

## ERUDITION AND RACISM IN THE UPWARD TRAJECTORY OF A BLACK FAMILY IN MARANHÃO

Erudição e racismo na trajetória ascendente de uma família negra do Maranhão  
Erudición y racismo en el camino ascendente de una familia negra en Maranhão

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**Abstract:** The present article aimed to rescue the social trajectory of a black family, whose most prominent member was the professor and journalist José do Nascimento Moraes. This family stood out for its adherence to a project of ascension based on erudition, which was enjoyed by generations. The research methodology contemplated the inductive paradigm, involving analyses in a set of newspapers, available in the digital newspaper library of the National Library and in the Benedito Leite State Public Library. The study showed that despite the prominence of members of this family in the intellectual field, they were not exempted from facing racism.

**Keywords:** black education; education history; social mobility; racial discrimination.

**Resumo:** O presente artigo visou ao resgate da trajetória social de uma família negra, cujo membro mais proeminente foi o professor e jornalista José do Nascimento Moraes. Esta família se destacou pela adesão a um projeto de ascensão firmado na erudição, o qual foi desfrutado por gerações. A metodologia da pesquisa contemplou o resgate indutivo, na imprensa da segunda metade do século XIX e primeira metade do século XX, de eventos que envolveram esta família, em um conjunto de jornais disponível na hemeroteca digital da Fundação Biblioteca Nacional e na Biblioteca Pública Estadual Benedito Leite. O estudo demonstrou que, apesar do destaque de membros desta família no campo intelectual, eles não foram eximidos de enfrentamentos ao racismo.

**Palavras-chave:** educação dos negros; história da educação; mobilidade social; discriminação racial.

**Resumen:** Este artículo tiene por objeto rescatar la trayectoria social de una familia negra, cuyo miembro más destacado fue el profesor y periodista José do Nascimento Moraes. Esta familia se destacó por su adhesión a un proyecto de ascensión basado en la educación, el cual fue seguido por generaciones. La metodología de investigación contempló el paradigma de los indicios, involucrando análisis de publicaciones periódicas, disponibles en la hemeroteca digital de la Fundación Biblioteca Nacional y en la Biblioteca Pública Estatal Benedito Leite. El estudio mostró que, a pesar del protagonismo de los miembros de esta familia en el campo intelectual, el racismo fue parte de sus trayectorias.

**Palabras clave:** educación negra; historia de la educación; movilidad social; discriminación racial.

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## INTRODUCTION

Manumission, freedom or the act of being or becoming independent are some of the meanings of emancipation (Ferreira, 2004). Minors may be emancipated, provided that their guardians agree. Women became emancipated as they gradually conquered civil rights and entered the public, political and economic life of societies. The enslaved were also emancipated, as soon as they were separated from the tutelage of a master.

Leo Spitzer (2001) explains that emancipation consists of a collective phenomenon of the 'modernization era', related to the rise of subordinate groups, which came as a consequence of the 'loosening of restrictions' imposed on such groups. Such loosening occurred as a complex process, which involved several elements inherent to the context of the affirmation of capitalism (rationalist ideas of the Enlightenment and economic advance of the industrialization era), combined with democratic values, contrary to servitude.

The same author clarifies that the emancipation is not established outside the range of action of the dominant system, which is defined as “[...] the admissible limits of social mobility and the expected role of the State<sup>1</sup> [...]” towards subjugated groups (Spitzer, 2001, p. 34). Among the approaches that explain the limits of social mobility favored by emancipation, *laissez-faire* is the one that is characterized by exempting the State from the responsibility of offering the conditions for the emancipated integration, which restricts this action to the legal aspect.

Another approach related to the limits of social mobility is 'catechetics' or 'conversion', which includes the intervention of power instances in the process of adaptation of the emancipated to the values and conceptions of dominant groups. The aim of the 'catechetical' approach is the civil and social upliftment of subordinate groups through education (Spitzer, 2001).

The analysis of the emancipation of black populations in Brazil indicates that the *laissez-faire* system characterized the process of extinction of slavery, with the legal end of slave labor, since the public power was not interested in promoting the social integration of black communities. The social mobility of these populations, when it occurred, was non-interventionist, and, many times, these communities had to face different social, political and economic restrictions, instituted as barriers to control social ascension (Costa, 1998; Luna & Klein, 2010; Russell-Wood, 2005).

Luna and Klein (2010) state that there was a class of free people of color since the beginning of slavery in all American societies, and all of them suffered restrictions on freedom depending on origin or skin color. They add that, in none of these

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<sup>1</sup> In the original: “[...] os limites admissíveis de mobilidade social e o papel esperado do Estado [...]”.

societies, “[...] there was the possibility of simultaneously existing freedom and acceptance<sup>2</sup>” (Luna & Klein, 2010, p. 271).

Almeida (2019) characterizes racial discrimination as a form of materialization of racism, insofar as it is attributed “[...] 'differentiated treatment to members of racially identified groups'<sup>3</sup> [...]”, whose practice produces “[...] 'social stratification', an 'intergenerational' phenomenon<sup>4</sup> [...]” affecting “[...] the chances of social ascension, recognition and material livelihood<sup>5</sup>” (Almeida, 2019, p. 23, emphasis added). of the author).

Discriminatory practices have been part of the reality of Africans and their descendants since the beginning of slavery in Brazil, but the period that characterizes the introduction of scientific thinking on the inferiority of blacks is the second half of the 19th century. With the emergence of a deterministic and polygenist science, thinking about inequality between races became established and widely influenced the local intelligentsia (Schwarcz, 1996). For European 'pseudoscience', Brazil would be doomed to barbarism, as a consequence of miscegenation (Schwarcz, 1993).

The theories that explained the Brazilian reality, placing blacks as an obstacle to the country's development, as well as being blamed for remaining in the lower social strata, since the colonial period, found reinforcement in the rhetoric of the existence of racial democracy, from the years 1930. According to precepts of Brazilian racial democracy, due to miscegenation:

[...] blacks and whites coexist harmoniously, enjoying equal opportunity of existence, without any interference, in this game of social parity, of their respective racial or ethnic origins. [...]. The existence of this intended racial equality is even [...] the greatest reason for national pride<sup>6</sup> (Nascimento, 2017, p. 48).

Racial equality comes up against the lack of offering equal opportunities to different groups, which demonstrates that racial democracy is a myth, which only works as a glimpse. According to Schwarcz (2012, p. 48), miscegenation, which represents the symbolic element of the realization of racial democracy, “[...] would

<sup>2</sup> In the original: “[...] houve a possibilidade de existirem simultaneamente a liberdade e a aceitação”

<sup>3</sup> In the original: “[...] 'tratamento diferenciado a membros de grupos racialmente identificados' [...]”

<sup>4</sup> In the original: “[...] 'estratificação social', um fenômeno 'intergeracional' [...]”

