

“The East River Reminds Me of the Paraná”

Racism, Subjectivity, and Transnational Political Action in the Life of André Rebouças

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The legalized (!!!) whipping or lynching of Africans in the streets mimics the Yankee Cannibals of Ohio, Mississippi and Missouri.

André Rebouças, Cape Town, South Africa, December 27, 1892

This chapter seeks to illuminate the development of racialized subjectivities as a historical problem in nineteenth-century Brazil. To that end, I will analyze the letters and writings of the Afro-descendant engineer and abolitionist André Rebouças (1838–1898), with special attention to the role of racial silence in Rebouças’ personal diary and in the edited papers of his father, lawyer and statesman Antônio Pereira Rebouças (1798–1880).¹

The Rebouças men were members of the best-known family of Black intellectuals in nineteenth-century Brazil. In personal and political terms, the history of the Rebouças family was shaped by the new opportunities that arose with Brazilian Independence (1822) and the approval of a liberal constitution (1824). The family’s first politically prominent member, Antônio Pereira Rebouças, was one of four sons of an Afro-descendant woman and a Portuguese tailor who took part in Independence struggles in the province of Bahia between 1821 and 1823. Brazil’s Independence struggles allowed Antônio to attain social and political recognition as a leading expert in civil law. He was decorated

* Translated by Brodwyn Fischer.

¹ André Rebouças heavily edited his fathers’ papers in order to create the Antônio Pereira Rebouças Collection at the Brazilian National Library. On Antônio Pereira Rebouças’ autobiographical manuscripts, see H. Mattos and K. Grinberg, “Lapidário de si.”

by the Brazilian emperor, D. Pedro I, was twice elected to the Parliament, was chosen as *conselheiro* (counsel) to Emperor D. Pedro II, and was eventually recognized throughout Brazil for his work as a lawyer. Antônio's brothers also gained prominence in careers formerly prohibited to men "of color": Manoel Maurício Rebouças graduated from medical school and became a member of Imperial Academy of Medicine, and José Pereira Rebouças became a composer and conductor of the Imperial Orchestra.² Antônio Pereira Rebouças married Carolina Pinto, the daughter of a wealthy merchant from Salvador. Little is known about her or her family, but according to family memory she was darker in complexion than her husband.³

Their sons, Antônio and André Rebouças, enjoyed a first-rate education. They graduated in military engineering from the Praia Vermelha School (Escola de Aplicação da Praia Vermelha) in 1860, and in 1861 Antônio financed a stay in Europe to complement his sons' professional training. Eventually known as the Rebouças brothers, they were among Imperial Brazil's most important engineers, and to this day they maintain a strong presence in Brazil's national memory: streets and public works projects throughout the country bear their names. Antonio Rebouças Filho would die in 1874, already a notable engineer. André would become famous as a social thinker and abolitionist leader.⁴ After abolition, André became an increasingly cosmopolitan intellectual who followed with interest not only the technological innovations of the industrial world but also transnational struggles against slavery and other forms of unfree labor "in Europe, the Americas, Asia or Africa," as he wrote in a letter of 1895.⁵

André left behind an extensive diary and many unpublished writings; he also served as editor for the published version of his father's papers. He will be our guide as we reflect on the construction of Black subjectivities in nineteenth-century Brazil. In particular, this chapter aims to understand how and why André Rebouças broke through his previously color-blind

² K. Grinberg, *A Black Jurist*. See also L. Spitzer, *Lives in Between*; H. Mattos, *Escravidão e cidadania* and "De pai."

³ Interview by Hebe Mattos and Keila Grinberg with Ana Maria Rebouças, 2006, LABHOI/UFF.

⁴ See, among others, M. A. Rezende Carvalho, *O quinto século*.

⁵ "The most effective and energetic way to civilize the barbarous and semi-barbarous peoples of Europe, Africa, America and Asia – to emancipate the serfs and the slaves – is to endow them with individual landed property." A. Rebouças, letter of April 23, 1895, to Conselheiro Augusto de Castilho, in J. Verissimo, ed., *Diário e notas*, pp. 428–429.

self-narrative in the letters he wrote during his one and only voyage to the continent of Africa (1891–1893) and in the articles he wrote and published during this period.⁶ In exploring this transformation, I also discuss the deep intellectual consequences of André's brief two-week visit to the United States in 1873, which were registered through posts in his personal diary. André Rebouças' transnational experiences, I argue, were directly related to his decision to break the ethic of racial silence that prevailed in his earlier writings.

ON THE ETHIC OF SILENCE

The social historiography of Brazilian slavery, a body of work that inspires many of the chapters in this volume, is centrally concerned with the question of social agency – among captive and freed persons, but also among broader categories of individuals who found themselves in a subaltern social position. The theoretical references for this work, from E. P. Thompson's cultural Marxism to the micro-historical methodologies of Fredrik Barth, emphasize the relational and political meanings of collective identity formation, as well as the relationship between normative structures and social agency. They valorize the role of shared experience and the collective production of hierarchical categories in shaping individual social action and conditioning the impact of individual endeavors on broader historical processes. In this sense, social history research has used individualized trajectories to continuously rewrite the history of slave societies and shed new light on the political and cultural meanings of actions taken by enslaved and freed people and their descendants, as well as the broader significance of the collective processes of identification and classification that have formed them as historical agents.⁷

This historiography does not, however, generally problematize questions of subjectivity and of the processes that condition it. Historians (myself included) have, for good reason, been wary of the anachronism inherent in many attempts at interdisciplinary exchange with the fields of psychology or psychoanalysis. Social history as a field has also generally

⁶ Fundação Joaquim Nabuco (FUNAJ)/LABHOI-UFF, Coleção André Rebouças: Registro da Correspondência, vol IV (1891–1892); Registro da Correspondência, Vol. V (1892–1893).

⁷ See F. Barth, *Ethnic Groups*; E. P. Thompson, *Tradicion, revuelta*; S. Lara, "Blowin' in the Wind"; P. A. Rosenthal, "Construindo o 'macro.'"

tended to turn away from deeper engagement with theoretical work in philosophy or communication studies (influenced by Spinoza and most fully realized in texts by Foucault and Deleuze), even though these works offer broader possibilities for theoretical exchange.⁸

This tendency has, however, been partially modified by the relatively recent consolidation of subfields involving the history of memory (and specifically the memory of Black slavery), which is itself related to the advance of postcolonial studies. This consolidation has paralleled a growing consciousness of the degree to which history – and especially the history of slavery – has constructed the Black subject in the West on the basis of racist frameworks inherent in the received memory of slavery. As Michel Rolph Trouillot postulated in *Silencing the Past*, historical experience is inseparable from historical narrative, especially (though not only) when it comes to the history of slavery.⁹ Understanding subaltern social agency should also allow us to problematize subaltern subjects' formation as self-narrators, whose accounts merit careful analysis.

