

Louis-Joseph Janvier and “The Detractors of The Black Race”: An Anthropological Critique

*Frantz Rousseau Déus*¹

¹ Universidade Estadual de Campinas, Campinas/SP, Brasil

Abstract

Ideas of hierarchy, inferiority and racial inequality predominated in the work of certain European intellectuals of the 18th and 19th centuries on the idea of ‘races’. The Société d’Ethnologie de Paris (SEP) and the Société d’Anthropologie de Paris (SAP) are two French institutions that had intellectuals who participated in the consolidation of these conceptions. Since the 18th century there have been criticism by black intellectuals; however, with the emergence of the First Black Republic of the modern era in Haiti, these criticisms gained new contours. Many Haitian intellectuals in the first and second half of the 19th century dedicated themselves to combating hierarchical ways of thinking, demonstrating their inconsistencies. In this article, based on bibliographical research, we consider the anthropological work of the Haitian Louis-Joseph Janvier (1855-1911), highlighting his contribution to struggles toward deconstructing the imaginary of racial inferiority attributed to black people and used to legitimize their domination and exploitation. Discussing the racial issue in Janvier’s thinking is relevant as it continues to be a dilemma and a challenge in the contemporary world.

Keywords: Race; Racism; Louis-Joseph Janvier; Anthropological thought; Haitian social thought

Louis-Joseph Janvier & “Os detratores da raça negra”: Crítica antropológica

Resumo

No pensamento de certos intelectuais europeus do século XVIII e XIX sobre raças, predominaram ideias de hierarquia, inferioridade e desigualdade racial. A *Société d’Ethnologie de Paris (SEP)* e a *Société d’Anthropologie de Paris (SAP)* são duas instituições francesas que tiveram intelectuais que participaram da consolidação dessas concepções. Desde o século XVIII existiam críticas realizadas por intelectuais negros; contudo, com o surgimento da Primeira República Negra da era moderna no Haiti, essas críticas ganharam novos contornos. Muitos intelectuais haitianos da primeira e segunda metade do século XIX se dedicaram a combater as formas hierárquicas de pensamento, demonstrando suas inconsistências. Neste artigo, por meio de uma pesquisa bibliográfica, apresentamos algumas considerações sobre as obras antropológicas do haitiano Louis-Joseph Janvier (1855-1911), destacando a sua contribuição nas lutas para desconstruir o imaginário de inferioridade racial atribuído às pessoas negras e utilizado para legitimar sua dominação e sua exploração. Discutir a questão racial no pensamento de Janvier assume relevância na medida em que este continua sendo um dilema e um desafio no mundo contemporâneo.

Palavras-chave: raça; racismo; Louis-Joseph Janvier; pensamento antropológico; pensamento social haitiano

Louis-Joseph Janvier and “The Detractors of The Black Race”: An Anthropological Critique

Frantz Rousseau Déus

Introduction

At the height of the slavery of African peoples, the idea of race was used to explain what led a group of men to appropriate themselves of a group of women and men, indenturing them into forced labour. Thus, race, as an idea anchored in biology¹, was employed during the period of Transatlantic slavery as a tool of classification, hierarchization and domination. Since the 18th Century, African intellectuals² had, in an isolated manner, assumed positions against the enslavement of Africans, but it was only in the 19th Century, in the wake of the Haitian Revolution (1791-1804), that matters of race, enslavement, inferiority, superiority, and freedom came to be more systematically questioned by Black intellectuals.

An unprecedented event in Western modernity began in August of 1791³. This year was the springboard for the largest revolution carried forth by enslaved Black peoples, transgressing the socio-political and economic orders of the time. People who had been conceived as objects or merchandise, who had been pushed to the margins of history, became the authors of a successful revolution, overthrowing slavery and the French colonial order at once. From the very first uprising of enslaved peoples in 1791, the revolution saw thirteen years of intense fighting before the Independence of the Haitian Republic was proclaimed in January of 1804 (James, 2000 [1938]; Trouillot, 2016 [1995]; Fischer, 2003).

Following the armed struggle which resulted in the Revolution, the ‘consolidation of an organicity of Haitian intellectuals’ sought to give sequence to the struggle in their writings. The launched at debate which was, at the same time, political, philosophical, historiographical, and anthropological, rethinking ideas which were central for European intellectuals, such as freedom and equality. These Haitian intellectuals desired not only to resignify these concepts, but also to widen them so as to include those people whose humanity had been denied. They presented themselves as defenders of the Black race. It is not by accident that René Depestre wrote that, in the 19th Century, Haiti was the only place in the Western Hemisphere with an *organic intelligentsia* composed of Black people who fought for the “rehabilitation of the Black race” (Depestre, 1980: 23). This does

1 During its drawn-out elaboration, the idea of ‘race’ was inflected in different ways, and its meanings changed according to historical circumstances. In light of this fact, the British anthropologist Peter Wade offers a chronology of ‘race’ which suggests that it is more readily understood when seen as a process. During different times, ‘race’ was related to culture, the environment, biology, and culture again (Wade 2017). Wade’s chronology addresses the work of another British sociologist, Michael Banton, who also discusses the “racialization of the world”, which is the title of the third chapter of his book *The Idea of Race* (2010 [1977]), in which he analyses the historical construction of ‘race’ in the 19th Century, confronting the different arguments presented at the time. Stressing the controversies surrounding the idea of ‘race’, Banton reveals the different ways Western scientists have elaborated racial typologies: i) biblical-religious; ii) anatomic and physiological; iii) geographical locale; iv) physical format; v) culture (Banton, 2010 [1977]).

2 We can, as an example, take Ottobah Cugoana (1757-1791), also known as John Stuart, who was born in Axim, in modern-day Ghana. He was kidnapped and sold as a slave, taken to work in Granada. He later travelled to England where he learned to read and write in English, and became a renowned abolitionist (Winter, 2013, p. 260). He was already critical of slavery and the slave trade in his 1787 work *Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evil and Wicked Traffic of the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species*. His critiques stressed the relation between economy and slavery. In his words, “[...] slave owners have no other intention than that they [the slaves] serve them like machines or beasts of burden; that their own tranquillity and profit advance by means of a ragged and poor bunch of men and women, that the despise and treat like animals, maintaining them and their children in perpetual slavery, with a merciful death the only way to rid themselves of their labour” (Cugoana, 2013 [1787], p. 273).

3 The slave uprising occurred on the 22nd of August 1791 (Rossignol, 1992, p. 154). On the Haitian Revolution, see C. R. L. James (2000 [1938]); Michel-Rolph Trouillot (2016 [1995]).

not mean that there were no other Black peoples, in other countries, who defended the Black race; only that, in the young Haitian nation, this defence was part of the ‘political programme’ of intellectuals.

The critique of the idea of race pursued by Haitian intellectuals did not amount to a complete rejection of ‘race’, such that it would no longer be necessary to speak of it at all; on the contrary, their aim was to demystify race, to deconstruct it. These activist intellectuals realized that, having been constructed, it was no longer enough to just pretend that ‘race’ did not exist, nor could it simply be ignored. They chose instead to discuss its principles and consequences in the everyday practices of racialized societies. In this way, the equality of the human races is not only a founding idea of the Haitian nation, but also the basis of its social thought in the 19th Century.

There are many names that make up the list of intellectuals of Haitian social thought in the 19th Century, some of them have been and are the subjects of various recent studies, including, for example, Joseph Anténor Firmin (1850-1911) and Philippe Hannibal Price (1843-1893)⁴. This article focuses on the writings of Louis-Joseph Janvier (1855-1911), a contemporary of Firmin and Price.

Through a review of the literature, this article considers the anthropological dimension of much of Louis-Joseph Janvier’s work. It first briefly considers the idea of ‘race’ through two *savant* European societies: the Société d’Ethnologie de Paris (SEP) and the Société d’Anthropologie de Paris (SAP). It then turns to Janvier’s critiques of how some 19th-Century European intellectuals presented the idea of ‘race’. Finally, it reviews some of the critiques of Janvier’s ideas.

