

Our Third Root

On African Presence in American Populations

Luz María Martínez Montiel

The recognition of Africa's contribution to American culture involves accepting an inheritance that is both part of the national heritage and part of the identity and cultural profile of each of our societies. By encouraging its complete assimilation into our history, this recognition also involves the study and dissemination of the culture, which in turn will enable the millions of Afro-Americans spread across the continent to participate in the process of building the future. Once properly recognized, this cultural heritage will produce a rich form of *métissage* and generate pluralism.

Roger Bastide applied the term *Amériques noires* (black Americas) to the cultures created by Africans and preserved by their descendants. When we use the term *Amérique africaine* (African America) in the same sense, we mean it to encompass all that the black man has created, from economic structure to community representation, including techniques of production, types of work, systems of understanding and thought, and the arts and traditions.

American cultural movements challenge us to accept our roots. As we begin to better understand our identities, we become more specific and more universal. African cultures, forcefully transformed into American cultures, are returning to their origins.

Africans have been present in America since the first decades of the sixteenth century. According to Du Bois, the number of men and women seized from the African continent approximates 15 million, while De la Roncière puts it at 20 million; if, however, to these numbers are added those who died in the slave ships during the voyage (35 percent), in the slave pens on the African coast (25 percent), or on the journey from the interior of the continent to the

ports (50 percent), as well as the victims of the manhunt (50 percent), a more precise idea of the number sacrificed can be had.

Afro-Americans have developed what is known as *folk-life* in specialized language: a synthesis of African and European traits that took root in America and thus became "native." This is a language whose form has developed its own motifs, styles, and structures. Music and rhythm continue to be an essential mechanism of integration in Africa, and by inheritance, in America, accompanying a great number of social and religious activities in all cultures on both continents. In the United States in particular, they have the functional role of accompanying community activities: tradition is a solid, surviving link between Africa and America. Some forms and techniques have been adapted and incorporated into local societies in Latin America and in the Caribbean. The resulting combinations demonstrate the *métissage* that is at work in the cultural development of countries and peoples who share the same origin.

The oral tradition and the value accorded to the spoken word are other traits that reveal the similarities between descendants of slaves. In South America the oral tradition is present in the *creole culture* in which everyone participates. In a new cultural history this tradition should be brought to the forefront, for the study of popular literature and oral tradition are fundamental to the rewriting of the history of Afro-American societies.

America is one in its entirety, but diverse in its plurality. No future is possible without the total participation, as is their right, of the full range of ethnicities that constitute it. Any rejection of our roots, whether Indian, European, or African, will prevent us from eradicating the racist conceptions that, in one way or another, interpolate our identities, for *any people that rejects itself is committing suicide*.

The study of African slavery in America begins with the system of slavery and black trade on the other side of the Atlantic. Despite the particularities due to the complexity of the subject, we find a common denominator of American origin at the heart of the problem: the Negro, that is, the African converted into a slave, into merchandise. To study the Negro as a cultural product requires seeing him within two contexts: on one hand, the slave

trade that kidnapped him from his own environment to sell him in America, and on the other, the system of slavery that subjected him to forced labor during the American colonial regime. Reconstructing the scope and nature of the Negro's culture means going even further back into his origins.

From a more current theoretical perspective, documentary resources are available in American and European countries waiting to be catalogued and put to use through diverse and clearly defined research methods. Some of these works should make a priority of examining the positions and evolution of the Christian church's doctrine concerning the trade, for the church had its own interest in providing support for the African slave trade throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

What is most needed, however, is a comprehensive study of the role of Africans and Afro-Americans in the economic, social, and cultural development of America. This would require the collaboration of numerous specialists from all of the different countries who have had and still have populations of African descent. A complete study of the trade, of slavery, and of their economic and cultural consequences throughout the world, requires a catalog and inventory of all available American sources of documentation.

In many cases, the printed matter and existing bibliographies on the subject have never traveled beyond their native country, despite an increasing interest in the spread and growth of Afro-American values. In taking up the black man as a theme and as a protagonist in literature, poetry, music, dance, sculpture, and painting, countless cultural expressions work to this end. The black man is not only found in the domain of the fine arts: his natural and ancestral milieu is that of popular culture, which is where we must search for him, for it is here that he has made his greatest contributions.

