960s) right up to the present administration of President Cardoso. Brazil came to reap an unexpected harvest from a "culturalist" discourse, which had pervaded its relations with Africa. Brazilian elites and diplomats could not have imagined

that their much celebrated race relations order, in conjunction with celebrations of historical Africa, could produce such unintended results in African eyes. Far from being accorded a special status and lauded for its positive race relations, Brazil appeared contradictory and no different from Euro-American countries (see Saraiva 1996, Johnson 1998). Because the African presence and heritage – to which Brazil itself had drawn attention in the first place – appeared to be totally absent in the public realm of Brazilian international relations, and also because of the marginalization of black Brazilians from critical centers of national life, the claims to African affinities appeared to be hollow symbolic gestures.

The weak collective voice of Afro-Brazilians in linking domestic to foreign affairs reflects a more fundamental Afro-Brazilian political weakness that cannot be ignored – high-profile Afro-Brazilians are rare in Brazil's relations with African countries. That the Afro-Brazilian Federal Deputy from São Paulo, Adalberto Camargo, had praised the Foreign Ministry (Itamaraty) for the selection of the first black diplomat in 1978 (Monica de Menezes Campos) was news. But in the subsequent two decades, there has not been any such speeches praising the Ministry for a similar boldness. Whatever the explanation, it is difficult to convince Africans and Afro-Brazilian observers that the continuing absence of Afro-Brazilians from the ranks of Brazilian diplomats is not related to age-old practices of excluding Afro-Brazilians from national representation abroad.

Since the 1980s, Afro-Brazilian movements have come to play an important role in the “deconstructuion” of the “culturalist discourse” in Brazil's African relations. For want of a legitimate alternate public space in which consistent critiques could be launched, there have been episodic criticisms by both Afro-Brazilian activists and individual Congressmen protesting the image projected by the Foreign Ministry in Africa because the honoring of Africana in international relations was at variance with the continued marginalization of Afro-Brazilians from the centers of power, influence, and decision making in Brazil.

Criticisms of the Foreign Ministry have not been restricted to Afro-Brazilian activists and parliamentarians. Responding to charges of racism in Itamaraty by a University of Brasília Professor in 1994, the President of the Association of Brazilian Diplomats offered some insight. Macedo Soares argued that there was nothing unusual about the fact that there were not a sufficient number of black diplomats, just as blacks were not represented in other prominent positions, such that there was a lack of black bishops, parliamentarians, judges, bankers, journalists and university professors. The source of this problem was not Itamaraty, but Brazilian society itself (see Saraiva 1996: 239).

Whether or not Brazilian society can rise to the challenge of removing the contradictions between the image and the reality of Brazilian race rela-

tions (especially as they pertain to Afro-Brazilians) and thereby increase the possibilities to more successfully use the culturalist weapon in relations with Africa, is one issue. A complementary issue is the extent to which Afro-Brazilian activists can re-articulate the connection to African countries and focus on political, economic, and social issues extant in contemporary Africa along with their concomitant implications for present-day Africa/Brazil relations.

If media accounts, scholarly publications, and official recognition of the problem are the measure, there is no doubt whatsoever that over the last two decades there has been a dramatic increase in public discussion of the existence of racism (against blacks) in Brazil. What is not clear, however, is the cumulative effect of this change. To the extent that Afro-Brazilians are largely excluded from participating in shaping Brazil's international relations – due to their exclusion from working in the strategic areas of domestic politics and society – there exists a strange disjuncture between Brazil's honoring of African cultural traditions and their representation as an asset in relations with Africa, on the one hand, and the lack of a visible inclusion of Brazilians of African descent, on the other (see Dzidzienyo 1999, Nascimento and Nascimento 2000, Hanchard 1999, Reichmann 1999).

The contacts and exchanges between Brazil and African countries over the last four decades, mediated by individuals in the business sector, educational field, journalism, and the arts, might have contributed to a certain extent in the breaking down of some of the stereotypical, negative, and exotic images of Africa which have long existed in Brazil. But the primary objective was the expansion of Brazil's activities in the South Atlantic. Commercial considerations, especially increasing Brazilian options in access to oil and other products, were a key factor. The Africa policy was articulated as a resumption of historical and cultural relations with African countries (Nigeria, Angola, etc). Whatever the consequences of this discourse, there was one outcome that was not sufficiently anticipated: the linkage between the claims made for cultural continuities between Brazil and Africa and the impressive absence of Afro-Brazilians from the picture.

The “emergent” and celebrated Africa was not intended to dethrone the primacy of Europe in Brazilian elite perceptions nor was it intended to displace preferable historical, cultural and linguistic models for Brazil.