To understand André Rebouças' self narration, and especially the role of racial silence within it, it is useful to begin with broader historical incongruities. In nineteenth-century Brazil, racism and the experience of slavery shaped each other within the contradictory context created by Brazil's political independence (1822) and first constitution (1824). The independent Empire – like the US slave republic or the slave empires of France and Britain – formally committed itself to interrupting the Atlantic slave trade and blocking other forms of new enslavement. Yet slavery was maintained in the name of property rights, supported by an illegal slave trade that operated with tacit Imperial consent. As a constitutional monarchy, Brazil explicitly recognized the civil rights of all Brazilian citizens except slaves, but it excluded freed Africans from the possibility of naturalization.

Despite those limits, the majority of Brazil's new citizenry was comprised of freeborn people of African descent, and the Brazilian Constitution of 1824 rendered unlawful colonial regulations that had barred so-called free people of color from civil and military positions.¹⁰ Article 179 recognized a wide array of civil rights for all Brazilians, banned torture and degrading punishment, and abolished the hereditary privileges of the Portuguese ancien régime.

⁸ See G. Deleuze, *Spinoza*; M. Foucault, "O sujeito," and "A escrita"; A. F. de Carvalho, "História e subjetividade."

⁹ M. Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*.

¹⁰ M. Carneiro, *Preconceito racial*, p. 57; H. Mattos, "'Pretos' and 'Pardos.'"

Political rights were nonetheless restricted, as they were in the contemporary constitutional orders of England, the United States, and France. The 1824 Constitution limited full citizenship on the basis of income and property ownership and excluded African-born former slaves even when they fulfilled these requirements. Brazilian-born freedmen could vote in local elections but could not be elected, even if they met minimum income requirements. Yet their descendants' political rights were in no way blocked, and liberals of the time maintained that Brazilians were divided into only two categories, slaves and citizens. Brazil's new subjects and citizens "of color" pushed the limits of these constitutional contradictions, and their demands for fuller incorporation into Brazil's incipient modern nation became a crucial political issue in the tumultuous early decades of the independent Empire. To some degree, those demands met with political success: an ethic of racial silence established itself in situations of formal equality. Yet denominations of color continued to label Afro-descendants with the stigma of slavery, shaping the experiences of racism among free Afro-Brazilians.¹¹

This was the context within which André Rebouças edited his father's handwritten autobiography, based on a manuscript written in 1837/1838 and other personal accounts and published in 1879.¹² In the original, unpublished manuscript, Antonio Pereira Rebouças began the story of his public life with his participation in Bahia's Independence struggles (which ended on July 2, 1823) and recounted many experiences of racial discrimination. Among others, he noted an episode that took place in 1823, after the end of war, as he travelled from Salvador, Bahia, to Rio de Janeiro. Antonio Pereira Rebouças – who wrote about himself in the third person – explained that he was almost "hindered from continuing his journey" and was only authorized to proceed by order of the municipal judge because "they were already familiar with his name and became convinced of his identity when he expressed personal knowledge of [Brazil's] most notable

¹¹ See H. Mattos, *Escravidão e cidadania*; S. Chalhoub, "The Precariousness of Freedom."

¹² A. Rebouças, *Recordações da vida*. The autobiographical documents written by Antônio Pereira Rebouças are part of the Antônio Pereira Rebouças Collection, organized by André Rebouças, held by the National Library of Brazil (BN). They are: "Notas políticas de Antônio Pereira Rebouças" (Rio de Janeiro, December 19, 1868); "Apontamentos biográficos do conselheiro Antônio Pereira Rebouças" (undated, perhaps from the 1860s); "Biografia do advogado conselheiro Antônio Pereira Rebouças" (undated, perhaps from 1837); and "Nota biográfica do conselheiro Antônio Pereira Rebouças" (undated, perhaps from the 1860s).

patriotic episodes and showed professional expertise on juridical legislation.”

The autobiography remained unpublished until after the end of Conselheiro Rebouças’ life. When André Rebouças finally facilitated its publication in 1879, he edited out all mention of discrimination. André Rebouças’ personal diary was shaped by the same preference for color-blind narrative. Those choices reflected the broader ethic of silence that surrounded the question of color throughout nineteenth-century Brazil. The decision to muffle his father’s experience of racial discrimination was in keeping with a personal political decision to construct his and his father’s self-narratives in a language of universal citizenship.¹³

“THE EAST RIVER LOOKS LIKE THE PARANÁ”

In 1871 – as Brazil enacted the Free Womb Law, the most important legal measure against slavery taken after the end of the Atlantic slave trade – André Rebouças was an established engineer and well-known businessman in the Imperial Court, dedicated, in partnership with his brother Antônio, to modernizing the docks of Rio de Janeiro and building a railroad in the state of Paraná. In 1873, in the midst of a business conflict over the Rio dock project, André Rebouças traveled to Europe and also to the United States to acquaint himself with technological innovations in his field. He spent two weeks in the USA, traveling along the East Coast from New York City, in the midst of Reconstruction (1865–1877) and just a few years after the end of the US Civil War and the abolition of US slavery. The supposed equality of political rights among Blacks and whites in the United States did not prevent Rebouças from experiencing problems at hotels, on trains, and in restaurants “because of his color”; he indicated as much in his diary, though descriptively and without comment.

He depended upon his friends, especially the Brazilian national José Carlos Rodrigues, to facilitate his movement around the country. José Carlos Rodrigues was the editor of *O Novo Mundo*, “an illustrated periodical of the progress of the era,” published monthly between 1870 to 1879 for circulation in Brazil from an office in the *New York Times* building in New York City. After his trip, André became one of the

¹³ André Rebouças’ original manuscript journal is archived at Fundação Joaquim Nabuco in Recife. I use here its published version, edited by José Veríssimo: A. Rebouças, *Diário e notas*.

newspaper's regular contributors, as well as a coeditor of the *Revista Industrial*, which was regularly published as an insert in the newspaper. The writings about race and slavery in *O Novo Mundo* offer clues that allow us to understand the ways in which André Rebouças' personal views about these issues changed as a result of his interactions with José Carlos Rodrigues, as well as how this new perception would shape Rebouças' subsequent personal narratives.

One of *O Novo Mundo*'s missions was to "furnish Brazil with detailed news about the political, moral, literary and industrial life of the United States of North America."¹⁴ The paper also sought to offer Brazilian readers news from other parts of the world. The processes through which nations around the globe were emancipating slaves and serfs figured among the paper's topics of interest and were clearly understood as relevant to Brazil's destiny.

