

# SEMINAR ON THE LEGACY OF AFRICANS AND AFRO-DESCENDANTS TO SPAIN



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Authors:

Fernando Barbosa; Ana Cebrián; Isabelle Mamadou; Gustau Nerín; Esther (Mayoko) Ortega; Juan Carlos Rocabruno Mederos; Patricia Rocu Gómez; Antumi Toasijé.

Participating organizations:

Sabelo Gumedze, Member of the United Nations Working Group on people of African Descent.  
Nuria Lores, Cidalia diversity consulting  
Ramón Mahía Casado, expert from the European and Mediterranean Studies Group (AGREEM)

Coordination:

Spanish Observatory on Racism and Xenophobia (OBERAXE), Directorate-General for Integration and Humanitarian Aid, Secretariat of State for Migration.  
Fernando Barbosa Rodrigues (UCM), and Patricia Rocu Gómez (UCM- UPM).

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José Abascal, 39, 28003 Madrid  
E-mail: [oberaxe@inclusion.gob.es](mailto:oberaxe@inclusion.gob.es)  
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# PRESENTATION

We are living in a complex time which has grown worse in recent months with the social and economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. This has led to an increase in inequality in society that must be analysed to be combatted. That is why I believe it is necessary to foster opportunities for debate and reflection to listen to people's concerns and try to respond to questions that raise uncertainties, especially among those population groups that may find themselves in a vulnerable situation or that are subject to discrimination.

Different studies show that between 700,000 and 1,300,000 Africans and Afro-descendants live in Spain, depending on whether North Africans are included in the calculation<sup>1</sup>. The Secretariat of State for Migration has been engaged in different initiatives aimed at acknowledging Africans and Afro-descendants living in our country and valuing their legacy to society so that present and future generations are given a complete vision of the history of Spain and its people.

Taking advantage of the framework provided by the UN's International Decade for People of African Descent (2015-2024)<sup>2</sup> and aligning ourselves with its objectives, in 2018 a working group was created within the Secretariat of State for Migration (SEM), specifically in the Directorate-General for Integration and Humanitarian Aid, to hold ongoing dialogue with Africans and Afro-descendants.

In this working group, coordinated by the Spanish Observatory on Racism and Xenophobia (OBERAXE) and in which experts from academia and African and Afro-descendant organizations participate, a "Study to further understanding of and represent the African and Afro-descendant immigrant community" was conducted funded by the SEM and was completed in 2019<sup>3</sup>.

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1 "Study to further understanding of and represent the African and Afro-descendant immigrant community", OBERAXE (2020). <http://www.inclusion.gob.es/oberaxe/es/publicaciones/index.htm>

2 <https://www.un.org/es/observances/decade-people-african-descent>

3 Op. Cit. 1

As a follow-up to that study, from June to October 2020 a series of short sessions providing food for thought were held and later published on the OBERAXE website. They consisted of analyses, assertions and proposals by experts on different aspects of history, social situations and culture, and on the legacy of Africans and Afro-descendants. The event culminating this process was the online seminar held on 7 October 2020: "The legacy of Africans and Afro-descendants to Spain". Its purpose was to rediscover the key historical elements re-signifying African and Afro-descendants' historical, political, economic, scientific and cultural legacy.

This publication includes contributions from experts who generously shared their knowledge and sparked our curiosity to delve deeper into an essential part of our society and history. Moreover, they gave us their perception of the society we share. I would like to thank them and all the people who have participated in the preparation of this publication and in the seminar for their special commitment which has enriched the entire process and the document that we are now presenting.

**Hana Jalloul Muro**  
Secretary of State for Migration

## Summary of the welcome address to the seminar “The Legacy of Africans and Afro-descendants to Spain”

Mr. Sabelo Gumezde,

Member of the United Nations Working Group of Experts on people of African descent<sup>4</sup>

Friends and colleagues,

It is a great honour and privilege for me to participate in this seminar on the “Legacy of Africans and Afro-descendants to Spain”. On behalf of the Working Group of Experts on people of African descent, I wish to thank the organizers of this important event for their kind invitation. The fact is that this seminar could not have come at a better time.

Rediscovering the key historical elements that re-signify Afro-descendants’ historical, political, economic, scientific and cultural legacy to Spain is an exercise that is often misunderstood in many countries. Afro-descendants should unapologetically claim their rights wherever they are. Philomena Essed summed up the unfortunate reality facing Afro-descendants in stating that “probably the only common European experience among many Afro-descendants is their exposure to racism and systemic discrimination, irrespective of country, socio-economic condition, gender, age or level of education”.

Having learned that Afro-descendants in Spain often face inequalities and multiple forms of discrimination based on race, colour, gender, sexual orientation and religious belief, the United Nations Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent recommended that the Government of Spain consider the adoption of a comprehensive law against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance, including measures to prevent acts of racism. The Working Group also urged Spain to partner with civil society to fully implement the Programme of activities for the International Decade, along with the latter’s three themes: recognition, justice and development. This call is repeated here today.

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4 The full intervention is available at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i8n3d\\_khNWE&t=27s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i8n3d_khNWE&t=27s)

This seminar is taking place during the world's darkest hour as COVID-19 continues to claim lives around the world. Statistics show that COVID-19 has claimed just over a million lives. In Spain, 32,486 people have died due to the pandemic. Concerns have been expressed about the impact of COVID-19 on people of African descent. The Working Group has expressed concern about how States have failed to protect the rights of people of African descent in light of COVID-19. As a result of the rise in the mortality rate of people of African descent, the Working Group continues to urge States to obtain disaggregated data to ensure that specific Programmes are developed to address the impact of COVID-19 on people of African descent.

In conclusion, I would like to reaffirm the Working Group's commitment to address the challenges faced by Afro-descendants in Spain. We will continue to collaborate with governments to take all necessary measures to prevent racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, Afrophobia and related intolerance faced by Afro-descendants in Spain. Furthermore, we encourage states to implement the International Decade for People of African Descent and also to take avail itself of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development, adopted by United Nations Member States including Spain, to bring about a better and more sustainable future for Afro-descendants. I wish you a fruitful debate. Thank you for your attention.





Photograph by Ana Cebrián

## INTRODUCTION

This publication includes a series of articles produced within the framework of the virtual seminar on the “Legacy of Africans and Afro-descendants to Spain”, held on 7 October 2020.

Within the framework of the UN’s International Decade for People of African Descent (2015-2024), throughout 2020, the Spanish Observatory on Racism and Xenophobia (OBERAXE), together with the working group for dialogue with African and Afro-descendant people, among other actions, scheduled the seminar on the “Legacy of Africans and Afro-descendants to Spain”.

Eight experts on human rights, historical legacy, gender and migration, postcolonialism, cultural legacy, innovation, learning processes and educational methodologies participated in this seminar.

This publication includes the articles prepared by the experts, their conclusions, and supplementary materials and bibliography used for the seminar.

Both the materials for the seminar and those compiled prior to the seminar are available at <http://www.inclusion.gob.es/oberaxe/es/ejes/africa/index.htm>



# INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR PEOPLE OF AFRICAN DESCENT, 2015-2024

**Isabelle Mamadou**

Coordinator in Spain of human rights initiatives within the framework of the International Decade for People of African Descent (2015-2024).

*“For centuries, Afro-descendants have been victims of racism, racial discrimination and enslavement, and of the historic denial of many of their rights. They should be treated with equality and their dignity should be respected; they should not suffer discrimination of any kind.”*

**Abstract**

This article analyses the events leading up to the United Nations International Decade for People of African Descent (2015-2024) and its strategy for the implementation of policies and programmes for the recognition and promotion of the rights of people of African descent. It also points out how and where progress can be made to promote a significant contribution to our societies. Measures aimed at increasing the visibility of statistics regarding people of African descent and other efforts to gather information for the purpose of studying and disseminating their historical and cultural legacy take on greater importance in this context. Lastly, the article presents conclusions and recommendations that could be considered by public institutions and civil society organizations to address the specific forms of discrimination that affect Africans and Afro-descendants.

**Key words:** Afro-descendants, International Decade, Human Rights, racial discrimination, racism, Durban Programme of Action, slavery.

## The Durban Declaration and Programme of Action

Studies conducted by various international organizations in recent decades show that throughout the world, regardless of whether they are descendants of people who were taken from their African homeland and enslaved or are more recent migrants or descendants of migrants, Afro-descendants have historically been denied their human rights due to the legacy of slavery and colonialism.

Faced with this scenario and with the tireless support of Nelson Mandela, in 2001, the United Nations (UN) organized the Third World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance in Durban (South Africa). The summit was attended by governments and civil society from 173 countries which, together with international organizations, reached a consensus on how to act to reverse the scourge of racism globally. The Declaration and Programme of Action<sup>1</sup> approved at the Conference provided the international community with the instruments to achieve this by identifying the origins and causes of racism and the groups affected, and the strategies to achieve full and effective equality.

'Afro-descendant' was the term chosen by the States attending the Durban Conference to include the entire diaspora and combat the specific discrimination suffered by people of African descent without leaving any African descendant behind. Thus, when setting the stage for possible instruments and laws to combat racism, the 'Afro-descendant' concept conceived in the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action expands the traditional indicators based on racial origin and ethnicity used to measure racism and xenophobia by adding other cross-cutting issues that encompass a relationship with Africa in its entirety, including cultural heritage, the practice of ancestral religions of African origin and the legacy of slavery.

## A decade for people of African descent

Despite the historic Durban process, Africans and Afro-descendants are still subjected to limited access to education, housing, employment, health and social services. They may suffer discrimination in gaining access to justice and they face disturbing rates of police violence due to racist bias. While, people of African origin have contributed to the development of numerous nations throughout history, their achievements have been mostly overlooked, making it impossible to place a value on and respect their contributions to humanity.

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1 [https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/DurbanDecProgAction\\_sp.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/DurbanDecProgAction_sp.pdf)

This is why the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed the period 2015-2024 as the International Decade for People of African Descent<sup>2</sup> through Resolution 68/237<sup>3</sup>. The Decade gives the 193 UN Member States an opportunity to make good on commitments and obligations to put an end to the injustices that Africans and Afro-descendants face on a daily basis. Alongside the International Decade, the General Assembly approved a Programme of Activities<sup>4</sup> designed to guide States, the United Nations, national institutions, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations in the protection and promotion of Afro-descendants' human rights by means of recognition, justice and development.

The Programme of Activities offers an operational framework with which to examine the contributions of African and Afro-descendant communities to the political, economic, social and cultural development of all societies, adopt measures to combat poverty, raise citizen awareness and guarantee access to justice for victims of racism, taking account of the particular situation of women and girls who are often at a greater disadvantage due to the multiple forms of discrimination they suffer.

## Towards recognition of our African legacy

One of the main objectives of the International Decade is to place Afro-descendant communities at the centre of contributions to building our societies. Affording greater visibility to their history and their cultural, economic, political and scientific contributions not only leads to a better understanding of the causes and consequences of racism, but also interrupts the intergenerational transmission of inequality by deconstructing racial stereotypes inherited from the time of slavery.

To consolidate these processes, Afro-descendant groups must be fully visible and account must be taken of their needs within the framework of their cultural characteristics. Hence, the importance of the Durban Programme of Action which calls on States to collect, analyse, disseminate and publish reliable national and local statistical data.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.un.org/es/observances/decade-people-african-descent>

<sup>3</sup> <https://undocs.org/es/A/RES/68/237>

<sup>4</sup> <https://undocs.org/es/A/RES/69/16>

A population census is one of the sources of statistical information through which social disparities can be identified. The census question concerning racial self-identification would be the variable used to assess the size of Afro-descendant populations and to identify the relationship between inequalities and ethnic or racial origin.

In addition to collecting data according to ethnic criteria, through the International Decade, the UN urges governments to engage in awareness-raising campaigns on the historical and cultural legacy of people of African descent and to include material about the general history of Africa and the challenges facing the African diaspora in textbooks and other educational materials. Specifically Spain, the UN Working Group of Experts on Afro-descendants<sup>5</sup>, in the report following its official visit in 2018<sup>6</sup>, also recommends establishing a cultural institute for Afro-descendants, managed by Afro-descendants.