<sup>5</sup> In the original: “[...] as chances de ascensão social, de reconhecimento e de sustento material”

<sup>6</sup> In the original: “[...] pretos e brancos convivem harmoniosamente desfrutando igual oportunidade de existência, sem nenhuma interferência, nesse jogo de paridade social, das respectivas origens raciais ou étnicas. [...]. A existência dessa pretendida igualdade racial constitui mesmo [...] o maior motivo de orgulho nacional (Nascimento, 2017, p. 48).

stick to our national representation just like a tattoo, making physical appearance a matter of character and cultural standard<sup>7</sup>”.

Contrary to racial democracy, racism has always prevailed in Brazil, serving as a substance impregnated in the individual and collective imagination and promoting social exclusion in the exact proportion to the marks of origin identified by the phenotypic load resistant to miscegenation. Such racism, according to Almeida (2019, p. 32, author's emphasis), can be understood as “[...] 'a systematic form of discrimination based on race, and which is manifested through conscious or unconscious that culminate in disadvantages or privileges for individuals, depending on the racial group to which they belong<sup>8</sup>”.

The present article contemplates the evidential rescue, from the Maranhão press of the second half of the 19th century and first half of the 20th century, regarding the trajectory of a black family, whose most prominent member was the professor and journalist José do Nascimento Moraes. The methodological procedures included the careful and detailed observation of evidence and small clues of events that involved this family, in a set of newspapers that are part of the wide collection of the Maranhão press, available in the digital newspaper library of the *Fundação Biblioteca Nacional* and in the Benedito Leite State Public Library. According to Ginzburg (2003), the Evidence Paradigm is appropriate when there is a need to know a certain reality in which the event was not witnessed, and about which specific documentary testimonies are not available. It is an appropriate model to contemplate neglected themes and underprivileged historical subjects in relation to the exercise of power, such as black populations. The study of the trajectory of the Nascimento Moraes family aims to contribute with knowledge that favors the insertion of black personalities with an intellectual profile in the scene of national memory, in which intellectuals of affluent and white origin have been privileged.

The article is organized into three parts, namely: in the first, social mobility strategies are analyzed, highlighting the adherence to an erudition project shared by members of the Nascimento Moraes family, since the second half of the 19th century; in the second, the upward trajectory of the most outstanding children of Professor Nascimento Moraes, members of the third generation of the family, is described; Finally, situations of confrontation with racism experienced by members of this family are recorded.

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<sup>7</sup> In the original: “[...] colaria à nossa representação nacional tal qual tatuagem, fazendo da aparência física uma questão de caráter e padrão cultural”

<sup>8</sup> In the original: “[...] ‘uma forma sistemática de discriminação que tem a raça como fundamento, e que se manifesta por meio de práticas conscientes ou inconscientes que culminam em desvantagens ou privilégios para indivíduos, a depender do grupo racial ao qual pertencam”.

## THE ASCENSION PROJECT

The Nascimento Moraes family began in the first half of the 19th century, from the relationship between the enslaved woman, Lourença Rosa dos Santos, with the Portuguese warehouse owner established on Rua do Trapiche, in São Luís. From this relationship without the sacrament of marriage, natural children were born, Manuel do Nascimento Pereira, in 1833, and José Alípio Moraes, in 1846. Until now, it is unknown whether Professor Nascimento Moraes' grandparents, as elements of an interracial relationship, have cohabited as a couple, bringing the two children together in a family unit, with mother and father under the same roof. The fact is that the two brothers, children of this relationship, moved through Maranhão society in the second half of the 19th century and the first decades of the 20th, leaving records of assimilation to the cultural and economic context of the period, with emphasis on cultural life.

José Alípio Moraes was a musician, a distinguished music teacher with an established band and with a record of working in public offices in the interior of the state (as assistant public prosecutor for Guimarães, justice of the peace of the first district of the village of São Bento and second deputy of delegate in the village of São Bento). It was from him that the family acquired the last name, when, in 1884, the eldest brother (Manoel Nascimento Pereira) renounced the last name, adhering to Moraes, already used by his younger brother. On the other hand, Manoel do Nascimento had a more modest life than his brother, as he worked as a shoemaker and as a servant at the State Treasury, in addition to being a former combatant in the Paraguayan War.

The free man Manoel do Nascimento Moraes joined, without the sacrament of marriage, with Catarina Maria Vitória, an enslaved woman, with whom he had three children: Manoel Filho, Raimundo and José. The first worked in commerce and died early, in 1905; the second presented a successful trajectory, working in the literary milieu of Maranhão, at the beginning of the 20th century, standing out as a professor and federal public servant in Manaus. Raimundo also died very early, in 1915. The third is the main exponent of the family, known as a renowned journalist and professor of Maranhão, working in the first half of the 20th century.

José do Nascimento Moraes was born in 1882 and died in 1958. He was one of the most active journalists in the Maranhão press of the first half of the 20th century. He became professor of geography at *Liceu Maranhense* and taught several subjects at *Escola Normal*, such as: arithmetic, algebra, geometry, Portuguese, pedagogy and history of education. He published three books during his lifetime: *Vencidos e degenerados* (1910); *Puxos e repuxos* (1910); *Neurose do medo* (1923); and a fourth, made public as a posthumous work, *Contos de Valério Santiago* (1972).

The assimilation process observed in the trajectory of the first members of the Nascimento Moraes family brings together characteristics of what was experienced by other families in national history, such as the Rebouças. As portrayed by Spitzer (2001), the existence of restrictions on economic, legal and social rights imposed on black populations since the colonial period did not completely prevent the rise and assimilation of some members of these families, especially mestizos, as was the case of Rebouças. Coming from the union between a freed mulatto woman and a Portuguese tailor who migrated to Brazil in the second half of the 18th century, they built ascending trajectories in successive generations, with the highlight of some of their members in outcomes of national history, from independence and even abolition of slavery (Spitzer, 2001).

The discussions put forward by Leo Spitzer (2001) lead to the realization that the process of assimilation towards ascending social trajectories involves a strategy of whitening, since social integration forces the subject in a subordinate situation to approach as closely as possible the pattern of the dominant. The whitening based on the disappearance of blacks, through miscegenation with whites, through skin whitening, became the “[...] social criterion of acceptance and social progress based on color<sup>9</sup>” (Spitzer, 2001, p. 123).

The whitening due to miscegenation relationships was not observed in the case of Professor Nascimento Moraes' father, as he was married to a woman darker than him, and still a captive. The opposite happened in the same generation, on the side of Manoel's brother, José Alípio, who married Tereza de Jesus dos Anjos Araújo Porciúncula, a white, educated woman who studied at the Asilo de Santa Teresa.<sup>10</sup>

In the second generation of the family, José do Nascimento Moraes, contrary to what was practiced by his parents, who were not formally married, married Ana Augusta Mendes, a woman who “[...] was part of the white elite of Maranhão, she was cultured, spoke fluent French, and played the piano<sup>11</sup>” (Carreira, 2015, p. 69).