An editorial in the paper's first edition, on October 24, 1870, associated Dom Pedro II's famous 1867 speech ("fala do trono") advocating the abolition of Brazilian slavery with the end of American Civil War. The author argued that D. Pedro's declaration that he would take measures to "abolish the subservient element as quickly as possible," made only one year after the conclusion of the American conflict, created the expectation that Brazil would finally accept "the lessons of the US war" and free the slaves. The editorial lamented that Brazil had chosen to become the last in the Americas to reform its labor regime, "trailing even Spain."¹⁵

The following year, the paper celebrated the ratification of the Free Womb Law on September 28, 1871, albeit with some reservation: "in reality, very little was done here to emancipate the slaves: that little, however, was the most that could be expected of Brazil."¹⁶ Articles in *O Novo Mundo* attempted to demonstrate to Brazilian slaveowners that they needed not fear deeper reforms. The pieces reported good outcomes for Russian agriculture after the emancipation of the serfs and equally favorable prospects for the plantations of the old South after full emancipation in the United States. According to the newspaper, "after Russia freed its serfs, it has taken on a quiet strength, entirely new in its history," without its "nobles" having become "ruined."¹⁷ So it was in the United States as well, where increasing cotton harvests – combined with the "progress of the *negro*," signaled that planters were achieving the best

¹⁴ *O Novo Mundo*, October 24, 1870, p. 14. ¹⁵ *O Novo Mundo*, October 24, 1870, p. 2.

¹⁶ *O Novo Mundo*, December 24, 1871, p. 42, "Os Ganhos de 1871."

¹⁷ *O Novo Mundo*, December 24, 1871, p. 42, "Emancipação na Rússia."

of both worlds.¹⁸ The newspaper attempted to convince Brazilian landowners that even “removing *negras* from the workplace,” which had occurred across the American South after the Civil War, had been essentially positive: “emancipation entitled the freedmen to houses, and houses need to be maintained and governed.”¹⁹ “Liberals,” another article declared, “need not fear freedom.”²⁰

The March 1872 issue carried a lengthy article about the closure of the Freedmen’s Bureau, the US agency that regulated the rights of former slaves, emphasizing its positive achievements. The article recognized the closure’s justification as valid: “free men cannot be held under tutelage.” But it also lamented the demise of a proposal that had called for each new citizen to receive up to “40 acres of land” in abandoned areas, paying the state 6 percent of the valuation annually in compensation. The article noted with enthusiasm the number of schools established by the Bureau, most of which were being maintained autonomously by the freedmen themselves despite much opposition. According to the newspaper, “racial prejudice” was the worst enemy of universal education among Blacks in the United States. The text noted the role that accusations of misappropriated funds against Bureau director General Oliver Otis Howard had played in hastening the decision to close the Freedmen’s Bureau, but it firmly asserted that those allegations were unfounded.²¹

During the early part of the 1870s, optimism and abolitionism continued to color the publication’s editorials with regard to the issue of slave emancipation around the world. “Spain and the Slaves” was the title of a January 23, 1873, editorial.²² “Egyptian Slaves,” which lamented the spread of domestic and female slavery in Egypt, appeared in a March 24, 1873, issue.²³ The June 1872 issue returned to Brazil, transcribing an article from the Bahian newspaper *O Abolicionista* that harshly criticized the restrictions of the 1871 Law and concluded:

For the true abolitionists – Conservatives, Liberals or Republicans – there is only one good law: that which brings an end to slavery. How much longer will it take?²⁴

¹⁸ *O Novo Mundo*, February 23, 1872, p. 75, “Progresso dos Negros.”

¹⁹ *O Novo Mundo*, October 24, 1870, p. 11, “Algodão Americano.”

²⁰ *O Novo Mundo*, October 23, 1872, p. 75, “Progresso dos Negros.”

²¹ *O Novo Mundo*, March 23, 1872, p. 102, “Auxílio do Estado aos Libertos nos Estados Unidos.”

²² *O Novo Mundo*, January 23, 1873, p. 55, “A Hespanha e os Escravos.”

²³ *O Novo Mundo*, March 24, 1873, p. 94, “Escravos no Egypto.”

²⁴ *O Novo Mundo*, June 24, 1872, p. 149, “A Lei de 28 Setembro.”

Two pages into that same issue, the newspaper published a review of a short story by Bernardo Guimarães, *Uma História de Quilombolas* (A History of Maroons), which had been published in the book *Lendas e Narrativas* (Legends and Narratives). The story was portrayed as a realistic record of the *mocambos* (fugitive slave communities) in the state of Minas Gerais. In conclusion, the editor expressed his hope that the story of the *quilombos* will someday be part of the past: “When will we be able to read *Histórias de Quilombolas* as past histories of a civilization that has already died off?”²⁵

But the paper’s 1872 run also referred to a series of pessimistic reports published in the *New York Times* about freedmen’s labor in the United States. *O Novo Mundo* reported the problems identified by the *Times* but insisted on contextualizing them. According to the paper, vagrancy among freedpeople was a temporary problem brought on by their desire to migrate from the plantations where they had been enslaved. Furthermore, a minority of the freedpeople had clearly improved their lot, and, despite claims to the contrary, Southern landowners were already unanimous in proclaiming the superiority of free labor.²⁶

In the July 1873 edition, a month after André Rebouças’ US visit, one article noted the results of the most recent US census. According to the article, “one of the principal emblems of the life of a people or race is their spirit of migration The search for foreign lands indicates intellectual vigor and wish to seriously shoulder life’s hardships.” For the writer, the US Black population’s demographic growth was an important indicator of the freedmen’s “vitality” and “love of free labor.” The author further noted the freedmen’s preference for cultivating cotton and again praised the expansion of education among former slaves and the removal of freedwomen from the workforce.²⁷

José Carlos Rodrigues served as a great interpreter of the United States for André Rebouças, whose brief US sojourn began after more than a year spent traveling through Europe. Upon his arrival in New York on June 9, Rebouças was shocked when several different hotels refused him a room. Only after various failed attempts did he understand that he had been refused hospitality on account of the “color difficulty” (sic).

“I obtained the address for the Brazilian Consulate and headed there in a special carriage,” Rebouças wrote in his diary. He was received “very

²⁵ *O Novo Mundo*, June 24, 1872, p. 154, “Os Quilombolas.”

²⁶ *O Novo Mundo*, October 23, 1872, p. 3, “O Trabalho dos Emancipados.”