Moreover, as a form of symbolic redress and a guarantee that crimes against humanity will never be repeated, the States that practised or benefited from the slave trade, slavery and colonialism should break their silence, publicly assume their responsibility for past atrocities and pay tribute to victims and their descendants.

## Conclusions and recommendations

Despite the international efforts of civil society, the full implementation of the Programme of Activities of the International Decade continues to pose a challenge in many countries. In 2019, more than fifty states, including Spain, abstained or voted against a UN resolution that included a series of measures within the framework of the follow-up to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action aimed at eliminating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. That resolution also provided for the creation of a Permanent Forum on people of African Descent within the United Nations system.

In addition to the lack of political will on the part of some States to address institutional and structural racism, we have witnessed the application of criteria likely to discriminate against people of African descent in the global response to the coronavirus. Several international organizations have expressed their concern about the racial prejudices that prevail in public

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/SP/Issues/Racism/WGAfricanDescent/Pages/WGEPADIndex.aspx>

<sup>6</sup> <http://rightsinternationalspain.org/uploads/publicacion/eca132299837fd31773b149f2e9d600c5142af6c.pdf>

and private institutions resulting in Afro-descendants being left out of strategies to combat COVID-19, thus further exacerbating their human rights situation.

The year 2020 marks the mid-point in the Decade for People of African Descent, time for the international community to carry out a mid-term review of the Decade where achievements will be evaluated and new actions are expected to be defined to reverse the lasting consequences of slavery.

The Decade's strategy should be implemented based on national Action Plans that, within the framework of the Durban Programme of Action, guide governments in the enactment of comprehensive laws against racism that include measures in the areas of employment, education, housing, health and social services, thus generating a real and sustained impact over time. This requires allocating sufficient financial resources to ensure the effective application of all the actions contemplated in the Programme of Activities, with the full and effective participation of Afro-descendant civil society in the design of measures that respond to their needs.



# THE HISTORICITY OF AFRICAN AND AFRO-DESCENDANT COMMUNITIES CALLED BLACK IN SPAIN

**Antumi Toasijé**

Historian, PhD in History, Culture and Thought

President of the Council for the Elimination of Racial and Ethnic Discrimination (Spain)

**Abstract**

Over the last four centuries, Spain's history has developed in a Catholic, European, androcentric environment which, in social terms, is known as white. This phenomenon was spawned in the violent history of intercultural conflict that characterized the Middle Ages on the Iberian Peninsula.

**Keywords:** history of Spain, African and Afro-descendant communities, de-Africanization, anti-Africanity, assimilationism.

It would be impossible to offer even a succinct account of the meaning and implications of a millennium of periods of peace, periods of war, stability, political upheaval, cultural transfer, economic exchange, alliances, rifts and disenchantment between the various cultures that inhabited the Iberian space in the Middle Ages. What we must keep in mind is that the narrative of the victors of these conflicts, so broadly disseminated over time, became increasingly distorted as their power was consolidated. Initially, historiography teaches us that the black African element is seen as one of many movements of peoples over that bridge between Africa and Europe. That viewpoint can be traced back to medieval and early modern chronicles. However, with the victory of the Castilian and Catholic cultural and social group, staking a claim to its Germanic origins through the Visigoths, Iberian Africanity was progressively reinterpreted as alien to that land and as a threat to its project to unify. The political project of a white, European, Catholic nation was actually the hypertrophy of a Germanized Castile which, although there are precedents, began with the Habsburgs.

After the defeat of the Islamic powers in 11492 HE<sup>7</sup>, a single group vision was imposed, and cultural elements that did not coincide with those of the victors were expelled and subjugated. The Jewish population was the first to be subjected to mass expulsion. When the Visigoths arrived on the Iberian Peninsula, this influential social group may have accounted for an eighth of the Iberian Peninsula's total population. The first "purity of blood" statute, drafted in 11449 HE in Toledo, is recognized as the beginning of late-medieval racism, although it would take more than 100 years for such statutes to spread to all estates and regions of the kingdoms that make up what we know today as Spain. Until the middle of the 11800 HE<sup>8</sup> century, the "purity of blood" test acted as a barrier to all pre-eminent social positions for those whose ancestry was considered non-white.

Between 11609 and 11613 HE, after several attempts at forced assimilation, the largest expulsions of what was known as the 'Moorish' population (which I prefer to call Hispanic-Amazigh) took place. This population, as Iberian as any other, was made up of people of diverse ancestry, predominantly black mixed-race people. The Hispanic Amazigh's may have accounted for none less than 18% of the total population in the year 11600 HE (close to 40% in Valencia) and they would have been the majority in different parts of the Peninsula and the Balearic Islands. That 18% is seven times higher than the current estimated Afro-descendant

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7 This date corresponds to the year 1492 of the common or Christian era. Except for bibliographical references, I use what is known as the Holocene Era (HE) proposed by Césaire Emiliani, which I call the Historical Era. To convert from HE to AD, simply subtract 10,000 years or omit the first figure on the left.

8 18th century AD

population in Spain<sup>9</sup>. This group was later to become known as 'mulatto', an animal-based epithet likening people of mixed African descent to the hybrid mule. It was precisely after the largest of the many expulsions of the Hispanic-Amazigh population, the enslavement of the majority of those who were not expelled and the growing number of kidnapped and enslaved black Africans, that the rewriting of Spain's past to de-Africanize it can be witnessed. The Catholic Church put its weight behind this task in conjunction with a monarchy staking a claim to its Gothic origins to better position itself for its empire-building enterprise in Europe.

It was in this context that racism emerged as a religious ideology to explain the great Muslim defeat and justify the exclusion from power and social isolation of broad sectors of the population through the notion of "impure blood" and what is known as the "Curse of Cam".<sup>10</sup> This, in fact, ran contrary to the official doctrine of the Catholic Church and was all accompanied by the general acceptance that black Africans, once respected or feared, were at that time mostly defeated and stripped of all rights. During the entire period from 11600 EH to 11800 EH, no fewer than 800,000 people of African origin, designated as black, lived in slavery in mainland Spain and the Balearic Islands.

11600 EH marked the beginning of a trend towards ultra-Europeanization that continues to this day and is responsible for many myths regarding Spain as a nation, including the alleged absence of an Afro-descendant population, called black, that had in fact been numerically significant in the past. The monumental work by the Mohedano brothers<sup>11</sup> illustrates how anti-African historiographic tools are effectively deployed to expel or discredit every Afro-descendant character in the history of Spain. Later works continued to whitewash Iberian history by means of different strategies such as: The 'whitewashing' of black or mixed-race historical figures (Figure 1), often distorting translations of classic works of literature by omitting specific chapters mentioning powerful Africans in Iberia, by completely deleting certain black characters, by misrepresenting the geographical origin of some historical figures, by simply replacing black historical characters with white ones, and the list goes on.

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9 Antumi Toasijé: Challenges faced by African and African descendant communities in Spain, in: Domínguez de Olazábal, Itxaso and Aimé González, Elsa, Coord. Africa Report 2020: Transformations, mobilization and continuity, Fundación Alternativas and Lúa Ediciones, 2020.

10 This myth, used to justify the enslavement of black people, claimed that the black descendants of one of Noah's sons, Cam, were cursed by him and condemned to serve the descendants of his other sons, although the biblical account actually only spoke of one of Cam's four sons, Canaan.

11 Rodríguez Mohedano, Pedro and Rodríguez Mohedano, Rafael, Historia literaria de España: origen, progresos, decadencia y restauración... 1766 to 1791.



11676 EH



11856 EH



11935 EH

**Figure 1.** Example of the ‘whitewashing’ of a historical figure. Illustrations of Muhammad ibn Umayyah (Abén Humeja) one of the main Muslim leaders of the War of the Alpujarras<sup>12</sup>.

This modern historiography, unlike its medieval counterpart, eliminates black African and Afro-descendant communities from the history of Spain. Physical de-Africanization by means of expulsions and “purification of blood lines” culminates in the elimination of the historicity of these communities, a contemporary *damnatio memoriae*. This process of erasing history went on for centuries. Particularly noteworthy was the difficult attempt, starting in the 1940s, to de-Africanize Iberian pre-history, its Palaeolithic and Neolithic periods during which we know that virtually all of the Iberian Peninsula was African and black. The litmus test is the origin and physiognomy of the Iberians as far back as the Iron Age, mythologized during 11900 HE and especially during the height of the Franco regime as the substratum of an ever elusive “Spanish people”.

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12 Left: Drawing of Aben Humeja, from 11600 HE by Matham, Theodor “Portrait of a Moorish Prince”, 1615– 1676. The legend reads “Aben-Humeja, Granaten fium Rex”, Abén Humeja. He was King of Granada. Source and details: Rijksmuseum, National Museum of Amsterdam. Centre: Abén Humeja engraving in: Fernández y González, Manuel, *Los Monfies de la Alpujarras*: original novel. Madrid: Gaspar y Roig, 1856. Right: Cover of the book by Fernández, Fidel, *Abén Humeja* (essay). Foreword by General Millán Astray. Barcelona: Editorial Youth, 1935.

From an academic point of view, at present the myths sustained over time about the non-existence of so-called black communities during long periods in Spanish history and throughout most of its geography have fostered an exotic and fragmented study of their existence. The few existing studies devoted to this topic, although recent interest has been growing, have been limited to periods of slavery or to issues related to migration, a limitation that has not always helped in avoiding an image that is 'foreignized', suspended in time, or that objectifies Africans and Afro-descendants in Spain. Moreover, these studies have especially focused on the colonial territories under Spanish rule, paying scant attention to what happened on the Iberian Peninsula and the Balearic Islands. What happened on the Canary Islands, whose Africanity has also suffered constant dialectical attacks, is another story altogether. This all contributes to relegating Afro populations of the past to an area of "non-existence" in Fanonian terms. In historiography based on the Eurocentric narrative and imaginary, this translates into forced a-historicity.

To recover our historicity, we need to rediscover and study Afro biographies from Spain's past. The black and black mestizo Africanity of characters such as Mauregato de Asturias, Abu l-Hasan Ali ibn Nafi, Ibn al-Yásamín, Abida al-Madaniyya, Juan de Valladolid, Farag Aben Farag, Juan Latino, Céspedes, Juan (de) Pareja, Tshikaba, María Loreto or Guillem d'Efak, among the large number of biographies that could be recovered, sheds light on the diverse reality of the Iberian Peninsula's and the Balearic Islands' past. By studying the people named above, erased from history by the powers that be, we can acquire a more accurate idea of the multicultural reality, diversity and origins of the lands of present-day Spain. Studying these biographies breaks down the myth that black Africans played no part in Spain's history. In fact, they unequivocally demonstrate that in prehistoric and ancient times, in the Middle Ages and the Modern and Contemporary periods, African and African-descendant populations, called black communities in Spain, have included relevant historical figures occupying a wide array of social positions to the extent that they constitute one of the major groups in the country's general community.

The restrictive notion of nation driving the de-Africanization of Spain continues to be relevant today thanks to the renewal of anti-African narratives lying at the undeclared centre of restrictive border policies in Ceuta, Melilla and the Canary Islands. This anti-Africanity was exacerbated when Spain joined the European Common Market (later the European Union). Spain welcomed this opportunity to free itself of the notion that "Africa begins in the Pyrenees" and from the so-called black legend that authors like Barbara Fuchs attribute to the entire African population<sup>13</sup>. All of this results in challenges faced by communities called black in Spain, including institutional and social racism and the treatment of Afro-descendants as foreigners, together with xenophobic political discourse, assimilationism as a public cultural strategy and strategic interculturalism intended as a form of control.

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13 Fuchs, Barbara. *Una nación exótica: maurofilia y construcción de España en la temprana Edad Moderna*. Madrid: Ediciones Polifemo, 2011.