Race in French intellectual thought in the second half of the 19th Century

Racial theories have occupied an important place in the scientific and philosophical thought of various European intellectuals⁵, particularly during the 19th Century. Many of the naturalists and philosophers who have dedicated themselves to the issue presented an idea of ‘race’ that followed a hierarchical classificatory logic of inferior race, superior race, unequal race.

In the 19th Century, in light of the struggle against slavery that irrupted throughout the Americas, and particularly after the success of the Haitian Revolution, many European intellectuals began an ardent defence of the inequality of the human races, striving to uphold slavery. Many scientific societies – the *Sociétés Savantes* – were created during this period, and such ideas were prevalent in their intellectual output

In 1839, William Frederic Edwards (1777-1842) founded the *Société d’Ethnologie de Paris* (SEP)⁶, one of the first French *Sociétés Savantes*, which contributed to the creation of the *Science de l’homme* in Europe. Through the

4 On Joseph Anténor Firmin and Hannibal Price, see: Déus (2020); for more information on Firmin, see the work of Fluehr-Lobban (2000); Marques & Kosby (2020); Silva (2020), Troitinho (2021), among others.

5 Among the European intellectuals who wrote on race is the Swedish botanist Carl Von Linné, who, in his *Systema naturae* (1793 [1735]), provided a classification which placed African Blacks at the lowest rank of the hierarchy (Linné, 1793: 33); the Frenchman Georges-Louis Leclerc, the Comte de Buffon, who published his *Histoires Naturelles* in two volumes: the first is dedicated to the *Histoire Naturelle des animaux* and the second to the *Histoire Naturelle de l’Homme* and they concern, respectively, races of animals and the human species. Although he held a more or less positive view of Blacks, they nonetheless occupy the lowest rank of his classification (Buffon, 1749). In his *Treatise on Metaphysics*, the French Enlightenment philosopher François-Marie Arouet, known as Voltaire, argued that the Black man is not a human being like others, but a type of man with a degree of superiority in relation to other animals (Voltaire, 1978 [1735]: 62). In 1795, the German zoologist Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, like other naturalists of his time, was concerned with explaining skin colour variation in human beings. He concluded that climate and way of life caused black skin in the inhabitants of warm region, which the customs of people of the north, on the contrary, contributed to their whiteness (Blumenbach, 1804: 18). Even though the author concluded that the varieties of humanity composed a single species, he was in agreement with the idea that the Black man’s appearance made him closer to the other apes than other men. He wrote, “it has been alleged that Ethiopians have more to do with monkeys than other men, I agree with this” (Blumenbach, 1804: 304). On more detailed panorama on the idea of race, see Banton (2010 [1977]); Wade (2017).

6 Williams Frederic Edwards (1841) sought to diversify the members of the SEP, bringing together seven geographers, seven naturalists or zoologists, six doctors, six historians, five explorers, five politicians, and three men of letters. In 1840, Auguste Le Duc, hailing from the Indian Ocean, became the first member from the colonial world. SEP succeeded in enrolling not only people from the colonial world – military men, diplomats, colonial doctors, travellers – but also people from the financial and economic sectors. Gustave d’Eichthal came from this field, bringing with him his brother, the banker Adolphe, in 1843, and his father-in-law Édouard Rodrigues in 1844. During its existence, SEP helped to rethink the colonial issue in England after the Revolution of 1833. It inspired the creation of the Aborigines Protection Society (APS), in London in 1837. In 1842 the Ethnological Society of London was created, dedicated to studying colonial subjects (Bernon, 2018: 3-4).

Société, Edwards proposed to reconstitute the *Science des Races*. The aim of his investigations was to demonstrate the existence of races via their physiological characteristics. He defined his programme as “studies of human races”, taking ethnology to be synonymous with “raciology” (Mucchielli, 1997: 77).

In 1842, Edwards left the board of the SEP for health reasons. His exit resulted in an intensification of the articulation between SEP and colonial matters, since “colonial interlocutors began to participate more fully in the materials analysed, [and] the colonial matter gradually penetrated the definition of the objects of study and the specification of methodologies” (Bernon, 2018: 8). Discussion surrounding the *race nègre* – the Black race – came increasingly to the fore in light of the abolitionist debate.

With the participation of scientists, members of parliament, and colonial agents, political and scientific arguments were enmeshed in the SEP. Confrontations were common between abolitionists and anti-abolitionists, the latter also compliant with ideas regarding the inequality of races. Two names had a fundamental impact on these debates: Victor Schoelcher (1804-1893) and Gustave d’Eichthal (1804-1886), the secretary of the SEP. The former was an abolitionist member of parliament who defended the equality of all races (Tomich, 2009), and the latter was a naturalist who divided humanity into two racial groups – Black and White – taking skin colour as a determining criterion.

In a SEP assembly in 1847, Eichthal, through an analysis of “the past”, spoke of the elements that justify white domination, making a natural racial dependence of Blacks on Whites explicit. Thomas Bernon (2018: 13, my translation) paraphrases Eichthal:

The “development of science” is proper to the white race, while the black race is destitute of it. Or, more precisely, without the “initiation of the whites”, the black race has “no civilizational initiative”. Thus, even if the black race is presented as being theoretically capable of scientific development, his opinion is that tutelage will be necessary.

According to these ideas, the Black man is unable to enter civilization without the mediation of the white man. Thus, in every situation, blacks depend on whites to become civilized. For Eichthal, “much like women, blacks are not equal to men in ‘an absolute sense’, but his function, the ‘role’ of the black man is also important in the ‘human couple’ (Bernon, 2018: 13).

The debates at SEP anticipated the work of authors such as the French diplomat Joseph Arthur de Gobineau (1816-1882), one of the most prominent defenders of ideas of racial inferiority and superiority in his *Essai sur l’inégalité des races humaines* (1853-1855) [An Essay on the Inequality of Human Races]. His writings have earned him the title of the true father of modern racism, particularly for sustaining the idea that there are three races – black, yellow, and white – and upholding the thesis that human races are gifted with unequal aptitudes. According to Gobineau, one race is superior to another, and their inter-breeding results in an inevitable process of degeneration.

Joseph Gobineau was not linked to anthropological schools, but, like all bulwarks of inequality and the inferiority of human races, he argued that the white race was the only one gifted with perfectibility. For Gobineau (2004 [1855]: 67), racial inequalities are not social constructs, nor do they stem from institutions, because “the idea of a natural, original, clear and permanent inequality between the various races, is, throughout the world, one of the oldest and most widespread opinions to be had [...]”. However, the Haitian author Anténor Firmin, a critic of the idea of ‘race’, refuted Gobineau’s opinion, stressing that “the division of people into distinct races, classified according to the principles of the natural sciences, began to emerge only with the birth of the ethnographic science” (Firmin, 1885: 204).

The Société d’Anthropologie de Paris (SAP), created by the French surgeon Paul Broca (1824-1880) in 1859, was another scientific society that played an important role in the scientification and legitimation of ideas of inequality among the human races. Scientists linked to the SAP saw ethnology as a potent methodological tool that could establish the “truth” about racial differences, since ethnology enabled:

The particular description and determination of these races, the study of their similarities and differences, the relationship between physical constitution and intellectual and social state, seeking out contemporary affinities, their distribution in the present or the past, their historical role, their more-or-less likely and more-or-less dubious kinship, their respective positions in the human series; this is the object of that part of anthropology called ethnology (Broca, 1871 in Mucchielli, 1997: 77) (my translation).

Paul Broca was moved by the same curiosities that moved monogeneticists and polygeneticists in the first half of the 19th Century, to wit, the origin of the human species and its varieties. The medic rejected both the views of the monogeneticists and the polygeneticists which rested on Biblical theses⁷, as well as the view of those who based themselves on climatic premises. Relying on a "scientific argument", Broca (1860; 1861) defends polygenism, postulating different origins for the human species. He writes:

It has been well-established that the colour of men is always the same within the same or similar climates, that his skin, black below the equator and in the inter-tropical zone, gets progressively lighter as we move to one or the other pole, and that, in the two hemispheres, it presents the same tonality in each point of the various isothermic lines; in a word, if we could find a constant, or near-constant, relation between climate and colour, the opinion of unitarianists on the matter of pigment would take on a serious appearance, even if it is not fully proved. [...] let us say that sun tanning produces a skin colour that has no analogy with that of blacks (Broca, 1860: 460-461) (my translation).