Moreover, the cumulative effect of Brazil's African adventures appears to have been a certain disenchantment with Africa.

The disillusionment with Africa, when it materialized, could be read, on the one hand, as a reflection of the end of illusions for Brazil. On the other hand, it could be translated as the inevitable outcome of the failure to successfully yoke together discourses aimed at Africa and complimentary discourses and actions aimed at enhancing Afro-Brazilian participation in

national and international affairs. Home and the outside world could not be separated. But this is an African reading (see Dzidzienyo 1999, 1985).

However, there is not much evidence to suggest that Brazilian authors of the African initiatives had seriously contemplated any form of Afro-Brazilian agency, if only because it had not been a salient issue in Brazilian national affairs and international relations. Beyond symbolic, strategic and political economic considerations, and granted that there is much more visibility of Afro-Brazil in public spaces in Brazil today than was the case forty years ago, it is, nonetheless, the case that such a greater visibility cannot be equated with any dramatic shift in the intersection of race and international affairs. Perhaps at some future date there will emerge a more substantive Afro-Brazilian position and influence in Brazilian society and the ways and means the society imagines, constructs, and implements foreign relations, especially, relations with African countries.

From the early 1960s to the end of the 1990s, Brazilian interest in Africa shifted from optimism to pessimism. “Afro-Pessimismo”, pessimism about Africa, was attributed to continental Africa’s continuing instability, continuing poverty and a disappointing political and economic trajectory which had resulted in a certain “cooling” of Brazilian euphoria (post-apartheid South Africa appeared to be the one exception to this “cooling” on Africa). Though Saraiva pays some attention to sporadic efforts by individual Afro-Brazilians and Afro-Brazilian political and cultural groups who have attempted to draw attention to the conspicuous absence of Afro-Brazilian representation in Brazil’s African projects, his concerns are much more related to analyses of foreign policy initiatives and an assessment of their relative successes or failures, rather than a sustained examination of linkages between racial factors and international relations. It is not surprising that Saraiva’s evaluation of successes and failures does not dwell principally on the interconnection between domestic race relations and external relations and the reciprocal consequences of external relations on domestic policies (see Saraiva 1999).

The relative lack of initiative on the official African side in the matter of Africa-Brazil does not imply a total absence of critical commentaries by individual African observers of Brazil’s contradictions in their relations with African countries. It is important to make a distinction between structural critiques – which interrogate Brazil-Africa within the existing international system, especially Brazil’s effort at expanding its manoeuvrable space and problems involved in privileging Africa in this endeavor – and non-structural critiques – which do not necessarily include a discussion of Afro-Brazilians, Brazilian race relations, and their significance in the country’s international relations with African countries.

Non-structural critiques are premised on a certain familiarity with the predicament of Afro-Brazil and the articulation of this as a reflection of



Afro-Brazilian lack of representation both at home and abroad. A Nigerian Ambassador for example, had called upon Afro-Brazilians to become more actively involved in democratic political participation so as to be comensurate with their demographic presence in Brazil. The survival of Afro-Brazilians as a race was contingent upon their participation in the electoral process and showing their worth as citizens. By so doing, they would become worthy partners for the greater development of Brazil and humanity (see Ojo 1998). Some African scholars have critiqued pitfalls and disappointments in Africa-Brazil-Afro-Brazil relations, directly engaging the serious discontinuities between the hopes and confusions that bedevil such relations. The lack of initiative on the part of the Nigerian government in the matter of Nigerian-Brazilian cultural linkage and its failure to act and support black consciousness activities among Afro-Brazilians have been criticized by these scholars (see Ojo 1998).

Some of this critical discussion has focussed on the enormity of the problems which confront dedicated, well-meaning and courageous Afro-Brazilian activists who recognize the linkage between domestic Brazilian race relations and international relations (see D'Adesky 1996, Munanga 1999, 1996). The racial dimension of national identity as articulated by Brazilian elites involved the incorporation of both indigenous and African cultural contributions within the hegemony of whiteness or whitening which remained the sought after ideal. A consequence of the search for whitening has been a lack of solidarity among blacks who, as individuals, have sought to attain the ideal of whitening. It has been observed that the absence of collective consciousness on the part of those excluded from political participation and the equal distribution of social goods has fragmented black political activity. Rescuing black culture, which had been falsified and denied in the past, and raising consciousness about black contributions to the building of Brazil has been a preoccupation of contemporary black movements in Brazil. That these movements continue to articulate a (new) vision of a multiracial and multicultural Brazil in which mulatos join their black brethren instead of linking their success to whites is an indication of the contested terrain of race mixture in Brazil (see Munanga 1999).