Moreover, we should note the absence of references in school syllabi reflecting the true diversity of Spain's past, the lack of centres devoted to the study of Afro-Spain at universities and in the Spanish National Research Council (CSIC), and the absence of census data for the purpose of gathering objective statistics are all issues that have impacted the invisibility of Spain's African heritage. When it comes to the autonomy and historicity of Afro women, this disregard and blockage is even greater. Hence, criticisms of exo-designated feminism as white and self-designated and as "general" or "universal" are raised for practices described as appropriation and instrumentalization of achievements, icons and philosophies of black or Afro feminism, but without espousing the specific demands of said Afro feminism<sup>14</sup>.

These difficulties and conditioning factors have prompted diverse activist movements during different periods, ranging from the Hispanic-Amazigh struggle against Catholic Euro-Leuco<sup>15</sup> assimilationism, to the struggle against slavery through different forms of resistance, to today's struggle for full rights. From the battles waged by Antonio María Machuca<sup>16</sup> against racial purity barriers two hundred and fifty years ago, to this century's legislative efforts to legally abolish Alien Internment Centres and immigration laws, Afro communities and their allies have been building association networks and political and cultural strategies to defend collective rights. Ultimately, this is one of the main traditions of resistance against the oppression of certain social groups over others. It is a tradition that determines the political, social and cultural future of the country and that deserves to be recognized for its importance in providing a complete account of the past and the present and enlightening us as to the full extension and depth of the legacy of African and African-descendant peoples in the history of Spain.

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14 See: Ekoka, Deborah. *Metamba Miago: relatos y saberes de mujeres afro españolas*. United Minds, Valencia 2019

15 From λευκος, which means white in Greek.

16 Born in Guinea, she liberated herself and from 11767 until her death in 11794 HE, she did litigate with the Cadiz (Spain) authorities to ensure that black people could engage in mainstream trade, forbidden by "racial purity" statutes.





# THE LEGACY OF AFRICANS AND AFRO-DESCENDANTS TO SPAIN

**Juan Carlos Rocabruno Mederos**

Specialist in Gerontology and Geriatrics from the University of Havana (Cuba)

**Abstract:**

This article takes a brief journey through the history of Africans and Afro-descendants in Spain and emphasizes the need for differentiated statistics based on the census of black people in Spain so as to better guide public policy. This need is even greater in the current context of the COVID19 pandemic.

**Keywords:** census, statistics, COVID19, public policies.

The legacy of Afro-descendants to Spain dates back to the fourteenth and early nineteenth centuries, coinciding with the discoveries of Africa's Atlantic coast and the New World and the beginning of the slave trade.

In those days, black Africans in the Spanish cities of Cadiz and Seville accounted for 10% of the population and filled Andalusia's streets with dance, rhythm, heel-tapping, body movements and styles of African song that evolved into fandango. "Los Negritos", Seville's oldest Holy Week brotherhood, was created in the fourteenth century by a bishop as an asylum to care for blacks who had been freed or rejected due to age or illness, and who were forbidden to live on the streets.

Great painters such as Velázquez and Murillo had slaves working in their studios where they learned about pigments and solvents working on Baroque paintings and leaving their legacy in works such as "The Supper at Emmaus" (The Mulatto Woman) by Velazquez, Murillo's "Three Boys", Domingo Martínez's "Carro del aire", to name only a few.

At that time, all social classes in Andalusia owned slaves —weavers, blacksmiths, silversmiths, apothecaries, carpenters, bricklayers, butchers, tailors, esparto weavers, coopers, in fact even the servants of the Duchy of Medina Sidonia and the nuns of *Regina Coeli* had slaves— who culturally melded leaving a cultural legacy in the overseas territories described by Dr. Fernando Ortiz in his work, "*Los Negros Curros*", where he narrates the difference between what he referred to as "*Negros Bozales*" (who came directly from Africa) and "*Negros Curros*", who came from Spain and who, at the height of slavery, walked freely through the streets of Havana and whose body language, slang and attire set them apart.

The whitewashing policies of the Spanish crown in the overseas territories resulted in many black people being given "white men's' papers", in part to mitigate uprisings in the colonies, which gave rise to racial strata within the black communities.

Failure to include slavery and colonization in Spanish history syllabi distorts true national history, confuses facts and deprives students of the ancestral legacy that the black population has left to Spanish cultural identity.

The multiculturalism of today's Afro-descendant Spanish population and the population of African origin residing in Spain is most evident in aesthetics and idiomatic divergence (due to the different colonial languages, African dialects and Hispanicisms). Spanish Afro-descendant youth, born and educated in Spain, need to vindicate their nationality because people have yet to grasp the notion of non-white Spanish citizens.

The Spanish Afro-descendant population, originating from migrations, diverges in its relationship with the colonial past. Factors including generational status and socioeconomic and cultural levels lead to great variations from one identity to another, and this complicates cohesion amongst the Spanish black community. Paradoxically, this diversity is evidence of the many ways in which the black community has played an important role in the evolution, construction and configuration of Spain's social, cultural, political and economic structure.

We do not have an "indirect identifier" with variables that can be used alone or in combination with other information to identify an individual by race, ethnic origin, languages spoken, occupation, etc. Some types of identification increase the likelihood of revealing a person's identity such as occupation or medical diagnosis. However, black people's health statistics cannot be analysed since the identity card held by all Spanish nationals does not include racial data. Similarly, there are no statistics on professional categories broken down by race leaving one to assume (on paper) that all Spanish professionals are white. This renders the legacy of black people in Spain invisible.

While the COVID-19 pandemic has made the importance of the African and Afro-descendant workforce in Spanish agriculture visible owing to the seasonal worker crisis, it did not shed light on their numbers among health-care workers, cleaning personnel or other affected services.

In terms of health, there are no statistics on the repercussions the disease is having on the black population as in Spain, unlike other countries such as the United States, a person's race is not disclosed on identification documents. Therefore, the only Covid statistic available on black people is the number of infections among temporary agricultural workers. Epidemiological and pathophysiological studies do not break down the incidence of disease by ethnic group, meaning that the results cannot be applied to 100% of the population. Moreover, samples are not representative of social diversity.

At the beginning of the 1980s, when Spain joined the European Union moving on from being an aid recipient to an aid donor, the first international cooperation programmes targeted the former colonies of Spanish America due to cultural ties and the language constraints of the Spanish population. The presence of immigrants and the diversity of ethnic groups in Spain has motivated professionals to work in other geographical areas, to study other languages and gain insight into other cultures. Also, many students became interested in international development cooperation and the study and understanding of black peoples' cultures. Many neighbourhoods in different Spanish cities where immigrant populations settled began to become role models for both cultural and gastronomic diversity.

Between the 1980s and the first decade of the 2000s, African studies were taught by expert Spanish professionals and by descendants of former colonizers. The presence, exchange of

opinions and appreciation of Afro-descendant professionals, intellectuals and academics has been transforming this situation, and although society is more familiar with the legacy of black professionals in sports, music and the performing arts, that legacy is less visible in the work performed by prominent philologists, linguists, historians, writers, and political scientists at our universities.

In the 1990s a resolution was passed recognizing black people as an ethnic minority in Spain. For several years in the first decade of the 21st century, the VIDA Grupo Ecológico Verde Foundation and the Pan-Africanist Federation of Spain, under the Title “Dispersed and in-edited” awarded the Emilio Castelar Prize for Peace and Human Rights Work to outstanding professional activists working towards the integration of the black community in Spain. For eight years the PSOE’s (Socialist Party) Afro socialist Award has been recognizing the scientific, technical, cultural, social, and humanitarian work performed by people and institutions of African and Afro-descendant origin in Spain. We have important works by African and Afro-descendant filmmakers and actors. Plastic artists are also beginning to spark social interest and are becoming beacons for younger generations at events such as Afro Conscience held at the Matadero Arts Centre in Madrid and which has been met with great acclaim.

In the service sector, African-descendant and Hispanic domestic workers have stood out for their human warmth, professionalism and dedication, meeting Spain’s great demand for caretakers of children and the elderly.

The Afro-descendant population has faced old, contemporary and complex intergenerational trauma. In addition to being passed down from one generation to the next, this trauma is shared by individuals, families, groups and entire populations that are affected by policies and laws imposed on them that do not consider diversity or that minimize conflicts such as those affecting Afro-descendant children in schools, neighbourhood marginalization and living conditions. Contemporary trauma includes relocation far from ancestral lands, non-inclusion in governance or jurisdiction, the inclusion of pathological variables in medical services, and lack of involvement in decision-making on the needs of the Afro-descendant community. Intergenerational trauma includes the enduring legacy of slavery for people of African descent, the impact of racial segregation, and old and new forms of racism and racial violence against racialized black populations.

Recognizing the legacy of people of African descent does not simply mean recognizing their contributions to the economic and cultural enhancement of Spain, it also invites us to remain constantly vigilant of judicial systems to ensure they adapt to the needs of a new, evolving society. The legacy of Afro-descendants to Spain also lies in urging political parties and governments to work together with an informed electorate to overcome racial conflicts and foster a social environment where inequality in all its forms —gender, justice, sexuality and identity— is done away with.

The presence and harmonious interaction of Afro-descendant artists, professionals and intellectuals in Spain shows that, like the majority population, other ethnic groups also have their socio-cultural and economic strata and have engaged with social and political actors to examine the need for intersectional analysis and inclusion involving the establishment of procedures, policies, services, programmes and practices accessible to as many people as possible, regardless of their race, ethnicity, gender, age, disability, language, etc., and who can enjoy an inclusive, open, safe, equitable and respectful environment in an effort to establish a sense of trust, belonging and participation.

# NEW CHALLENGES FOR TEACHERS: INCLUDING DIVERSITY FROM AN AFRO-DESCENDANT PERSPECTIVE IN THE EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

**Patricia Rocu Gómez**

PhD from the UCM. University professor and specialist in languages and expressive-  
corporal methodologies for teacher training

**Abstract**

In the sphere of education, the image of Africans, African society and Afro-descendants has traditionally been Eurocentric, the result of a colonial, slave-owning past fostering the transmission of stereotypes assigned to this group. To change this stereotyped vision and promote educational justice, we need to reflect on the approach taken to educational curricula, their development, and the design and implementation of teaching practices that first recognize this distorted hegemonic approach and then incorporate methodological strategies taking an Afro-centric approach. This paper describes a few educational experiences developed for Spain using innovative teaching methodologies based on expressive body language and targeting students engaged in preliminary teacher training and secondary education students. It highlights the need to train teachers and develop educational materials and calls on institutions to draw up policy and conduct research in accordance with Spain's actual situation.

**Keywords:**

Teacher training, Afro-centred education, curricular justice, educational inclusion, Afro-descendants.





In the field of education, these groups have traditionally been portrayed based on a Euro-centric hegemonic point of view, the origin of which dates back to a colonial and slave-owning past, according to which the European vision was considered universal and the only lens through which to analyse the world (Dussel, 1992). This implies that students are presented with a distorted image of reality based on negative stereotypes of Africa and Africans such as associated with poverty and disease, erroneous ideas concerning their physical and intellectual capacity and the omission of certain historical events, to name but a few. On top of that come stereotypes espoused by patriarchal societies as dominant social models.

However, the problem extends beyond the transmission of these stereotypes: power relations become entrenched rendering these portrayals and interpretations of knowledge admissible (Araújo and Rodríguez, 2013).

Education must contribute to the construction of a democratic, just and egalitarian society that prepares young people to join it. It must foster curricular justice that meets the needs of an increasingly “racially” and ethnically diverse democratic society<sup>17</sup>. This implies ensuring the inclusion in the curriculum of subject matter that addresses historically marginalized groups situated outside of a certain historical and social context, as is the case of Africans and Afro-descendants, in line with United Nations’ recommendations (1992). To achieve this justice, we must first analyse the approach taken to curricular design stipulated in education laws, how this design process is included in school syllabi, and the way it is implemented and evaluated (Torres, 2011).

