Dual Legacies: Cultural Memory, Emancipation, and Tordesillas in Teixeira de Pascoaes and Gilberto Freyre

Recibido: 18/12/2024 | Revisado: 29/02/2025 | Aceptado: 04/03/2025
DOI: 10.17230/co-herencia.22.42.8

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Abstract This paper offers a fresh interpretation of the thought of Portuguese poet Teixeira de Pascoaes (1877-1952) and Brazilian sociologist Gilberto Freyre (1900-1987), emphasizing how aspects of their work resonate with contemporary struggles for emancipation. Drawing on their admiration for the nineteenth-century Portuguese historian Oliveira Martins' historiography, the paper situates their ideas within the broader post-Tordesillas dynamics of Luso-Brazilian psychopolitics. It argues that Pascoaes' and Freyre's reflections on memory and their visionary approaches to the future provide valuable frameworks for addressing present-day challenges. By critiquing the restrictive lens that excludes these thinkers from the Imaginary Museum of Progressive and Emancipatory Luso-Afro-Brazilian Thought, the paper reassesses their potential contributions, challenging their orthodox portrayal as reactionary guardians of tradition and exploring their relevance to contemporary cultural and political discourse.

Keywords:
Emancipation, Gilberto Freyre, Saudosism, Teixeira de Pascoaes, Tordesillas.

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Doble legado: memoria cultural, emancipación y Tordesillas en Teixeira de Pascoaes y Gilberto Freyre

Resumen Este artículo ofrece una nueva interpretación del pensamiento del poeta portugués Teixeira de Pascoaes (1877-1952) y del sociólogo brasileño Gilberto Freyre (1900-1987), subrayando cómo ciertos aspectos de sus obras resuenan con las luchas contemporáneas por la emancipación. A partir de su admiración por la historiografía del historiador portugués del siglo

XIX Oliveira Martins, el texto sitúa sus ideas en el contexto más amplio de las dinámicas post-Tordesillas de la psicopolítica luso-brasileña. Se argumenta que las reflexiones de Pascoaes y Freyre sobre la memoria y sus enfoques visionarios hacia el futuro ofrecen marcos valiosos para enfrentar los desafíos actuales. Al criticar el filtro restrictivo que excluye a estos pensadores del Museo Imaginario del Pensamiento Progresista y Emancipador Luso-Afro-Brasileño, el artículo reevalúa sus posibles aportes, cuestionando su representación ortodoxa como guardianes reaccionarios de la tradición y explorando su relevancia para el discurso cultural y político contemporáneo.

Palabras clave:
Emancipación, Gilberto Freyre, saudosismo, Teixeira de Pascoaes, Tordesillas.

Duas heranças: memória cultural, emancipação e Tordesilhas em Teixeira de Pascoaes e Gilberto Freyre

Resumo Este artigo propõe uma nova interpretação do pensamento do poeta português Teixeira de Pascoaes (1877–1952) e do sociólogo brasileiro Gilberto Freyre (1900–1987), destacando como certos aspectos das suas obras dialogam com lutas contemporâneas de emancipação. A partir da admiração de ambos pela historiografia do historiador português do século XIX Oliveira Martins, o texto insere suas ideias nas dinâmicas psicopolíticas luso-brasileiras do pós-Tordesilhas. Argumenta-se que as reflexões de Pascoaes e Freyre sobre a memória e suas visões de futuro oferecem quadros teóricos valiosos para enfrentar os desafios do presente. Ao criticar o filtro restritivo que os exclui do Museu Imaginário do Pensamento Progressista e Emancipador Luso-Afro-Brasileiro, o artigo reavalia suas contribuições potenciais, desafiando sua representação ortodoxa como guardiões reacionários da tradição e explorando sua relevância para o discurso cultural e político contemporâneo.

Palavras-chave:
Emancipação, saudosismo, Teixeira de Pascoaes, Tordesilhas.

Fallen idols

In recent decades, Teixeira de Pascoaes (1877-1952) and Gilberto Freyre (1900-1987) have received less sustained engagement in university departments of literature and cultural studies, where critical frameworks emphasizing coloniality and decolonization have reframed the histories of Lusophone thought. In the early twentieth

century, both thinkers were central figures in intellectual circles in Portugal and Brazil, shaping national and transatlantic debates. Over time, however, shifts in historiographical and ideological priorities have led to a more skeptical reading of their legacies, often positioning them within a Eurocentric tradition that many scholars seek to critically reassess.

In contemporary academic discourse, where decolonial and anti-colonial approaches shape many discussions, Pascoaes' and Freyre's works are frequently criticized for their perceived Eurocentrism. Their once celebrated visions of Luso-Brazilian identity are now often read as part of a broader colonial legacy that contemporary thought seeks to dismantle.

What António Cândido Franco (2000, p. 437) says about Pascoaes —that the common stance became to accept the poet but reject the doctrinaire— applies just as well to Freyre. Dismissed as relics of colonial ideology and circular worldviews, works such as *Arte de Ser Português* (1915) and *Casa-Grande & Senzala* (1933) are often criticized due to their reactionism. This tendency to dismiss them outright—particularly in academic circles influenced by postcolonial critiques and critical theory—has contributed to a narrower reading of their contributions, often reducing their work to ideological shorthand rather than engaging with their complexities.

Alfredo César Melo pushes back against this prevailing view of Gilberto Freyre. In his paper, *"Saudosismo e crítica social em Casa grande & senzala: a articulação de uma política da memória e de uma utopia"* (2009), Melo highlights Freyre's "subtle dialectic between memory and forgetting", revealing how *Casa-Grande & Senzala* deploys nostalgic and analytical elements to constitute a "memory pact" with readers, to the point that memory becomes a lived experience to deconstruct the discourse of racial democracy.

In this paper, I will revisit the ideas of Teixeira de Pascoaes and Gilberto Freyre, highlighting their significance for contemporary emancipatory thought. In addition to Alfredo César Melo's paper, Jorge Schwartz's well-regarded essay *"Abaixo Tordesilhas!"* (1993) and *Beyond Tordesillas* (2017), edited by Robert Patrick Newcomb and Richard Gordon, were key sources of inspiration for this analysis.

Even though I do not directly engage with them in this piece, these works make a compelling case for the dynamics of cultural integration and the challenges of overcoming regional divides between Latin American and Luso-Brazilian traditions, which I believe is useful for strengthening my argument. Along the way, I will bring in insights from Roberto Esposito, Diana Taylor, and Michel Serres —thinkers whose work pushes us to rethink the boundaries of cultural and political discourse.

In what follows, I place Teixeira de Pascoaes and Gilberto Freyre within the broader political and psychological legacies of the Treaty of Tordesillas, looking at how they have influenced the formation of Portuguese and Brazilian identities. Ultimately, my goal is to challenge the assumption that their ideas are somehow incompatible with progressive thought. In fact, I shall argue that their work offers us important tools for engaging with today's questions about memory, identity, and historical continuity.

Rather than tracing lines of influence or proposing a unified theory, this comparison aims to reveal resonances —moments where two distinct traditions mobilize cultural memory toward shared horizons of historical redescription and political imagination.