Ana Augusta was the natural daughter and orphan of Adelaide Mendes, who died a month before her daughter turned 5 years old. Adelaide, in turn, was the legitimate daughter of Antônio Raimundo Mendes with Emília Augusta Vidal Mendes. Ana Augusta's grandfather, Captain Antônio Raimundo Mendes, was a well-known figure in São Luís, he held several public positions (sub-delegate of the chief of police, of the parish of São João Batista, second clerk and bookkeeper of *Caixa Filial do Banco*

<sup>9</sup> In the original: “[...] critério social de aceitação e progresso social pautado na cor”.

<sup>10</sup> Escola criada em 1855, cujo objetivo principal da sua fundação era acolher meninas pobres da província e educá-las para o emprego doméstico, desempenhando o papel profissionalizante. Esta escola recebeu, entre suas alunas, tanto meninas negras, filhas de mulheres libertas, como meninas órfãs oriundas de famílias marcadas pelo rebaixamento de um padrão socioeconômico elevado. Tereza foi filha do alfaiate José Francisco Porciúncula e de dona Vitalina Rosa de Araújo Porciúncula, e sua mãe foi herdeira de um fazendeiro e proprietário de escravos.

<sup>11</sup> “[...] fazia parte da elite branca maranhense, era culta, falava francês fluentemente, e tocava piano”

*do Brasil* and bailiff) and died on November 22, 1881, aged 61, a year before the birth of his granddaughter.

Ana Augusta's father was Pacífico Cunha, a literature teacher at the *Liceu* and later also at the *Escola Normal*; one of the editors of the newspaper *O Pensador*. Carreira (2015) attributes to Pacífico Cunha the parenting of Ana Augusta. However, we do not rule out the hypothesis that she was his natural daughter, which, although unconventional for a man with the social projection he had, would not be surprising, since at the time he was also seen as a convinced liberal. He opposed the dogmas of the Catholic Church, for which marriage was something indispensable for the “good men” of the time, and denounced reprehensible practices in the ecclesiastical environment, as noted in the editions of *O Pensador*.

The union of José do Nascimento Moraes with Ana Augusta Mendes confirms a common element in the pattern of social ascension of blacks in Brazil, in which not only education appears as an important element but also the achievement of 'a good marriage', because, according to Schwarcz (2012, p. 49, author's emphasis), “[...] 'marrying well' in general means getting married to someone whiter, and not necessarily richer<sup>12</sup>”.

The strategy of social ascension observed among the Nascimento Moraes, via adherence to the schooling process, is something very strong in the trajectory of this family, an influence of the context of the meritocracy system that promises to those who reach a higher level of education the award of placement in the best occupational positions. Black families understand that the insertion in successive levels and degrees of schooling will imply in the deviation of the destiny of the occupation of functions linked to the physical effort.

The project of social ascension via schooling embraced by the members of the Nascimento Moraes, in the successive generations, may have as its starting point the speech of Manoel, father of professor José do Nascimento Moraes, when, after the return of the Paraguayan War, when he was awarded for heroism, and, being illiterate, swore that his children would be doctors (Carreira, 2015). Probably, Manoel already observed that, with his younger brother, life was going differently, since José Alípio, in the condition of schooling, enjoyed a more peaceful life. He had become a professional musician and, later, in 1875, he would marry<sup>13</sup> Tereza Porciúncula, confirming his personal process of ascension.

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<sup>12</sup> In the original: “[...] ‘casar bem’ em geral significa contrair matrimônio com alguém mais branco, e não necessariamente mais rico”.

<sup>13</sup> From the union of José Alípio and Tereza, thirteen children were generated, who followed the paths of schooling and entered different occupations considered successful, such as dentist, lawyer, musicians, civil servants and teachers. From the couple's descendants, José Alípio de Moraes Filho had a trajectory similar to his father's, and his son, Jomar Moraes, a member of the Academia de Letras, occupying the presidency for a long period, from 1984 to 2006.

On the other hand, Manoel and his partner Catarina, both illiterate, made an effort to ensure an education for their two youngest children. For this, it was necessary to fund private primary schools in Maranhão, creating the conditions for them to have access to secondary education at *Liceu Maranhense*.

The cultural capital acquired at *Liceu Maranhense*, where young people kept in touch with outstanding literati and journalists who taught at the high school, favored social transit and subsequent acceptance in public offices and in the literary world, an issue pointed out by Castro, Cabral and Castellanos (2019). The same authors state that, at the beginning of the Republic, “[...] this educational institution still maintained the forums of a convergent center and trainer of educated and, mainly, literate minds<sup>14</sup>” (Castro et al., 2019, p. 22).

The erudition acquired in the experience as a high school student is a mark in the life trajectory of the black teacher and journalist referred to in this study and a door to his economic maintenance, at the beginning of the 20th century. It was common for successful young people to support their studies by providing services in the newspapers of the time, in which they were often introduced by their teachers, as happened with the young Nascimento Moraes, when he started at the age of 16 in the newsroom of *Pacotilha*<sup>15</sup>, by the hands of Béthencourt<sup>16</sup>.

Secondary education at *Liceu*, the only public school of its kind in the state, from 1838 to the end of the first half of the 20th century, for both Nascimento Moraes and his brother Raimundo, functioned as a gateway to social ascension. It was not just a space for schooling, but also a social showcase through which the most successful intellectuals from Maranhão of the 19th century and first half of the 20th century traveled (Castro et al., 2019).

The good school performance of the two brothers lead to teaching, another possible way for the young men to earn a living; this was something they did in private lessons at their students' homes and in the family's own home. Twice, the house of Nascimento Moraes' father housed formalized schools, such as *Colégio Gomes de Sousa*, directed by Raimundo, and *Instituto Nascimento Moraes*, directed and owned by José Nascimento Moraes.

<sup>14</sup> In the original: “[...] essa instituição de ensino ainda conservava os foros de centro convergente e formador de mentes cultas e, principalmente, letradas”.

<sup>15</sup> Newspaper founded on October 30, 1880, by Victor Lobato. He was a propagandist for Abolition and the Republic and stopped circulating in January 1881, returning in April of the same year with a new format. In 1930, the newspaper stopped circulating again, only returning in 1934 (Nascimento, 2007). Among the founding editors of *Pacotilha* were Aluísio Azevedo and Manuel de Béthencourt.

<sup>16</sup> Manuel de Béthencourt was a Portuguese naturalized Brazilian who worked as a journalist, columnist, literary critic and teacher at *Liceu Maranhense*. He was considered an important reference among the *Liceu* youth from Maranhão, at the end of the 19th century (Martins, 2002), of which Nascimento Moraes was a disciple and one of its last scribes, working with the record of texts dictated by the master to be published in the press.