Skin colouring, physical constitution and the measurement of the skull are some of the elements that the author studies to sustain his thesis. To write about the foundation of racial differences, Broca (1860: 459) underscores that "among the anatomical characteristics that distinguish the Ethiopian from the Caucasian, I take skin colour as primary, and if not the most serious then the most apparent". For the surgeon, this is the primary natural datum that reveals that the human species does not share a common origin. For him, the transformation of a White man into a Black man or vice-versa is impossible. Broca's argument is situated within a logic that delegitimizes the unitarian view of human species. Contrary to the monogenetic view, Biblical damnation and climate cannot explain why Ethiopians have black skin. He continues to stress that each species' skin colour is immutable; a change can only occur in exceptional cases, such as albinism, a pathology present in all races (Broca, 1860: 478).

The demonstration of the divergent origins of Blacks and Caucasians and the inferiority of the former – whom, according to Broca (1860: 503), possess a physical constitution midway between European man and the ape⁸ – is not limited to colour alone, but also includes the measurement of the skull, face, trunk, and members (Broca 1860: 501).

To sustain his theses, he spent many years measuring cadavers through two methods that he himself developed. The first involved filling the cranium with lead and then weighing it to obtain an indirect estimate of cranial volume. The second involved the removal of the cadavers' brains for weighing (Vidal, 2004: 146-147).

Broca wanted to show not only that races were "inferior" one in relation to the other, but also that women were less intelligent than men. He argued that craniology and the study of the constitution of the head provide valuable criteria for establishing anatomical parallels between the races, since it made possible the measurement their intellectual and moral worth. Moreover, the analysis of crania captures the degree of perfectibility of races because the shape of the cranium relates to intelligence (Broca, 1861: 2-3). These arguments were evidently

7 Broca asked the following question: "Must science be forced to remind theology of the Holy Scripture?". To which he replies: "The editor of Genesis did not write anything that could be directly or indirectly related to the distinction of races after the Flood. Far from claiming that Noah's curse had the singular consequence of changing the form and colour of the descendants of Ham, it indicates precisely the contrary, and nothing less than the need to destroy a belief opposed to orthodox faith to decide to tell here this old story that everyone tells without knowing it. [...] Thus far it is about damnation and slavery, and not about a change of colour (Broca, 1860: 456) (My translation).

8 "[...] it is clear that the foot of the negro recalls somewhat the posterior hand of quadrumanes. In Caucasians, the length of the thoracic member is shorter, when compared to the abdominal member, than it is in Ethiopians; when the length of the forearm is compared in both races to the arm, we find an analogous, and even sharper, difference. These two zoological figures still place the negro between the European and the ape" (Broca, 1868: 504).

challenged by many 19th-Century intellectuals. Anténor Firmin was one such intellectual whose important studies were the basis for a severe criticism of these ideas of the Black race.

Firmin was a lawyer. During his time in Paris as an emissary for Haiti, Louis-Joseph Janvier introduced him to the *Société d'Anthropologie de Paris* (SAP). He became familiar with the arguments that eminent naturalists, anthropologists, doctors and surgeons were developing regarding the idea of ‘race’. Realizing that the thesis of the inequality of races was almost unanimously accepted in the scientific community, Firmin felt obliged to look into the matter (Déus, 2020a). As a result, in 1885 he published the monumental *De L'égalité des races humaines: Anthropologie positive*⁹ (On the Equality of Human Races: Positive Anthropology). The Brazilian anthropologist Omar Ribeiro Thomaz stresses that, with this book, Firmin can be claimed as one of the founding fathers of modern anthropology (Thomaz, 2011: 280). Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban, in turn, notes that Firmin provided important contributions to Anthropology, anticipating what would later be called *Cultural Anthropology* (Fluehr-Lobban, 2000).

Let us turn to some of Firmin's rebuttals of Broca's scientific claims.

In criticizing the outlook of a thinker such as Broca, Anténor Firmin acknowledges that, during the 19th Century, when a first-rate scientist has set himself the task of revealing his scientific “truth” in the heart of the academy, no one in the scientific world could challenge him. For Firmin, Broca was the greatest representative of polygenism in his time. As a *libre penseur*, he was against the religious dogmas used by many monogenists to speak of the unity of the human species. Yet, when establishing his own dogma, Broca behaved like all dogmatists. Firmin (1885: 56) writes: “An intellectual order such as Broca's would not easily bear the yoke of any dogma more scientific than religious. But, sadly, having become one of science's princes, he dogmatized himself”. Firmin points to the dogmatism of SAP's founder:

If, during the best period of his scientific career, he was presented with a black cranium weighing over 1600 grammes, with a facial angle of some 80 degrees, he, and any of his former colleagues at the Société de Biologie, would have probably indicated an error of measurement, since it would not be possible for this cranium to be black, because the phenomenon contradicts the laws of anthropology (Firmin, 1885: 57) (my translation).

The inferiority of the Black man that Broca set out to prove was proven as he expected; that is, it was confirmed, even though the facts disproved it. Through Firmin's work it becomes evident that Broca depicted Blacks as ugly as possible, because ugliness was another sign of inferiority. Broca presented the Black man's physiognomy with the following characteristics: narrow and receding forehead; a nose compressed at the base and flattened at the nostrils; eyes wide open with hazel irises and yellowish sclera; extremely thick lips, protruding outward and forward; prominent jaws, shaped like a muzzle, with long and oblique teeth (Broca in Firmin, 1885: 58).

It should be noted that, unlike Broca, Firmin's arguments in defence of the Black race were aimed at backing and/or “correcting” those of his friend and compatriot, Louis-Joseph Janvier, to whom I now turn.

Louis-Joseph Janvier: a defence of the Black race in the Republic of Haiti

Short biography of Louis-Joseph Janvier

Hailing from a protestant family, Louis-Joseph Janvier was born on the 7th of May 1855 in Port-au-Prince. His grandfather was close to Alexandre Pétion (1770-1818), who governed the western part of Haiti from 1807 to 1818.

9 It is symptomatic that Firmin's work was published in the same year in which the Conference of Berlin (1885) took place, in which colonial European powers war partitioning Africa, giving birth to a new phase of European colonialism and imperialism. It is symptomatic for having been held in a context in which African and diasporic thinkers were questioning the very kernel of the idea of the superiority of the Europeans.

His father had relations with Faustin Soulouque (1782-1867) and Nicolas Geffrad (1806-1878), who respectively governed Haiti from 1847 to 1849 and from 1859 to 1867¹⁰.

Janvier's primary and secondary studies were in a Wesleyan Protestant school in Port-au-Prince, and he began his medical studies in the Medicine Faculty in Port-au-Prince. With a scholarship from the Haitian state, he left Haiti in 1877 to pursue the remainder of his medical degree in Paris. In 1888 he completed his degree with the highest grade of his class (a *lauréat*). He continued to live in France and began to study political science, economics, administration and diplomacy at the *École libre des sciences politiques* (today known as Science Po – Paris), and Law in Lille.

Aware of the anthropological and political debates of his time on the notion of ‘race’, Janvier became a member of the *Société d'Anthropologie de Paris* (SAP) in 1882 (Chemla, 2005: 9; Silva, 2020: 153). During this period, he regularly published articles and essays in magazines and newspapers, seeking to defy the current negative representations on the Black race. He also became a member of the *Société de Législation comparée* (SLC) (Comparative Legislation Society) and the *Société Littéraire Internationale* (International Literature Society) (Silva, 2020: 153).