Geographical definition

The Treaty of Tordesillas exemplifies early Iberian attempts to impose a continental logic onto the ocean, carving the vast expanse of the Atlantic and the extra-European lands that were available to be captured into spheres of influence between Portugal and Spain. The geopolitical divide created by this constitutive juridical event, ratified through cartographic imagination and the Pope's blessing, constitutes a performative act of world-making that sought to impose a continental order on the fluid, liminal space of the sea. In this regard, the treaty reflects the impulse to transform the ocean from an open and uncontrollable space into a region governed by the same territorial sovereignty that defined land-based empires.

As Robert Patrick Newcomb (2012) highlights in *Nossa and Nuestra América*, the Treaty of Tordesillas, which divided the New World between Spain and Portugal in 1494, placed Brazil in a unique and ambiguous cultural position. While the majority of Latin American nations were influenced by Spanish colonial structures, Brazil's Portuguese colonial legacy resulted in distinct linguistic, cultural, and political characteristics that set it apart.

This division has had lasting implications, complicating the development of a cohesive regional Latin American identity that could unite the diverse cultures and histories across the continent. Newcomb argues that Brazil's separate colonial trajectory, combined with its later position as a Portuguese-speaking anomaly in a predominantly Spanish-speaking Latin America, has led to a cultural ambiguity that continues to challenge the idea of a unified Latin American identity (2012, p. 24).

This cartographic seizing of the New World, with its focus on imperial design and territorial conquest, is subverted by the dialectical tensions woven into the works of Teixeira de Pascoaes and Gilberto Freyre. Both thinkers engage with these tensions, resisting simplistic categorizations of identity and culture, and reflecting the complexity of postcolonial histories that, much like the ocean itself, cannot be neatly divided or easily contained. Freyre and Pascoaes propose distinct paths for reimagining Portugal's identity. Freyre envisions cultural synthesis, framing colonial encounters as moments of postcolonial hybridity, not a straightforward imposition of territorial domination.

In his view, Portugal reveals a way of life imbued with tropicalized cultural influences. In contrast, Pascoaes reinterprets Portugal's history through mystical nationalism, suggesting a retreat to pre-imperial, municipal identities freed from the imperial vistas influenced by French or English worldviews.

Even if their claims do not directly address contemporary demands, Freyre's and Pascoaes' dialectical approaches to history invite us to rethink the Treaty's symbolic and material legacy. They offer tools for reimagining the imperial line as a site of transformation rather than a relic of domination.

Freyre's reflections on Brazil's colonial past, for example, emphasize Portugal's unique tropical experience in contrast to Spain's. He goes to great lengths to describe the social structure, cultural values, and practices of the transnational Luso-tropical society, arguing that Brazil showcases the most fully realized expression of this system. The Treaty of Tordesillas functions as a symbolic anchor, tethering cultural and social narratives that continue to shape how Brazil and Latin America are imagined. As Oliveira Martins (1994) notes in *História da Civilização Ibérica*, the Iberian experiences of conquest and empire, while often grouped together, reveal significant differences:

> *Cada um dos povos peninsulares desenvolve os recursos do seu génio, e, objectiva ou historicamente esses recursos são equivalentes: o que de um lado sobra em audácia, falta do outro em justiça. Há nos portugueses um melhor equilíbrio nas faculdades, como é próprio de um temperamento menos acentuado; e essa é a causa do carácter trágico da cena ultramarina portuguesa, ao lado da espanhola que é uma comédia, ou um auto, como os de Lope ou Calderon, terminando pelo sorriso amargo de Cervantes* (Martins, 1994, p. 256).

The Iberian distinction has become a cornerstone of national narratives, as Robert Patrick Newcomb and Richard A. Gordon argue in *Beyond Tordesillas*. Despite the shared academic spaces of Hispanic and Luso-Brazilian studies, the colonial histories of Spain and Portugal are treated as distinct, rooted in nationalistic impulses that trace back to their dynastic union in the 16th and 17th centuries.

Gilberto Freyre and Teixeira de Pascoaes challenge conventional temporalities, reframing Portugal's identity as both predating and transcending the Treaty of Tordesillas. Freyre praises Brazil's post-colonial society as exceptional, mainly in contrast to Spain's colonial legacy, which he simultaneously aligns with and distances himself from.

In contrast, Pascoaes draws on Portugal's imperial past to craft a melancholic, saudade-infused vision of a pre-expansionist municipal Portugal. While Gilberto Freyre critiques colonial social structures to advocate for cultural hybridity, Teixeira Pascoaes uses these legacies to philosophically reimagine Portugal's future. In this way, the Treaty of Tordesillas transcends its geopolitical origins, evolving into a symbolic negotiation of history, memory, and identity in their works.

The geopolitical demarcations imposed by the Treaty of Tordesillas were not merely territorial; they also structured historical narratives, shaping how Portugal and Brazil imagined their roles in the Atlantic world. For Pascoaes, this division represents a symbolic rupture between Portugal's maritime expansion and its internal spiritual identity, a fissure that he seeks to reconcile through saudade. For Freyre, the treaty marks the beginning of a sociocultural experiment—one that he frames as a process of hybridization rather than a rigid imperial order. Both thinkers, in their distinct ways, interrogate the legacy of Tordesillas, seeking to transform its rigid historical boundaries into dynamic cultural exchanges that resist easy categorization.

Know thou country

Before proceeding, I want to clarify the nature of the comparison I am making between Teixeira de Pascoaes and Gilberto Freyre. My aim is not to suggest a strict homology between saudosismo and miscegenation, nor to claim a convergence of their political projects. Rather, I propose a heuristic analogy: both thinkers use backward-looking concepts—saudade in Pascoaes' case, and memory and hybridity in Freyre's—as vehicles to reimagine national identity. These concepts are not equivalent in content or genealogy, but they function similarly as mediating figures that bind past and future in a critical reworking of national myths. My goal is to trace these resonances, not to collapse the differences between poetic metaphysics and sociological narrative, but to show how each constructs a vision of community rooted in a particular affective and territorial imagination.

Pascoaes and Freyre knew their countries inside out—not just politically, but in how they felt. One built his vision of home through saudade; the other, through miscegenation. Different routes, maybe, but the same destination: a place where cultural memory stands in for geography. This comparison, of course, is not meant to suggest that "saudade" and "miscegenation" are conceptually or historically

equivalent. Rather, I propose that both function as emotionally and symbolically charged signifiers of "home"—not a geographical home, but a vision of belonging tied to memory and cultural inheritance. In both cases, territoriality becomes affectively saturated, anchoring their respective projects of national imagination.

As performance theorist Diana Taylor aptly observes, "Cultural memory is, among other things, a practice, an act of imagination and interconnection" (Taylor, 2003, p. 82). Building on this insight, I argue throughout the following pages that while their perspectives may not align neatly with the most prominent strands of radical critique, they nevertheless open avenues for a distinct yet complementary form of cultural criticism—one that, if read with attentiveness to its complexities, offers insights as rich as those found in contemporary decolonial thought. Their work, with all its complexity, prompts a rethinking of cultural memory as a living, dynamic, and embodied narrative.

Let me start by saying that in this endeavor, I only need to focus on the second half of the work, since Alfredo César Melo (2009) has already developed the first part of my argument in "*Saudosismo e crítica social em Casa grande & senzala: a articulação de uma política da memória e de uma utopia*". In that article, Alfredo César Melo suggests that one of Freyre's merits lies in combining a nostalgic evocation of the colonial past with a sharp critique of the social prejudices created by that past.