²⁷ *O Novo Mundo*, July 23, 1873, p. 163, “Movimento da População Negra.”

kindly by the Consul's son," who was also an engineer, and was then able to secure "a room at the Washington Hotel on the condition that [he] take meals in his room rather than in the restaurant." He was initially given a "very dirty little room" on the third floor and was then moved to a bedroom with a sitting room that opened directly to Broadway, which meant that he never had to cross paths with the other guests. According to Rebouças' diary, the establishment – which had "the honor of once welcoming the immortal Washington" – was "in fashion for many years" but had since become "a third-class hotel."²⁸

After he finally settled in, André Rebouças returned to the consulate to await José Carlos Rodrigues, with whom he had spent the previous evening visiting the docks, since, according to his diary, "color prejudice impeded [him] from attending the show at the Grand Opera House."²⁹

André Rebouças was well-received by engineers of the New York Pacific Railway but spent most of his first days in the United States with José Carlos Rodrigues.³⁰ As a way to explain the foreigners of the United States to his Brazilian visitor, Rodrigues talked about illustrious non-whites: "the *mulato* [Frederick] Douglass, an old friend of President Grant and very influential in his reelection, had been turned away recently from several hotels in Washington, DC; this fact led to controversy in the newspapers and a motion in the US Senate."³¹

Rebouças had a few other friends in the city, including the Lidgerwood brothers, engineers with whom he met up on June 11. One of the Lidgerwoods agreed to accompany Rebouças on his excursion to various ports along the East Coast "in order to avoid problems of color prejudice."³² José Carlos Rodrigues saw him off on the steamer *Providence*.

The East River reminded Rebouças of the Paraná River. Always in the company of John Lidgerwood, he visited "magnificent cotton mills" and continued to Boston, eating his meals in public places without any further racial aggravation. On the way to Buffalo, however, when the train stopped for a meal, he was again harassed by a restaurant owner, at which point "John Lidgerwood had to make a point of revealing my nationality, and refer[red] to me constantly as 'Doctor.'"³³ From then on, with each new stop there was a new complaint. Even so, Rebouças marveled at Niagara Falls and the tourism industry that surrounded it,

²⁸ André Rebouças, *Diário e notas*, p. 245–246.

²⁹ André Rebouças, *Diário e notas*, p. 246.

³⁰ André Rebouças, *Diário e notas*, p. 246.

³¹ André Rebouças, *Diário e notas*, p. 247.

³² André Rebouças, *Diário e notas*, p. 248.

³³ André Rebouças, *Diário e notas*, p. 249.

which was like nothing he had seen in Europe. He especially noted the “Yankee audacity” of the ferry and the beauty of the suspension bridge to Canada. In Buffalo, he wrote that all the hotel staff members were “*mulatos* and creoles.”³⁴

The next day Rebouças visited the “Oil-Creek” oil fields. The progress he observed there astounded him and brought him hope. He firmly shared the optimism of his friend Rodrigues:

The discovery of oil in “Oil Creek” dates back to 1858; it was during the Civil War that this industry reached maximum production.

In Moses’s time, to free the people of Israel, God made water spill from rocks: to free the American slaves, God did even more: he made oil come from the land of Pennsylvania!³⁵

On Rebouças’s return trip, however, the “color prejudice” at the train stops caused him to go two days “without food.” All the same, he was impressed, visiting factories, mines, bridges, docks, and shipyards. They traveled by train from Pittsburgh to Philadelphia in a sleeping car, and, as at the hotel, “he was served by *negros* and *mulatos*.” When they returned to New York City on June 18, at 11 p.m., there was again no hotel for Rebouças, a problem they finally resolved at the “State House” at 760 Broadway, where he shared a room with John Lidgerwood.³⁶

The next day, José Carlos Rodrigues put Rebouças in a room adjacent to his own at French’s Hotel, and on June 20 Rebouças received his passport to return home from the Brazilian consulate. Before his departure, Rebouças visited the family home of the Lidgerwood brothers and made additional technical visits to the outskirts of the city. On June 23, two weeks after his arrival in New York, he embarked on the Corvette *Niterói* for his return to Brazil.³⁷

Rebouças’ journey had been made amidst challenges to his rights as operator of the docks of Rio de Janeiro. The death of his brother Antônio, in 1874, would eventually lead him to abandon his business dreams. In a way, his failure as a businessman would also mark the beginning of his path as an abolition activist.³⁸ From then on, he became known for his advocacy of social reform projects, which specifically included the abolition of slavery and the democratization of land ownership, both projects clearly inspired by the Yankees.

³⁴ André Rebouças, *Diário e notas*, p. 250. ³⁵ André Rebouças, *Diário e notas*, p. 251.

³⁶ André Rebouças, *Diário e notas*, p. 252–253.

³⁷ André Rebouças, *Diário e notas*, p. 253–256. ³⁸ A. Trindade, “André Rebouças.”

As previously stated, André Rebouças was eventually one of *O Novo Mundo*'s principal contributors. Among his numerous articles, he wrote his brother's obituary and a tribute to his father, Counselor Antônio Pereira Rebouças, which was published along with a full-page portrait on the cover of the February 22, 1875, edition.³⁹ It was during this same period that André Rebouças edited his father's memoirs. The newspaper also published Rebouças' articles in a special insert called the *Revista Industrial*.⁴⁰ These included three pieces about coffee, cotton, and sugar that made proposals about those crops' future in Brazil.

The coffee article focused on the prizes that Brazilian beans had received at the Centennial International Exhibition of 1876, held in Philadelphia. To maintain the crop's excellence, Rebouças stated, coffee would have "to undergo a critical progressive evolution from slave to free labor."⁴¹ For this purpose, his proposal called for the industrialization of coffee processing and the democratization of agricultural production, to be achieved by leasing or selling small plots of land to freedmen and immigrants. That was also the basis for his proposal for sugarcane production: industrialization combined with the democratization of land tenure and the mechanization of agricultural production, a model he called "rural democracy."

The article on cotton, however, is especially interesting for the purposes of this chapter, because it paired proposals for Brazilian agriculture with an interesting analysis of the US post-emancipation scenario.⁴² According to Rebouças, 1876 was a year of "crisis and decadence in the cotton culture in this [Brazilian] Empire . . . yet one of prosperity and great victory for cotton in the admirable Anglo-American Republic." The article's objective was to explain why. For the author, the answer was simple: "slave labor here, free labor there: an incessant experimental demonstration that constitutes practical proof of the sublime axiom: liberty is the supreme prerequisite for rational and progressive labor." To prove his point, he presented figures for the post-Civil War cotton harvest and the growth of the textile industry in the US South. The harvest of 1875/1876,

³⁹ *O Novo Mundo*, August 23, 1874, p. 196, "Necrologia – o Engenheiro Antonio Rebouças"; February 22, 1875, p. 117, "O Sr. Antonio Pereira Rebouças (retrato)" and p. 122, "O Sr. Conselheiro Rebouças."

⁴⁰ *O Novo Mundo*, April 23, 1877, pp. 75–79.

⁴¹ *O Novo Mundo*, April 23, 1877, pp. 75.