This requires a detailed analysis of the way Africans and Afro-descendants are portrayed in national and regional school curricula and a review of the way in which this knowledge is reflected in schools’ curricula and how it is actually taught in the classroom through the different activities, methodologies and resources used.

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17 The term ‘racial’ appears between inverted commas because it is an obsolete concept lacking scientific rigour. However, it still has social value and that in itself bears witness to the tension surrounding this way of classifying the diversity of the human population.

Regarding teaching materials, textbooks are the most widely used didactic resource which is why they must be carefully assessed as they also reproduce this knowledge bias; a significant fact considering most schools depend on them. In fact, the latest report compiled by the Group of Experts on Afro-descendants in Spain recommends a review of textbooks to ensure a more objective view of the past (United Nations, 2018)<sup>18</sup>.

The sort of language used in classroom activities and interactions with students must likewise be reviewed to make certain that it is inclusive and void of all expressions and comments that, while commonly used in daily communication, are characteristic of everyday racism. While barely perceptible, they are nonetheless present in a wide array of daily situations including in school.

As for activities and methodologies, it is important to develop innovative educational approaches that encourage students to think critically while also taking their needs and interests into account.

As Ladson-Billings (1995) suggests, learning is based on one's own cultural identity and we should take advantage of the latter to build new layers of knowledge on top of it. This would pave the way for educational approaches that take the different identities of black, African or Afro-descendant students into account in the classroom. Schools could even opt for the Paris educational approaches (2012) according to which the cultural practices of young students in the classroom are taken as references and they are recognised as producers and consumers of culture. There are many different ways to implement these approaches in the classroom. We have examples from other countries based on different critical pedagogical models such as Critical Pedagogy, Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy or Decolonial Pedagogy. These should be taken as references of pedagogical models and accompanied by the necessary educational research in Spain, and new measures should be progressively adopted to generate Spain's own model tailored specifically to its context.

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18 The Government should diligently review textbooks and other educational materials to ensure that they accurately reflect historical facts relating to past tragedies and atrocities, in particular slavery, the African slave trade and colonialism (United Nations, 2018, p.16)

## Necessary teacher training to incorporate the Afro-centred, ethnic/'racial' approach

Many training activities, in addition to teacher training resources, have been developed in Spain along with a large body of teaching materials taking an inclusive and intercultural approach to combat racism in the classroom. However, the Afro-centred approach is still only just beginning to make its way into some classrooms.

Teachers are the key element on which the success of these inclusive practices depends and it is therefore essential to provide them with the know-how, strategies and tools, all taking the inclusive approach, in their initial and ongoing training so as to better address this Afro-centred perspective and incorporate a neutral vision of reality and other narratives diverging from the most prevalent official discourse through the design and implementation of educational curricula.

Critical thinking should be the basis of this training and teachers should be taught to recognise unconscious bias resulting from the Eurocentric cultural and educational influences they are exposed to. It is also important for an introspective analysis to be conducted of the personal position that one has with respect to 'others' and specifically one's position on manifestations of racist discrimination in one's personal and professional life, i.e. teaching activities and social interactions in the sphere of education (Rocu, Ortega, Barbosa, Camacho and Navajas, 2019).

In addition to these reflective exercises, teacher training must focus on innovative teaching that stimulates understanding (Araújo and Rodríguez, 2013). There are examples of innovative teaching initiatives in Spain such as the pioneering work promoted by Cebrián (2015) through artistic education targeting Afro-Spanish students.

Body expression methodologies have also been developed. In these, the body is the centre of attention and reflection and one experiences body expression and the emotions it generates. Examples include those developed at the Education Department of Madrid's Complutense University (UCM) targeting future preschool, primary and secondary education teachers (see Figure 3)<sup>19</sup> (Rocu, 2017 and Rocu y Navajas 2017).

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<sup>19</sup> These training activities were conducted as part of the project entitled "*Miradas múltiples hacia la diversidad étnica: Multiplícate y cambia el chip*" (Multiple views of ethnic diversity: Multiply yourself and change your mindset) funded by the Institutional Relations, Development Cooperation and Volunteering Service of the Complutense University of Madrid under the 13th call for Development Cooperation Projects.

Creative educational materials were generated through some of these projects (see Figures 4 and 5). Projects targeting Secondary Education students (see Figure 6) have likewise been conducted by the Afronteriz\*s Co-learning Project<sup>20</sup>.

These are just some of the initiatives implemented in Spain; others have been conducted by informal educational institutions targeting both teachers and students<sup>21</sup>. However, they are the exception to the rule and are the result of individual initiatives.

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20 Afronteriz\*s was developed as a co-learning programme arising from the education team at Madrid's Matadero Artistic Residency Centre's Afro Awareness Space. This project was promoted and coordinated by Dr Ana Cebrián and was implemented in a secondary school in Madrid's Usera district. It was a critical and reflective experience focusing on identity, visual art and culture and corporal expression (Cebrián, Cupe, García López, Martín-López, Erchs Piña, Rocu and Shepard, 2018).

21 Other initiatives: In 2011 the Rap against Racism campaign was created and promoted by the NGO *Movimiento Contra la Intolerancia*) Movement Against Intolerance and the INJUVE. National rap artists collaborated and carried out the campaign in secondary schools. Different Afro-centred training workshops were carried out by the Pedagogías Invisibles group, the Afrofeminas group and the anti-racist activist Desirée Bela-Lobedde among others. In recent years, Afro-descendant discourse has been gradually introduced into the Academy through conferences given by representatives of the African and Afro-descendant community within the context of complementary university education initiatives.



**Figure 3.** Examples of some corporal expression projects targeting future primary education and social education teachers in the Complutense University education department.



Figure 4. Work projects and creation of materials targeting Master's degree students doing their teacher training in physical education at Madrid's Complutense University

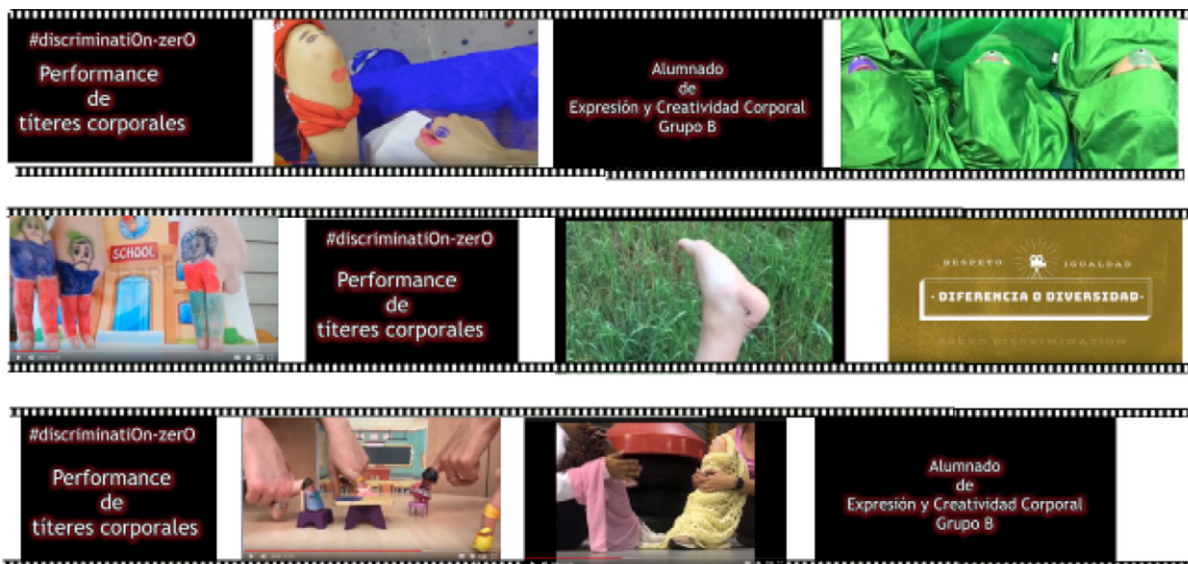


Figure 5. Work projects and creation of materials targeting students preparing to be pre-school teachers. Complutense University of Madrid.



**Figure 6.** Corporal expression projects targeting students at the Pradolongo secondary school in Madrid. (Cebrián et al., 2018, p.107)

Lastly, just a few words about some different strategies designed to incorporate an ethnic-‘racial’ perspective in education (see *Figure 7*), some of which have already been described in the text (Rocu et al., 2019).



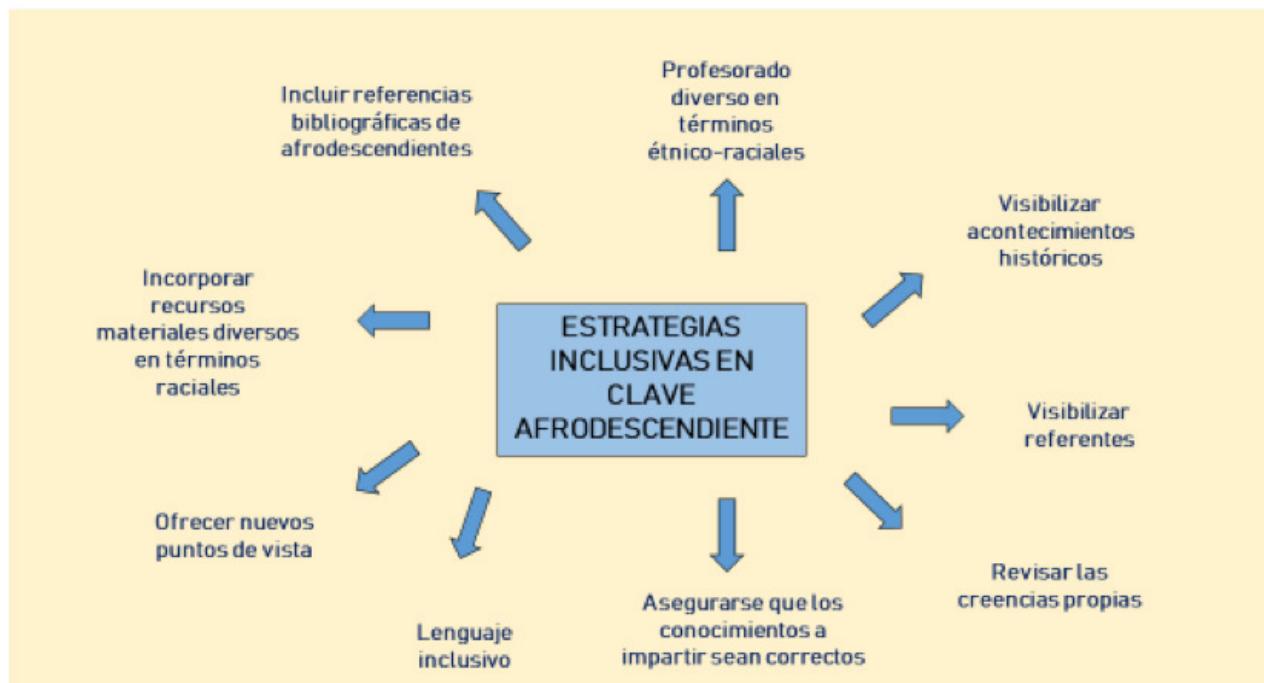
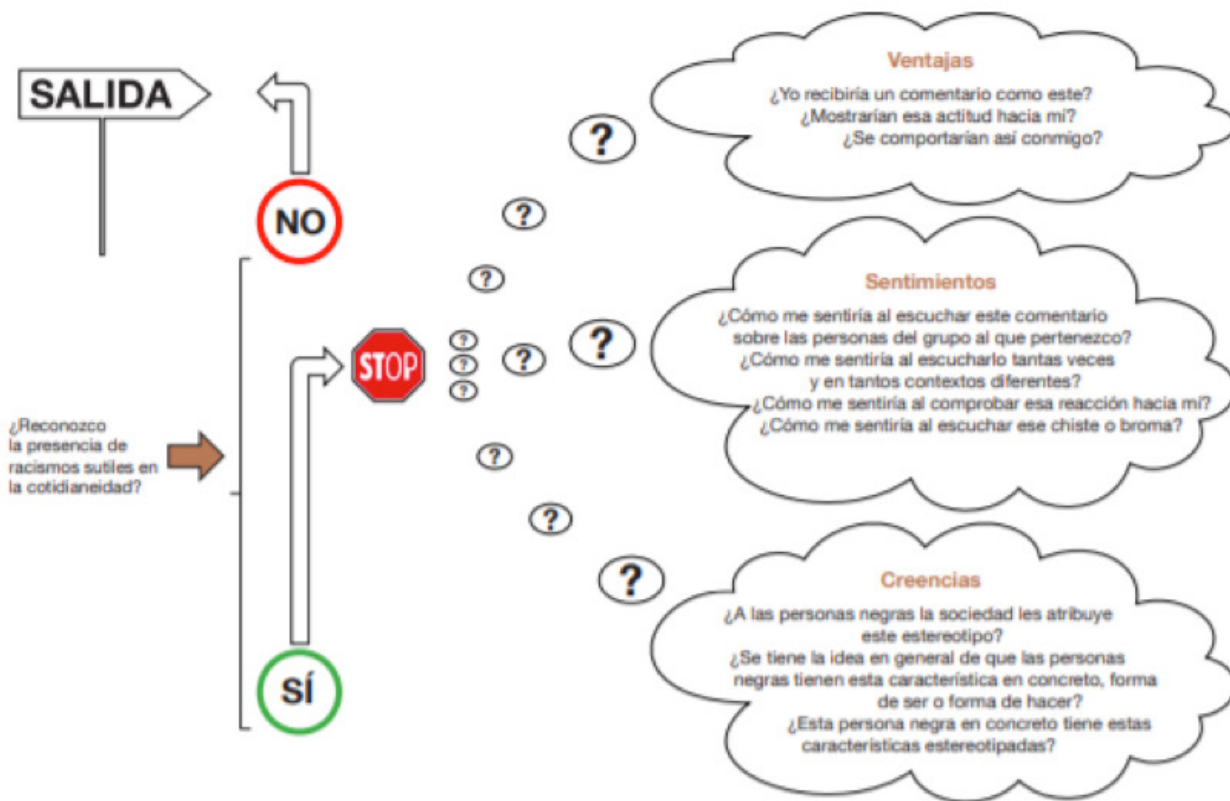