Thus, Alfredo César Melo builds a bridge between Freyre and contemporary cultural criticism, attempting to correct some misunderstandings and demonstrate that Gilberto Freyre is not merely a figure of the past, but someone who, in the best parts of his thinking, can still create important spaces for those interested in practices of social emancipation.

In the following sections, I seek to expand Melo's argument through a comparison with Teixeira Pascoaes, the central figure of the Portuguese saudosist movement. In the first, more extensive part, I will comment on the key points of that work, which serves as my starting point, and then propose a way to relate Teixeira de Pascoaes and Gilberto Freyre through the Portuguese historian

Oliveira Martins, which, I believe, expands Melo's considerations, adding a transatlantic dimension.

Ecologically Brazilian

Today, Gilberto Freyre remains a contentious figure, critiqued by both the political left and right. His seminal work *Casa-Grande & Senzala*, first published in 1933, oscillates between nostalgia for Brazil's colonial past, largely rooted in personal memories, and groundbreaking sociological analysis, emphasizing a positive view of miscegenation. This duality—celebrated by some, denounced by others—positions Freyre as both an innovator and a polarizing apologist for colonialist ideologies. Critics have long questioned Freyre's theory of Lusotropicalism, which framed Portuguese colonization as a progressive model for racial and cultural integration.

As Alfredo César Melo (2009) observes, *Casa-Grande & Senzala* operates as a duet: the melancholic aristocrat yearning for a lost colonial "paradise" shares the stage with a socially conscious scholar critiquing the very structures he romanticizes. This dynamic creates a narrative that resists easy classification, blending autobiography, cultural history, and sociology in a way that remains as provocative today as it was in 1933.

Gilberto Freyre stoked the fury of Brazilian sociologists with benign allusions to a troubling past whose specter of social inequality and discrimination still weighed heavily on the present. His greatest opponent at the University of São Paulo, Florestan Fernandes (1920-1995), accused him of confusing documentary values with poetic values and of producing books that were nothing more than a combination of crippled science, moral impudence, and poetic ideation. Alongside Roger Bastide (1898-1974), a French sociologist and anthropologist known for his work on Afro-Brazilian culture, Fernandes comprehensive research revealed the extent of racial prejudice in Brazilian society, weighting the socioeconomic and cultural barriers that systematically hindered the full integration of Black and mixed-race populations into the sphere of citizenship.

Faced with the glaring inequality that anyone could observe in Brazilian society, Florestan Fernandes protested that no one who takes themselves seriously could have the audacity to claim that Brazil is a racial democracy and that the assimilation of Amerindians and Africans into citizenship has been a "relatively peaceful and smooth process, with only a few instances of cultural and class conflict in which race antagonism has been also present" (Freyre, 1966, p. 158).[1]

This thesis, which Freyre's works helped to echo, whitewashes reality and diminishes the need to scrutinize the mechanisms of social inequality. Freyre's depiction of Brazil as an "ethnic democracy" has sparked ongoing debate, as it appears to celebrate cultural hybridity while downplaying the persistence of racial and social hierarchies. While his work undeniably challenged rigid racial essentialism, critics argue that his emphasis on fluid identities risks obscuring the deep structural inequalities that continued beyond formal abolition.

This tension shapes how Freyre's legacy is read today: as either a bold alternative to racial determinism or a quiet endorsement of colonial inequality. Freyre's portrayal of colonial Brazil as a kind of "pre-democratic" society remains controversial, with many critics arguing that it softens—or outright overlooks—the era's entrenched inequalities. But that is no reason to think that the sage of Apipucos, reclining on a club chair, had different goals to Florestan Fernandes when it came to imagining the future society as one more open to diverse forms of citizenship. The contradictory logic of his work requires a discerning reader and responsible knowledge of historical background.

The contemporary reader, distanced from Freyre's time by nearly a century, must approach the exuberant prose of *Casa-Grande & Senzala* with strong moral reins, carefully separating the good from the bad. On the one hand, I suggest we should cherish the marvelous pages on the intimate life of Brazil. On the other hand, we should critically reject

[1] Interestingly, the Portuguese translation of this book takes a more nuanced approach, often relativizing ideas that are presented more definitively in the original. This shift reflects an effort to temper the assertions, offering a more cautious and critical perspective on Brazil's social dynamics. In this case, for instance, the translation makes the point that these instances of conflict actually were not uncommon: *"embora não tenham sido de todo raros exemplos de conflitos culturais e lutas de classes, nos quais o antagonism racial se tenha feito sentir; e de abusos de indígenas por 'civilizados'"* (Freyre, 1971, p. 188).

(not excuse) the reactionary tendencies that shaped many of Gilberto Freyre's political sympathies in his later years, such as his support for the 1964 military coup and the ensuing dictatorship.

The Gilberto Freyre that notable Brazilian public intellectuals such as Darcy Ribeiro and Antonio Candido preferred to remember is the daring sociologist who, as Alfredo César Melo (2009) observes, sought to pave the way for a "*rememoração coletiva, rememoração de uma geração cuja socialização primária foi fortemente marcada pela presença do negro, especialmente da mulher negra*" (p. 283). In *Casa-Grande & Senzala*, Freyre offers an innovative rendering of Brazilian social history that foregrounds the presence of Black and Indigenous peoples, while also grappling with an uneasy complicity with the colonial aristocracy of the sugarcane-producing northeast.

Rather than dismiss Freyre's works as relics of colonialist ideology, Melo (2009) argues for engaging with their complexities. Freyre's dialectical approach combines nostalgic remembrance with a subtle critique of Brazil's unresolved relationship with its colonial past. By highlighting African and Amerindian contributions to Brazilian identity, Freyre not only challenged scientific racism but also crafted a selective politics of memory. According to Melo, *Casa-Grande & Senzala* represents a rhetorical whole in which Freyre's attention to folk culture and ancestral voices fosters a collective self-awareness, positioning him within contemporary cultural criticism. Freyre's evocation of the past becomes a nonconformist response to a present that diverges from the successful experiences of earlier times.

Ultimately, the image constructed in Freyre's work serves as an instrument for contemplating Brazil's collective destiny, denouncing the moratorium elites placed on addressing racism and slavery after abolition. According to Melo (2009), Freyre temporalizes the myth of racial democracy, disarticulating its assumptions by showing how affection for the Black population in plantation houses coexisted with prejudice and intolerance. In this way, Freyre asks readers to interrogate the society of the "cordial man" described by Sérgio Buarque de Holanda in *Raízes do Brasil*.

Freyre's *Casa-Grande & Senzala* is ultimately a work of temporal complexity, where the past is folded into the present, creating a

dynamic critique of Brazil's unresolved colonial legacy. As Alfredo César Melo demonstrates, Freyre temporalizes the myth of racial democracy by exposing its contradictions—affection for the Black population coexisting with deep-seated prejudice—thus compelling readers to interrogate the idealized narratives of harmony and equality.