⁴² Articles originally published in *O Globo* and republished in the April 23, 1877, edition of *O Novo Mundo*.

as already been reported in *O Novo Mundo*, had been nearly identical to the largest harvest ever reported during slavery:

Thus, the cotton harvest of 1875–1876 was larger than any from the nefarious period of slavery: it was only 482 bales smaller than the maximum harvest known in the United States.

These figures are irrefutable; it is not freedom; it is God himself teaching us that slavery is not only unfair and unjust, but also fatal to the development of wealth and the prosperity of nations.

And it should also be noted that the 1875–1876 planting season was disturbed by the uprisings of the carpet-baggers; by wretched clashes between freedpeople and their former masters, stirred up by the politicians for electoral purposes.

In the absence of these upheavals, they would have harvested 500 more bales, and the harvest of 1875 to 1876 would have been the largest ever obtained in the United States.

If we go from agriculture to the cotton industry, the results are even more astonishing.⁴³

Despite his optimism, Rebouças followed the inclinations of *O Novo Mundo* in being attentive to Southern accusations about the political activities of Northern “adventurers.” Those Southern critiques were part and parcel of a strategy to undo Reconstruction and impose racist restrictions on African Americans and would culminate in the fully institutionalized suppression of Black voting rights in the Southern states. But that was still in its early stages in the late 1870s. And André Rebouças, despite his trying experience in the “great Northern republic,” as he referred to it, was an optimist when it came to the free movement of goods (which he advocated in the article) and the triumph of free labor around the world.

In addition to closely monitoring the results of the various experiments in emancipation across the Americas, Rebouças was increasingly aware during this period of Black economic activity in Africa, noting:

It is not only in the United States that the slave, purified by freedom, works wonders; it is in Puerto Rico, which is still a colony of Spain; it is in Martinique, which belongs to France; it is in the British colony of Mauritius; it is in the Portuguese colony of Angola, which already sent coffee to Lisbon markets to compete with ours; it is in Liberia, this singular republic of Blacks freed in the United States, already wealthy as a result of oil and palm trade, which now prospers amazingly from the cultivation of the famous Liberian coffee; it is, at last, everywhere in which lawmakers had the wisdom of ordering the unfastening of the hideous chains of slavery.⁴⁴

⁴³ *O Novo Mundo*, April 23, 1877, p. 78. ⁴⁴ *O Novo Mundo*, April 23, 1877, p. 78.

The friendship between André Rebouças and José Carlos Rodrigues would survive the end of *O Novo Mundo*. It would even be maintained when Rebouças decided to accompany the deposed Brazilian emperor into exile in 1889, just as his friend decided to end his own exile in the United States and return to Brazil. These contrary choices both stemmed from the same cause. On May 13, 1888, Brazil's Princess Regent signed the bill that abolished slavery, without compensating slaveowners and after massive flights of the last enslaved workers. A year and a half later, with the full support of discontented slaveowners who came to be known as the "14th of May republicans," a military coup ended the monarchy and instituted Brazil's first Republic.

José Carlos Rodrigues, son of coffee farmers from Cantagalo, was an early republican, who converted to Protestantism and willingly left Brazil to live in exile in the United States, after being accused of corruption by the royalist government while working as a public servant. The republican regime brought Rodrigues back to Brazil, although only for a few years; he would become owner of the *Jornal do Commercio*, one of the most important newspapers in Rio de Janeiro. André Rebouças, as a Liberal monarchist and personal friend of Dom Pedro II, decided to accompany the Imperial family into exile. He was firmly convinced that the republican coup had been fueled by resentment on the part of the old slave-based oligarchies, who feared the implementation of reforms that could lead to a "rural democracy," which, as conceived in Rebouças' articles in the 1870s, would have eliminated large landed estates and complemented the work of abolition. Rebouças never returned to Brazil, but neither did he break his epistolary ties with the friend he had met in the United States.

BREAKING THE SILENCE

In exile, André Rebouças stopped keeping a diary. From that point on, however, he began to save copies of the letters he wrote in his correspondence notebooks. In these letters, written first in Europe and then in Africa, a small revolution took shape in Rebouças' self-narration. It was in a letter to the former owner of *O Novo Mundo*, written as he awaited Dom Pedro II's death in Cannes in October 1891, that Rebouças referred to himself for the first time as "the *negro* André."⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Fundação Joaquim Nabuco – Recife (FJN)/LABHOI-UFF, Coleção André Rebouças, Registro de Correspondência, vol. IV, 1891–1892, letter to José Carlos Rodrigues, p. 517, image 1465, Cannes, October 29, 1891.

Judging from his letters, Rebouças' final years in exile were marked by deep melancholy. Leo Spitzer is the only biographer who emphasizes this stage of Rebouças' life, arguing that it underscored the sense of marginality that characterized him.⁴⁶ The fact that Rebouças narrated this melancholy as an acute awareness of his African origins, however, suggests that it reflected more than the personal difficulties he confronted.

In Spitzer's reading, Rebouças' anguish at the end of his life is a psychological reflection of the "social anomaly" to which he was condemned as a *mulato* in a white world. From this standpoint, Rebouças' social agency is obscured by an interpretive model that presents racial identities as immutable categories, tragically pitting individual freedom against social structure. Without disregarding the tragic dimension of André Rebouças' trajectory and the richness of certain aspects of Spitzer's analysis, my intention is to capture the dramatic dimension of Rebouças' correspondence. Rebouças' letters dwell significantly on Africa, allowing us to see the sinister edifice produced by European scientific racism and colonialism. His narratives illuminate the multiple actors present in assembling this social drama, including Black diasporic figures like himself.⁴⁷

In fact, much of what André Rebouças wrote about Africa after Brazil's abolition suggests familiarity with the US thinkers whose ideas would later contribute to Pan-Africanism. Rebouças' perception, expressed in his letters from Africa, was that the Atlantic Blacks were also Africans, that they shared the "soul" of their brothers from the "Martyr Continent" and should contribute to the mission of Christianizing and civilizing Africa.⁴⁸ Even if US intellectuals did not directly influence Rebouças' thought, it is worth pondering the ways in which the growing importance of race in Western scientific thought after 1870 – and especially after Brazilian abolition – might have led Rebouças to reflect upon the theme in much the same way as Black intellectuals in the United States.

In his self-imposed exile, Rebouças continued to be an active and well-informed intellectual who wrote constantly and published numerous articles in the Brazilian press. His letters discussed a wide array of issues that plagued Brazil and the world. His first article on Africa, *O problema da África* (*The Problem of Africa*), was written on November 7, 1890, while he was still in Lisbon, and published in Brazil's *Revista de*

⁴⁶ Leo Spitzer articulates this interpretation in *Lives in Between*, particularly chapter 6.

⁴⁷ W. Wariboko, "I really cannot."

⁴⁸ A. Crummell, *The Future*; E. Blyden, *Liberia's Offering*.