In Europe, Louis-Joseph Janvier established contacts with many progressive French intellectuals, such as the poet Charles Marie René Leconte de Lisle (1818-1894), the poet and novelist François Édouard Joachim Coppée (1842-1908), the poet and literary critic Stéphane Mallarmé (1842-1898), the Cuba-born French poet José-Maria de Heredia (1842-1905), the geographer and anarchist Jean Jacques Élisée Reclus (1830-1905), the French poet Judith Gautier (1845-1917), among others (Chemla, 2005: 9). Janvier was furthermore friends with the French abolitionist senator Victor Schoelcher (1804-1893). It was Schoelcher who wrote the letter which became the introduction to the volume *Les détracteurs de la race noire...* (1882) edited Louis-Joseph Janvier. In this letter, Schoelcher wrote: “My heart will always be with you in support of the cause of the black race, which produced the great Toussaint-L'Ouverture and many other men notable by their intelligence, virtues, dignity and desire for enlightenment” (Schoelcher, 1882: 2). Since the primary aim of this work is not his biography, I merely note some of the intellectual figures with whom Louis-Joseph Janvier kept in touch to stress that he was not an unknown character in French intellectual circles.

From 1884, onwards, Janvier was charged with various diplomatic missions by the Haitian government. From 1889 to 1904 he was sent to London, first as a delegation secretary, later as business chargé d'affaires, before being nominated resident minister at the Court of St James's. He returned to Haiti in 1905 after 28 years abroad. He attempted to unsuccessfully follow a political career, favouring a civil government, after which he went into exile. Despite being nominated minister-council in London, he moved to Paris after a disagreement with Duraciné Vaval, who was the nominated minister (Chemla, 2005).

In 1902, he married Jeane-Maria Windsor, a British woman who died on the birth of their only child (Chemla, 2005: 28). Louis-Joseph Janvier died on the 24th of March 1911, the same year in which Anténor Firmin died (Chemla, 2005: 9). He left behind a large body of work, some of which is analysed in this article.

Louis-Joseph Janvier and the “detractors of the black race”

In the first half of the 19th Century, few Haitians knew how to read and write, and few joined the intellectual and philosophical debate against the racist ideas disseminated by some European thinkers regarding the

¹⁰ Janvier was Black, but was part of a Haitian elite. His father's proximity to the *mulâtres* (mulatto) politicians mentioned above sheds light on the matter of race (skin colour) in Haiti's post-Revolution history. After the Haitian Revolution, skin colour started to be a factor in political arenas, whether by Black politicians to disparage mulattoes as the natural allies of white colonizers, or by some mulattoes to affirm their purported natural superiority (Étienne, 2007). Nonetheless, there is not a historically rigid separation between Blacks and Mulattoes in the political arena. For example, in reference to the two largest Haitian political parties in the 19th Century, the Parti National and the Parti Libéral, despite the fact that the former is generally described as being a Black party and the latter a Mulatto party, certain authors have convincingly shown that this duality is simplistic and false. Anténor Firmin and Edmond Paul, for instance, are two Black intellectuals linked to the Parti Libéral. Demesvar Delorme and Frédéric are two renowned Mulatto intellectuals associated with the Parti National (Hurbon, 1987: 92). In what pertains to Janvier, we do not know if he ever supported a political party.

Black race. Among the authors of the first half of that century, we can include: Louis Félix Mathurin Boisrond-Tonnerre or Boisrond Tonnerre (1776-1806), secretary to Emperor Jean-Jacques Dessalines (1758-1806). In 1804, soon after the Revolution, he published *Mémoires pour servir à l’histoire d’Haïti* (Memoires in the Service of Haitian History). An even more prominent intellectual was Jean Valentin Pompé de Vastey or Baron Vastey (1781-1820), secretary to King Henri Christophe (1767-1820). Vastey published a number of works, the most well-known of which is *Le Système Colonial dévoilé* (The Colonial System Unveiled), in 1814.

Boisrond Tonnerre focuses his writings on a defence of his young nation, as well as on the description of the main events, happenings and battles that took place during the revolutionary process, denouncing the cruelty of colonization, particularly of the French. Baron Vastey went further. He engaged in a scientific, philosophical and historiographical debate aimed not only at (re)thinking colonial issues, but also at deconstructing the restricted humanism of Europeans. *Le Système Colonial* was translated into various tongues, and was widely read in the north of the United States of America, influencing US abolitionists. The relevance of Vastey’s thought led him to be called the “Alpha and Omega of Haitian literary intellect” (*Review of New Books in Daut*, 2012: 36).

Indeed, the issue of the integration of Africans and their descendants in Western universalist humanism-enlightenment, and the acceptance of the first Black republic in the modern era as an independent country, was likewise a concern of Haitian writers in the second half of the 19th Century. The consolidation of scientific racism at the start of the century afforded greater consistency to debates concerning racial matters. As we have seen, the historical relegation of Black people gained legitimacy in the writings of many natural scientists, doctors and in the thought of certain European philosophers. Faced with this scenario, Louis-Joseph Janvier wrote a number of works in defence of the Black race, seeking to refute those European writers whom he called “detractors of the Black race”.

Louis-Joseph Janvier never hid his discomfort, and even his rage, at the works on Haiti and the Black race:

There are those who, when they hear an insult, have the habit of using white gloves to respond to the slanderer. Not me. I feel my blood boil and become feverish with rage whenever someone or something dear to me is attacked. And I have the custom of defending the object of my love with a fury that my age and temperament easily explain (Janvier, 1882a: 43) (my translation).

For Louis-Joseph Janvier, representing Haiti in such a grotesque and rude manner was not only a slander against the Haitian people, but an attack on all Blacks. For him, Haiti emerged as the starting point for the emancipation¹¹ of all Black peoples on the face of the earth:

It was the independence of Haiti that determined the emancipation of Blacks in the English colonies, the founding of Liberia, the emancipation of Blacks in Martinique, and, later, in the United States. It is she, this independence, that, by a splendour that you do not know, which petty spirits that slander your country, pessimists whose excuse rests on their egotism, men of little faith – it is this independence and this autonomy of Haiti which has exerted a commendable pressure on some governments and determined the emancipation of Blacks in Puerto Rico and Brazil (Janvier, 1882a: 56) (My translation).

Such a consideration becomes more explicit in Janvier’s writings when he stresses that “*Pour la race noire, Haïti c’est le soleil se levant à l’horizon*” (For the Black race, Haiti is the sun rising on the horizon) (Janvier, 1882b: 57). The writings of Louis-Joseph Janvier and his collaborators were presented as retorts to various European writers, particularly French writers who disseminated negative ideas about the Black race and the Republic of Haiti. For instance, in his book *Un peuple noir devant les peuples blancs, étude de politique et de sociologie comparées* (A Black People Before White Peoples, a study in comparative politics and sociology) (1882a), Janvier critically responded to those he called ‘detractors of the Black race and of the Republic of Haiti’. This work continues

¹¹ The idea that Haiti emerges as the springboard for the Black race is present in the writings of all Haitians thinkers of the 19th Century. Anténor Firmin (1885) and Hannibal Price (1898) speak of the rehabilitation of the Black race by Haiti.

in *Les Détracteurs de la race noire et de la République d’Haïti* (The Detractors of the Black Race and the Republic of Haiti) (1882), which gathers articles by various Haitian intellectuals, such as Louis-Joseph Janvier, Jules Auguste, Clément Denis, Arthur Bowler, Justin Dévost, etc. All of these intellectuals were enraged by how the Black race and Haiti were treated by various European journalists and intellectuals.

The main theses which were read in scientific and journalistic circles celebrated the incapacity of the Black man to enjoy his freedom, his incapacity for civilization. It is such theses that these writers sought to discredit. As Clément Denis (1882: 11) stresses, “for too long they have insulted the Black race and the only country in the world where she constitutes an independent State. We justify and correct this error that we live in semi-barbarism”. For Denis as well as other defenders of the Black race who were his contemporaries, the Black race is perfectible, but, because of the dehumanization of slavery, needs time to (re)manifest this perfectibility. In response to the charge that Blacks are incapable of betterment, he writes:

I will not commit to scientifically observing the claim that the Black race is incapable of betterment. The solution to this great problem of the perfectibility of the Black race will come from us, free Blacks; but it may be the task of many generations successively inheriting the acquired development (Denis, 1882: 11) (My translation).