In the last fifty years, specialists with diverse political backgrounds have studied the economic relationship between blacks and other marginalized minorities in the United States, the Caribbean, and South America. In reviews and other periodicals, blacks continue to be a theme, but one consistently treated with respect to *subculture* and the various migratory movements

toward the industrial centers of northern countries. This phenomenon provokes the disintegration of the family, inter-ethnic clashes, and the formation of ghettos in poor areas. Today the subject of minorities and their assimilation into dominant cultures is returning to the forefront.

At the time of the independence of our American countries, the status of the black man rose from slave to citizen. Questions were of course raised about his ability to assimilate Anglo-Saxon or Latin models of culture. It was thought that his strange culture, with its different customs and forms of thought and perception, would prevent, or at least pose serious obstacles to, the integration of Africans into American societies and Western culture. Regarding this issue, it is of interest to take a look at the Afro-American religions, which had in fact captured the attention of some of the first researchers, such as Nina Rodriguez in Brazil and Fernando Ortiz in Cuba. In Haiti, it was at first thought that voodoo, the religion of the black rural masses, was the major hindrance to the economic and social development of the island. It was in this country, however, that the negritude movement got its start, a movement demanding among other things the re-evaluation of formerly misunderstood and despised local religions, thought to be "superstitions." The North American occupation of Haiti revived the elite's nationalism and produced a realization that led to the cultural unity of all Haitians and, finally, to their embrace of their African heritage.

Some authors believe that science has severed its last links to ideology in these last decades. This rupture has indeed encouraged the systematic application of scientific analyses and theories to the study of surviving African culture. However, it cannot really be asserted that the links between science and ideology have been thoroughly severed: absolute neutrality and objectivity seem impossible to obtain in this era, still plagued with problems of racial and ethnic integration across the world and in particular throughout America, where integration has known periods of violence.

In the Caribbean, ancient forms of the *santeria* cults, which are of Nigerian origin, are reappearing in the form of large religious movements. These religions are practiced by fully active ethnic groups who are in the process of reinterpreting their own tradi-

tions. Such reports bear witness to a new return to the African roots of these so called syncretic religions. There are other examples; in daily practice the religion of Yoruba origin (*santeria*), usually considered a *cosa de negros* (a black affair), includes an increasing number of nonblack participants in the countries in which it is practiced. These collective rituals of religious communion have resulted in the "Africanization" of whites. Such manifestations of identification with Africa prove that, contrary to what has been thought, slavery has not totally destroyed black culture. Assimilation must be considered with respect to the extent of disorder instigated by the white man on the reorganization of black nuclear structures according to the options and models offered by the dominant society. In the course of a long process of *métissage*, blacks, whites, and Indians have all contributed to new forms of living and dancing, new beliefs, and even new culinary recipes.

In light of the above, we can now call upon the proposition made by Bastide in his work, "the ideology of negritude, born in the West Indies, claims to reground the black American in his ancestral culture; the wise man who studies the problems of Afro-Americans finds himself implicated, whether he wants it or not, in an agonizing debate, for the America of tomorrow depends on the conclusions that he makes."

Several authors have agreed on the "gesture" of independence, by which the insurgent armies of America predominantly lined up their ranks with black people and representatives of castes *who had already opposed a resistance to colonial forces*. In fact, one recognizes the important role that they played in the liberation of our continent, for it is reasonable to assume that it was the dark-skinned who undermined the core of colonial power by blazing the road to freedom in America. The validity of this theory is proven by Haiti's example.

The opposition between blacks and Indians was reinforced, even legally so, by outlawing, for example, mixed marriages. In this way, it was ensured that black descendants of Indians, who inherited the mother's status at birth, would not go free. A great number of lawsuits attest to the racial rivalry between blacks and Indians. This is not to say that the rivalry was formerly nonexistent; it is to say that as a result of white power, the laws in question served to reinforce it.

One of the greatest achievements of the anthropological sciences in the last century is the recognition that no society exists without culture and that all human groups have a cultural heritage that cannot be dissolved or abolished by a change in economic structure, as long as it persists in the official discourse and in educational institutions, both public and private.