Engenbaria the following year.⁴⁹ In it, he sought to reflect upon the relationship between slavery and racism:

Africa has always been a continent of slavery . . . The color black has always been valued by the exploiters of men as a justification for their iniquity . . . The color black saved them from a moral struggle . . . Because all criminals want to have some justification for their crime.

At that point, Rebouças was still optimistic about the presence of Christianity in Africa, both Protestant and Catholic, and especially about the churches' role in the fight against slavery, which was still thriving on that continent. He praised Cardinal Lavigerie in Algeria (whom he saw as an opponent of Muslim proslavery advocates) and the Black Protestant missionaries in Liberia and Sierra Leone.

Recognizing European and American responsibility for what he referred to as the "African problem," which derived in Rebouças' view entirely from slavery, he counted on the civilizing efforts of Europeans and Americans to repair centuries of African suffering. In the wake of 1888, he firmly believed that Brazil should play a role in a new colonization of the African continent.

Considered from the highest cosmopolitan perspective, Brazil is a great workshop, preparing Humanity for the scientific and industrial conquest of Africa . . . Our next steps as Argonauts of this grandiose future, will take us from across the beautiful coast to the Continent that faces us from across the Atlantic, so that we can bring to it Civilization, Industry and Progress, and thus pay this great debt of gratitude and recognition that Brazil owes to Africa.

In the best tradition of proto-Pan-Africanism, Rebouças proposed the establishment of a steamer route from Europe to the Pacific, which would pass along the Western coast of Africa and continue to Brazil before rounding the tip of South America. With the death of Pedro II in Paris in early December 1891, Rebouças decided to begin the undertaking himself. He traveled from Cannes to Marseilles in order to seek employment on the Luanda-Ambaca Railroad "or in any company in Africa."⁵⁰

In letters from this period, he described in detail an anticipated expedition to Africa, the primary goal of which was to fight slavery on that continent. He planned to leave on the packet ship *Malange*, "with his friend João Nunes Lisboa," and to visit ports along Africa's East Coast,

⁴⁹ A. Rebouças. "O problema."

⁵⁰ Fundação Joaquim Nabuco – Recife (FJN)/LABHOI-UFF, Coleção André Rebouças, Registro de Correspondência, vol. IV, 1891–1892, letter to Santinhos (José Américo dos Santos), p. 609/638, images 1564, 1594, Marseille, January 17, 1892.

producing a detailed report of local conditions and possible improvements; he also planned at various points to “take a steamship from Lourenço Marques [the pre-1976 name for Maputo, in present-day Mozambique] to the East Coast,” to “set up residence in Ambaca or any other high point along the Railroad,” and to “work to develop rail traffic by introducing coffee cultivation to the adjacent areas.”⁵¹

In a long letter to the abolitionist writer Alfredo Taunay, his closest friend and correspondent, he wrote of his desire to be in the “forests of Africa”⁵² and his plans to write a book during his time in Africa entitled “Around Africa,” of “Tolstoyan” inspiration.⁵³ In his self-imposed exile, Rebouças openly assumed his Blackness, making reference to his “Portuguese and African grandparents.” And he also became a diligent reader of Leo Tolstoy, whom he repeatedly quoted in his letters. Only ten years younger than the novelist, André Rebouças became “Tolstoyan” when the Russian writer was only beginning to gain followers in Europe, advocating a stoic and anti-institutional religiosity, aligned with a new sense of pacifism. For Rebouças, attention to Russia and the United States was part of a larger effort to think about post-slavery societies and their potential for modernization. At the same time, Rebouças sought – “Tolstoy-like,” as he liked to say – to morally and intellectually resist the advance of racism in the Western world, an evil that was bolstered by the very “science” in which Western thinkers so believed.

In 1892, André Rebouças finally traveled to the continent of Africa through the Suez Canal. By May he had settled into Lourenço Marques (Maputo). His first impression was one of amazement with the natural landscape and with the new array of languages, religions, and human beings. He felt happy “mingling with all human races; having as enemies only those who monopolized the land and enslaved men.”⁵⁴ He spent some time there before embarking on the steamship *Tinguá* to South

⁵¹ Fundação Joaquim Nabuco – Recife (FJN)/LABHOI-UFF, Coleção André Rebouças, Registro de Correspondência, vol. IV, 1891–1892, letter to Antônio Julio de Machado, p. 614, image 1570, Marseille, January 31, 1892.

⁵² Fundação Joaquim Nabuco – Recife (FJN)/LABHOI-UFF, Coleção André Rebouças, Registro de Correspondência, vol. IV, 1891–1892, letter to Taunay, p. 616, image 1572, Marseille, January 31, 1892.

⁵³ Fundação Joaquim Nabuco – Recife (FJN)/LABHOI-UFF, Coleção André Rebouças, Registro de Correspondência, vol. IV, 1891–1892, letters to Taunay, p. 616, image 1572, Marseille, January 31, 1892, and p. 617, image 1573, Marseille, February 12, 1892.

⁵⁴ Fundação Joaquim Nabuco – Recife (FJN)/LABHOI-UFF, Coleção André Rebouças, Registro de Correspondência, vol. IV, 1891–1892, letter to Taunay, p. 651, image 1610, Lourenço Marques, May 14, 1892.

Africa. His stay was long enough, however, to change his initial point of view:

I left Cannes on January 8, 1892, with the intent of working on the Luanda to Ambaca Railroad, owned by my friend Antonio Julio Machado. Because of the Portuguese crisis, I was only able to leave on the *Malange* to Lourenço Marques on March 27. There I found revolting slave-ownership in its full debauchery. After twenty days of Herculean effort, I had to seek shelter for my Physical and Moral Health in the Barberton Mountains at an altitude of 1,000 meters.⁵⁵

In finding that slavery continued in Lourenço Marques, and that he was powerless to fight it, Rebouças experienced the first disappointment of his trip. Ongoing slavery was not something he was unaware of before arriving, but its dimensions and intensity rendered his plans to fight it unworkable. But by May 26, he was in South Africa, confident of Britain's capacity to repress slavery and the slave trade.

The stigma of revolting slave-ownership is still very much alive in eastern Africa . . . [but] here in South Africa, the *negro* is already progressing toward rural democracy; they already have houses, cultivated crops.⁵⁶

Rebouças settled in Barberton, which he denominated the "African Petrópolis."⁵⁷ He established himself in South Africa as an admirer of the humanitarian sentiment of the British, who were then consolidating the imperialist occupation of the region in the name of "civilization" and the fight against slavery, which had been abolished throughout the British Empire in 1838. The year 1892 was, for Rebouças, one of intense intellectual work. Upon arriving in Barberton, he had "a number of 'idylls' written or ready to write," for which he repeatedly claimed Tolstoyan inspiration.