What is at play in this struggle of ideas is the argument that the races are morally and intellectually unequal. Louis-Joseph Janvier criticizes the author Léo Quesnel, who had written:

If the theory of racial inequality needed confirmation, it would be confirmed by the futility of the efforts of Haitian Blacks for over a century in constituting a society. And he adds – with the scholastics, he says – “what happens in time happens in eternity; in other words, the law of nature is immutable” (Quesnel in Janvier, 1882b: 17) (My translation).

To refute Léo Quesnel’s opinion, Janvier had recourse to the arguments of some naturalists. Despite presenting a favourable opinion of Blacks, by dabbling with the craniology of the polygenist school he seems to momentarily agree with the methodologies used to place human beings in a hierarchy. He quotes the founder of the Anthropological Society of Paris, pointing out that:

As my first evidence, I will refer to the betterment of the Black type in this island, an advancement that the eminent Broca, the most enlightened of French anthropologists, only two years ago told his students, at the Necker Hospital, that he recognized a Haitian at first sight, by his frank and proud eyes, full of flashes, as well as by his wide and rounded forehead and his secure demeanour, unmistakable signs, he proceeded, of a great capacity of the braincase and of a spirit at once firm and intelligent (Janvier, 1882b: 18) (My translation).

When he approaches this incapacity from the intellectual vantage point of Africans and their descendants, Janvier refutes this position through the examples of the children of enslaved people who went to great universities the world over: “In the United States we find parsimonious, active, organized Blacks who think about their own future; they are members of Congress, their sons go to the schools and universities of West Point, where they study science, mathematics, disciplines which were previously inaccessible to them, along with their white brethren” (Janvier, 1882b: 18). He continues to stress that Haitians have proved the same in the universities of Paris. They can be found in the benches of the Collège de France. In the School of Medicine, the School of Law, the Central School, the Sorbonne, they pass their exams with brilliant results and surprise their professors with their various abilities and hard work (Janvier, 1882b: 19).

Louis-Joseph Janvier did not realise that for racist scientists with colonialist aspirations, Black participation in intellectual activities that had previously been restricted to whites was not enough for the former to be considered human. In other words, although Blacks who went to Euro-American universities performed excellently in various scientific and intellectual fields, coming from a race which “western science and philosophy” considered inferior, their results were insufficient to prove their humanity.

Léo Quesnel claimed that “the African race, left to its own devices, would spiral in a vicious circle, and the only way it may be elevated is through contact and fusion with the white race: fusions of ideas, fusion of heart, fusion of blood” (Quesnel in Janvier, 1882b: 33). Louis-Joseph Janvier (1882b: 34) agrees that there should be an exchange between these peoples: “certainly, there should be a fusion of ideas between the two peoples, one can feed of the literature of the other”. It is clear from Janvier’s writing that, although he followed a path in which he sought to defend the Black race and the Republic of Haiti, he tried to prove to Europeans that Black Haitians were on the road to “civilization”, thereby conforming, in some measure, to that which Europeans believed was necessary for the Black race to be viewed as civilized. For instance: “Science in Haiti is entirely European; and the ideas of the Paris school are prevalent in jurisprudence and medicine, as well as in natural and philosophical sciences” (Janvier, 1882b: 33). Janvier also argues that the fusion of blood had taken place, that is, that all Haitians of both sexes had some drop of white European blood.

What left Janvier perplexed was Quesnel’s idea that Haitian Blacks should be “absorbed” by the whites through the fusion of blood. Louis-Joseph Janvier did not disagree with a spontaneous miscegenation between Whites and Blacks, but he was against the idea that migratory policies which sought to take European whites to Haiti to “absorb” Blacks, so that the latter would disappear, should be encouraged – as in fact had happened in many Latin American countries¹².

Contemporary Haitians have every reason to believe – and rightly so – that the mass immigration of whites would be fatal to their autonomy, to their very existence as a nation. They very well admit sporadic, individual, and gradual immigration of whites; in this way, the white element has time to fuse with the Black element and to defend the interests of Haitian nationality, in a word the absorption occurs to the benefit of the native race of Haiti. But we reject the idea of a selection by absorption which would occur to the benefit of the immigrants, for two main reasons: 1) for a philosophical, physiological and historical reason; 2) for a political reason (Janvier, 1882b: 36) (My translation).

The realization of a new anthropological experiment in Haiti is the reason why Louis-Joseph Janvier opposes mass white immigration to absorb the native population. Furthermore, he disagreed with the idea that Blacks should be absorbed, eliminating the African element so as to ascend to civilization. Despite his adherence to western civilization, Janvier was struggling against that idea that only the white man is synonymous with the human, the civilized, the intellectualized, the beautiful, etc.

If these naturalists theorized and “proved” the intellectual capacity of Black peoples, Janvier (1882b: 37), in considering that this argument lacks merit, underscored that, “from the intellectual point of view I will refer, in support of my thesis, to the great faculty of understanding that Haitians have acquired: no science, no art, is beyond them. No sooner do they put their heads to study and assimilate something, than we are surprised to see how easily and rapidly they achieve success”. Ironically, Janvier notes that “all of these brains that armchair anthropologists such as M. Dailly believe to be stupid, are moulded to be filled without bursting, and are kept in skulls that can very well become capacitated” (Janvier, 1882b: 38). He criticizes the following idea held by Léo Quesnel:

12 Louis Henry Gates Jr, a historian and specialist in African and Afro-American cultures, stresses, in a study of the conditions of Black people in Latin America and the Caribbean, stresses that after the abolition of slavery almost every Latin American and Caribbean country started on a project of bringing Europeans over to promote inter-mixing in order to whiten the population, and, consequently, to reduce the number of Black people in these countries (Gates, 2011). This project was inspired by European eugenics, and aimed at “improving” race; this practice became a mechanism of social and racial control. Eugenics left its mark in Europe, North and South America, and Asia, in countries such as England, Germany, Italy, France, Switzerland, Sweden, Belgium, the USA, Cuba, Chile, Argentina, Ecuador, Brazil and Japan (Góes, 2015: 43). In what pertains to Brazil, Lilia Moritz Schwarcz has shown how the idea of whitening the population penetrated deep into Brazilian society. With its project of whitening, Brazil was considered a country in transition: miscegenation was but a stage in a wider process which sought to make Brazilian society whiter by accelerated inter-breeding of races through a “natural selection” (Schwarcz, 2005: 12). Nonetheless, the author makes it clear that there was a great theoretical debate surrounding the notion of race. Social Darwinism and Evolutionism influenced the many interpretations of racial inter-breeding. Concerning miscegenation, Giralda Seyferth stresses that “it became a privileged topic of the Brazilian national discourse after 1850 – seen as mechanism for forming a nation since colonial times and the basis for a future Brazilian race, a national *type*, resulting from a selective process aimed at whitening the population” (Seyferth, 1996: 43).

Nothing can be done with a society composed entirely of blacks. Sending young blacks to study in Europe is hardly a remedy, since they accumulate more resentment against the whites than obtain knowledge from them, and the mistrust of whites is the permanent misfortune of Haiti (Quesnel apud Janvier, 1882b: 46) (My translation).

For Janvier, Quesnel’s claim is riddled with prejudice and he can see nothing positive in Blacks. The allegations against Haitians who were studying in foreign universities are baseless, and indicative of how these authors do not accept seeing free Blacks take charge of their own destiny.

Physical beauty is also a theme mentioned by Louis-Joseph Janvier:

Beauty is a sign of freedom and intelligence. I add that this natural selection occurred by the intrinsic transformation of the Haitian type, by mixing African blood with the European blood on the island after Haitians proclaimed their independence in 1804 (Janvier, 1882 b: 47).

It is well-known that prejudice of colour and racism played a fundamental role in the structuration of colonial societies (Tolentino, 2014; Sala-Molins, 1987). Louis-Joseph Janvier admits this, but, when writing of the progress of the Haitian population, he claims that this evil imposed by the slaveholding system is almost disappearing and is not very visible in Haitian society. Nonetheless, he allows that, during certain specific times – such as political crises, legislative or presidential elections – this problem can become manifest. He also states the prejudice of colour “can be observed in some rare, narrow, superficial, ignorant, or monstrously perverse minds, however enlightened, or even in some weak souls, full of visions or chimeras and in a panic of imaginary fears” (Janvier, 1882b: 50).