In America, the factors that characterize cultural revolution are also found in the strength of precolonial cultures – the results of the *métissage* that occurred throughout the centuries of colonial domination, and the transformations that took place after independence. On this subject, Leopold Zea quotes Vasconelos who wrote: “in Spanish America, Nature will no longer repeat her partial trials. There will no longer be a race of a single color with particular traits, the kind that would emerge from an Atlantis fallen into oblivion. The future race will not be a fifth or sixth one, destined to surpass those that preceded it; what will be born is the definitive race, the race of synthesis, or the integrated race, steeped in the wisdom and blood of all people, and as a result, more capable of proving the possibility of true brotherhood and a truly universal vision.” Zea ends thus, “All equal amongst each other as a result of their differences, but none sufficiently different that some could be considered more or less ‘men’ than others.”

From the conquest of America to the present day, South American countries have been oriented toward the assimilation of Western values, but the search for identity by the populations produced by *métissage* remains a subject of vital importance today. The history of the last centuries is in part an account of the failures and successes in the search for a national culture. In the new history, all the cultural processes and movements, such as negritude, that have contributed to forging the identity of a plural and multi-ethnic people must be gathered together.

In order to activate all facets of identity, to write a history that includes our Amerindians and blacks in addition to the Europeans, we must write a new history. To achieve this we must use the museums of our many American countries to create spaces that serve to disseminate the existence of our third African root and all of its contents.

Aureola Molina, the thinker of Vera Cruz notes, "history doesn't unfold by itself but follows the people closely: those who do not value their past are incapable of imagining a future in keeping with the mark that they have made in history."

As for the rest, it is up to the American peoples to have the last word on their identity and on the preservation of their traditions.

Sources of Documentation on the Trade and African Enslavement

Our primary sources of data are made up of the numerous works written on the slave trade, the forced immigration of Africans, and the study of African communities in America. The first represent the resources used in the pioneering works of this century; the second is comprised of the work of historians, anthropologists, sociologists, etc., dedicated to synthesizing the initial collection of documents. These initial works describing the black man in America are generally of an ethnographic nature, based on first hand accounts of the customs, rituals, and beliefs of the descendants of African slaves. Even if they involve judgments that fail to totally understand their subject, their testimony is very valuable in reconstructing America's social and cultural history.

Documentary resources, the necessary base from which a complete vision of the trade can be arrived, should not only provide for the causes and consequences of slavery, but also help determine the volume of traffic, broken down by era, period, and century, as well as its form and the consequences of the massive migration of Africans to America, Europe, and Africa. Some authors have even used existing documents as a base from which to study other aspects of the slave trade, such as the personality traits of the procurers, their commercial relationships, and their social status, that is, the world of slave traders from the factory bosses, to the ship owners, the slave brokers, the shippers, etc.¹

The first stories of the trade are best documented in Spanish archives, even though the first brokers were Portuguese. Historians have established that the supervision of the trade was divided between the Indian council (*Consejo de Indias*), the

Chamber of Commerce (*Casa de Contratación*), and the Finance Council (*Consejo de Hacienda*). The boats were registered in Seville and the accounts were kept at the General Audit Court (*Contaduría Mayor de Hacienda*). The General Indian Archives represent thus the first documented source concerning the trading, the General Archives of Simanca follow as do the Historic Provincial Archives of Valladolid and the National Historical Archives of Madrid, as well as the Naval Museum and the Library of the Royal Academy of History.²

Although much documentation on the trade exists in the European countries involved, they have not been sufficiently studied, despite their obvious importance. Portugal, Great Britain, France, and, in other respects, the Netherlands, all possess very rich documentary inheritances which are well enough organized to be useful. The oral tradition, which takes up where archival evidence is ignored, makes reference to the demographic drain suffered by the African continent. Slavery has become a part of the body of myths and legends maintained by the oral tradition of the African peoples, but even so it remains an insufficiently explored and potentially valuable line of research.

The information on the documentation concerning Africans and their American descendants has yet to be logically organized in the countries of the New World. The organized resources that we currently possess are those thanks to the efforts of international organizations such as UNESCO who have taken the preservation of this information to heart. The many meetings that have focused on the cultural relations between Africa and Latin America have yielded a series of recommendations for both short- and long-term action. At last, the need for a center of documentation and information specializing in the study of African culture in Latin America has been recognized. The final document of the 1964 meeting further suggests the exchange of facsimiles, documents, bibliographies, and documentary files between Africa and Latin America. In support of this suggestion, they underlined the need for a catalogue of cultural, institutional, and other available collections, specific to the issues concerning Afro-Latino-Americans in Africa, America or any other country that has an historical interest in the matter.