In the intellectual field, Nascimento Moraes was among the main founders of two literary associations that stood out for their commitment to the cultural and literary rescue of São Luís, right at the beginning of the 20th century, before the creation of the *Academia Maranhense de Letras* (1908), the *Oficina dos Novos*, in 1900, and the *Literary Renaissance*, in 1901.

Although Nascimento Moraes was belatedly accepted in the *Academia Maranhense de Letras*, which only happened in 1934, with the inauguration only four years later (1938), his passage through it was remarkable, since he became president for a long period: at first, from January 1941 to January 1946; for the second time, he returned to the presidency from June 2, 1946, to January 2, 1947; later, he held the position for a shorter time, from 13 to 21 September 1947<sup>17</sup>.

In the third generation of the family, while José do Nascimento Moraes wrote for the newspapers and taught in secondary education, his children, successively, occupied the benches of private schools in Maranhão, graduating in the primary school series. Subsequently, the boys attended the gymnasium of *Liceu Maranhense* and the girls went on to the professional course (formerly *Escola Normal*). The occasional presence of the children of Nascimento Moraes in public primary schools is observed only in graduated schools of notorious prominence at the time, such as *Escola Modelo Benedito Leite* and *Grupo Escolar Almeida Oliveira*. All Nascimento Moraes' children followed the paths opened by their father and absorbed schooling as a tool to maintain an upward trajectory, which the family had been presenting for two previous generations.

Like his father, Nascimento Moraes was committed to the education of his offspring and invested efforts aiming at the children's future; he thought it was important to provide his children with a refined education, based on the classics of literature. He wanted them to be able to declaim at the soirees, lectures or political conversations that were part of the cultural life of the time. He envisioned not only educated children but also intellectuals, like himself. The perception of the type of education seen for the children is contained in a statement recorded on the blog of a grandson of Nascimento Moraes<sup>18</sup>, as follows:

[...] the central figure was the father, the old Nascimento Moraes, journalist, writer and professor at *Liceu Maranhense*, author of several books, and an exponential figure in the intellectual history of Maranhão; and his mother, Ana Augusta, with whom Paulo did not learn to play the piano, as much as she wanted to, because old

<sup>17</sup> Informações do sítio da Academia Maranhense de Letras. Retrieved from: <http://www.academiamaranhense.org.br/presidentes/>.

<sup>18</sup> Paulo de Tarso Moraes é professor e revisor de língua portuguesa, filho temporão de Paulo Augusto Nascimento Moraes. Em seu blog, faz constantes publicações e depoimentos que remetem à memória da família.

Nascimento, lying in a hammock, preferred that his dear son stay behind a door reciting 'Os Lusíadas' aloud, so at least mitigate that familiar stutter of his, a hallmark of all Nascimento's children, which would not suit him, Paulo, mainly to make the old man's assertion convincing: It was better to be a speaker than a pianist, because the magic of the word it is the vehicle of thought, paraphrasing Teilhard de Chardin, Nascimento used to say to Dona Sinhá, as she was called by her friends, the mother of Paulo Moraes, also an educator and one of the most distinguished and elegant lady I have ever met<sup>19</sup>. (Saudades..., 2020, author's remarks).

It is observed that there was a commitment to provide their children with an erudite education, based on the values shared by the elites. According to Souza (2008), the secondary school of the early 20th century had a curriculum that focused on “[...] the art of expression, linguistic erudition, writing and speaking well, mastery of foreign languages and attraction to literary aesthetics<sup>20</sup>” (Souza, 2008, p. 89-90). Such knowledge was intended for the children of economically successful groups, unrelated to the world of work (Souza, 2008).

## THE OFFSPRING OF NASCIMENTO MORAES IN ASCENDANCE

Nascimento Moraes married Ana Augusta Mendes in 1908, and the following year he had his first child with her, Ápio Cláudio. His firstborn had his second name (Cláudio) inspired by the main character of the plot of his work, *Vencidos e degenerados*. In addition to giving the firstborn son the first name of the protagonist of his novel (Cláudio Olivier), it is noted that high expectations were nurtured regarding the intellectual destiny of the child who had just been born, which is

<sup>19</sup> In the original: “[...] a figura central era o pai, o velho Nascimento Moraes, jornalista, escritor e professor catedrático do Liceu Maranhense, autor de vários livros, e figura exponencial da história intelectual do Maranhão; e da mãe, Ana Augusta com quem Paulo não aprendeu a tocar piano, por mais que ela quisesse, porque o velho Nascimento, deitado numa rede preferia que seu filho querido ficasse detrás de uma porta a recitar 'Os Lusíadas' em voz alta, para amenizar, pelo menos, aquela sua gagueira familiar, marca registrada de todos os filhos de Nascimento, o que nele, Paulo, não ficaria bem, principalmente para tornar convincente a assertiva do velho: Era melhor ser orador que pianista, porque a mágica da palavra é o veículo do pensamento, parafraseando Teilhard de Chardin, dizia Nascimento à Dona Sinhá, como era chamada pelos íntimos, a mãe de Paulo Moraes, também educadora e Senhora das mais distintas e elegantes que conheci”.

<sup>20</sup> In the original: “[...] arte da expressão, a erudição linguística, o escrever e o falar bem, o domínio das línguas estrangeiras e a atração pela estética literária”.

inferred from the fact that he received, as his first name (Appius), the same name that belonged to the first Latin intellectual dedicated to literary activity and philosophy<sup>21</sup>.

It was not identified which school Ápio Cláudio attended primary school or what his performance was. As for secondary education, it can be accurately stated that it began in 1922, at *Liceu Maranhense*, after passing the entrance exam, when he was 13 years old. The history of the firstborn's passage through secondary education indicates a career without apparent brilliance. The 5th year, expected for 1926, will only take place in 1927 (for the schools, 1927). In 1928, still in the 5th year, possibly because he had been held back, he was accused of indiscipline, receiving suspension from the *Liceu* for the entire school year (Lyceu..., 1928, p. 2).

In 1929, Ápio obtained the degree of Bachelor of Science and Letters, at the age of 20. This title was granted as a prerogative of the Secondary Education Reform of 1925, Rocha Vaz, in which the 6-year high school was established, with the granting of the Bachelor of Science and Letters title at the end of the sixth year and granting of certification from secondary to end of the fifth, with the right to take a college entrance exam (Moreira, 2017).

Ápio entered the Civil Engineering course at the University of Rio de Janeiro in 1930, although he did not complete the course. He became an employee of the Institute of Identification and Legal Medicine, working as an office assistant until 1947, when he died at the age of 37 (death: 1947). In the intellectual field, he was a member of the *Associação Maranhense de Imprensa*, in 1936.

On November 23, 1910, the couple's second child, Paulo Augusto, was born, named in honor of his mother, Ana Augusta. Paulo Augusto's primary school was *Instituto Raimundo Cerveira*, a private school founded in 1919 by normalist Zoé Cerveira<sup>22</sup>.