We can see that his desire to defend not only Haiti, but also to correspond to an idea of civilization, leads Janvier to occasionally ignore the profundity of the legacy of the slaveholding-colonial system, particularly in the form of racism. Louis-Joseph Janvier was completely mistaken by his understanding that racism was on the verge of disappearing in Haitian society, or that Haiti was a country practically devoid of racism.

Justin Devost also criticized Léo Quesnel for “believing that the Black race is affected by a cerebral incapacity that will prevent it from ascending by its own efforts to the level of European civilization” (Devost, 1882: 83). Devost argues that Haiti’s condition stems from a very complex historical process¹³, but that it is not a matter of race. He claims that many writers who criticized Haiti were nostalgic of slavery. Another criticism that Devost refuted was the idea that Haitians in general hated France, and that Haitian students who went to France returned to their country not with the intellectual knowledge they acquired, but with hatred of the whites. Haitians would furthermore be against inter-racial relations, and they hated Europeans. In consonance, Devost (1882: 99) points out that:

[..] Unions between Haitians and Europeans are very frequent. And, had our opponent obtained information from reliable sources, he would know that Haiti is by no means a closed-off land. Many foreigners live there. They are welcomed with the warmest hospitality [...] (My translation).

Jules Auguste, much like Devost and Janvier, shows himself to be outraged with the views of French writers such as Quesnel, Lasselve and Renan. His criticisms, however, were directed at the *Revue politique et littéraire* (Political and Literary Journal), which published any text on Black peoples without considering their academic rigour or the precision of the information propagated. He wrote: “And now, without any control, the *Revue politique et littéraire* accepts works of fantasy that can distort the minds of readers who are avid for precise scientific novelties. This is not how history is told” (Auguste, 1882: 103-104).

¹³ “The heroic struggle of 1803 and the ensuing ruins; the large and crushing indemnization of 1825 – 129 million Francs paid in cash to France; the oscillations of internal politics, and internal struggle for a truly democratic government..., these are the causes which prevented us from developing with the facility and speed we had hoped for” (1882: 81).

Augusten proceeds to criticize the following claim made by Lasselve: "The Black man is radically incapable of any elevation. His natural inferiority is quickly revealed... The brain has hardly expanded. He hates the white man" (Lasselve, 1882, in Auguste, 1882: 119). Looking at the development of Haiti, Quesnel and Lasselve claim that Blacks are incapable of building a society. In reply, Auguste stresses that "our society, like all other in every country, has its imperfections and its positive aspects" (Auguste, 1882: 122).

Arthur Bowler is another Haitian writer who challenges the prejudice of some French writers who insist that Black Haitians do not like white Europeans. According to Bowler (1882: 147), these writers should admit that it is they who do not like Black people. He addresses the eminent Léo Quesnel, claiming:

Thus, admit it, Mr. Quesnel, that you do not like Blacks! Above all, admit it that, were it not for the generous hearts in France who know how to place themselves above petty matters of skin-colour prejudice, and if all of your compatriots had as little affection for us as you do, that we would be right not to like them! (Bowler: 147) (My translation).

Belief in the innate inequality of human beings and the innate inferiority of Black people constituted a field of political, literary, and scientific debate in which various authors faced off against each other throughout the 19th Century. *Les Détracteurs de la race noire et de la république d'Haïti* (The Detractors of the Black Race and of the Republic of Haiti) is a book edited by Louis-Joseph Janvier which contains articles from various Haitian intellectuals, and it seeks to strike at the heart of the arguments of authors considered to be *enemies of the black race*.

The refutation of the prejudiced argument of these authors set the groundwork for the idea of the unity of the human species and to claims of racial equality, as well as to challenge the idea of racial inferiority. His work *L'égalité des races* (The equality of races), starts from the presupposition that "every people needs a great ideal to live, to go forth, to prosper and to shine. And to speak of a great ideal is also to speak of a programme". Janvier states that:

The programme of young Haiti, cognizant of the importance of the dignity of a nation of the Black race, is: to speak for a race entirely, to present its aspirations, proclaim its ideas, doctrines, reclaim its moral hegemony until such time as it can act for itself (1884: 12) (Our emphasis).

By considering the relations established by peoples in a process of domination and advancement, through which people considered barbarous strive to approximate to civilization, Janvier claims that the French philosopher and historian Ernest Renan was mistaken for defending, in the preface of his *Dialogue Philosophique* (Philosophical Dialogues), that "men are not equal and races are not equal" (Renan, in Janvier, 1884: 19). Ernest Renan claims that "the negro, for example, is born to serve the great things desired and projected by the white man [...]" (Renan in Janvier, 1884: 20). For Janvier, it was this pseudoscientific doctrine that allowed "the abominable traffic in human flesh which lasted for so long, and it is behind this traffic that authors continue to seek refuge to confer an appearance of reason to their stupid prejudice of colour" (1884: 20). Janvier criticizes E. Renan for failing in his engagement with one of the towering intellectual figures of his time, and for dissimulating prejudice against Black people (Chemla, 2005: 19).

Louis-Joseph Janvier laments the fact the contact between white Europeans and Africans occurred only in a logic of exploitation. It is this exploitation that explains so many depreciative opinions that relegate Black peoples to the nonhuman level. Even if, in the post-slavery period, humanity produced political men such as Toussaint L'Ouverture (1743-1803) in Haiti and Frederick Douglass (1818-1895) in the USA, western thinkers continued to insist on the idea of the moral inferiority of the Black intellect.

After the abolition of slavery in Haiti and after abolition and emancipation in the USA, the progress obtained by Blacks in the field of politics, journalism, and science, Janvier stresses, are evident proof of the perfectibility of the Black race.

The Black race has shown the philosophical speculation is familiar to it, and the study of mathematics is not above its understanding. The contemporary philosophical movement, under the stimulation of Schopenhauer and Herbert Spencer, is not strange to Pierre Laffitte or André Lefevre, and thus, just as we see many young Blacks going to West Point, in the United States, and leaving it with the epaulette of an officer in the federal army, much as we can count Blacks in the French colonial forces among members of the École Militaire de Saint-Cyr and the École Polytechnique. In the same way, the Republic of Haiti is very well represented in the scientific colleges of Paris (Janvier, 1884: 26) (My translation).

As initially stressed, the idea of the equality among human race is the basis of both the Haitian nation and Haitian social thought. This conception is present in Haiti's first constitutions. It is in the constitution of Toussaint L'Ouverture from 1801 and in the constitution of de Jean-Jacques Dessalines from 1805. For both revolutionaries, “before the Supreme Being all mortals are equals” (Fischer, 2003). Equality is also feverously upheld by the first Haitian thinkers. While this equality was argued mostly in the political sphere, the publication of Louis-Joseph Janvier *L'égalité des races*, in 1884 anticipated Joseph Anténor Firmin (1885) by providing a more explicit formulation of the idea of the equality of races (Déus, 2020a).

According to Yves Chemla, in *L'égalité des races*, Janvier attacks the main personage of the French intelligentsia of the time, Ernest Renan, in the three prongs of morality, history and scientific reason. First, Janvier admonishes Renan for a completely gratuitous claim and for failing in his own commitments as a *homme de culture* [man of letters] (Chemla, 2005: 19). Louis-Joseph Janvier also criticizes the eminent French intellectual for not taking into consideration the true condition of enslaved Blacks and for considering social inequality to be an “inequality of nature”. Thus, for Renan, the enslavement of Black people was an attempt to save them from their inhuman state (Janvier, 1884). It should be recalled that these debates occurred while Janvier was in the Société d'Anthropologie de Paris (SAP), one of the most adequate places to carry out these debates at the time. Without neglecting the relevance and importance of Janvier's work, Firmin provided important critiques of it.