Figure 7. Inclusive strategies focusing on Afro-descendants (Rocu et al., 2019, p.17-21)

## Conclusions and recommendations

We believe it is essential to incorporate African and Afro-descendant heritage in school curricula and teacher training programmes. This material must be free of traditional bias, shed clarifying light on slavery and colonialism, and acknowledge entrenched power relations. Appropriate educational materials should likewise be developed. Moreover, it would be advisable to have public policies in place that explicitly support these approaches to enhance their educational impact on students. Lastly, more research is needed to gain a fuller understanding of these issues in the context of Spain and we therefore recommend that public institutions encourage these studies.

# THE INVISIBLE BUT INALIENABLE AFRICAN COLONIAL LEGACY IN SPAIN

**Gustau Nerin**

Professor of African History at the University of Barcelona. An anthropologist by training, he is the author of books on Spain's presence in Africa such as *Traficants d'ànimes* and *La Última selva de España*.

**Abstract:**

Spain's colonial legacy in Africa must be thought of not only in terms of what remains in Spain from past colonial experiences in Africa, but also how Spain's presence impacted African societies. Colonial reality is deeply asymmetrical and therefore Spain's impact on Africa is likely to be much greater than Africa's impact on Spain.

**Key words:** Historical memory, Spanish colonialism, Africa, colonies

The African colonial past of some European cities such as Lisbon, Paris or Liverpool is plain to see. Lisbon's *skyline* is marked by the bombastic *Padrão dos Descobrimentos* discoveries monument. In the town of Tervuren, a short distance from Brussels, the immense Royal Museum for Central Africa recalls the Belgian presence in Congo. In the Château Rouge district of Paris, Africans from the former French colonies are omnipresent and even dominate local commerce. In Bordeaux streets named after slave traders and colonialists make their appearance, though in response to this, the City Council has produced commemorative plaques to contextualize the grim events that these characters were responsible for. In contrast, vestiges of African colonialism are much more discrete in Barcelona, Madrid and Valencia (although Spanish colonial legacy in America is more visible in Madrid). Few are aware that one of the developers of Madrid's luxurious Salamanca neighbourhood, the Marquis de Vinent, engaged in the slave business, or that several prominent slave traders invested in Barcelona's Rambla and Eixample districts. It is practically impossible to find a restaurant that serves Guinean food in Barcelona, and Moroccan music is completely unknown to most Spaniards. Immigrant communities from Spain's African colonies are a discrete minority compared to other groups. Most Spanish cities have nothing or very little to commemorate Spain's colonial past in Morocco, Western Sahara or Guinea. The asymmetric relationship established during the colonial period continues to prevail today.

In contrast, when wandering the streets of Malabo, Bata or Tetouan, Spain's former presence is perceived everywhere. Tetouan's Ensanche neighbourhood has the feel of a Spanish city, in much the same way that some areas of downtown Malabo retain a Caribbean colonial atmosphere. In Malabo, the Guinean presidential palace is a grandiose colonial building designed by Governor Barrera and later enlarged and embellished by Obiang Nguema (adjacent to the palace are benches decorated with Manises tiles depicting scenes of traditional African life as well as Don Quixote). Malabo's small neo-Gothic cathedral burned down recently, but the Bata and Ebibeyín cathedrals, which mimic the Latin American colonial style, are a permanent reminder of Spanish colonization, as are the ceremonies that take place inside and the many Catholic prayer groups such as the "Daughters of Mary", the "Mystical Rose" and the Carmelites. The Guinean writer Francisco Zamora once described colonization as an "inescapable presence of mitres, cloaks and cassocks". National Catholicism had a major impact on Guinea where religion and power too often go hand in hand.

There are constant reminders of Spain's past in former Spanish Africa. In Guinea, rice and salted fish are common ingredients in meals because they were the typical foods consumed by labourers. Spanish is still the official language in Guinea and children who speak in their native languages at school are punished, as was the case in Spain under Franco. In old Spanish Morocco, a handful of writers still express their dreams in Spanish even though it is not an official language. The influence is also evident in politics. The phrase "*Todo por la Patria*" (everything for the homeland) can be seen on the façade of all Guinean military barracks, bearing witness to the extent to which Equatorial Guinea's politics are still affected by Spain's former presence.

The African colonies were not economically, demographically or geo-strategically vital for Spain. Spain did not send hundreds of thousands of its nationals to live in Africa as Portugal did, nor did it obtain enormous wealth from African territories as Belgium did. It did not regain self-government thanks to its colonies as France did, and it did not dominate vast tracts of African land like England did. Indeed, it is surprising that Spain insisted on colonizing a tiny poor territory like Ifni and, even more surprising, that it stubbornly refused to decolonize it and engaged in a war over such an insignificant possession. The colonies probably served much more to promote the dreams of greatness of the Spanish military, politicians and civilians than to contribute to national wealth.

This does not mean that Spain did not participate in the colonial phenomenon in Africa or that it did not share colonialist thinking. The population cheered General Prim when he went to war in Africa in 1859. The Catalan volunteers who set out to conquer Tetouan were given an enthusiastic welcome and the musician Josep Anselm Clavé even composed a piece in which he advocated exterminating the 'Moors'. Decades later, in 1921, after the defeat at Annual where 10,000 Spanish soldiers died, the media called for a 'campaign of revenge' against the Riffian population. Thus, they legitimized the use of prohibited chemical weapons against the population opposing colonization and even applauded mutilation at the hands of the legionaries (Franco himself celebrated these practices in his well-known work *Diario de una Bandera*). Wealthy aristocrats and ordinary citizens alike contributed with their alms to the missionary campaigns aimed at eliminating 'paganism' among the Guinean population. Thousands of children were snatched from their families and locked up in boarding schools to free them from what was viewed as the terrible influence of their family members.

Spanish citizens who read the colonialist works of Jules Verne and Emilio Salgari and watched films like *The Four Feathers* rarely considered colonisation from the point of view of the colonised. Colonised peoples were considered inferior and their opinion ignored. Although colonial wars were sometimes unpopular due to their cost in human lives (most of which were from among society's poorest), colonialism itself was generally not questioned.

It is easy for the Spanish to forget their African colonial legacy as if colonialism in Africa had never existed. Many fighters from the Ifni war are still alive but this chapter in our collective memory is often pushed out of sight. Many Spaniards do not even know that Spain had colonies in Africa.

Paradoxically, Spanish colonialism not only had negative consequences in Africa, but also had a profound impact on Spanish society. If it had not been for the bloody Moroccan campaigns (1909-1927), Spain would certainly not have suffered what is known as the *Semana Trágica* (the Tragic Week), a major manifestation of popular discontent resulting from the mobilization of recruits to fight in the Moroccan campaigns. Nor would the Primo de Rivera dictatorial takeover probably have occurred had not been for colonialism in Africa, as he revolted when

the Picasso Report called the colonial army into question, which was interpreted by many soldiers as an attack on the army's honour and, by extension, on the homeland. Moreover, had it not been for colonialism in Morocco, Franco would probably not have been able to win the Spanish Civil War. The intervention of the Army in Africa (the Legion and the 'Moorish troops'), transported to mainland Spain with the help of the Italian fascists and the German Nazis, was key to the advance of Franco's troops in the 'cell battles' during the early stages of Spain's Civil War.

And the impact of the colonial experience on our society was minor compared to its brutal consequences for colonised societies. The only way to subject colonised peoples to a social system out of synch with their culture or their moral principles was through large doses of violence. Moreover, colonisation meant imposing state structures on societies whose political structures were different (the Guineans and the Sahrawis were organized in segmented societies that did not recognize a central authority, and the northern part of Morocco had always had an antagonistic relationship with the Makhzen, the authority of the Sultan). Decolonization consolidated this model of central state authority and the state imposed the worst forms of government in the colonised territories. The Sahrawis still suffer exile resulting from the chaotic Spanish withdrawal. The Guineans are governed by a colonial soldier from Franco's Military Academy in Zaragoza. In Rif the people suffer the consequences of a monarchy, supported by the French and Spanish, that truncated the area's prevailing dream of a republic.

## Conclusions

It seems as if some Spaniards would like to erase the colonial past from their collective memory, as if it had never existed. Others try to glorify it at the expense of ignoring the experiences of the colonised for whom the glory of the conquest is based on ignoring them or questioning them through supremacist ideas. But the legacy of Spain's past must include its colonial undertakings. Spain and its colonies were inevitably linked throughout its history. We cannot think about Spain's past without thinking about the peoples it colonized. Our memories are forever intertwined.





# MULTIPLE INTERSECTIONS AROUND RACE AND GENDER

**Esther (Mayoko) Ortega Arjonilla**

PhD in Philosophy of Science. University Professor at Tufts-Skidmore University

**Abstract:**

Spain's total disregard for its relationship with blackness, hegemonic feminism's acquiescence towards this attitude and the construction of a discourse ignoring Afro-descendants in general and femininities in particular, are the basis of this analysis that proposes a different way of looking at the historical place of Afro-descendants, especially women. I propose an intersectional and situational analysis which traces its own genealogy from Afro-feminisms in Spain and endeavours to set its own agenda designed by us and for us.

**Key words:** race, gender, intersectionality, genealogy

## Introduction

From the perspective of Afro-feminisms, we are critical of the conception of the categories of 'gender', 'woman', 'equality' and 'autonomy'. As we are in the process of studying and recovering our history, we are aware that all these concepts, assumed to be universal, have been defined by a subject that is not so at all. The heterosexual, middle-class, Western white woman is the standard against which all those terms are measured. Feminism in Spain cannot be conceived of from outside the cultural system in which it was created (Wekker, 2016) and must be aware that it has participated in and been part of the country's colonial and patriarchal narratives. Precisely because this feminism has never taken stock of all its different aspects or questioned its 'raciality', it has never questioned its racism.