Paulo Augusto attended secondary school at *Liceu Maranhense*, which began in 1925, and higher education at the Faculty of Law of Maranhão, from 1934. In journalism, he was a writer for the periodicals *Notícias*, *Pacotilha* and *O Imparcial*, during the 1930s. In law school, he was among the founders of the '*União Acadêmica da Faculdade de Direito do Maranhão*', in 1937, which focused on “[...] raising the cultural level of academic youth<sup>23</sup>” (A União Acadêmico..., 1937, p. 8). The entity

<sup>21</sup> The Greek Appius Claudius (307 and 296 BC) was a politician and consul, he stood out as the first Latin intellectual dedicated to literary activity and interested in philosophy. Retrieved from <https://citacoes.in/autores/apio-claudio-cego>.

<sup>22</sup> Distinguished Normal School teacher, daughter of a well-known teacher at the time (Raimundo Cerveira), D. Zoé Cerveira was always very close to the Nascimento Moraes family. She was a student of Nascimento Moraes in the Normal course of *Liceu Maranhense*. She was the director of the school founded by her in 1919, named after her father, and appears in the company of her student and successor in the direction of *Colégio Zoé Cerveira*, teacher Nadir Adelaide, in many moments caught by the press in the first half of the 20th century. She died in 1957.

<sup>23</sup> In the original: “[...] o levantamento do nível cultural da mocidade acadêmica”.

aimed at “[...] the publication of a magazine, the promotion of conferences in the halls of the Faculty, the establishment of cultural exchange, through embassies, with its colleagues from the rest of the country<sup>24</sup>” (*A União Acadêmica...*, 1937, p. 8).

In the public service, Paulo was assistant to the secretary of *Liceu Maranhense*, in the 1930s, and an employee of the State Department of Statistics and Publicity, hired in 1938. He went to Rio de Janeiro, in 1945, where he worked at *O Jornal*, returning to São Luís in 1953. Upon arriving in São Luís, he began to collaborate with *Jornal do Povo* and worked as a professor at the Raimundo Cerveira Institute. In 1965, he was an effective member of the *Associação Maranhense de Imprensa*, being a contemporary of Josué Montello in this association. In the same period, he was part of the editorial staff of *Jornal do Dia*. In 1971, Paulo Augusto published the book *Aquarelas de Luz*, a work of poetry, which earned him the chair nº 16 of the *Academia Maranhense de Letras*, in 1982.

Nadir Adelaide was the couple's only child, and the third in the birth order; she came into the world in 1911, on the 16th of November. She attended primary school at *Instituto Raimundo Cerveira*, standing out in exams, almost always with a grade 10. She finished primary school at the end of 1923. She was baptized and made her first communion at 14, in 1924, after passing the entrance exam for the professional course at *Liceu Maranhense*, obtaining the highest grade among the 17 candidates who competed to enter the Normal course. Her performance was attributed to her good school performance in primary education, “[to] her intelligence and [to] her application to books<sup>25</sup>” (*Notas Mundanas*, 1924, p. 4). She attended the professional course at *Liceu Maranhense*, from 1924 to 1928, receiving a degree in normal education (*As Novas Professoras*, 1928, p. 8). She excelled in her school performance, completing both elementary and high school in less time than her two older brothers.

In 1933, she was a professor at the *Raimundo Cerveira Institute*. Her good reputation as a teacher always appears in the press, described as: “[...] a competent teacher from Maranhão [...]”, “[...] a cultured spirit, a distinguished normalist teacher, and undeniably, one of the intellectual glories of Maranhão<sup>26</sup>” (*Nadyr Adelaide...*, 1933, p. 4).

In 1935, Nadir appeared as an assistant professor of history at the Normal course, at *Liceu Maranhense*, and was also a member of the *Instituto Cerveira* board. In 1945, she was appointed director of the State Public Library and, in 1965, already director of *Instituto Cerveira*, she founded the *Ginásio Zoé Cerveira*, in honor of her friend and late teacher.

<sup>24</sup> In the original: “[...] publicação de uma revista, a promoção de conferências nos salões da Faculdade, o estabelecimento de intercâmbio cultural, por meio de embaixadas, com os seus colegas do resto do país”

<sup>25</sup> In the original: “[à] sua inteligência e [à] sua aplicação aos livros”.

<sup>26</sup> In the original: “[...] competente educadora maranhense [...]”, “[...] espírito culto, distinta professora normalista, e incontestavelmente, uma das glórias intelectuais maranhenses”.

João José Nascimento Moraes was the fourth child of Nascimento Moraes with Ana Augusta. He came into the world on March 17, 1916, having started his primary education in 1922, at *Instituto Raimundo Cerveira*. His approvals in the annual exams were almost always with a grade 10. He finished primary school in 1925 and began his secondary education in 1926, at *Liceu Maranhense*. He did not stand out in the journalistic or literary environment, exercising a career as Civil Police clerk.

In 1922, José do Nascimento Morais Filho was born, followed by Talita and Raimundo Nascimento Moraes<sup>27</sup>, who were not the fruits of her marriage to Ana Augusta, although it is known that the former was created by her. According to Carreira (2015)<sup>28</sup>, Nascimento Moraes' last three children are the result of his relationship with Francisca da Graça Bogéa, who, having left the countryside of Maranhão, spent some time living in Nascimento Moraes' house, in order to attend secondary school at the Maranhão High School. José Nascimento Morais Filho was given to Ana Augusta with one day of birth (Carreira, 2015).

Nascimento Morais Filho was born on July 15, 1922, completed primary school in 1934, at *Escola Modelo Benedito Leite*. He passed the entrance exam for the *Liceu Maranhense* gymnasium, in 1935. Of the offspring of professor Nascimento Moraes, he was the most outstanding, becoming a poet, teacher, journalist, folklorist, environmentalist and one of the precursors of Modernism in Maranhão.

On August 9, 1945, when he was still a high school student at *Liceu Maranhense*, he participated in the creation of the *Centro Cultural Gonçalves Dias* (CCGD); an association responsible for the introduction of Modernism in Maranhão literature.

Zé Moraes, as he became known, was successively the president of the CCGD, which aimed at “[...] a cultural survey of students from the traditional educational establishment in Maranhão<sup>29</sup>” (Centro..., 1945, p. 4). The CCGD played a much broader cultural role, mobilizing some older intellectuals and bringing together many young people interested in literature and committed to resurrecting the literary vigor that had once been enjoyed by the state. The entity met for studies, restricted to members,

<sup>27</sup> Little information is available on the last children of Nascimento Moraes. About Talita, it is known that she became a normalist teacher trained at *Escola Normal Primaria Rosa Castro*, a private school in São Luís, founded in 1916; and about Raimundo, it is known, from a few quotes about him, that he was known as 'the mathematician'.