Certain critiques of the thought of Louis-Joseph Janvier

Louis-Joseph Janvier is part of a set of intellectuals whose mission was to deconstruct ideas of racial inequality and to prove that intelligence does not depend on race. Concerning Janvier, Firmin observes: “As for Monsieur Janvier, he alone would suffice to prove to what heights the intelligence of the Black man can rise in the superior regions of the mind [...]” (Firmin, 1885: 464).

Although Firmin agreed with many of the writings and the struggles of Janvier, he did not hold back when it came to criticizing him, particularly when Janvier allowed himself to be flattered by the preposterous compliments of certain European thinkers, and when he agreed with the scientific opinions of Paul Broca – which proposed that the size of an individual's cranium determined his intelligence. Paul Broca claimed that he could distinguish, at first site, a Haitian from other Blacks by the size of their cranium and their wide and vaulted forehead, by their frank stare, etc. Firmin was severely critical of his compatriot who, based on a “biologism”, suggests that he is in agreement with the relation established between the size of the braincase and intelligence. According to Firmin, intelligence and intellectuality do not depend on the size of the individual: whether he is small or big he can display great intellectual aptitude (Firmin, 1885: 260-1). The rehabilitation of the Black race, as proposed by Firmin, cannot occur on the basis of scientific arguments anchored on racism and prejudice.

Other critiques of Louis-Joseph Janvier relate to his attitude toward the cultural legacy of Africans, particularly the Vodou religion¹⁴ which, soon after the Revolution, became the object of state-sanctioned repression and prohibition. It was seen to be symbol of backwardness, incivility, and, therefore, its continuing existence had a negative impact on the image of the young Haitian nation. In attempting to present Haiti as

¹⁴ In the 20th Century, the negative representations of Vodou were severely criticized by intellectuals such as Jean Price-Mars (1928), who sought to combat Haitian collective bovarism, and Stephen Alexis (1933) who also struck at the alienation of the Haitian people. On this matter, see Déus (2020a).

a civilized country in the manner of Europe, Louis-Joseph Janvier argued that Vodou had all but disappeared and that all Haitians were Christians and spoke French. In Janvier’s racist argument, the moral development of the Haitian people should occur under the auspices of Christianity.

Janvier’s position on religion is intimately linked to his critique of the role of the Roman Catholic religion in the enslavement and alienation of Black people and also their Christian faith as a civilizational religion. He calls Catholicism an “European fetishism” which he places in the same rank as “African fetishism” (Janvier in Chemla, 2005: 22). For Janvier:

Catholicism, having enslaved the Blacks, continues to be an accomplice: it is responsible for the abjection in which the Black race has been stagnated for centuries; it helped to develop the prejudice of whites against Blacks; centralized in Rome, it can never become a religion of national politics; in brief, at some point, it may challenge the success of 1804: Independence. For pure patriotism, and not for any sort of proselytism, everyone should repeat that the Protestant religion can become a powerful factor in the social development of Haiti because it is superior from the point of view of economic results and it can be national; we must repeat that all solutions are better than the current one: a concordatory Catholicism without a Haitian clergy (Janvier, 1886: 286) (My translation).

Recall that Louis-Joseph Janvier was not only from a Protestant family, he was also a strict Protestant convinced that Protestantism should be the religion of the country. However, he wrongly assumed that the religion he adored could not also be used for maintaining colour prejudice. His favourable consideration of Christianity as a civilizational religion would feature in the work of racist Protestants, such as Spencer Saint-John who, in an 1886 publication, attacked the Vodou religion and Haitian culture. Spencer Saint-John describes the Vodou religion as an orgiastic and demonical manifestation which should be violently and rigorously combated (Saint-John, 1886). The arguments of Saint-John and other European authors who spread these same prejudices were rebutted by the Haitian intellectual Hannibal Price (Déus, 2020a, 2020b, 2021). The latter, on seeing the effects of these ideas on Black people, on their beliefs, culture and values, calls the racist writings of pro-slavery intellectuals a ‘filthy literature’, aimed at relegating Black people (Price, 1898 [1891]). In this sense, it is clear that Louis-Joseph Janvier did not help to clarify religious issues in Haiti.

A further criticism of Janvier is that he had considered colour prejudice to be incompatible with civilization. It should be noted that a negligence of this type of prejudice is intimately linked to his conception of what it means to be Haitian. Mulatto and Black are considered “authentic” Haitians. For this reason, he says, it was made no sense to take racial division seriously. And, according to Janvier, racial prejudice was decreasing in Haiti because the Haitian people were joining western civilization (Janvier, 1883). However, Janvier’s great mistake was to have set aside the fact that western civilization is racist and, as paradoxical as it may seem, racial prejudice is by no means inimical to this civilization. There is no way that a civilization based on racial, cultural, etc. differences, one that treats others as nonhuman, can cease to be prejudiced in the blink of an eye. Although Janvier wanted the intellectual and moral progress of society to put an end to colour prejudice in Haitian society, this colonial-slaveholding secular invention remains – which would contribute to the multidimensional crises faced by Haiti until this day.

Final Thoughts

This article considered some aspects of the thought of Louis-Joseph Janvier on anthropological ideas related to the racial question in the 19th Century. These considerations have not sought to be exhaustive, nor could they be. Many of the questions that his writings and his professional biography might raise were not dealt with here.

We have seen that, upon completing the medicine course in Paris, the author went on to do a number of other courses. He did not work as a doctor during his stay in France, the country in which he spent most of his

time. He chose to pursue further studies, proving, through his own experience, that no scientific discipline was beyond the reach of Blacks (Firmin, 1885). Alongside the courses he took, Janvier was involved in political and intellectual militancy, publishing in newspapers and magazines, leaving behind a vast output that can be of interest to various fields of research – literature, anthropology, history, sociology, political science, etc. *Phtisie pulmonaire* is the first important work he published in the field of medicine in 1881 (Chemla, 2005). Later, he dedicated himself to more anthropological writings, such as: *L'égalité des races* (1884) and *Détracteur de la race noire et de la république d'Haïti* (1882a). He also published political essays, such as: *Les Constitutions d'Haïti* (1886); *Du Gouvernement civil en Haïti* (1905); *Les Affaires d'Haïti* (1883-1884) (1885). Finally he published novels: *Le Vieux Piquet* (1884); *Une Chercheuse* (1888).

Although Janvier vehemently criticized the “European detractors of the Black race” and the Republic of Haiti, he kept in touch with many progressive European intellectuals, particularly in France; he also relied on the work of many European philosophers and scientists. For him, science in Haiti is European. It is the ideas of the Paris school that have prevailed in Haitian jurisprudence, medicine, and natural and philosophical sciences (Janvier, 1882b: 33). We thus see that we are not simply faced with a Haitian thinker who is *counterposed* to “European thinkers” or “European thought”, but an author who established various orders of relation with the hegemonic thought of his time. This observation is valid for many other Haitian intellectuals of the 19th Century, since Baron Vastey (1814, 1816) – although less so – through Anténor Firmin (1885), Hannibal Price (1898), and others.

The critical posture of these authors was never a complete rejection of French and/or European thought. For they themselves made it clear that, just as there were “detractors of the Black race”, so were there philanthropists (to use a term preferred by Vastey (1814)) who took a stand against racist and pro-slavery ideals; moreover, the Haitian Revolution itself contained principles dear to Europeans, such as freedom and equality. It is these principles that Haitian intellectuals sought to resignify as values shared by all human beings on the face of the earth. We can thus see that any attempt to study the thought of these authors requires that we take care to avoid any strict dualism that establishes a radical opposition between “European thought” and “Haitian thought”, a centre and a periphery. This is important, lest we leave aside the complex relational dynamics that existed in these thoughts, since the production and circulation of knowledge in formerly colonized countries – where people were victims to enslavement – follow a plural path that constantly appeals to the colonial West.