This temporalization resonates with Michel Serres's theory of time, which rejects a linear, sequential view of history in favor of a topological model where time folds, crumples, and overlaps. Freyre's method aligns with Serres's notion of the "crumpled handkerchief", where disparate points in time touch and influence each other. The plantation houses of Brazil's colonial past, with their simultaneous displays of affection and domination, become not merely relics of history but active folds that connect to and shape the racial dynamics of the present.

In this sense, Freyre's rhetoric serves as more than historical critique—it operates as a representational strategy that collapses time, making the latent contradictions of Brazil's colonial and postcolonial experiences palpable in contemporary cultural memory. Michel Serres' theory of time helps us understand Freyre's project as a manipulation of temporalities, where the past is drawn into the present.

Communitas

The concept of "national" embraced by Gilberto Freyre resonates with Roberto Esposito's notion of community in *Communitas. The Origin and Destiny of Community* (2009). Freyre's idea of nation, like Esposito's vision of community, challenges identity boundaries defined through ownership or autonomy. Esposito contests the immunitary logic that protects individuals from the collective, defining relationships through exclusion rather than obligation. Instead, he argues that communal bonds stem from debt—an open-ended obligation rooted in shared existence.

Where Esposito's community centers on relational indebtedness, Freyre's Brazil resists fixed identities. Unlike exclusionary nationalisms, Brazil is shaped by continuous negotiation, binding

people through shared vulnerability rather than autonomy. This contrasts with Oswald de Andrade's anthropophagic metaphor, which frames cultural synthesis as consumption.

While Andrade's vision emphasizes devouring foreign influences, Freyre's model is organic, favoring adaptation over rupture. For Freyre, the Brazilian nation emerges not from the recreation of cultural difference but from ongoing hybridisation—rejecting purity or autonomy implied by immunitary logics. Freyre's vision is inherently relational, focusing on a network of reciprocal obligations that form the fabric of the nation within a patriarchal society, which can later be redefined and modernized in a post-imperial political and cultural form.

It is precisely this mutual indebtedness—complex, fraught, and often asymmetrical—that allows Freyre to reinterpret Brazil's colonial history not as a unidirectional imposition but as a dynamic process of blending, where no single element retains absolute ownership of the resulting identity. Much like Esposito's communitas, Freyre's Brazil is constituted not through the exclusion of the other but through an ongoing, often uncomfortable, entanglement with difference. For Freyre, as opposed to Oswald de Andrade, the Brazilian community is not the byproduct of Brazilians' fear of being colonized by foreigners, but of a particular disposition to build an affirmative community.

Freyre didn't want to symbolically eat the colonizers (like Oswald de Andrade), nor did he want to overthrow them in Marxist style (like Fernandes). His prescription was less dramatic: to cultivate the mixed-up, messy relationships that already exist. It's not revolution, but it is a form of resistance—one rooted in coexistence, not purity. While Oswald de Andrade and Florestan Fernandes emphasize anti-imperialist rebellion, Freyre tells us that Brazilianness is essentially ecological in nature and, therefore, also tendentially solidaristic and accommodating, showcasing a particular prowess for "ethnic democracy" (Freyre, 1966, p. 7).[2]

[2] Again, the Portuguese translation is much more nuanced. In this case, Freyre's statement about the "almost perfect equality of opportunity for all men regardless of race and color" (1966, p. 7) is relativized. Instead of making a definitive claim, the translation reads: "Daí a sua relativa democracia étnica: a ampla, embora não perfeita, oportunidade dada no Brasil a todos os homens, independente de raça ou cor, para se afirmarem brasileiros

If we were to call this form of coexistence "racial democracy" we would obviously be going too far, and we must be grateful to Florestan Fernandes for putting his finger on the wound in such a harsh way. But Gilberto Freyre, strictly speaking, never claimed that Brazil, due to Portuguese colonization, lived in a racial democracy, nor did he use that expression to legitimize the oligarchic powers that kept Brazil under strict control.

In fact, Freyre almost never used the expression, and never did so to refer to the past or present of Brazilian society. What he suggested—and this is something entirely different—was that Brazil's traditional sense of identity, shaped by the peculiarities of daily coexistence between Portuguese, Amerindians, and Africans, held valuable lessons. According to Freyre, a fierce believer in the virtues of republicanism, this sort of coexistence, which took place on the sugar plantations of the northeast and in the "bandeiras" led by the frontiersmen of São Paulo during the colonial period, could offer insights into how to create a society without ethnic prejudices. In his view, this could serve as a model for a more diverse and inclusive future.

Rejecting what he saw as the "excessively Marxist approach" adopted by leading Brazilian sociologists in analyzing the Brazilian context, Freyre argued that this perspective failed to account for the need for a comprehensive historical and social analysis (Freyre, 1953, p. 333). He believed that Brazil, unlike other societies, had developed a way of life that promoted the informal dissolution of social barriers. This, he suggested, positioned Brazil closer than other nations to a democratic future, which he described in terms that resonate even more today as trans-Lusitanian, trans-Hispanic, and trans-Catholic. "Not that there is no race or color prejudice mixed with class prejudice in Brazil", he explains in the introduction to *New World in the Tropics*, pointing out the "particularly cordial and human relations between the masters and the slaves in Brazil." He adds: "But no one would think of having churches only for whites" (Freyre, 1966, p. 8). This is what Freyre had in mind when

plenos" (Freyre, 1971, p. 31). This phrasing introduces a more cautious perspective, aligning with the overall trend of the translation of presenting Freyre's ideas in a more tempered light.

he prophesied that Brazil would achieve its fulfillment when it bore witness to the world that, through far-reaching technologies of assimilation and hybridization, it was possible for a former colony to expand all its borders.

That is why, while acknowledging the social tensions caused by the oligarchic social practices of the European colonizers, Freyre argued that in Brazil—unlike in the United States—regional conflicts were more significant than ethnic divisions. With "one or two insignificant exceptions," he stated, these tensions never superseded the development of a society whose "main or decisive characteristics are European and Christian." The model of civilization that, in this historical account, tacitly took the lead within the context of "European dominance in Portuguese America" that "never became sharply exclusive" proved able to smoothly welcome those who were to become Brazilians (Freyre, 1966, pp. 149-154).

In practice, when Freyre expressed his belief in a Brazil "beyond race," his aim was neither to depict an already-existing sense of community across Brazilian society nor to advocate for what Florestan Fernandes called a massive social fraud; Freyre did not mean to deny the social trauma experienced by several populations. On the contrary, Freyre sought to create a conceptual space where such a moral and political triumph could eventually take root by abandoning the sort of racial opposition promoted by most of the European powers.

Alfredo César Melo highlights the vulnerability of Freyre's positions, although he notes that authors like Florestan Fernandes, Roberto DaMatta, Peter Fry, and António Risério—some of Freyre's most vocal detractors—also adopted the term "racial democracy" in a similar spirit, viewing it as an aspirational ideal rather than an existing reality.

This could serve as a reason for action and help reshape the terms of debate and organize the social construct that would more effectively bring about the kind of moral progress that Brazilians should expect. In any case, the distinctions between these thinkers and Freyre are striking. While their writings adhere more closely to academic conventions, using a neutral tone and scientific

standards, they reject any positive view of colonial patriarchalism. Nevertheless, Freyre often portrayed colonial Brazilian patriarchy in a more favorable light, particularly when comparing it to other colonial contexts. His analysis highlighted aspects of patriarchalism he saw as uniquely shaped by Brazilian circumstances, which set it apart from more conventional European models.