<sup>28</sup> The same author attributes the title of second wife to Francisca da Graça Bogéa, in a relationship established after an alleged separation between Ana Augusta and Nascimento Moraes; however, the sources worked so far indicate that there does not seem to have been a divorce between the two. Although one cannot rule out the cohabitation of Nascimento Moraes with Francisca Bogéa, it must be considered that Ana Augusta was officially considered his wife until the end of his life, in 1958, as can be seen among the biographical references published about him in *Pacotilha – O Globo* (Maranhão..., 1958, p. 4).

<sup>29</sup> In the original: “[...] levantamento cultural dos alunos do tradicional estabelecimento de ensino do Maranhão”.

and for lectures open to the general public (Garrido, 2016). It was in this institution that Ferreira Gullar (José de Ribamar Ferreira) took his first steps as a poet.

Zé Moraes became a member of the *Academia Maranhense de Letras*, occupying chair 37. He also founded the Defense Committee of the Island of São Luiz, focused on the defense of the environment (Garrido, 2016). He wrote several books, such as: *Clamor da hora presente* (1955), *Pé-de-conversa* (1957), *Um punhado de rima* (1959), *Azulejos* (1963), *Esfinge azul* (1972), *Esperando a missa do galo* (1972; 1973), *Maria Firmina dos Reis: fragmentos de uma vida* (1975) and *Clamor do presente* (1992) (Garrido, 2016). He worked at *Jornal do Dia* and was director of the art supplement of *Jornal do Maranhão*, in 1969, and died on February 21, 2009.

## FACING RACISM IN THE TRAJECTORY OF MEMBERS OF THE NASCIMENTO MORAES FAMILY

According to Spitzer (2001), racism works as a barrier, making the permanence of blacks in the subordinate strata of society seem natural. The author states that it was from the second half of the 19th century onwards that racism became “[...] popular, to justify and support formal and informal European domination over the peoples of all non-European regions of the globe<sup>30</sup>” (Spitzer, 2001, p. 85), when assimilated Africans became the focus of racially motivated insults, discriminatory incidents and segregationism (Spitzer, 2001).

Spitzer (2001) brilliantly demonstrates the relationship between emancipation and racism in his biography of Joseph Boston May, a Methodist pastor of Yoruba origin who, as a boy, was freed due to the prohibition of the slave trade, being referred to an assimilation experience developed by England in Sierra Leone, in 1827. The boy was introduced in a process of conversion and schooling that culminated in his social ascension and that of his descendants. The author demonstrates that Joseph Boston May had his ascent to the highest levels of his career inhibited in the 1860s and 1870s, although he was not aware of the relationship between the “[...] limitations of the personal professional ambitions and the growing antipathy of many white people to the possibility of African professional and social progress within the colonial system<sup>31</sup>” (Spitzer, 2001, p. 86).

The case of Joseph Boston May, portrayed by Leo Spitzer, indicates that, despite the fact that joining the formal education system represents, for black families, a possibility of social ascension, there is no guarantee that the achievement of high levels of schooling guarantees the enjoyment of complete social integration. Although

<sup>30</sup> In the original: “[...] em moda, para justificar e apoiar a dominação formal e informal europeia sobre os povos de todas as regiões não europeias do globo”.

<sup>31</sup> In the original: “[...] limitações de suas ambições profissionais pessoais e a crescente antipatia de muitos brancos pela possibilidade de um progresso profissional e social africano dentro do sistema colonial”.

the author refers to the 19th century, it is clear that this reality follows the trajectories of black intellectuals throughout the 20th century.

In this sense, the confrontation of racist situations was not uncommon in the daily lives of black men and women with ascending trajectories, as occurred at various times in the lives of members of the Nascimento Moraes family. Events recorded in the press show that members of this family, despite the social prominence achieved, also faced discriminatory situations.

An event, which took place in May 1928, with Ápio, the son of Nascimento Moraes, during his 5th year of high school, illustrates a routine of confrontations not uncommon for black children who, in schools in the 20th century, were affected by a climate of hostility forged in the belief that, by nature, they were undisciplined or averse to studies.

What happened was printed in *O Imparcial* of May 13, 1928, as a note given by the director of the *Liceu*, and also General Director of Public Instruction, Luiz Vianna. It was recorded that the boy confronted Sergeant Bousson, a *Liceu* military instructor, and, therefore, suffered a process for indiscipline that culminated in his suspension for a school year (Lyceu..., 1928, p. two). The justification, or the trigger for the decision to physically confront his military instructor, is definitely not included in the explanation recorded when reporting what happened from the director's point of view.

In the inquiry initiated by Luiz Vianna, on May 7, and chaired by the vice-principal, Gilberto Maya Costa, the testimony of Ápio's father was waived, arguing that the Regulations of *Colégio Pedro II*, which governed the *Liceu*, as an equivalent high school, established that only those who had witnessed the fact would be heard as deponents (Lyceu..., 1928, p. 2). In the speech of the *Liceu* director, Ápio was represented as an undisciplined, nervous and insubordinate young man. The partiality of the publication can be clearly seen, when the accuser fails to refer to the facts that triggered such an extreme attitude on the part of the teenager.

The narrative about the fact, published in *O Imparcial*, showed that the student was a repeat offender and that, on other occasions, he had already been punished with lighter penalties such as “[...] admonition and suspension<sup>32</sup>” (Lyceu..., 1928), p. 2). Observing the other side of the story, narrated by Nascimento Moraes in the newspaper *A Hora*<sup>33</sup>, it can be seen that other information enriches the plot.

The inquiry against Ápio was closed on May 9, but Nascimento Moraes broke down several aspects related to the process in *A Hora*'s publications from May 11 to June 11 of the same year. In these publications, beginning with the title “In the *Liceu*

<sup>32</sup> In the original: “[...] admoestação e suspensão”.

<sup>33</sup> The newspaper *A Hora* was published from 1926 until the beginning of 1929. Nascimento Moraes was its director, becoming, in 1928, also its owner. This newspaper is not found digitized in the Digital Newspaper Library of the National Library. The physical collection which was consulted is in the Benedito Leite State Public Library, located in São Luís do Maranhão.

*Maranhense*. An interesting and curious case - a sui-generis” inquiry, Nascimento Moraes denounced several irregularities. He claimed that, even after the deputy principal, who presided over the process, closed it, principal Luiz Vianna decided to continue the work and personally collected the testimonies of the students appointed as witnesses. Nascimento Moraes denounced other cases that had occurred at the institution that could merit the initiation of inquiries for indiscipline committed by students, demonstrating that it is not usual for this type of process to be instituted at the *Liceu*. He claimed, in the past, that Sergeant Bousson, who served as instructor, was a stranger to the institution and did not comply with the article of the Regulation that determined the suspension for one academic year of students who repeated serious misconduct, committed against teachers, instituted authorities and directors.