## Analysis based on 'race' and gender in Spain

The positions we hold as African and Afro-descendant women in Spain cannot be fully comprehended unless we use approaches that do not focus exclusively on analysing a single social marker, in this case gender. Any approach that does not also take 'race' into account will be utterly ineffective in understanding the reality of African and Afro-descendant women whose social position in Western societies is heavily impacted by 'race'.

The intersectional approach, therefore, is not a passing fad but is one of the few tools we have to analyse and make transformative proposals with regard to a reality that generally places us in positions of subordination and discrimination with respect to other women. Black feminism in the United States is the forerunner to intersectionality as a theoretical approach and analytical tool (Collins, 1999; Crenshaw, 1989). Intersectionality is probably the most significant contribution that Black feminism has made to feminist theory and critical theories in general. Conceived by the black feminist scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw in the late 1980s, intersectionality builds upon the ideas already formulated by Black feminism of the 1970s and 1980s: that black women's experience of discrimination is not only based on their being seen as women but also on their 'race', i.e. dual or even multiple discrimination: sex, 'race', class and other differences.

In the case of Spain, this intersectional approach needs to be diachronic as it must be able to understand and make others understand that the position of African and Afro-descendant women is not static but rather belongs to historical processes in which they have played a role and have also been socially perceived in certain positions. Thinking about ourselves from the perspective of Afro-feminism today in Spain means doing so from the margins, shifting away the centrality of the feminist gender discourse and putting 'race' in the centre. For us, 'race' is not and cannot be an analytical category; it is to label ourselves from the historical place of subordination of our black, Afro-descendant and diasporic bodies.

## Displacement: site-specific genealogies

Afro-feminisms in Spain are clearly focused on shifting the core message so as to be able to draw our own counter-hegemonic, Afro-centred genealogies enhancing the historical position of African and Afro-descendant women in shaping current Spanish society. This entails a process of spotlighting African and Afro-descendant women and their associations that have played an active role in shaping a 'non-essentialist' idea of the gender category, or woman category. Not all women are white. Similarly, we have called the feminist 'agenda' into question for focusing exclusively on the gender category and have proposed intersectional agendas designed to weave in variables other than gender but often with the same or greater weight in order to arrive at an intersectional 'own agenda'.

We cannot, for example, speak of 'gender equality' when many of the African and Afro-descendant women in Spain are held back by the so-called 'Alien Act' (Organic Law 4/2000) which forces them into low paying, low prestige work and into the informal economy.

As Afro-feminists we point out that one of the fundamental contributions of African and Afro-descendant women was to break with the monolithic notion of 'equality' in Spain by means of political proposals. We also put our bodies out there and made ourselves visible to change people's idea of what women are truly like (Sipi Mayo, 2018; Sipi, 2000).

There are many notable elements that people of African origin and/or Afro-descendants have contributed to Spanish culture. However, as in the history of subordinate subjects, our history and our legacy has been denied, deleted or re-appropriated and whitewashed.

First of all, African and Afro-descendant women have contributed our entire work effort to the Kingdom of Spain throughout history right up to the present day. During the modern era, in the form of enslaved labour mostly for 'domestic' tasks encompassing a wider range of work than they do today. We were also charged with taking care of our enslavers and were used as wet nurses and to raise their children.

Objectives shared with our mothers, grandmothers and ancestors, objectives which have evolved, include the struggle for representation of feminities of other racial origins. Representation matters (a lot) although we need to go beyond the politics of representation. We are currently witnessing an 'explosion' of self-representation that empowers us and wards off the stereotypes traditionally associated with African and Afro-descendant women.

It is worth noting that in the past, despite slavery, there were people, particularly women of African descent, who need to be acknowledged for their important contribution to Spain's history. Women like Sister Chikaba, the first Afro writer we know of in the Iberian Peninsula

(17th century), who stood out for their qualities or abilities in certain fields, especially the arts. There is a long list of others following in her footsteps that we can trace back in our own genealogies such as Raquel Llombe Epita, María Nsue, Remei Sipi, Lucía Asué Mbomío, Desirée Bela-Lobedde and many more.

Our genealogies are not linear but rather appear and disappear throughout Western time. They are not linear because linearity is only a relative temporal form. But they are also not linear because, in general, when tracing these genealogies back in time we again run into the problem of the invisibility of blackness and of the Kingdom of Spain's very relationship with blackness in its archives and cultural heritage. Either we do not appear in the archives at all or we appear as 'commodities' (black slaves) as slavery was legal in the Iberian Peninsula and in the kingdom's (colonial) territories until well into the 19th century, or we appear distorted owing to how these archives are interpreted today. A particularly relevant example of the latter given the extensive documentation we have in the archive, including eyewitness testimony to which no credit has been given, is that of Céspedes. Céspedes was an Afro-descendant born into slavery in 16th century Granada. Little is said about her race or her escape from slavery so as not to detract from her whitewashed figure as the first female surgeon claimed by white feminism (which uses gender as the sole criterion) or by the incipient LGBT movement as the first known transgender person and surgeon in the kingdom (Ortega Arjonilla, 2019).

## Conclusions and next steps

A commitment to the future of Afro-feminism requires Spain to define its own 'agenda'. Agenda is another of those uncomfortable terms insofar as it refers to a hierarchy and a linearity of the issues to be addressed, but it does have something to contribute when it comes to establishing a dialogue with hegemonic white feminism, which historically has explicitly placed us on its salvationist agenda through this exercise of nationalising whiteness and foreignizing the 'race' of all 'others'. The 'Afro-feminist agenda' must be an intersectional agenda in which analyses must necessarily stem from some fundamental strands of positionality, namely: race, gender, class, migration, sexuality and age.

Turning to another fundamental aspect, Afro-feminisms must continue to drive social transformation through formal and informal education. School syllabi must be analysed from a perspective empowering our communities and educating students, such as the seminar for which I prepared this paper about the importance of Afro-descendant people and communities in Spain's past and present. This is the perspective that promises us a better future, broadens our vision and perspective. As the black feminist epistemological point of view (Collins, 2000) has also taught us, the perspective from below and from the margins often increases objectivity.



# BLACK VERNACULAR SPEECH: LITERARY CANONS, LINGUISTIC IDEOLOGIES AND EMANCIPATING FEMINISMS IN THE PERSON OF CONCEPCIÓN ARENAL

Fernando Barbosa

Cultural and Social Anthropologist; associate professor and doctoral student at INSTIFEM / UCM. Specialist in postcolonial feminist studies.

*"By accepting the wildest fantasies of the colonizer, in the popular sense of the word, the stereotyped 'other' becomes a projection of desire and a way to defend a position of dominance"<sup>22</sup>*

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<sup>22</sup> "The invention of 'whiteness': stereotypes and mimicry in Francisco de Quevedo's *Boda de Negros* (Black Wedding), Mar Martínez-Góngora (2005, 281) The Johns Hopkins University Press. On the nature and function of stereotypes and discriminatory practices. See Homi K. Bhabha, (1994), *The Location of Culture*, London and New York , Routledge.

**Abstract:**

Several different studies are shedding light on the legacy that Africans and Afro-descendants have left to Spain. Based on post-colonial feminist theory and feminist political theory, linguistic anthropology and gender anthropology, this article describes popular speech known as *Black speech* which was commonplace and fashionable in the Spanish period known as the *Siglo de Oro* (Golden Age). The invisibility of Black-African, Moorish and Roma women and their contribution to this legacy, concealed behind a masculinising approach to social science, must be addressed and the importance of this legacy must be recovered. To that end, we spotlight the memory of slave women and abolitionist women, such as the Spanish writer Concepción Arenal Ponte, who invalidated the colonial order through feminist initiatives and allegiances. Racialised linguistic ideologies have been and continue to be powerful tools producing phobic myths controlling the production of meaning.

**Key words:** post-colonial feminism, gender anthropology, feminist theory, linguistic anthropology, linguistic ideologies, racialisation, colonialism.



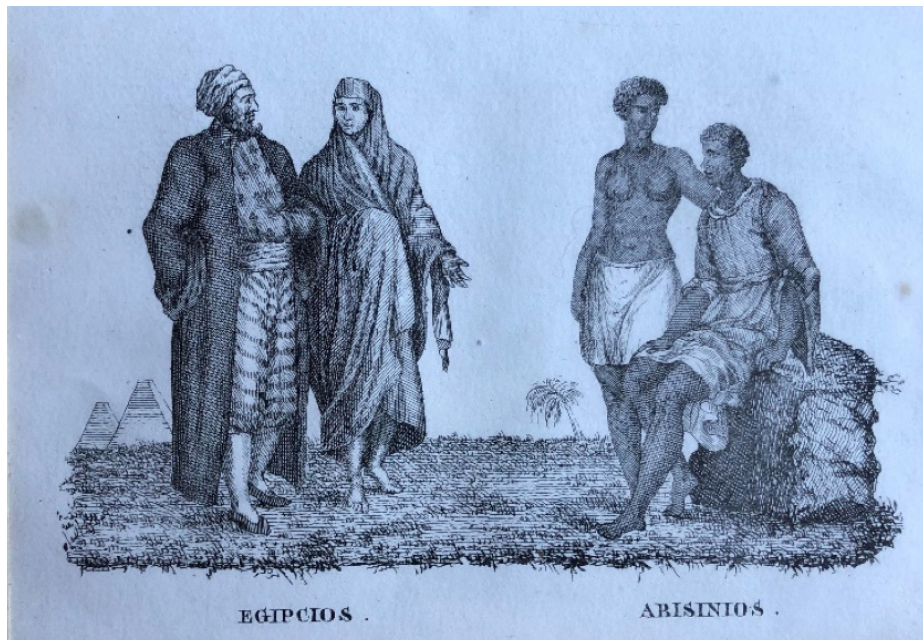
The peculiar way of speaking of the 'popular' classes, attributed to the different social groups, i.e. Moors, rural shepherds, black male slaves, black female servants and even Biscayans (Baranda 1989) was recorded as early as the beginning of the 15th and the first half of the 16th century in the literary production of Castilian, Portuguese and Catalan writers<sup>23</sup>. Miguel de Cervantes congratulates Lope de Rueda for "expertly portraying black women, ruffians, fools and Biscayans" Baranda (ibidem). Black women and men appear in ballads and *cordel'* or folk literature as characters whose way of speaking was intended as humour to provoke laughter. But masculinisation and sexism in the study of this community made the crucial role played by black African slave women who were greater in number in Europe and Spain than their male counterparts, Martín Casares (2011, 1) invisible.

Baranda (1989) offers a historical vision of how in the classical world (the *Iliad*) Ethiopian Africans are idealized as compassionate and just people resulting in their being highly respected. This idealisation is confirmed in the figure of Euridates, a black man and a personal friend of Odysseus. The black king Mennon participates in the Trojan War as recounted in the famous epic poem by Homer. Hence, the treatment accorded in the classical tradition to black Africans does not denigrate their human condition despite their phenotypic differences. Figures 8 and 9 show representations of black women and men in 19th century engravings.

The peace treaty of Alcaçovas (Alentejo, Portugal) signed in the year 1479 guaranteed the so-called "reconquest rights" divided up among the Iberian Peninsula's kingdoms of Castile, Aragon and Portugal and afforded Portugal the exclusive right to explore the African coast. This paved the way for the introduction of black slaves into the Iberian Peninsula by the Portuguese who had set up slave labour factories scattered along the western coast of Africa, for instance in the El Mina fortress-castle in present-day Ghana and in the Cidade Velha in the Cape Verde islands.

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23 King Escarriano "a strikingly handsome, very strong, extremely brave and completely black knight" mentioned in the work *Tirant lo Blanc*, started in 1460 by Joanot Martorell and nearly completed when he died in 1468, fell into the hands of Martí Joan de Galba who wrote the last few chapters and had it printed in Valencia in 1490. Miguel de Cervantes called it the best book in the world.