We can agree that Freyre was not as successful as his opponents in his campaign against the structural racism ingrained in Brazilian society, and we can also agree that he was even less successful in his campaign to distinguish the colonial Africa of the Portuguese from that of the Belgians, the English, and the Boers by praising characteristically Lusitanian values. On the other hand, it is also important to note that Freyre acknowledged that Brazil had already surpassed Portugal in its capacity to showcase in Asia and Africa the presence and possibilities of Portuguese culture, which could be flexibly adapted to different tropical contexts.

As I wrote earlier, many of the criticisms of Freyre are deserved. However, he should not be excessively criticized for believing that there is no incompatibility between the remembrance of past things and the defense of moral and social values, nor for thinking that poetry has as much dignity as science, nor for being skeptical of the kind of evolutionary ideas that underpin Marxist theory and revolutionary preaching. He certainly shouldn't be criticized for being true to himself and believing it is important to bring out the lesser-known aspects of Brazil's social and cultural history, projecting his autobiography into the collective.

Dressing up as a Portuguese

I now want to turn to Teixeira de Pascoaes to share some thoughts on what seems to be the common root of their reflections on their respective communities: how they place *saudade* at the service of imagining the future. I also want to suggest that this affinity is reflected in their shared admiration for Oliveira Martins' interpretation of Portuguese history. I will begin by examining the moment when Gilberto Freyre, during his long journey through

Portugal documented in *Aventura e Rotina*, met Pascoaes in Amarante. His comments about Pascoaes are significant for more than one reason.

For starters, Freyre saw him as a worthy representative of the old moral order—rudimentary and traditionalist. Like other Lusitanian poets, Pascoaes didn't shy away from expressing the intimacy he felt with the landscape around him:

> Sob a sua aparência de actor pronto para representar uma comédia de mil e novecentos — com o chapéu de palha, a gravata, o colarinho, o corte do fato, de uma época já morta — Teixeira é um homem autêntico, genuíno, sincero. Sem coisa alguma de postiço ou de teatral. Vive o seu "saudosismo" tão naturalmente como Eugénio de Castro vivia o seu "parnasianismo" e António Correia de Oliveira vive o seu "populismo" lírico. Cada um deles criou ou achou o "ismo" justo para o seu temperamento. Nenhum deles se deixou artificializar por um "ismo" que fosse apenas uma moda literária. Três admiráveis poetas vivos.
>
> [Then he adds an importante note:] "*É uma pena que o Brasil quase não conheça Teixeira de Pascoais. Se o conhecesse, talvez compreendesse melhor o na verdade raro Fernando Pessoa, hoje tão em moda entre os brasileiros, como poeta para poetas*" (Freyre, 1953, pp. 148-149).

In 1953, when Fernando Pessoa's work was beginning to be published and studied in Brazil, Freyre displayed an unusual understanding of the agonistic relationship between Pessoa and Pascoaes, which critics would only later come to appreciate. The attempt to return to the past to critique the present undertaken by Gilberto Freyre is similar to Teixeira de Pascoaes' effort to demonstrate that the path to the country's freedom and progress lay in the resurrection of the *Lusíada* spirit.

The notion of saudosismo as a mobilizing cultural force—what Alfredo César Melo sees at the rhetorical core of *Casa-Grande & Senzala*—can be seen as structurally analogous to the concept of saudade as theorized by Teixeira de Pascoaes and institutionalized through the Renascença Portuguesa movement. While saudade refers broadly to an existential and affective condition, saudosismo is Pascoaes' specific cultural project to elevate that condition into a principle of national regeneration. This distinction matters, but so too does their functional alignment: both are attempts to activate

the past as a generative force for political and cultural renewal. For Pascoaes, saudade is precisely a dialectic between remembrance and hope, operationalized as a guiding light for the future.

This is not very different from the representative logic we find in *Casa-Grande & Senzala*, but, in turn, it is very different from the social Darwinism present in the *Acto Colonial* of the Estado Novo. As in the case of Gilberto Freyre, the shadow of the past is transformed into an instrument for promoting political and social regeneration. Not coincidentally, in the final lines of his *Livro de Memórias* we find an explanation for much of what occurs in the preceding chapters of this kind of intellectual and spiritual autobiography, which could very well have been provided by Gilberto Freyre to describe the expository method of *Casa-Grande & Senzala*. Pascoaes (2001) writes: "*Também eu desprezo o presente, e me refugiei no Passado, para salvar da minha morte algumas das minhas lembranças mais queridas*" (p. 143).

At first glance, Pascoaes seems a melancholic figure, weighed down by the past. However, as António Cândido Franco observes, the statement cannot be simply taken at face value. Like the evocations in *Casa-Grande & Senzala*, the nostalgic impulse to return to the past effectively serves as an epistemological expedient to act upon the present with a gesture of emancipation. Guided by a redemptive impulse, Pascoaes' *saudosismo*, as Pascoaes claims (1988, p. 60) and António Cândido Franco reinforces (2000, p. 401), aligns with the modern European spirit. António Cândido Franco describes this tension in a way that makes its essential movement clear, which is worth transcribing here: "the dialectic of an ascendant returnism, neither fixated nor circular, in which disdain for the present is a contradictory way of paying attention to it, and the concentrated and obsessive focus on the past is a covert way of escaping from it" (Franco, 2000, p. 12; own translation).

This paradoxical way of knowing seeks to clear a space where the Portuguese soul might reemerge through a renewed alliance between culture and landscape. Pascoaes' use of saudade as a mobilizing force parallels Freyre's conception of memory as a political tool. Both construct identity not as static inheritance but as an ongoing negotiation between past and present. In Pascoaes, saudade

reclaims Portugal's lost historical consciousness, projecting it into a spiritualized future. In Freyre, memory functions similarly but within a postcolonial framework—Brazilian identity emerges from a dialectic between longing for colonial order and a desire to transcend it.

Both employ nostalgia, not as an end in itself but as a method for rethinking national belonging. The soul, or national character, is fundamentally the "original share" with which each nation must contribute, in its own language, for the world to move forward. This naturally refers to what I wrote above about Gilberto Freyre's *saudade*, following Alfredo César de Melo.

As with Freyre, Pascoaes sees social memory as transmitted through performative practices aimed at fostering an emancipatory spirit. Presenting itself as a dialectic between ontological continuities and territorial discontinuities, the sentiment of *saudade* or the notion of r*egionalism*, with its ephemeral nature, constitutes a witnessing experience, an exercise in self-knowledge, both individual and collective, a stage of cultural development, and a pedagogical method. On a political level, under pastoral apologetics, it would embody a concrete program for organizing the country. More than mere escapism to a timeless mythical past, it is about rescuing what from the past helps us preserve national identity after many years of harmful foreign influences (Freyre, 1967, p. 31; Pascoaes, 1988, p. 60).