He sent Taunay a piece entitled "New Propaganda – Dressing 300,000,000 African Negroes," in hopes his friend would facilitate its publication in Brazil.⁵⁸ Part of it, – the sixth of his African "Idylls,"

⁵⁵ Fundação Joaquim Nabuco – Recife (FJN)/LABHOI-UFF, Coleção André Rebouças, Registro de Correspondência, vol. V, 1892–1893, letter to Taunay, p. 709, image 1678, Barberton, November 25, 1892.

⁵⁶ Fundação Joaquim Nabuco – Recife (FJN)/LABHOI-UFF, Coleção André Rebouças, Registro de Correspondência, vol. V, 1892–1893, letter to Rangel Costa, p. 673, image 1641, June 14, 1892.

⁵⁷ Fundação Joaquim Nabuco – Recife (FJN)/LABHOI-UFF, Coleção André Rebouças, Registro de Correspondência, vol. IV, 1891–1892, letter to Antonio Julio Machado, p. 668, image 1627, Barberton, May 28, 1892.

⁵⁸ Fundação Joaquim Nabuco – Recife (FJN)/LABHOI-UFF, Coleção André Rebouças, Registro de Correspondência, vol. IV, 1891–1892, letter to Taunay, p. 665, image 1624, Barberton, June 17, 1892.

written in Barberton on May 30, 1892 – was published in the newspaper *A Cidade do Rio*, owned by abolitionist José do Patrocínio, on February 4, 1893. One of the article's central questions foreshadowed W. E. B. Du Bois' seminal *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903):⁵⁹

Why does the African *negro* always laugh, sing and dance?! . . .

Clad in perpetual mourning, covered in black that is ingrained in his very skin . . .

Why does the African *negro* always laugh, sing and dance?!

Carrying rough . . . hard stones, . . . heavy, cold irons, or dirty and suffocating coal!!! . . .

Why does the African *negro* always laugh, sing and dance?! . . .

When the awful rearguard of the ferocious [Henry Morton] Stanley bought a little Black girl so that they could watch her be eaten alive by the cannibals, they grabbed their Sketchbooks, trained their ears for heartrending screams, and poised their binoculars for emotion scenes . . . The poor girl raised her eyes towards the Heavens and smilingly allowed them to tear apart her belly . . .

Why does the African *negro* always laugh, sing and dance?!

When in Campinas a landowner from São Paulo sent an innocent *preto velho* to the gallows in place of his murderous henchman, that poor wretch unconsciously traipsed along the satanic path of the Annas and the Caiaphas: of the corrupt and cynical judges and juries, wrongly sold out to the enslavers of men, usurpers and monopolizers of our national territory It was only when the executioner approached him with the rope in hand that the old African *preto* understood how the infernal comedy would end . . . So he sat down on the steps of the gallows and sang a song that his mother had taught him, here in the Martyr continent of Africa . . .

Why does the African *negro* always laugh, sing and dance?! . . .

Do tell, Jesus, Martyr of Martyrs: Do tell, You, for whom there are neither secrets nor martyrdoms in sacrifice and humility; in dedication, in devotion and in self-abnegation . . .

Do tell: Why does the African *negro* always laugh, sing and dance?!

Blessed be the slaves, the whipped, the insulted, the slandered, the spat upon and beaten.

Blessed be those who suffer injustice and wickedness: abduction and plundering.

Blessed be those who have no land, nor home: nor property, nor family.

Blessed be those who have no homeland: those who are foreigners in their own African continent.

(conceived in Krokodilpoort, May 23, 1892;
written in Barberton, May 30, 1892)

Rebouças spent all of 1892 working diligently on the book he had planned to write while still in Europe. Although he finished the book,

⁵⁹ For a longer explanation of this passage, see M. Abreu, "O Crioulo Dudu."

entitled *Around Africa 1889–1893: Abolitionist propaganda – Socio-economic life – Anthropology – Botany – Comparison of Brazilian and African Flora – Astronomy, Meteorology, etc.*, the manuscript has not yet been located among Rebouças’ papers.⁶⁰

In late May 1892, shortly after arriving in Barberton, Rebouças still felt optimistic about the possibilities of South Africa under British rule. From his standpoint, “the Africans needed to be taught how to read and write . . . it should be absolutely clear that the only thing Africans ask for is fundamental justice; equality in payment . . ., a bit of land To deny this is a diabolical evil.”⁶¹

With the acceleration of the South African gold rush after 1886, however, the Boers from the Republic of Transvaal became a majority. The Republic of Transvaal or South Africa Republic was an independent state until the British defeated it in the Second Boer War (1899–1902). Rebouças was crushed by the racist practices of the Boers and the return of the specter of proslavery sentiments. Abruptly, in a passage that was not foreshadowed in his previous correspondence, he wrote to Nabuco and Taunay:

The fire at the Royal Hotel in Barberton and endless conflicts with slaveowners determined my move to Cape Town, seat of the scarcest slave-ownership on the miserable African continent. The proslavery republicans of the Transvaal say: *To make Money, slavery is necessary.*⁶²

Rebouças once again felt powerless in the fight against African slavery. In Cape Town, which remained under British rule, he managed to channel his personal resources from Portugal and Brazil through the Bank of South Africa in order to maintain what he defined as an “anti-slavery and scientific mission.”⁶³ But before long, even his illusions about the British rule in the Cape faded away. Racial discrimination, which was not legalized but was informally tolerated by the British, began to affect him. In

⁶⁰ Fundação Joaquim Nabuco – Recife (FJN)/LABHOI-UFF, Coleção André Rebouças, Registro de Correspondência, vol. V, 1892–1893, letter to Taunay and Nabuco, pp. 716/723, images 1685/1692, Barberton, December 21, 1892.

⁶¹ Fundação Joaquim Nabuco – Recife (FJN)/LABHOI-UFF, Coleção André Rebouças, Registro de Correspondência, vol. IV, 1891–1892, letter to Antonio Julio Machado, p. 668, image 1627, Barberton, May 28, 1892.

⁶² Fundação Joaquim Nabuco – Recife (FJN)/LABHOI-UFF, Coleção André Rebouças, Registro de Correspondência, vol. V, 1892–1893, letter to Taunay and Nabuco, p. 711, image 1680, Barberton, December 12, 1892. Emphasis in original.

⁶³ Fundação Joaquim Nabuco – Recife (FJN)/LABHOI-UFF, Coleção André Rebouças, Registro de Correspondência, vol. V, 1892–1893, letter to the Bank of South Africa, p. 720, image 1689, Cape Town, December 19, 1892.

a dramatic letter to Taunay dated December 19, 1892, he cataloged the list of horrors that British colonialists had allowed or engaged in the once idealized “South Africa.”⁶⁴ According to him, the British insisted on:

1. Withholding land ownership from the Africans – What a disgrace! Africans cannot own property on their own continent of Africa!
2. Refusing voting rights to Africans; subjecting them to barbaric laws; judging them in ad hoc courts; using and abusing the atrocious practice of whipping.
3. Employing the brutal Yankee practice of refusing *negros* and *mullatos* hotel rooms, and even making it difficult for clothing stores and toiletry shops to serve them.