Over one hundred volumes worth of documents and works on this theme and related details can be cited. Only the essential ones will be mentioned here, those sources that will most benefit from a wide distribution. This is only the beginning of a new investigation that has posed numerous difficulties to the experts, for the creation of a catalogue of documents relating to the theme of blacks in America demands that all of the archives be organized in accordance with international systems. The libraries and archives of different American countries have all adopted varying systems of classification. In each case the criteria used were those that were directly related to the research underway at the time. In Latin America, documents were organized in a system based on colonial affairs. It is only in the last twenty-five years that blacks have emerged as a theme of research (still in the developmental stages for some institutions) with rubrics covering slavery, the trade, slave revolts, and other subjects of interest such as emancipation and liberation.

Once accepted as an object of study, blacks became the subject of highly-specialized books by authors recognized in the field of human and social sciences. In general, the primary centers of documentation are to be found in the capitals of Latin-American countries, as are the majority of specialists and institutions. In certain cases, however, several cities house important archives within a single country, such as Seville, Simancas, and Valladolid in Spain or Cordoba, Jalapa, and Mexico City in Mexico. These centers of documentation must be hierarchized.

A certain reticence can be felt with respect to this theme and added to the list of factors disfavoring the adequate classification of material related to blacks in the Latin American archives. In many countries the history taught does not give an account of the influx and presence of Africans in each American region. Even universities do not offer consistent courses on black cultures. The prejudices born of slavery have contributed to the negation of Africa and to the ban on teaching its cultures at all levels of the system, from kindergarten to higher education. Only in these last decades have historical studies taken Africa and its cultures, art, and folklore into account. Literature, anthropology, and sociology have served as a vector of dissemination for African cultures. There nonetheless remains a lot to do, for university chairs

devoted to Afro-American cultures are the exception rather than the rule. Even amongst the programs of study with a focus on Latin America, there are only a few institutions of higher education and research who take the past and present of Asia and Africa into account. The old prejudices have not been completely dispelled. Few historians have really objectively evaluated the ethnic and social development of the American continent despite the recent emphasis by black-culture specialists on the participation of Africans in the social struggles of the colonial era and in the wars of independence.

Still, the progress of history itself has obliged the historians and other scientists to widen the field of their research. They are now publishing works that pose theoretical questions: about the significance of the regime of slavery in America; about the economic correlation between American countries on a global level during the period of slavery; and about the process of the development and decline of the regime of slavery in America, to name only a few of the most interesting themes.

While the works addressing the life of blacks in America already number the hundreds, their production is very uneven, and there are extreme differences between the publications of various countries. In all of Latin America there exist only a few reviews that focus on the theme or themes relative to black Americans, and of these, some are limited to just a few issues (this was the case with *Afroamerica* which published only three issues).

In countries with a strong Amerindian population such as Peru, Mexico, Ecuador, and Bolivia, the presence of black culture is not of quite the same proportion as it is in Brazil, Venezuela or Colombia where the black population is historically strong and has left a large lineage. This explains the importance of the documentation of blacks in these countries, as it does the importance of the direct study of Afro-American communities.

Ecuador offers only a few isolated monographs based on archival documents; in Bolivia and Chili the bibliography on blacks is quite reduced and, in fact, specialized works are rare. Specialized bibliographies such as the Afro-Paraguayan one by Paulo de Carvalho Neto or the Uruguayan one by Alfonso Pereda Valdéz are rather exceptional.

In two countries, Cuba and Brazil, African influence has preserved the folklore and the traditions. Most of the studies of documentation and actual populations of African descent have been carried out there. In these countries, the study of black cultures does take place in the universities where they teach the different languages still used in religious rites, and a special importance is accorded to the study of recent migrations from Brazil toward Africa.