Nascimento Moraes claimed that his son did not have the right to defend himself and that the crime cited in the document was the fact that he “[...] had an altercation on the corner of the *Liceu* with the instructor sergeant<sup>34</sup>” (Moraes, 1928a, p. 1). For the process begin, according to the Regulation, it would be the victim who would have to write the sentence request for the student, which there was not, since the instructor refused. In his statement, Sergeant Bousson only stated that, on May 5, Ápio had “[...] withdrawn from the form 'with the intention of disrespecting him<sup>35</sup>'” (Moraes, 1928b, p. 1, remarks added of the author).

As for the course of the process, the journalist revealed that the instructor was called to testify three times before the accused, and that the latter did not have access to any of the depositions. He attributed to the repeated testimonies the director's intention to prepare the instructor to deny information he had obtained that Ápio had been insulted by Sergeant Bousson, who called him 'vagrant kid', 'anarchist' and 'relapse'. Such insults had been witnessed by Ápio's brother, Paulo Augusto, who was not called as a witness in the process (Moraes, 1928b, p. 1).

Nascimento Moraes accused that indiscipline was widespread in the Military instructor's classes, since he 'walked shoulder to shoulder' with the *Liceu* students “[...] listening and narrating anecdotes from boys, attending high school classes by order of the director<sup>36</sup>” (Moraes, 1928c, p. 1). He argued that the sergeant, from being a military instructor, also became a colleague of the boys, which would have triggered widespread indiscipline among the students. He did not defend that his son should go unpunished, but he considered the penalty too heavy, claiming that Ápio was chosen as an example of correcting a common undisciplined attitude among the boys in the class (Moraes, 1928c).

<sup>34</sup> In the original: “[...] ter altercado na esquina do Liceu com o sargento instrutor”.

<sup>35</sup> In the original: “[...] retirando-se da forma 'com o intuito de desrespeitá-lo”.

<sup>36</sup> In the original: “[...] ouvindo e narrando anedotas de rapazes, frequentando com eles as disciplinas do curso ginasial, por ordem do diretor”.



It cannot be ignored that Ápio was born 21 years after the law that made slavery official in Brazil. He had a dark complexion, despite the fine features of his nose, probably inherited from his mother<sup>37</sup>; he was a black teenager attending high school, at a time of shortage of places in the state. Data from the period indicate that, in the capital São Luís, there were only three preparatory secondary schools, and only one of these schools was public, *Liceu Maranhense*, where 90 students attended high school, and two other private high schools, where 109 young people attended: *Instituto Viveiros* (from professor Gerônimo de Viveiros) and *Escola Minerva* (from professor Ruben Almeida). During this period, Maranhão had 41,624 people of school age, but only 23.15% were enrolled (Almeida, 1929). Such elements place the schooling experience as a privilege accessible to few.

On the other hand, one cannot forget that Nascimento Moraes did not lack enemies. One cannot help but think that he could arouse antipathy among a certain group of influential people and among some of his peers in secondary education, as was the case with Luiz Vianna.

Luiz Vianna was a teacher trained at the *Escola Normal do Maranhão*, in the early years of the 20th century. From 1916 onwards, he studied Medicine in Rio de Janeiro. In 1920, he was already in Maranhão working as a clinician. He was director of the School of Pharmacy and Dentistry, when he took a public examination as a professor at the *Liceu*, at the beginning of 1926. In August of the same year, he was appointed to the direction of the *Liceu*, also assuming, as a result, the General Directorate of Public Instruction; management roles that he accumulated with the position previously held at the School of Pharmacy and Dentistry, until August 1928, when he moved to São Paulo.

The *Liceu* director was, without a doubt, Nascimento Moraes' disaffected; he was one of those enemies recognized by the black professor. The rivalry between the two can be seen in the press, since 1910, when the controversy between Antônio Lobo and Nascimento Moraes<sup>38</sup>. In several moments of the publications printed in *A Hora*, Nascimento Moraes attributes the director's motivation to the hatred nurtured against him and mentions the enmity with the director, recording that Luiz Vianna: “[...] uses their position for petty vengeance and that one does not hesitate to phlegmatically

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<sup>37</sup> Appius' appearance can be seen in an image published at the time of his graduation in Science and Letters, in 1929 (*Os novos...*, 1929).

<sup>38</sup> In 1910, Nascimento Moraes participated in a fierce dispute in the press with the Inspector General of Public Instruction, Antônio Lobo. Among the disciples and supporters of Antonio Lobo, appears Luiz Vianna, who is also in the sights of Nascimento Moraes. The texts resulting from the controversy, published by Nascimento Moraes in the newspaper *Correio da Tarde*, gave rise to the book *Puxos e Repuxos* (Moraes, 1910).

sacrifice the intellectual life of a boy, although it is necessary to sacrifice the law, to force the Pedro II Regulation<sup>39</sup>” (Moraes, 1928d, p. 1).

The firstborn appears as the weakest and most susceptible part of Professor Nascimento Moraes, a question pointed out in the penultimate publication on the case, on May 30th. On the occasion, already giving up, Nascimento Moraes recorded that:

Mr. Luiz Vianna [...] assuming that Maranhão is inhabited by imbeciles, opened the valves of his hatred by suspending the student Áppio Cláudio for a school year, harming the same student for being the son of Prof. Nascimento Moraes, whose headmaster is a personal enemy.

[...] The accused student is in the 5th year of junior high school. Mr. Luiz Vianna does not ignore that Prof. Nascimento Moraes is a poor man who has many children and struggles, as one must understand, with difficulties, to educate them. Therefore, the director of the *Liceu* had, with this act, two intentions:

1st.. to hurt Professor Nascimento Moraes in his father's heart.  
[2nd].. harm him, causing him to have greater expenses for the education of his children (Moraes, 1928e, p. 1).

One cannot fail to infer that, on that occasion, discriminatory practices were present in the *Liceu*. In general, as other institutions were inserted in a traditionally racist society, blacks were expected to be restricted to a position of conformism and subalternity, without the right to react and question; behaviors rejected by Nascimento Moraes, since the beginning of his career, and probably also by his son. According to Almeida (2019, p. 2):

Racial inequality is a feature of society not only because of the isolated action of racist groups or individuals, but fundamentally because institutions are hegemonized by certain racial groups that use institutional mechanisms to impose their political and economic interests<sup>40</sup>.

<sup>39</sup> In the original: “[...] usa o cargo para instrumento de vinganças mesquinhas, e que se não peja de fleugmaticamente, sacrificar a vida intelectual de um rapaz, embora seja preciso sacrificar a lei, forçar a letra do Regulamento do Pedro II”.

<sup>40</sup> In the original: “A desigualdade racial é uma característica da sociedade não apenas por causa da ação isolada de grupos ou de indivíduos racistas, mas fundamentalmente porque as instituições são hegemonizadas por determinados grupos raciais que utilizam mecanismos institucionais para impor seus interesses políticos e econômicos”.

Luiz Vianna, as disaffected by professor Nascimento Moraes, used his position of power, within the most important secondary education institution in Maranhão, to offend his opponent, taking Ápio out of school for a year, for reasons incompatible with the penalty. There was an unfavorable climate for the black boy, the firstborn of a teacher and journalist already known for his fearless confrontations against people positioned in the spaces of power.