**Figure 8.** 19th century Spanish engraving portraying Egyptians and Abyssinians. Author: Anonymous, personal collection of Fernando Barbosa.



**Figure 9.** 19th century Spanish engraving portraying people from the Sahara and Blacks from Senegal. Author: Anonymous, personal collection of Fernando Barbosa.

The way black people were considered changed in the first decades of the 16th century. Racism and a pre-capitalist society determined the nature of the trade that revolved around enslaved African peoples. Blackness came to be associated with slavery and Black African customs and traditions seen as barbaric and inferior. Denigrating descriptions began to appear in literary texts and Africa was portrayed in a negative light<sup>24</sup>. All this literary tradition emerged in what became known as *Moorings*. Exploratory voyages down the West African coastline around the Cape of Good Hope and towards the eastern coast and the Indian Ocean generated an abundance of writing that shaped Africa for Portuguese imperialism in the late medieval and early modern periods, applying them to the imaginative, ideological framework of overseas expansion, Blackmore (2008). The consciousness of racial superiority was reiterated, evoking an evangelising, civilising mission under the cover of the Christian religion.

The break with the ancient world having been consummated, the texts of the first half of the 16th century associated the liminal image of African black people with the typified figures of the black maid, the black slave and a constant allusion to their geographical origins. Works such as *La Chingala* by Rodrigo de Reinosa, poet and publicist, appear describing peculiar ways of speaking: Gelofo (Wolof) Mandinga, Mangana, refer to the native inhabitants of present-day Senegal, the Guineas, and down to Nigeria. Parodic techniques, innovative for the period, were introduced making these peculiar forms of '*Black speech*' a fashionable comic resource in the Golden Age, Martín Corrales (2000). This peculiar way that the lower classes of Spanish society (low-class servants and male and female slaves) had of speaking Spanish was used as a source of humour. Their peculiar way of speaking was exaggerated and distortions and differences magnified as a parody. However, these exaggerations did not always correspond with the true linguistic skills of the speakers. This literary recourse was also skilfully exploited by authors such as Diego Sánchez de Badajoz, Sebastián de Covarrubias y Orozco, in *jácaras*, *mojigangas* and other theatrical works.

It is here that we can invoke the idea of 'racialized linguistic ideologies' that stigmatize particular linguistic practices perceived as deviating from prescriptive norms. The racialised ideologies of this 'lack of language' call linguistic competence into question and, by extension, the legitimate personality of the speakers as well, Rosa (2016, 163).

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24 "[...] The production of a 'white' subject, understood in terms of racial purity, became especially urgent in 16th and 17th century Spanish society. This society was constantly faced with difficulties in establishing a clear difference between old Christians and "others" of Jewish or Muslim origin, whose presence threatened the ideal of religious unity and the cultural homogeneity around which the Empire was built [...]. (See, Martínez-Góngora (2005, 264).

Stereotyped meaning, crude comedy and social roles corresponding to the popular speech of black Africans marks the beginning of new literary canons in the Iberian Peninsula in the 16th and 17th centuries, Baranda (1989). The lively and popular comedies by actor and playwright Lope de Rueda (1500-1565) are replete with these stereotyped characters. Black maids, black and Moorish female slaves, Gypsies and extremely poor maids are now being analysed under the lens of black feminist theory, Jones (2020) and 'Black Studies', Fernández (2020) but perhaps, as Nicholas Jones suggests, these stereotyped figures should be interpreted as rebellious voices.

And it is fitting that hundreds of years later in the 19th century, a white woman of aristocratic origin and proven insubordination in the face of patriarchal order, dresses as a man to attend university (reserved for men only) and, influenced by feminist, Masonic and emerging abolitionist currents, rises up against the colonial order in force even in Spain. Slavery was not abolished until nearly three quarters of a century later (1886) and the recognition of women as full members of society, with voting rights, took over a century (1918), Vila (2014, 312).

Concepción Arenal Ponte, born in Ferrol, calls one of the thorniest, most controversial and dense issues in the entire political panorama of the second half of 19th century Spain into question. Enriqueta Vilar (2014) suggests that one would be hard-pressed to find an external or internal event that is not directly or indirectly affected by these occurrences. While banned throughout Europe and in almost all the former Spanish overseas provinces, the infamous practice of slavery was still in force due to pressure from Cuban landowners and the greed of the Bourbon dynasty deeply entrenched in the slave trade. On 2 April 1865, at the initiative of the Puerto Rican Julio Vizcarrondo, the Spanish Abolitionist Society was founded in Madrid and its members included politicians and economists such as Emilio Castelar, Mateo Sagasta and Fermín Caballero. But few of these prominent men did much to address sugarcane production in Cuba, an issue that was both political and economic.

Concepción Arenal won the literary contest sponsored by the Spanish Abolitionist Society in March 1866 with her book of poetry entitled "*La esclavitud de los negros*". From among the 76 works entered into the contest, her nearly 100-page work, also known as the *Ode Against Slavery*, was immediately published in the *Cancionero del Esclavo (Slave Songbook)* that same year. The poem attacks the institution of slavery founded on the Aristotelian concept of *just reason* that he defended. It takes on the revived debate that Spanish theologians had been having for centuries about the enslavement of Indians which, while ultimately condemned, did not liberate enslaved black Africans. "*Concepción Arenal does not mince words. Although her aim was to defend abolition, she became wholeheartedly involved in the issue and harshly condemned the enslavement of human beings, the men who did it and the nations that acquiesced to it, ending her poem by imploring her country to free itself from such a shameful institution.*" Vila (ibidem: 319). One of the first verses goes like this:

*Horrible slavery! In your presence  
 What generous hand,  
 would want to subscribe to the odious sentence that  
 delivers innocence to greed?  
 Who adjusts your noose, the mark you leave?  
 Who in just anger is not inflamed?  
 Who, with anguished heart, does not groan to God and the  
 world and call for their help?  
 SLAVERY! How this horrible name, which is oppression,  
 iniquity, weeping,  
 brutal force, depravity, dread,  
 can man hear? What do I say to man! It is said that it  
 terrifies,  
 that it inspires horror itself  
 in the stormy sea, in the vast countryside, from the region of  
 the sun, to the abyss.*

Vila (2014) does not hesitate to classify this piece of writing as an exciting, courageous and progressive poem for the time, written by a woman who today would be seen as an 'activist' and who is now considered one of the founders of Spanish feminism. Her antislavery and abolitionist stance deserve our greatest admiration and celebration of a feminist legacy to the cause of the struggle of black-African peoples in Spain.

At a given historical moment, linguistic stigmatization was based on the phenotype of its speakers, race and class/occupation, making them the exception based on "the imagination of the colonizer of the colonized without language, i.e. without Eurocentrically valued expressiveness" Veronelli, (2015) [cited in Rosa (2016, 164)]. Centuries later, emancipatory feminist movements gave rise to women of the stature of Concepción Arenal who, in a world of men and with her passionate pen, obstinately addressed the consequences of slavery.



# BLACK ART: AN ANTI-RACIST ARTISTIC EDUCATION IN SPAIN AS A SETTING FOR OTHER POSSIBILITIES

**Ana Cebrián Martínez**

Doctor of Fine Arts from the UCM. University teacher, specialist in community learning projects through art Co-founder of Conciencia-Afro

**Abstract:**

Art is one of most powerful transformation tools that exists today. It allows us to imagine alternatives, other possible futures. Art is “philosophy in images”. It calls the world into question to understand the different forms of human experiences. It can synthesize events promoting the catharsis of disturbing emotions (Chalmers, 2003) and indirectly reveals many things that we do not know about ourselves or our society. It gives us a chance to cope, to put an image on these experiences, face up to them and respond, and experiment with other lenses through which to see them (Berger, 2000). And this is how Afro-descendant artists have approached art. While the History of Western Art has many gaps, we can find many works that clearly demonstrate that migration is not a recent phenomenon and that art by Africans and Afro-descendants has had an influence on our history.

**Keywords:**

Artistic education, contemporary art, afro-descendants, activism, black art.



## Why art?

Art is one of the most powerful transformation tools that exists, which is why Afro-descendant artists have used it as a way to shout out their very existence, a radical response struggling to come to the surface of the world of white art. A form of resistance, an intimate and living archive (Muholi, 2011). We can trace the history of the aesthetic empowerment of the black community, and suddenly hair is a braided message of freedom (Brown, 2011), an affirmation of presence and a map drawn for survival. From aesthetic empowerment itself to cultural and community production or the creation of contemporary work, Afro-descendant art, even more than in other cases, is an art of healing, generation of knowledge and social vindication.

## Presence that is not a recent phenomenon

When charting a precise route on the aesthetics of racism in Spain (El Olmo, 2009), the aesthetics that remain, and recovering black images, it is safe to say that since pre-modern times there are visual documents throughout Europe, including Spain, (Bindman and Gates, 2010) that bear witness to this presence and the racial blending and cultural influence it brought with it.

Often, when we speak of the presence of Afro-descendants, we should disregard the division between Sub-Saharan Africa and its North African neighbour. The word *Moro* in Spanish (Moor), comes from the Greek term *maurous*, which means “man with a tan complexion” (Del Olmo, 2009: 97). *Mauro*, *Moor*, *Moorish*, mixed-race, *mulatto*, *black*, *African* and *Ethiopian* are all terms used in ancient times to refer to black people. There are many works that include these words in their titles: *Cristóbal the Moor*, *the Moor Kanka Musa* or *the Moor Juan de Pareja*, *Velázquez’ the Mulatta* and the expression “very Ethiopian blood” in reference to Juan Latino.

When tracing the impact that Africans and Afro-descendants have had on Spanish art, it is important to point out that there are few in-depth studies on this topic, with the exception of the very complete *The Image of the Black in Western Art* by Bindman and Gates (2010). It is difficult to determine whether some works by unknown authors were painted by Afro-descendants and we often have to make assumptions. In spite of everything, we can assume that the number of artistic works is greater than that attributed to such artists.

In the time before colonialism and the slave trade, we find paintings and sculptures in religious buildings and tombs, especially works portraying close and harmonious interaction that do not clearly show racial differences between natives and immigrants or servitude linked to black people, nor was there any clear physical differentiation between Christians and Muslims

(Del Olmo, 2009). The Renaissance and Baroque periods offer more documents where we can find scenes of daily life, public authorities, and black diplomats in court portraits while 'caste paintings' and family portraits portray miscegenation in the building of racial separation (de Souza, 2006) as the paintings are instrumentalized by power-holders for the purpose of maintaining colonial order.

It is common to find black characters in the works of Hieronymous, Michelangelo, Rubens, Velázquez, Rembrandt, Goya and Marie-Guillemine Benoist, and some black artists stood out (Bindman and Gates, 2010) such as the painter Juan de Pareja, the African-American Joshua Johnson and the anonymous artist depicted painting the portrait of Maria Anna of Austria, Queen of Portugal. Later it was the Orientalists such as Delacroix, Leopold Carl Müller, Henri Regnault and Jean Leon Gerome, and the Spaniards Mariano Fortuny and José Tapiró y Baró who, in their portrayals of Al Ándalus, confirmed the statement attributed to Alejandro Dumas that "Africa begins in the Pyrenees".

## Primitive avant-garde art

Later, attention focused on the work of African-American artists such as Wilfredo Lam, Hayden Palmer, Aaron Douglas, Alma Thomas, Elizabeth Catlett, Loïs Mailou Jones and Jacob Lawrence who addressed cubist primitivism leaving their mark on avant-garde art.

Here a close relationship was established between 'the exotic-primitive' and art that, in its search for a new code of representation, turned to traditional African art in some instances as a source of inspiration and in others as an aesthetic appropriation. In 1984, William Rubin, curator of the MoMA, organized the exhibition called *Primitivism in 20th Century Art* in which the works by these artists were linked to objects from Africa, Oceania and America (Rubin, 1984), showing the influence that these objects had but classifying them as artefacts. In 1988, the anthropologist Susan Vogel inaugurated *ART/Artefact* at the Centre for African Art exhibiting traditional African objects with the aesthetics of contemporary art, and clarified that traditional African cultures do not distinguish the objects we call art by placing them in a certain category, but rather associate aesthetic experiences with objects that have certain qualities (Vogel, 1988), thus demonstrating the universal nature of aesthetic experience (Fontdevilla, 2018). This is not the case of the categorization of art. In 2019, an important exhibition, *Le modèle noir, de Géricault à Matisse: un modèle d'exposition* at the Musée d'Orsay, illustrated how the black diaspora culture influenced modern western art.