On the Term "Afro-American"

In their respective domains, history, sociology, ethnology, and other disciplines all grapple with the African presence in America, which now forms a collective that we call *African America*. The results of slavery have become a global reality in which the traces of our ancestors are manifest and alive, where Africanness is a substance not only biological but also a product of history and cultural roots. Its territory is not defined, though it is easy to observe the weight of its representation in certain regions, in people's faces, in their devotion to the inescapable use of drums, in the continuity of *afro-synthetic* ritual. There are nuances in demographic distribution across the map, but the African constituency covers the entire country, from Canada to Argentina and from the Pacific to the Atlantic. It is the link that has built, through slavery, the complex chain of the world of *métissage*. Perhaps the concept of Afro-American arises from a methodological need for a term that designates the African element spread throughout the peoples of the continent; this would be a term similar to Latin America or Spanish America, drawing attention to the makeup of the occidental world via a name (Spanish or Latin) of a part of their land. These terms have, however, held the black person at a distance, separating him from America and negating his position as a cultural agent in Latin America; in addition, the African sector is kept separate in English and Dutch speaking countries. In other words, Latin America is exclusive as a result of its European mold, while African America includes all Americans who have African roots whether their language be French, English or Spanish.

The term *Amerindian*, which underlines the persistence of pre-colonial cultures in predominantly Indian regions, must also be considered. A broad and politically engaged term, it designates in particular the America weakened by the devastating actions of conquest. "Amerindian," like "Afro-American," is an inclusive term that unites the original cultures of the entire continent, or in any case, what is left of them. This term designates the country's most distant history, that of its Old World founders. It stands as an epilogue, defends them from complete destruction, and represents five centuries of unflinching survival.

African America has no more of a frontier and is no more homogenous than *Amerindian*. Just as in the ancient African kingdoms, certain areas represent agglomerations where Africanness is preserved and taught: Harlem, Bahia, Palenque San Basilio, Santiago in Cuba, Matanzas, Barlovento ... Contemporary diasporas originate in these places, fostering resistance to assimilation, but also fostering the syncretic movements and the movements that result in the cultural conquest of the *nonblack* world.

In Mexico, the term "Afro-American" took on its conceptual dimension at the time of the first Inter-American Demographic Congress which took place in the capital. The International Institute of Afro-American studies was founded on 20 October 1943 with the review *Afroamerica* as the periodical mouthpiece of the Institute. The two would last for only a brief duration: the review only published three issues; 1 and 2 in the first volume and 3 in the second, despite the fact that the most prestigious Afro-Americanists were involved in the review's promotion: M. Herskovita, A. Lokce, R. Price, J. Price Mars, A. Ramos, F. Ortiz, G. Aguirre Beltrán, J. Le Reverand, and Jorge A. Vivó, among others.

On 5 July 1946 Aguirre Beltrán's work *La población negra de México* came out. The sequel would be published in 1958 under the name *Cuijla, esbozo etnográfico de un pueblo negro*. Since then, and until 1976, the Center of Higher Research of the National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH) has initiated the Afro-American Conference which still functions in various capacities.

Documentation

The following summary of UNESCO catalogues will give an idea of the resources currently available.

ARGENTINA – *Nation's General Archives*: the most significant source of information on blacks. *National Library Archives*: here are found works on blacks, slaves and slavery within the country. *Archives of the Library of Congress*: documents relating to blacks. *Archives of the Minister of External Relations and of the Cult*: documents on the terms of the slave trade and the traffic in blacks. *Archives of the National Institute of Anthropology*: details of the folklore of black populations. *Archives of the Buenos Aires Customs*: details on the traffic of blacks and the trade. In certain private libraries and archives one can also find old and new materials treating blacks.

BOLIVIA – *Historical Archives of Potosí*: the material concerning blacks is spread throughout the documentation: documents about black slaves refer to those employed to work in a metal foundry. *Ecclesiastical Archives*: baptism records of black slaves. *National Archives of Bolivia*: documents corresponding to the colonial and nationalist periods. *National Library of Bolivia*: printed materials from the colonial era on blacks in the history of Bolivia.

