
Natália Vicente Jaremko. (IC)

Abstract

This research aims to study the depiction of black sorcerers in Brazilian literature and the press to understand its relation with the social and political context of slavery, especially in the second half of the nineteenth century.

Key words: slavery, sorcerers, literature, press.

Introduction

In the first year of research, I read works of literary theory in order to understand better the possible uses of literary materials in historical studies. In addition, I read texts about the relations between literature and the press in the nineteenth century, since most literary works that are relevant for my research were originally published in newspapers and magazines. Furthermore, I have read about magic, African religions and slavery, from both political and social perspectives. Also, I have been exploring novels and periodicals – mainly from 1852 to 1871 – that depict one or more black sorcerers as characters. The aim is to explore the ways in which these black characters are constructed in the context of a slave society.

Results and Discussion

After exploring several peridicals, I have decided to focus my study on a serialized novel published originally in 1852 and 1853 in the magazine Marmota Fluminense, and again, in 1859 and 1860, in the same periodical. The novel is called Maria ou A menina roubada and tells the story of two black sorcerers, as well as of a lot of other complex characters that are rich for a discussion of Brazilian slavery at the time.

I intend to understand how the main sorcerer – tia – is structured. So far, it has become clear that her practices combine elements of European folklore and traditional African religious beliefs.

Conclusions

I will continue to analyze this novel, focusing mainly on characters that are slaves – both African and Brazilian-born – and free or freed people of color. Of course, black sorcerers are the most important characters for my research. I will seek more information about the author, the intellectual context – what kind of literature and scientific texts the intellectuals of that time used to read – and the mentality – to understand how people at the time professed and dealt with magical thinking. I will read texts about witchcraft and folklore, besides continuing to explore the newspaper where Maria ou A menina roubada was published.

Acknowledgement

I thank my supervisor for his support and guidance. My parents and my brother provide all kinds of emotional support and encouragement for my studies and research activities. My thanks to the CNPq for the financial assistance.