Once again, we hear the words of Gilberto Freyre, who, echoing the schematism of the poet from the mountains of Marão,[3] conceptualized the ambivalence he observed in the Portuguese temperament as an existential tension between aventura (adventure) and rotina (routine). This framework reflects the conflicting elements of national identity. Freyre argued that the Portuguese historical experience—shaped by the interconnectedness of the

[3] Marão, the mountain range in northern Portugal, isn't just a physical feature—it is a cornerstone of Teixeira de Pascoaes' work, providing both literal and symbolic substance for his reflections on national identity. For Pascoaes, the jagged peaks and winding valleys of Marão serve as metaphors for the Portuguese soul, intertwining nature and culture. It's the place where the land itself becomes a vessel for the country's collective memory, and where saudade—those nostalgic longings that pulse through the national consciousness—finds its roots. Pascoaes saw the landscape as more than a backdrop; it is a key player in his philosophical inquiries into the nation's identity, which he often framed in terms of continuity and spiritual depth.

Age of Discoveries—clashed with the ingrained patterns of a life tied to tradition, comfort, and repetition. This duality was central to Freyre's interpretation of both Portuguese culture and the broader Luso-Brazilian identity, which oscillated between the allure of adventure and the pull of routine, creating a tension in their way of being and thinking.

Similar to Alfredo César Melo's reading of Gilberto Freyre—where nostalgia becomes a political instrument for imagining a more inclusive Brazilian society—Teixeira de Pascoaes' saudosismo also mobilizes cultural memory as a force for shaping a national community. In Pascoaes' case, this project is rooted in a metaphysical longing for a spiritualized Portugal, one that recovers a sense of historical and cultural coherence. While their methods and registers differ—Freyre's sociological hybridity versus Pascoaes' poetic mysticism—both turn to the past, not as a refuge but as a resource for envisioning a transformed collective future. In Freyre's case, as with Pascoaes yet contrary to Pascoaes' occasional view of his own writings, we see a more constructive than contemplative activity—one aimed at rearranging Brazilian cultural heritage to make it more horizontal, dynamic, and fluid, thus more turbulent and interconnected. The parallel between them is evident even in their shared vision of political organization: both envisioned an agrarian pluralist democracy, diverging from modernist vanguards. This vision combined the best characteristics of a representative government with those of an affirmative community, an idea that would later align with Esposito's political theory.

Clearing away the clutter and cobwebs with which António Sérgio had covered the saudade doctrine, António Cândido Franco concludes that Pascoaes' saudosism, marked by internal contradictions, is also an *anti-saudosism*. This is because, in crucial aspects, Pascoaes does not adopt a reactionary, nationalist, and backward-looking stance but instead creates room for an "experience of rupture, breaking well-defined and present totalities" (Franco, 2000, p. 400; own translation), which aligns with the country's circumstances during the crisis it faced during the traumatic shock of the First Republic.

It is against this backdrop that Franco astutely warns that it is futile to hope for incontrovertible signs of Lusitanianism, even in *Arte de Ser Português*, if that expression alludes to a form of ethnocentrism intolerant to the outside (in the sense, for example, that Salazar gave it when he decreed Portugal's isolationism). Ultimately, Pascoaes—like Freyre—promotes a non-conformist consciousness that advocates for a "particular and progressive way of contributing to the universalization of peoples and individuals" (Franco, 2000, p. 400).

Freyre, Pascoaes, and Oliveira Martins

When Pascoaes and Freyre speak of the universalization driven by the Portuguese in their colonial ventures, they are not strictly operating within the realm of colonial biopolitics. Their views differ from the approach taken by the New State under Salazar, which, as is well known, perversely used the clauses of Lusotropicalist theory to legitimize the claim that the benevolent nature of Portuguese imperialism justified differential treatment by the public sphere and international institutions, such as the United Nations.[4] Both Pascoaes and Freyre share a nostalgia for a time when society had moral and political independence. This nostalgia is tied to a period when history and tradition served as a fiduciary guarantee of independence.

What is at stake here is the dialectic between terrestrial and maritime existence. This dialectic implicitly informs Oliveira Martins' historiographical theory, endowing it with a set of injunctions that can easily be included within the spectrum of counter-colonial thought. Since problematic legacies are often best addressed in unexpected places, I now turn to this overlooked context of emancipation. In addition to taking a further step in the

4 The UN played a significant role in advocating for the independence of European colonies, including Portugal's, especially after the onset of African liberation struggles in the 1960s. While Portugal continued to resist, claiming the territories were integral parts of the nation, international pressures, including UN resolutions, made it clear that the independence movements in Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea were valid and supported by much of the global community.

analogy between Teixeira de Pascoaes and Gilberto Freyre that I have sought to outline here, I will add some observations on how both find in the nineteenth-century historiography of Oliveira Martins the mediating element of their respective theories.

As Rui Ramos (1997) pointed out, Oliveira Martins had little regard for the outcomes of Portugal's overseas expansion. "In his *History of Portugal*," Ramos explains, "he reduced the 16th-century empire to a sea of infamies and incompetence, viewing it as the cause of the disappearance of the nation that, before 1580, was called 'Portugal' (and with which, according to him, contemporary 'Portugal' shared only the name)" (1997, p. 113). To explain the history of Portugal, Oliveira Martins used the history of the Roman Republic as a comparative element, which he viewed as a paradigmatic model of national histories. From this parallel he developed the idea that, like the Roman Empire, the biopolitical system that allowed the mobilization of the popular energy of the Portuguese for the enterprise of expansion was also the primordial cause of their decline.

According to Oliveira Martins, the floating Portugal of Bartolomeu Dias, Vasco da Gama, and Pedro Álvares Cabral—whose maritime existence was determined by its geographical and historical situation—exists in antinomy with the Portugal that emerged from the overseas enterprise. The former is like a ship set adrift, driven by the currents of geography and history, exploring uncharted waters, while the latter is more like a nation anchored, its future shaped by the consequences of its imperial past. This antinomy underscores the contrast between the exploratory Portugal of the Age of Discovery and the constricted Portugal that was left behind after the decline of the empire. The tension between the fluid, maritime existence of the nation and the rigidity of its post-imperial condition reflects a complex historical transformation.

Under the influence of a mercantile system driven by profit and domination, the Portuguese monarchy gradually severed its ties with the republican-inspired regime established by the Afonsine Dynasty to safeguard immunity practices. Oliveira Martins remarked that Portugal had never successfully articulated, through a convincing

political or economic narrative, its ambition to control maritime trade routes—inevitably leading to the tragic outcome of the enterprise.

Martins had no illusions about the empire. Portugal's overseas adventure, he argued, was less a glorious expansion than a national self-sabotage. "We were navigators, not conquerors," he declared in his *History of Portugal*, directly challenging those who advocate for prioritizing overseas expansion in national policy. In doing so, he desacralized the memory of the empire: "*desvendámos todos os segredos dos Oceanos; mas o nosso império no Oriente foi um desastre; para o Oriente e para nós. A bordo fomos tudo; em terra apenas pudemos demonstrar o heroísmo do nosso carácter e a incapacidade do nosso domínio*" (Martins, 1977, p. 36).