All of this was in addition to what happened “in the heinous Republic of the Transvaal, where “former landowners claimed compensation for the formal abolition of slavery by the British,” the trading post system “[stole] wages from the African,” and settlers practiced violence against entire classes of workers. In 1892, Rebouças witnessed a “horrendous event” that caused him to leave the Granville Hotel in Barberton: the lynching of Africans on the streets, which brought to mind “the Yankee cannibals of Ohio, Mississippi, and Missouri.”

Rhetorical references to Europeans and Americans who engaged in actions that were perceived as pure savagery as “cannibals” recurred in Rebouças’ writings. Aside from this, his disappointment with British rule in Africa began to diminish his will to fight. For Rebouças, it was becoming increasingly clear that the problem of racism went much further than the Republic of Transvaal. To Rebouças’ great disappointment, British colonization of South Africa allowed “the African [to remain] completely naked, unabashed and with no shame, in the company of his family, among the women and his own unmarried sons”; it did not teach Africans “English or Dutch or any other language,” because colonists spoke to domestic servants in “a gibberish of Savage, Dutch and Portuguese.”⁶⁵ He concluded, astonished, by saying that “The London *Graphic* depicted a half-naked African, serving as nanny

⁶⁴ Fundação Joaquim Nabuco – Recife (FJN)/LABHOI-UFF, Coleção André Rebouças, Registro de Correspondência, vol. V, 1892–1893, letter to Taunay, p. 734/735/736, images 1703/1704/1705, Cape Town, December 23–27, 1892.

⁶⁵ Fundação Joaquim Nabuco – Recife (FJN)/LABHOI-UFF, Coleção André Rebouças, Registro de Correspondência, vol. V, 1892–1893, letter to Taunay, p. 734/735/736, images 1703/1704/1705, Cape Town, December 23–27, 1892.

in Barberton, carrying a small child and leading the older sister along by the hand!!!!!!”⁶⁶

Rebouças’ enthusiasm for the Protestants likewise ended. His Christian mysticism, like that of Tolstoy, held that all religions, without exception, had a nefarious influence on progress and civilization. To him, all missionaries were theocrats who fostered the caste system (“eminently caste-ish”). “The missionaries in Africa teach the Zulu language instead of English or any other civilized language!”⁶⁷

Rebouças’ letters, especially those to Taunay, made it clear that he himself was no longer immune to segregationist practices, even in Cape Town. All the same, a few more months had to pass for him to give up on his “scientific and anti-proslavery mission” and decide to leave South Africa. In April 1893, he wrote:

Look, I came to Africa not to hunt lions like a lord, but to fight slavery and territorial monopoly. I disembarked in Port Said on April 2, 1892, and soon engaged in my initial battle. Of course, I do not relate my victories, abhorring the quixotic; but I am happy with myself and not sure if I will die in Africa or in Brazil.⁶⁸

The letters of André Rebouças are a dramatic self-narration, as well as a testament to the contradictions and disillusionments of antiracist liberal ideas in the process of European colonization of Africa. According to Paul Gilroy’s foundational work (2001), Black critical thought comprised the first “counterculture of modernity,” produced by divided subjects defined by a “double consciousness” that at once constituted them as modern and excluded them from modernity because of their race. André Rebouças was, without any doubt, a significant figure in this mold.⁶⁹ In his last letter from Cape Town to his friend Taunay, Rebouças narrated his journey in terms of Greek mythology, announcing his departure from Cape Town as a “new chapter in the Odyssey of this miserable African Ulysses.”⁷⁰

⁶⁶ Fundação Joaquim Nabuco – Recife (FJN)/LABHOI-UFF, Coleção André Rebouças, Registro de Correspondência, vol. V, 1892–1893, letter to Taunay, p. 734/735/736, images 1703/1704/1705, Cape Town, December 23–27, 1892.

⁶⁷ Fundação Joaquim Nabuco – Recife (FJN)/LABHOI-UFF, Coleção André Rebouças, Registro de Correspondência, vol. V, 1892–1893, letter to Taunay, p. 734/735/736, images 1703/1704/1705, Cape Town, December 23–27, 1892.

⁶⁸ Fundação Joaquim Nabuco – Recife (FJN)/LABHOI-UFF, Coleção André Rebouças, Registro de Correspondência, vol. V, 1892–1893, letter to Taunay, p. 773, image 1744, Cape Town, April 4, 1893.

⁶⁹ P. Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*.

⁷⁰ Fundação Joaquim Nabuco – Recife (FJN)/LABHOI-UFF, Coleção André Rebouças, Registro de Correspondência, vol. V, 1892–1893, letter to Taunay, p. 791, image 1767, Cape Town, June 20, 1893.

In June 1893, André Rebouças considered his book *Em torno D’Africa* “dead,” “faced with the impossibility of publishing it in Cape Town.” At the same time, “the civil war in Brazil’s south” left him with no will to go home.⁷¹ He decided instead to go to Funchal, on the Atlantic Island of Madeira, where some of his Portuguese friends had epistolary contacts. There, he briefly considered the possibility of returning to the “Martyr Continent” so he could experience its Western coast:

As I wrote in my last letter of 6/20, I arrived on the *Skol* on the 2nd . . . Will I wait out the horrors ravaging our miserable Brazil, or will I go to the Western coast of Africa? . . . God only knows.⁷²

With the historian’s magical hindsight, we know that he carried out none of the options. Still in Funchal, Rebouças fell to his death off of an Atlantic cliff in 1898. The self-narratives he left to the posterity are nonetheless powerful testimonies to the significance of transnational politics for universalist Black intellectuals in the nineteenth-century Atlantic World. The arguments set forth in this chapter have sought to illuminate the racialized subjectivization engendered by the stigma of slavery and to portray the ways in which its politicization was shaped by a collective transnational experience.

⁷¹ He referred to the Federalist Riograndense Revolution (1893–1895), a civil war in southern Brazil against the centralized power of the Republic. Fundação Joaquim Nabuco – Recife (FJN)/LABHOI-UFF, Coleção André Rebouças, Registro de Correspondência, vol. V, 1892–1893, letter to Taunay, p. 787, image 1763, Cape Town, June 12, 1893.

⁷² Fundação Joaquim Nabuco – Recife (FJN)/LABHOI-UFF, Coleção André Rebouças, Registro de Correspondência, vol. V, 1892–1893, letter to Barão da Estrela, p. 791, 1777, Madeira Islands, July 4, 1893.