On other occasions, parallel to the construction of his career, Nascimento Moraes faced different situations of racism, such as when various pejorative terms were thrown at him, especially when exercising controversial journalism. In 1910, he was called a 'two-sex animal', 'black and dirty', 'beast', 'donkey', 'black horse', 'arrogant black boy', 'vulture' (Peaceful Intervention, 1910; An immoral Moraes, 1910). In another of these situations, in 1923, he is called a 'riding animal', 'animal', 'quadruped' and 'black donkey' (Em torno da instrução, 1923, p. 1).

The practices of discrimination against Nascimento Moraes were not restricted to the swearing tone in the controversial articles printed in the newspapers, but also materialized as physical violence. Physical attacks were part of the journalist's life many times. He declared that he had suffered eleven attempted murders (Masson, 1954), and when he denounced, by the press, the injustice committed by the Federal Examination Inspector who decided to exclude him from the Geography exam bench, in 1919, he was cursed, beaten with a handle of a cane and threatened with a revolver (Um facto lamentável, 1919). Four years before he died, Nascimento Moraes declared: "I felt, in my flesh and soul, the hatred of the powerful, I always fought tyrants with the weapon I had: the penalty<sup>41</sup>" (Masson, 1954, p. 1).

Other family members were also not spared physical attacks and racist abuse, such as what happened to José Alípio de Moraes Filho, cousin of Professor Nascimento Moraes, in 1938:

José Alípio de Moraes, resident at Rua de Santana, 346, appeared at the 1st Police Station in order to communicate that, the day before yesterday at 9:30 pm, when he was passing by building 245 at Rua Cândido Ribeiro, for the simple fact of saying good night to two young ladies, who were in the window of that building, was labeled 'protruding black', being kicked by two boys who were in the aforementioned house, whose names he does not know. The authority became aware of the complaint and will act accordingly<sup>42</sup> (Casos policiais, 1938, p. 3).

<sup>41</sup> In the original: "Senti, na carne e na alma, o ódio dos poderosos, combati sempre os tiranos, com a arma de que dispunha: a pena".

<sup>42</sup> In the original: "José Alípio de Moraes, residente à rua de Santana, 346, compareceu à 1ª Delegacia afim de comunicar que, ante-ontem às 21: 30 horas quando passava pelo prédio 245 à rua Cândido Ribeiro,

José Alípio de Moraes Filho was from the third generation of the family, descended from Nascimento Moraes' uncle. Like his father, he was also a musician with an established band, in addition to having exercised, among others, the career of music teacher. José Alípio senior also appears in a newspaper as a victim of physical violence, still at an early age, in 1865, when it is declared that they had arrested “Camillo Lellis, for having beaten and wounded José Alípio Moraes<sup>43</sup>” (Estatística da cidade, 1865, p. 2). Although we have not identified other information that explains what triggered the act of violence against José Alípio senior, it would not be surprising that there was little tolerance for freed black boys who transited in cultural environments occupied by other young people of privileged family descent. The name of José Alípio Moraes always appears among others of people of economic power in festivities, composing directorships of brotherhoods, in electoral lists and in honor of political authorities of the period.

In 1863, two years before being beaten by 'Camillo Lellis', he appears as one of the members of the Union of Artists, inserted in a petition whose subscribers declared values to be delivered to the president of the province, who should pass on to Emperor D Pedro II, aiming to contribute to the payment of the “[...] external public debt of the State<sup>44</sup>” (Dívida Pública externa..., 1863). All the indications about José Alípio Moraes' social life show that he enjoyed a certain level of integration in the society of the time and did not seem to consider that he deserved an inferior position, because he was a dark man<sup>45</sup>.

The acts described so far, carried out against members of the Nascimento Moraes family, can be interpreted as resulting from racism. Almeida (2019) considers that discriminatory practices are, so to speak, articulated, in the broadest sense, to racism, as a process in which “[...] conditions of subalternity and privileges are distributed among groups, reproduced within the scope of politics, the economy and everyday relationships<sup>46</sup>” (Almeida, 2019, p. 24). The social interdictions imposed on black people in Brazil, especially those with more pronounced dark skin, took place at all levels of social relations, which confirms the existence of racism in structural, institutional and individual dimensions (Almeida, 2019).

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pelo simples fato de dar boa noite a duas senhoritas, que se encontravam na janelado referido prédio, foi taxado ‘de negro saliente’, sendo agredido a ponta-pés, por dois rapazes que se encontravam na casa citada dos quais ignora os nomes. A autoridade tomou conhecimento da queixa e vai agir conforme o caso (Casos policiais, 1938, p. 3, grifo nosso)”.

<sup>43</sup> In the original: “Camillo Lellis, por ter espancado e ferido a José Alípio Moraes”.

<sup>44</sup> In the original: “[...] dívida pública externa do Estado”.

<sup>45</sup> I conclude that José Alípio was a dark man, in view of the signs of the dominance of this characteristic identified in two of his sons: José Alípio Filho, was called a 'protruding black' by people he did not know; Raul Porciúncula de Moraes, who graduated in Dentistry, had a photograph printed in *A Hora* (O gabinete cirúrgico..., 1928), in which the characteristics loaded with his blackness can be identified.

<sup>46</sup> In the original: “[...] condições de subalternidade e de privilégios se distribuem entre grupos, se reproduzem no âmbito da política, da economia e das relações cotidianas”.

## FINAL REMARKS

The journalist and professor at *Escola Normal* and *Liceu Maranhense*, José do Nascimento Moraes, was the main exponent of a black family with a remarkable participation in the history of education, journalism and literature.

Nascimento Moraes became famous in the intellectual field and, by constituting his family nucleus, bequeathed to his sons and daughters the path of humanities, with insertion in teaching, journalism and literature. All Nascimento Moraes' children followed the paths started by their father and absorbed schooling as a tool to maintain an upward trajectory that the family had been presenting for two previous generations. Of the seven best-known children of Nascimento Moraes, at least six worked as teachers and two became prominent journalists, occupying chairs at the *Academia Maranhense de Letras*. The study showed that, despite the prominence of members of this family in the intellectual field, they were not exempt from confronting racism.

All the situations described in this work register particularities of the process of ascension of the black strata, in which the permanence of similar strategies can be identified, both in the 19th century and in the first half of the 20th century. Strategies of whitening and adherence to a continuous project of schooling, for generations, were recurrent in the history of Brazil. However, within these experiences, the barriers imposed by racist practices are continually updated, demonstrating that whitening the skin, schooling and changes in social class are not enough. Even fulfilling all the demands focused on as favorable elements to the social integration of these populations, discriminatory practices are recurrent, since they are manifested as a rejection of the incidence of African characteristics and origin, as well as a denial of the individuals of such ancestry.

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