In their historical scrips about the world created by the Portuguese, both Pascoaes and Freyre make an operative distinction between "Portuguese" and "pseudo-Portuguese," which echoes Oliveira Martins' critiques of imperial projects and his defense of a republican ethics rooted in regional equilibrium. For Martins, this equilibrium balances the contradictory forces shaping an organic society. Pascoaes' and Freyre's critique of the colonial project partly reflects a mystical notion of heroism tied to the diplomatic arrogance exemplified by Tordesillas. Here the arrogance of Tordesillas is not merely a historical artifact—the preamble to the colonization model enacted in Latin America—but also a conceptual shorthand for critiquing the unilateralism of imperial projects and their enduring legacy of exclusion.

What distinguishes them is their relative position in global geopolitics, as well as their orientation regarding the modes of production of subjectivities and the expansion of vital space. They call "Portuguese" those who maintain a bond with the moral, material, and symbolic conditions of the "primary situation", while also adapting themselves to new environments and becoming a different sort of person. Socially and politically, this translates into an expansionist policy guided by techniques of ecological and cultural assimilation, and as an effort to preserve the tradition of "classical republicanism" that was a feature of the old monarchy. This tradition, whether in a village in the northwestern Iberian

Peninsula or the "big houses" of northeastern Brazil, reflects a debt to a system that supported individual autonomy and freedom. For Pascoaes and Freyre the distinction between Portuguese and non-Portuguese identifies those who sustain this legacy.

In light of Esposito's formulations on the semantics of community, we can better understand what is at stake in this distinction. In their most decisive aspects, *Arte de Ser Português* and *Casa-Grande & Senzala* do not merely serve as indirect panegyrics to the oceanic and continental expansion of the Portuguese order; rather, they provoke a short-circuit in the structure of the social body, endowing with a voice those who had previously been excluded from the political arena. Both works urge their companions to recreate the communal atmosphere of a world on the brink of extinction.

In this sense, we can draw on Diana Taylor's ideas about the performative enactment of cultural memory, as a means of acknowledging trauma and forging a community of witnesses through performance. In this way, *Arte de Ser Português* and *Casa-Grande & Senzala* can be seen as performative acts in themselves, creating new pathways for memory that challenge existing narratives of power and exclusion. These works reframe history not only as a past to be remembered but as a living, dynamic force capable of shaping the present and future. By calling for the recreation of a communal atmosphere these texts engage in an active process through which communities heal, reclaim, and reimagine themselves.

Freyre considered Brazil the pinnacle of a society edging towards an "ethnic democracy", one that, in his view, was more than European (in a progressive sense). In contrast, he saw Portuguese Africa as embodying the realpolitik conditions of coloniality, where the ideals of Lusotropicalism, which he had championed for Brazil, were starkly absent. It is unsurprising, then, that today these two visions have become part of extremist discourses, disconnected from their historical context and set adrift from the realm of imagination. While Teixeira de Pascoaes invoked the idea of community to urge his countrymen to reconnect with the national soul amid a period of national crisis, Gilberto Freyre similarly employed the concept of community, but for a very different purpose: to critique Portuguese

colonialism in mid-20th-century Africa and point out the singularity of the Brazilian social experiment.

When he toured the Portuguese colonies, invited by the Portuguese government, instead of encountering a less mature version of the Luso-tropical society, what he found there sharply contrasted with the harmonious images he had painted of Brazilian society in *Casa-Grande & Senzala*. Rather than the idyllic Lusotropical society he had idealized, Freyre witnessed the brutal realities of colonial rule—racism, exploitation, and an extractive economy—that shattered his earlier assumptions. In places like the Diamang facilities in Dundo, he observed a stark society, one far removed from the vision of assimilation and miscegenation that he had once so confidently promoted for Brazil.

At this stage of his journey, Freyre does not forget that the trip is sponsored by the Portuguese government, which organized a large part of the itinerary, as well as providing the opportunities to give talks and hold meetings in important venues. But he also does not hold back. After praising the leadership abilities of Rolando Suceno and Commander Vilhena, Freyre does not hesitate to state the following: "*o lamentável é dirigirem um sistema que em algumas das suas raízes e em várias das suas projecções não é sociològicamente português, prejudicado, como se acha, por um racismo que é de origem belga e por um excesso de autoritarismo que é também exótico em sua origem e seus métodos*" (Freyre, 1953, p. 352). Later, following a visit to the Ethnographic Museum maintained by the company, where he posed alongside a *soba*, "*um pobre soba carnavalesco*", he took the opportunity to make his denunciation of the racism he witnessed there even more concrete: "*o estado do escravo no sistema patriarcal luso-brasileiro nada tinha de fixo: era transitório, plástico. O indivíduo podia superá-lo. O estado de 'trabalhador nativo' do africano destribalizado, dento das grandes empresas capitalistas instaladas na África, é uma situação de condenado sociològicamente à morte*" (Freyre, 1953, p. 357).

In both, one can hear the echo of the objective critique that Oliveira Martins directs at the unilateralism of the imperial enterprise—a form of madness that pushed the old Lusitanian

monarchy over the precipice, leaving in its place the ghost of D. Sebastião, the "posthumous proof of nationality." Both lean heavily on the traumatic power of their writing. The difference is that Pascoaes, the romantic poet through and through, imagines a revival of the mythical Portugal of the Navigations. His reflections on the continuity between the past and present of the Portuguese-speaking world can be traced back to the line of Tordesillas and the ways in which it bears witness, as a long lost symbol, to the psychological and cultural distinctiveness of Portugal. Freyre, on the other hand, is a sociologist piecing together a portrait of Brazilian society that celebrates sensual, multiracial bodies and customs. His goal is to uncover the political momentum that exposes the deep-seated antagonisms in the public sphere. He is mainly focused on getting the reader in sync with the explosive energy of the mixed-race society created under the unique conditions the Portuguese established in tropical latitudes.

Drawing consequences from a biological and cultural interpenetration that he saw as highly distinctive in the context of European colonization experiences in the Americas, Freyre leads us to describe the episodes of the decline and death of the Portuguese empire on the basis of the concrete realities of the post-colonial world: that is, merely as a stage in the biopolitical process that originated Brazil and, eventually, would set the stage for something like a new Brazil in Angola.

For the author of *Casa-Grande & Senzala*, the best part of the Portuguese legacy is precisely that which found its extra-European extension in the social experience of Brazil, and for which the mercantile ambitions of the *mare clausum* policy had no positive meaning. While reconstructing the stories of multicultural encounters under the tropical atmosphere, even if he was still under the influence of a not always discreet Eurocentrism, Freyre was already outlining a local response to the spatial experience invoked by the unilateral notion of "Discoveries".

In truth, Gilberto Freyre never lost sight of the notion that the significant event was not merely the colonizers' landing but the emergence of a new social and economic experience. This

experience, facilitated by the arrogance that produced Tordesillas, had substantial topological and anthropological consequences that, in his thinking, would overcome that arrogance. Unlike many of his readers, Freyre recognized that his depiction of a mixed-race society operating at high-intensity frequencies could inspire forms of social and racial emancipation on a global scale.

Dialectical spectatorship

Looking at Pascoaes and Freyre through a decolonial lens means resisting the impulse to fit them neatly into today's theoretical categories. They don't theorize power like Mignolo or Quijano, but they do highlight the cracks in the historical narratives that have shaped Luso-Brazilian identity. Pascoaes turns to a pre-imperial Portugal to imagine a national spirit unburdened by modern statehood; Freyre, meanwhile, scrambles the racial binaries that empire depends on by embracing hybridity.