BRAZIL – paradoxically, this country does not possess a great number of documents concerning blacks, although there are royal maps, decrees, rulings, and a somewhat reduced set of documentation. As is well known, most of the official documents concerning slaves were destroyed in 1890, when the slaves were liberated and slavery was abolished. This resulted from the idea that slavery was a stain which should disappear forever. By granting the legitimacy of this generally held opinion, the abolitionist confederation, which harbored the most fervent defenders of black liberty among its ranks, demanded and obtained from the Financial Minister of the provisional government of the Republic, the abolitionist Ruy Barbosa, the destruction by fire of all papers books and documents relating to slaves, the registration of slaves, the "ingenuos" (the sons of slaves born after the emancipation), the free sons

of slaves' wives, and the emancipated sexagenarians, for as was stated in the minister's order, it was the duty of the Republic to destroy all vestiges of slavery for the honor of the fatherland.³

In spite of this enormous loss, one can still find documentation in the *National Archives*, at the *Brazilian Historic and Geographical Institute*, in the *Archives of the State of Bahia* and in many libraries such as the National Library. In retrospect, the Brazilian bibliography on this subject remains extensive and deep. It is a collection of the most significant aspects of the lives of blacks in Brazil. Among Brazilian authors, there are in particular: Raymundo Nina Rodríguez, Arthur Ramos (already mentioned), Manuel Querino, René Ribeiro, Octavio Iani, Henrique Cardoso, L.A. Costa Pinto, and Tales de Acevedo, from among so many others that to list them all would take too long.

COLUMBIA – the *Historic National Archives of Columbia*: documentary resources on mines, lands, introduction of populations, ornaments, taxes, and a large section on the subject of the black population or slaves called "Negros y Esclavos" in the *Historical Archives of Antioquia*. The documentation corresponds to colonial and independent periods. There is a more specific department containing a section on slaves including various documents referring to the black population.

CUBA – *General Archives*: whose catalog was developed by specialists from the *Institute of the History of the Academics of the Sciences in Cuba* who published a catalog summarizing documentary resources. A good number of Cuban archival materials were transferred to Spain. Those that refer the most closely to colonial life must be consulted in the *General Archives in India*. In any case, the materials referring to the blacks abound in the section entitled *Historic Archives*. There one can find facts by which to study the trade and piracy in close relation to the trafficking of slaves. One mustn't forget that in Cuba, as in other countries, provincial or regional archives should be the object of thorough, fundamental research.

CHILI – the *National Archives of Chili* have assembled all historic documentation of a public character which can be found in the country: the acts, notary records, and those of the court are particularly pertinent to the study of blacks.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC – the *General Archives of the Nation*: here one finds different sections corresponding to different historical periods – the Spanish colonial era, the French colonial era, Haitian domination, etc. *Cathedral Archives*: black baptism, marriage and death records.

ECUADOR – *Municipal Archives of Quito*: one of the principal centers of documentary research; the most significant section is the book of Chapters (Cabildos). *Archives of the Legislative Power*: references to slaves and to emancipated slaves. *Archives of Archevêché*: details in various documents on the blacks' enslavement. *Guayaquil Archives*: references to blacks in several cities.

EL SALVADOR – *General National Archives*: the documentation is dispersed throughout and there is no section devoted to the black population.

GUATEMALA – *General Government Archives*: the "Colony" section devotes itself mainly to titles from the registry, royal patronage, government decrees; the references to blacks are important in the section dedicated to royal warrants.

HONDURAS – *Honduran General Archives*: scattered references to blacks.

MEXICO – *General National Archives*: archives of great importance concerning history; here we find close to 25,000 volumes. Sections that refer to the subject of blacks: the Inquisition, royal warrants, interrogations of parties, ordinances, favors, Jesus Hospital, history, and patrons. The significant characteristic of these archives is that other institution's resources have been added to them. Now we will attempt to classify exhaustively the places where, unless otherwise indicated, the sections containing materials on blacks are found. *Financial Historical Archives*: many materials on blacks. *Mexico City Hall Archives*: materials relating to slavery. *Notary Archives of the District Federal Department*: multiple details concerning blacks. The State's notary and parish records are very important and remain mostly unexplored.

NICARAGUA – *Nicaraguan National Archives*: completely destroyed by the earthquake in 1931. *Parish Archives*: a source of information concerning baptisms, deaths, marriages and births among blacks.

PANAMA – *National Archives*: the judicial section is of special interest for it contains testimony referring to the sale of slaves. In

the index one will find maps of concessions, documents referring to the introduction of black slaves, to the dark-skinned revolt, to the distribution of blacks, to the war against the dark-skinned, to punishments and misdemeanors, to alliances between dark-skinned and corsairs, to the liberation and rights of blacks, in addition to important documents on this topic.