That Raimundo Souza Dantas is the only identifiable Afro-Brazilian ambassador to have represented Brazil abroad, in recent memory (Ghana 1962-1964), is significant in terms of Brazilian relations with Africa and Brazil's profile within the international system. This high profile appointment did not turn out, however, to be a harbinger of a new policy towards Africa, one that might have better reflected Afro-Brazilian incorporation into Brazil's African initiatives.

An unusual example of Afro-Brazilian identification with continental Africa is the case of Thereza Santos. Inspired by racial and ideological soli-

parity with the African Liberation Movements in Lusophone Africa, she went to work in Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde and Angola. In the course of her Angolan sojourn she was imprisoned for eighty-five days for reasons which remain unclear. Nationality perhaps trumped racial solidarity. But not even this untoward development has tempered her identification with the cause of Africans which she considers to be linked to the position of Afro-Brazilians in Brazil (see Santos 1999).

No examination of Brazil-Africa relations and the racial factor within would be complete without commenting on the career of Abdias do Nascimento. As a political thinker, dramatist, artist, political activist, parliamentarian, and Secretary of State in the state of Rio de Janeiro for Afro-Brazilian Affairs, he has stood out as an indefatigable advocate of linking Brazilian domestic race relations to a broader Pan-African universe. This posture has resulted in high profile clashes with Brazilian Foreign Ministry officials during two major festivals in Dakar, Senegal in 1965 and Lagos/Kaduna, Nigeria in 1977. On both occasions, his views on linkage met with opposition from the official Brazilian delegation. Nascimento's argument was that African "heritage" could not be considered in isolation from the existing predicament of Afro-Brazilians; from their conspicuous marginalization from the centers of the polity and political economy; and from emerging relations with African nations (see Nascimento 1977, 1991; Nascimento and Nascimento 1992).

Nascimento's congressional career in the 1980s and 1990s found him now battling with the legislature to keep the discussion about the exclusion of Afro-Brazilians on the table. In a few years, the irony of the Foreign Ministry's refusal to forward his request to UNESCO for supporting funds came full circle. He was now part of the Presidential visiting delegations to (in his capacity as the Vice President of the Third Congress of Black Cultures scheduled for Brazil in 1983) continental Africa and a member of Congress included in interrogating Foreign Ministry officials. His Congressional tenure in both the Chamber of Deputies and in the Senate also involved his efforts to help educate Congressional colleagues about the realities of the linkage between domestic race relations and foreign relations, especially in connection with continental Africa.

His unflappable commitment to an Afro-Brazilian role in both domestic and external affairs for more than half a century is a testimony to the continuing significance of race in Brazil. It is also an inspiration for Pan-Africanist racial solidarity and a continuing appeal for continental Africa to take a more pro-active role in cementing relations with politically active diasporans (see Nascimento 1977, 1991; Nascimento and Nascimento 1992).

Perhaps the single most significant development bearing on the role of the race in international relations in terms of Brazil/Africa is the emergence

of post-apartheid South Africa and the central role it assumed in Brazil's African relations. That race is a socially constructed category which lacks of scientific legitimacy, and is possessed of a fluidity, is beyond controversy. Be that as it may, the case could not be made that race has no meaning or relevance in multiracial societies, much less in an international relations system, where real or perceived racial/color differences are recognized and linked to historical asymmetrical relations denoting unequal power relations as a result of European expansion and colonialism.

Focussing on structural aspects of race in international relations does not, in any way, undervalue the kinds of articulated interest, expressions of solidarity, and a continuing search by some Afro-Brazilians for closer relations with other groups in the black world. There is a long history of this trajectory though it has been intensified over the last two and a half decades as a result of the greater availability of transnational black information, travel opportunities, etc. It is an admirable effort against the odds. Nonetheless, it is important to distinguish between those activities which are conceptualized and practiced as ultimately transcending the bounds of spiritual and cultural issues and spilling over into concrete political action and those that remain within the confines of non-political action.

Brazil is not unique in terms of the lack of input it has into the international relations formulation and execution on the part of the general population. Writing of Nigerian foreign policy-making, former Foreign Minister Gambari observed that there exists a link between domestic and foreign policy in Nigeria: that the domestic arrangement and the manner of conducting political business invariably influence the conduct of external relations. Nigerian foreign policy, never directly linked to the needs of the masses of the people, is formulated, articulated, and implemented in highly elitist circles. Loud radicalism at home has kept pace with the pursuit of conservative policies abroad (see Gambari 1990). The Brazilian case appears to be the opposite: loud proclamations abroad, and minimal action on the home front to legitimize those claims.