So, are they unlikely allies in decolonial critique—or are they still spinning an old Eurocentric story, just with more nuance?

Quijano's coloniality of power offers one test case: while Freyre's lusotropicalism treats miscegenation as Brazil's social glue, critics argue it papers over racial hierarchies rather than dismantling them. Likewise, Pascoaes' *saudosismo* could be read through Mignolo's epistemic disobedience: does it carve out space for a different way of knowing, or is it just nostalgia dressed up as resistance? Taking these tensions seriously means reading them not as reactionary holdovers or proto-decolonial thinkers, but as figures whose contradictions still press on the limits of how we think about history and belonging.

Oliveira Martins viewed the Treaty of Tordesillas as a pivotal event in Portugal's history, but in an undeniably negative tone. He saw the treaty not as a source of empowerment but as the beginning of Portugal's geopolitical and cultural decline. The division of the world between Portugal and Spain didn't just install imperial ambitions—it set the stage for stagnation, locking Portugal into a passive role and out of sync with the dynamic geopolitical shifts

of the time. Instead of engaging with broader European currents, Portugal was stuck in an intellectual and cultural limbo, a legacy of Tordesillas that echoed throughout its history.

From the perspective of contemporary critical theory, the politics of memory advanced by Pascoaes and Freyre—deeply indebted to Oliveira Martins' vision of Portugal's history—can be read as engaging with the tenets of decolonial critique, particularly in their challenge to imperial historiographies and their attention to regional and cultural hybridity. Their modernity, rooted in a regionalist drive, offers an alternative to the more orthodox accounts of modernity, such as that embraced by Oswald de Andrade's anthropophagic movement. While such a reading may seem anachronistic, it helps uncover the emancipatory potential embedded in their counter-colonization critiques of imperial histories.

Their defense of regionalism, obviously, does not provide a thorough decolonial critique—far from it. But Marcuse would likely approve of how both Pascoaes and Freyre sought to break through the ideological containment of imperial histories, incorporating more environmentally bound perspectives. Their works, even indirectly, aim at liberating human potential by imagining communities free from dominance and exploitation, aware of their own ecological limits. Pascoaes' mystical patriotism, with its fixation on *saudade* as a collective affect, invites us to rethink identity as the amalgamation of contradictory worldviews, while Freyre's lusotropicalism, though often misappropriated, begins as a celebration of hybridity—a recognition that historical blending can disrupt the binaries of colonizer and colonized.

This embrace of historical fluidity aligns with Michel Serres' theory of time, which views time not as linear but as a mesh of overlapping moments. In this view, Freyre's and Pascoaes' reflections on identity and history resonate with Serres' idea of temporality as dynamic and non-hierarchical. Their work invites us to rethink history not as a series of fixed events but as a living fabric where past, present, and future converge. Through this lens, their politics of memory offer a decolonial potential—disrupting dominant historical narratives and revealing new possibilities for experiencing time.

It wasn't the term "lusotropicalism" that invented Brazil; Brazil existed long before Freyre coined it. The vibrancy of Brazilian life—its polyphony of voices, its defiance of rigid hierarchies—inspired Freyre to put a name to it, contrasting it with Spanish America. The same applies to "saudosismo": it didn't create Portugal. Pascoaes, in an imaginative way, drew on the textures of Portuguese experience to craft a vision of collective yearning rooted in everyday life.

In both cases, their theories amplified what was already there, hidden in plain sight, rather than dictating identity from above. In the works of Freyre, Pascoaes, and Oliveira Martins, the politics of memory challenges the historical moment when the rational endeavors of transoceanic exploration devolved into a delirium of identity and nation building. Freyre's belief that Brazil could become an ideal space for racial democracy (often misinterpreted as a mere description of Brazilian society in his own time) reveals his vision of a future possibility. Though the echoes of this delirium are distant, they still resonate in the post-colonial world.

Freyre's *O Mundo que o Português Criou* (*The World that the Portuguese Created*, 1940) asks us to look at the long shadow cast by Portuguese colonization, not just in Brazil, but across all the places shaped by Portuguese influence. This expression takes on new significance when viewed through the lens of contemporary critical theory. It anchors Portugal in a past that is presented as the pre-history of Brazil, while positioning Brazil as the country tasked with leading the political imagination of the Luso-tropical world in a post-colonial context. This formulation highlights the tension between historical linearity and the cyclical, overlapping nature of time.

As Freyre suggests, Portugal's political and cultural legacies do not simply fade into the past but are continuously re-enacted and re-imagined in the present. This dynamic distorts temporality, as it keeps the affective traces and performances of the past alive in the present rather than relegating them to a static history.

This ongoing process underscores the tangled, messier relationships between past and present. As Freyre remarks about the sugar-cane planters who initially settled Brazil, "They became also the physical expression of a new type of feudal or patriarchal

power that through isolation and self-sufficiency was to develop into a strong spirit of independence, a spirit of republicanism and even rebellion against the Crown" (Freyre, 1966, p. 69). These words open a window into understanding how these early figures of colonization laid the groundwork for the tensions and contradictions that would echo throughout Brazil's history.

Ultimately, "decolonial", more than a trendy terminology that drives critics to do things that were not previously done, is a term intended to identify modalities of thought and activist practices that start from the premise that the unacceptable chapter of colonialism can only approach its epilogue when the psycho-cultural effects it produced during five long centuries of European arrogance cease to affect the social and political structures of post-imperial societies. If the crucial question in this process of reformulating planetary communities involves providing a reflection on shared spaces that simultaneously connect us with the world before and the world after the Iberian crossings of the Atlantic, Teixeira de Pascoaes and Gilberto Freyre have rendered good service to the cause.

How can we make sense of these views together, at a time when social visions and political projects seem as distant as two shores separated by a vast ocean, each with its own tides, currents, and winds? How can we bridge this divide and navigate toward a shared horizon? Rather than relics of colonial ideology, Pascoaes and Freyre challenge the rigid temporalities of empire, inviting us to rethink national identity as an ongoing negotiation. By revisiting their work, we uncover not just a critique of past empires, but tools for imagining post-imperial futures.

As Alfredo César Melo points out, Freyre's work remains relevant, providing a dynamic space for rethinking social emancipation. The subtle dialectic between memory and forgetting in *Casa-Grande & Senzala* reveals how understanding and misunderstanding often go hand in hand. It also reveals, as in Pascoaes, the role that loyalty to regional attachments can play. Freyre's nostalgic view of the colonial past is intricately bound to a critique of the social prejudices it fostered—one that resonates with contemporary ideas of emancipation. Extending this critique to Pascoaes opens

a transatlantic dialogue, connecting Portuguese and Brazilian intellectual traditions to contemporary struggles.

Revisiting the visions of Freyre and Pascoaes not only enables us to critique the past but also offers us the opportunity to reimagine a more interconnected transatlantic world. This is the dual legacy of their work. Seen from this perspective, they chart a course that both diverges from and remains anchored in the divisions established by the Treaty of Tordesillas. Engaging with its warped temporality, Freyre and Pascoaes encourage us to transcend its historical confines while still feeling the pull of its shores, creating space for a more fluid and expansive understanding of the Atlantic world ℂ

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