Other artists found their point of reference closer to home in the Black Atlantic (Gilroy, 1993), which impacted the creation of communities and identities based on transposed cultural forms (...) identities that were configured in contact with and in contrast to other black trans-

national formations (...) and on constant mobilization and emigration (Archer in Barson and Gorschlüter, 2010: 22). This creation was above all international, revolving around Paris, the artistic epicentre of the time, but also Haiti, Cuba, Brazil, Mexico and the US, giving rise, among others, to the Anthropophagic Movement in Brazil based on the recovery of indigenous and black roots “devouring European culture” (De Andrade, 1999). The most salient examples were Lassar Segall and Tarsila do Amaral.

During that same period, the representation of colonial imagery was very present in Spain during the Franco regime and left multiple traces in advertising, statuary and civil works. During that period, Guinea was interpreted both as having a culture of its own, but also something possessed, an icon from the conquest. As the artist Rogelio López Cuenca (2016) points out in his study on colonial representation called *Los Bárbaros*: (...) through their silent presence, monuments enunciate the power of the owners of the present to narrate history. They are able to project this power back in time in order to build and reinforce its contemporary legitimacy (p.3).

## Black art and contemporary art

*As a painter, I don't believe in the idea of black art, but it is obvious that the black experience is universal (...). I was reluctant to fully accept the idea simply because, above all, I view many issues through the lens of politics and I clearly have a political conception of what it means to be an artist, and an artist who happens to be black. As such, I think of many things that I have experienced that make what I do a reflection of a broader spectrum.* (Frank Bowling in Barson and Gorschlüter, 2010: 50.)

Afro-descendant artists have managed to make a way for themselves, but not without first having to defend their status as artists which affords them a broad scope to record a series of anti-racist lessons through themes, styles of representation and formats. In Spain, this has meant that the black community is most politically visible in cultural areas: Afro awareness at the Matadero Cultural Centre in Madrid or Black Barcelona at CCCB / MACBA. In recent years, there have been significant retrospective exhibitions such as *MAKING AFRICA* at the Guggenheim in Bilbao, the *Pigozzi Collection of African Art* and *Jean-Michel BASQUIAT - Now is the time; Wilfredo Lam and Kerry James Marshall* at the MNCARS and *Yinka Shonibare* at the Sala de Arte Alcalá 31. We are also witnessing the rise of artists with an important international presence at biennials and art fairs, especially Afro-American, Afro-British and African (Kehinde Willey, Hank Willis Thomas, Kara Walker, David Hammons, Meschac Gaba, Romouald Hazumé, Esther Nwangi, Tony Gum, Omar Viktor Diop, Muholi Zanele, Renné Cox, Wangechi Mutu and Tracey Rose, to name only a few. Some, like Chris Ofili, are notorious winners of *Turner Awards*.

Currently many Spanish and international artists choose migration as the fundamental theme of their pieces (Tania Bruguera, Nuria Güell, José Luis Bongore, Rogelio López Cuenca, Valeriano López and Cristina de Middel). However, it is the Afro-Spanish artists who take on issues related to identity or a dual sense of belonging. As Mieke Bal suggests (in Olivares, 2008), her dual relationship with her host country and her country of origin generates its own aesthetic that, in turn, also contributes to bringing about change (p.142).

Today in Spain we can speak of an Afro-descendant artistic community and not of isolated cases; artists who produce on the contemporary market but who are still far from the international projection of other Afro-European artists. Among other factors, this owes to the situation of art in Spain, to the rationale behind its representation, to the precarious structures through which it promotes art and culture, and also to media and institutional recognition of the Afro-descendant presence in our country that are still, in a sense, one-off. This recognition has had its milestones in terms of presence in cultural institutions, the recent visibility of some artists in the media, and the purchase of works by some regional exhibition halls (CA2M Collection), as a launching pad of sorts that we hope to see continue into the future.

One of the problems faced is disconnection from the international scene, bring with it a lack of role models which in turn prevents Afro-descendant students from feeling more inclined towards other types of art where black people have had greater visibility. There is an interconnection between artists from different fields as part of a community and we can speak of historical review, going back to roots, anti-rules, new-aesthetic paradigms, denouncement and activism as relevant concepts in the works of these artists. Photography, archival art and audiovisual art are prime channels of expression. The most recognized artist in this regard is clearly the photographer Angélica Dass, and photography is one of the fields where we find the most role models (Rubén H. Bermúdez, Agnes Essonti, Dylaila Romeo, Arturo Bibang, Sergio Ekobe and Jose Oyono Ngalo). Other artists are more focused on the plastic arts (Montserrat Angiano, Ramón Esono, Carmen Bolena and Carmen Reyes), and some names, such as Sylvia Abert, are more linked to stage representation, with important links to the performing arts. There are also other young and inspired artist who are revolutionizing social networks such as Stephania Yepes, Sheherezade F. Sephard, Iman Arzak or Navxja.

## Conclusions

Within the Afro-descendant community, there are those who focus on the importance of institutional presence to foster recognition. Education in the arts, the efficacy of images in a world of images, is an essential tool in this task to promote the development of programmes enjoying continuity in spaces of social transformation. By promoting the essential visibility of communities, introducing the transcultural perspective in self-managed spaces, mixed and non-mixed alike, and demonstrating the importance of education as an opportunity, change can be brought about in the arts and society (Cebrián, 2015).

We need to open our minds to other creators. Without an anti-racist visual education, we will never acquire the tools we need for art to be an instrument that produces specific knowledge, bridging a gap and offering an opportunity to transform pain or contempt into a space for possibility (see annex 1). When this happens, there is an exchange, a way to change what no longer works, what does not respect us or hurts us, and activate thought-action processes for an inclusive society where one can be both singular and multiple, the same and different (Edouard Glissant in Barson and Gorschlüter, 2010).





Photograph by José Oyono Ngalo

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## Decade for Afro-descendants

- Despite the international efforts of civil society, the full implementation of the Programme of Activities of the International Decade continues to pose a challenge in many countries.
- In 2019 more than fifty states, including Spain, abstained or voted against a UN resolution that included a series of measures within the framework of the follow-up to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action aimed at eliminating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.
- The year 2020 marks the mid-point in the Decade for People of African Descent, time for the international community to conduct a mid-term review of the Decade where achievements will be evaluated and new actions are expected to be defined to reverse the lasting consequences of slavery.
- The Decade's strategy should be implemented based on national Action Plans that, within the framework of the Durban Programme of Action, guide governments in their enactment of comprehensive laws against racism including measures in the areas of employment, education, housing, health and social services to generate real and sustained impact over time. To accomplish this, it is necessary to allocate sufficient financial resources to ensure the effective application of all the actions planned.



## Historical legacy, cultural legacy, and postcolonialism

- Communities designated as black in Spain are facing challenges that include institutional and social racism and the treatment of Afro-descendants as foreigners, xenophobic political discourse, assimilationism as a public cultural strategy, and strategic interculturalism intended as a form of control.
- Over the last four centuries, Spain's history has developed in a Catholic, European, androcentric environment which, in social terms, means white. To recover our historicity, we need to rediscover and study Afro biographies from Spain's past.
- Spain's colonial undertakings must be included in the study of its legacy from the past. Spain and its colonies were inevitably linked throughout its history. We cannot think about Spain's past without thinking about the peoples it colonized. Our memories are forever intertwined.
- Racialized linguistic ideologies have been and continue to be powerful tools that have generated phobic, controlling myths in the production of meanings.

## Statistics

- Statistics are needed to provide information on the ethnic issue. For instance, because epidemiological and pathophysiological studies do not break down the incidence of disease by ethnic group, the results cannot be applied to 100% of the population. The samples are not representative of social diversity. *muestreo de la diversidad social.*

## Gender

- The 'Afro-feminist agenda' must be intersectional and its analyses must necessarily stem from certain fundamental positionalities, namely: 'race', gender, class, migration, sexuality and age.
- Afro-feminisms must continue to drive social transformation through formal and informal education. School syllabi must be analysed from a perspective that empowers our communities and educates students. The seminar "The Legacy of Africans and Afro-descendants to Spain" about the importance of Afro-descendant people and communities in Spain's past and present and promises us a better future stands as an example.
- The invisibility of Black-African, Moorish and Roma women and their contribution to this legacy has been concealed by a masculinizing approach to social science. The importance of their contributions must be recovered.

## Innovation, learning processes and educational methodologies

- Incorporating African and Afro-descendant heritage in school curricula and teacher training programmes is deemed essential. This material must be free of traditional bias and shed clarifying light on slavery and colonialism. It must acknowledge entrenched power relations. Appropriate educational materials should likewise be developed.
- It is advisable to have public policies in place that explicitly support these approaches with a view to more directly impacting student education.
- More research is needed to gain a fuller understanding of these issues in the context of Spain and it is therefore recommended that public institutions encourage these studies.
- Education in the arts, the efficacy images in a world of images, is an essential tool in this task of promoting the development of programmes with continuity in spaces of social transformation, By promoting the essential visibility of communities, introducing the trans-cultural perspective in self-managed spaces, mixed and non-mixed alike, and demonstrating the importance of education as an opportunity, change can be brought about in the arts and society.
- We need to open our minds to other creators. Without an anti-racist visual education, we will never acquire the tools we need for art to be an instrument that produces specific knowledge bridging a gap and offering an opportunity to transform pain or contempt into a space for possibility.
- The absence of references in school syllabi reflecting the true diversity of Spain's past, the lack of centres devoted to the study of Afro-Spain at universities and the Spanish National Research Council (CSIC) and the absence of census data for the purpose of gathering objective statistics are all issues that have an impact on the invisibility of Spain's African heritage.



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## ANNEX 1

# SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL

BLACK ART: an anti-racist artistic education in Spain as a setting for other possibilities. Historical journey and representation of afro women. Ana Cebrián.



Image 1

**Lady Flavia (Detail). Head of Ibera in Ampuriae (Spain)  
Circa 100 AD Archaeological Museum of Barcelona.**

Retrieved from: <http://www.macbarcelona.cat/>



Image 2

**The Mulatta or The Supper at Emmaus. Diego Velázquez.  
National Gallery Dublin.**

Retrieved from: <https://www.nationalgallery.ie/>



Image 3

Woman painting the portrait of Maria Anna of Austria. Attributed to the Brazilian school. Private collection. First Half of the Eighteenth Century.

Retrieved from: <http://carltonhobbs.com/portfolio-items/black-artist-completing-a-portrait-of-a-white-female-aristocrat-2/>



Image 4

**Leopold Carl Muller. An exotic beauty. Private collection.**

Retrieved from: <https://www.darnleyfineart.com/>



Image 5

**Matisse. Woman in White. (Detail). 1946.**

Retrieved from: <https://www.elperiodico.com/es/cuaderno/20190427/arte-representacion-negros- a-prueba- racismo-7425472>



Image 6

**Lois Mailou Jones. La Baker, 1977. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.**

Retrieved from: <https://www.mfa.org/exhibitions/lois-mailou-jones>



Image 7

Zanele Muholi. Ntozakhe II, Parktown 2016.

Retrieved from:

<https://mytown.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-modern/exhibition/zanele-muholi>



Image 8

**Frances Bodomo. Afronauts. Short film. 2014. Contemporary work.**

Retrieved from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jd9278JAjKU>



Image 9

**Agnes Essonti. Contemporary work.** Retrieved from: [essonti.com](http://essonti.com)



Image 10  
Carmen Bolena. Contemporary work.  
Retrieved from: [afrofeminas.com](http://afrofeminas.com)







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