Since the mid 1990s the government of President Fernando Henrique Cardoso has taken some noticeable steps which differentiate his administration from its predecessors. By publicly articulating the existence of a racial problem in Brazil, signifying the intention of tackling the problem, whether through the creation of an interministerial working group, the convening of international seminars on comparative race relations, the appointment of Afro-Brazilians to head the Federal Police Force, the appointment of the first Afro-Brazilian one-star army general in recent memory, opening a debate on the possibilities of affirmative action simultaneously conflated with "quotas" for blacks in both official and unofficial discourses, all point to a new order, an uncharted territory in Brazilian race relations.

What the long-term consequences of the above are for the linkage between domestic Brazilian race relations and Brazil's international relations remain to be seen. If, in fact, they lead to a mobilized Afro-Brazilian action to keep the linkage alive in national political discourses – considered a part of legitimate public discourses rather than being relegated to the realm of anti-national actions characteristic of practices of “reverse discrimination” –, then a new chapter in Afro-Brazilian prominence in the polity will be inaugurated.

Minimally, it is an opportunity to seriously tackle and examine how the lack of open attention devoted in the past to race in Brazil's international relations has produced a gap between reality and the rhetorical flourishes of an idealized race relations order of non-whites in the country's representations abroad.

Perhaps the most visible Afro-Brazilian in the government of President Cardoso is Dulce Maria Pereira, President of the Palmares Cultural Foundation which is attached to the Ministry of Culture and is responsible for the management of cultural initiatives. It is named after the prominent community of slaves who liberated themselves and formed a community composed of former slaves, indigenous populations and even whites who were refugees from society. Because of her long history of active involvement with Afro-Brazilian and other issues, there is little doubt that she is keenly aware of the linkage between race and international relations. She has recently been named the Executive Secretary of the community of Portuguese-speaking countries (CPLP).

There is no gainsaying the fact that recent official initiatives delineated above are the result, even if partially, of the re-energized activities of Afro-Brazilian organizations demanding more effective inclusion within the polity. It is significant that in the preparations for the United Nations Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, the Palmares Cultural Foundation is engaged in hosting several pre-conference gatherings in which there is visible Afro-Brazilian representation.

It remains to be seen how such official and semi-official actions keep pace with increasing Afro-Brazilian activities. Over the last decade there have been changes in some areas of Brazilian race relations representation. Perhaps, at last, race in the international relations of Brazil, with particular reference to Africa, is beginning to emerge from the shadows of Afro-Brazilian activities and consciousness raising, which are beginning to penetrate some of the hitherto impenetrable areas of Brazilian life and society. At some future date, hopefully the near, rather than the remote future, race in Brazilian international relations may become fully and openly inserted within public discourses in Brazil and in Africa.

The increasing attention in the literature on the Atlantic World from the fifteenth century to the present and the emergence of new, creolized, and

for our purposes here, Brazilianized or Brazilian influenced cultures and politics offers distinct possibilities for re-evaluating African-Americas' relations reflected or refracted through these mirrors.

Undoubtedly, history, culture, religion and politics as they played out in the colonized and decolonized African spaces continue to benefit from critical studies such as those of Martory (1999), Law and Mann (1999), Butler (1998), Kelly (1999). The persisting challenge, and one yet to be tackled directly and subjected to careful dissection is unraveling the conundrum of Brazilian, Continental and diasporic African relations, while noting that the ties that bind are also ties that can choke. Looking through the mirrors of the Empire is a good starting point, especially through triangular mirrors, which pose both a challenge and offer new discoveries.

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## Anani Dzidzienyo

### ESPELHOS TRIANGULARES E COLONIALISMOS EM MUDANÇA

*Embora o colonialismo não exista como categoria homogênea – devido às especificidades das conjunturas históricas, à interligação dessas conjunturas com os projectos metropolitanos, às diferentes modalidades de contestação das hegemonias coloniais ou às transformações nas relações estruturais/institucionais entre os (ex-)colonos e os (ex-)colonizados –, existe, no entanto, a necessidade da actual consideração e análise dos reflexos e projecções nos espelhos do império e do colonialismo. O estudo das contradições que caracterizam as relações actuais entre os países africanos e o Brasil permitirá esclarecer as contradições inter/intra coloniais/raciais e o seu impacte nas estruturas de poder. Pela sua "africanidade" amplamente reconhecida e cada vez mais apregoada, o Brasil torna-se um espelho que reflecte e projecta simultaneamente múltiplas imagens do colonialismo, da raça e do império.*

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