PARAGUAY – *Paraguayan National Archives*: documents on blacks. *Parish Archives*: also, documents on blacks.

PUERTO RICO – *General Puerto Rican Archives*: numerous contracts of purchase/sale as well as details of marriages, escapes, emancipation, and testimony of blacks. *Parish Archives*: here we find documents relating to blacks and mulattos. *Municipal Archives of San Juan*: details concerning slaves and freed blacks, mulattos etc. *Carnegie Public Library*: details on slaves and slavery. *Library of Athénée of Porto Rico*: here one finds a collection of minutes from sessions of Spanish courts, with acts by deputies and debates concerning the slavery question.

PERU – *Peru National Archives*: rich information on blacks. Here we find materials from the king's coffers, customs, and from the Court of Accounts and Finance. *Archives of the Minister of Foreign Relations*: documents relating to slaves. *Cuzco Archives*: references to black slaves. *National Library*: one documentation concerning blacks.

URUGUAY – *General National Archives* and *Parish Archives*: in these we find birth records related to slaves and to affairs concerning emancipation, testimonies, sales, etc. The documents that are found in the *General National Archives* contain details of the capture of slaves, the permits for their sale, the licenses for the purchases of boats destined for the trade, hunts for blacks, census, emancipation, etc. One also finds an equally interesting list of slaves as a part of the goods owned by inhabitants of Montevideo. *Archives of the Montevideo Customs*: lists slave ships with the names of the vessels, their nationality, equipment, and the number of slaves. *National Library*: an important resource concerning general information on blacks in Uruguay.

VENEZUELA – The principal source of documentation pertaining to blacks is found in the *General National Archives*. One should next mention the *Archevêché Archives* and certain primary registries such as those in Caracas and the parish archives which are of great interest.

Bibliography

I. Regional bibliography *English-speaking America*

The works in Mexican libraries concerning black, English-speaking cultures are few in number and often treat the sociological phenomenon of blacks in actual societies. There are, however, few works that approach the subject from a historical perspective.

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The French succeeded the English, taking advantage of freed licenses granted to individuals such as Barboteau between 1743 and 1745, and Malhorty between 1746 and 1748. From 1764 to 1779 they revived the conditions of the eighteenth century by granting a monopoly agreement to the Cádiz traders of the Aristegui and Aguirre society. In truth, the pivotal bulk of the trade remained Flemish and English, the slaves being exported, as we have seen, from Jamaica, the great slaving port of the Caribbean.

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The dark skinned communities of Guyane did not manage to form a geographically determined entity and were, in fact, considered a group of tribes out of which four groups were distinguishable: *saramaca*, *auca*, also known as *djuka*, *boni* and *matawaai*.

Misunderstood for a long time, the "bushmen" of the Guinea forests abruptly caught the interest of the ethnologists who thought they were discovering, by studying them, a culture that conserved its African purity, the origin of which could be located in the *agni-ashanti* zone.

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The French-speaking Caribbean

The special attention devoted to the French speaking areas of the Caribbean is essentially thanks to Haiti, where the first great slave revolt occurred. That revolt is considered the precedent for all such actions that occurred in Latin America. The rest of the islands, that is to say the Little West Indies, including Guadeloupe and Martinique, which continued under a permanent colonial system until our time, have acquired a particular connotation. The isolation, more than the language barrier, was the result of the psycho-social status of the two islands, who did not go beyond their borders, and released little information to the outside world.

Apart from its legendary aspect, the Haitian revolution is considered the first victory of revolted slaves in history because the French were soundly routed. After the revolution, the territory left the colonial sphere, and the social group that had formerly been oppressed by the colonial powers became the new power and government. This antecedent broke the ground for a whole body of serious thought on the liberation of blacks, and their cultural situation and identity while assimilated to the values of white culture.

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Notes

1. E. Vila Vilar, *Hispanoamericana y el comercio de los esclavos* (Seville, 1977), p.9.
2. *Ibid.*
3. Various authors, "Introducción al estudio de los repositorios documentales sobre los africanos y sus descendientes en América" in *Introducción a la cultura africana en América Latina*, pp. 47-122.