In revisiting the anthropological work of Janvier, it is notable that he sought to dismantle the arguments of those he called “detractors of the Black race and the Republic of Haiti”. His anthropology was thus strictly tied to a defence of the Black race which necessarily passes through a defence of the Republic of Haiti. Haiti which, since the revolution was not only managing and suffering imperialist and colonialist policies, but also suffered the paths followed by their governors, a fact which left Janvier perplexed. Two considerations here become relevant: i) for anyone interested in understanding the basis of the idea of race and its social impacts; ii) for anyone who wishes to understand the basis of the political, economic, social and cultural problems of the Haitian nation, Louis-Joseph Janvier has become an unavoidable thinker, since he is a pioneer of anti-racism and his writings remain timeless and instigating.

In sum, in a context of heated anthropological and sociological debates which seek to rethink the production of knowledge and relations of power that cut across both the production and dissemination of this knowledge, a return to these intellectuals can be an important way of adding density to these processes. In the final instance, these thinkers help us to investigate ways of overcoming the colonial or neo-colonial dimension that persists in the human sciences.

Received: August 18, 2023

Approved: January 04, 2024

Revised by Luiz Costa

References

- ALEXIS, Stephen. 1933. *Le nègre masqué*. Port-au-Prince: Fardin.
- AUGUSTE, Jules. 1882. “Une protestation nécessaire”. In: Louis-Joseph Janvier, *Les Détracteurs de la race noire et de la république d’Haïti*. Paris: Marpon et Flammarion: 5-10.
- BANTON, Michael. 2010 [1977]. “A Racialização do Mundo”. In: Michael Banton, *A Ideia de Raça*. Rio de Janeiro: Editora: Edições 70: 39-75.
- BERNON, Thomas. 2018. “La science des races: la Société Ethnologique de Paris et le tournant colonial (1839-1848)”. *Cahiers de l’Institut d’histoire de la Révolution française*. 15 : 1-56. Doi: <https://doi.org/10.4000/lrf.2448>
- BLUMENBACH, Johann Friedrich. 1804 [1795]. *De l’unité du genre humain, et de ses variétés*. 3. ed. Paris: Chardel.
- BUFFON, Georges-Louis Leclerc. 1749. *Histoire naturelle, générale et particulière*. Paris: Imprimerie royale.
- BOWLER, Arthur. 1882. “Article de M. Bowler”. In: Louis-Joseph Janvier, *Les Détracteurs de la race noire et de la république d’Haïti*. Paris: Marpon et Flammarion: 137-147.
- BROCA, Paul. 1861. *Sur le volume et la forme du cerveau suivant les individus et suivant les races*. Paris: Bull. Soc. Anthropologie.
- BROCA, Paul. 1860. *Recherches sur l’hybridité animale en général et sur l’hybridité humaine en particulier: considérées dans leurs rapports avec la question de la pluralité des espèces humaines*. Paris: Imprimerie de J. Claye.
- CHEMLA, Yves. 2005. “Louis-Joseph Janvier, écrivain national”. *Francofonia: Lectures et écritures haïtiennes*, 49: 7-36. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43016336>
- CUGUANO, Ottobah. 2013 [1787]. “Pensamentos e sentimentos sobre os males da escravidão”. *Locus: revista de história*, 18(2): 259-281.
- DAUT, Marlene L. 2012. “From Classical French Poet to Militant Haitian Statesman: The Early Years and Poetry of the Baron de Vastey”. *Research in African Literatures*, 43(1): 36-57.
- DÉNIS, Clément. 1882. “Haïti”. In: Louis-Joseph Janvier, *Les Détracteurs de la race noire et de la république d’Haïti*. Paris: Marpon et Flammarion: 162-164.
- DEPESTRE, René. 1980. *Bonjour et adieu à la négritude*. Paris: Éditions Robert Laffont, S.A.
- DÉUS, Frantz Rousseau. 2020a. “A antropologia haitiana e a questão racial no século XIX”. *Mediações, Revista de Ciências Sociais*, 25(1): 207- 224.
- DÉUS, Frantz Rousseau. 2020b. “A construção da identidade no indigenismo haitiano e o debate pós-colonial”. *Vibrant*, 17. <https://www.scielo.br/j/vb/a/wTZKGcptNnsdqxwPyrQYq6j/abstract/?lang=pt>
- DÉUS, Frantz Rousseau. 2021. *Paradoxo haitiano: Identidade negra e “branqueamento” na contemporaneidade*. Curitiba: Appris.
- DEVOST, Justin. 1882. “Haïti: lettre à M. Eugène Yung, directeur de la Revue politique et littéraire”. In: Louis-Joseph Janvier, *Les Détracteurs de la race noire et de la république d’Haïti*. Paris: Marpon et Flammarion: 93-100.
- EDWARDS, Williams Frederic. 1841. *Des caractères physiologiques des races humaines considérés dans leurs rapports avec l’histoire. Lettre à M. Amédée Thierry*. Paris: Imprimerie de Mme Ve. Dondey-Dupré.
- ÉTIENNE, Pierre Sauveur. 2007. *L’énigme haïtienne: échec de l’État moderne en Haïti*. Montréal: Les Presses de l’Université de Montréal.
- FIRMIN, Anténor. 1885. *De L’égalité des races humaines: Anthropologie positive*. Paris: Librairie Cotillon.
- FISCHER, Sibylle M. 2003. “Constituciones haitianas ideología y cultura posrevolucionarias”. *Revista de la Casa de las Américas*, 233:16-35.
- FLUEHR-LOBBAN, Carolyn. 2000. “Anténor Firmin: Haitian Pioneer of Anthropology”. *American Anthropologist*, 102(3): 449-466.
- GATES, Henry Louis Jr. 2011. *Os negros na América Latina*. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras.
- GOBINEAU, J. Arthur. 1855. *Essai sur l’inégalité des races humaines*. Paris: Éditions Pierre Belfond.

- GÓES, Weber Lopes. 2015. *Racismo, eugenia no pensamento conservador brasileiro: a proposta de povo em Renato Kehl*. Dissertação (Mestrado em Ciências Sociais) – Universidade Estadual Paulista, Faculdade de Filosofia e Ciências, Marília.
- HURBON, Laënc. 1987. *Comprendre Haïti. Essai sur l'État, la nation, la culture*. Paris: Les Éditions Karthala.
- JAMES, C.R.L. 2000 [1938]. *Os Jacobinos Negros: Toussaint L'Ouverture e a Revolução de São Domingos*. Tradução Afonso Teixeira Filho. São Paulo: Boitempo.
- JANVIER, Louis-Joseph. 1884. *L'Égalité des races*. Paris: G. Rougier.
- JANVIER, Louis-Joseph. *Les affaires d'Haïti (1883-1884)*. 1885 [2013]. Port-au-Prince: LES Éditions « PANORAMA », 2. Ed.
- JANVIER, Louis-Joseph. 1884. *Le Vieux Piquet: Scène de la vie haïtienne*. Paris: Parent & Davy.
- JANVIER, Louis-Joseph. *Une chercheuse*. Paris, Marpon & Flammarion, 1888.
- JANVIER, Louis-Joseph. 1882 a. “Lettre de M. le Dr Janvier”. In: Louis-Joseph Janvier, *Les Détracteurs de la race noire et de la République d'Haïti*. Paris: Marpon et Flammarion: 15-30.
- JANVIER, Louis-Joseph. 1882b. “Etude de M. le Dr Janvier”. In: Louis-Joseph Janvier, *Les Détracteurs de la race noire et de la République d'Haïti*. Paris: Marpon et Flammarion: 31-78.
- JANVIER, Louis-Joseph. 1883. *La République d'Haïti et ses visiteurs*. Paris: Marpon et Flammarion, Libraires-éditeurs 1 a 9, Galeries de l'Odéon et Boulevard des Italiens.
- JANVIER, Louis-Joseph. 1905. *Du Gouvernement civil en Haïti*. Lille: Le Bigot Frère, Imprimeurs-Éditeurs.
- JANVIER, Louis-Joseph. 1886. *Les Constitutions d'Haïti*, Paris: Marpon et Flammarion.
- LINNÉ, Charles de. 1793. *Système de la nature*. Bruxelles: Imprimeur-Libraire, rue de l'Impératrice.
- MARQUÊS, Pamela Marconatto; KOSBY, Marília Flôor (2020). Anténor Firmin, Jean Price-Mars, Jacques Roumain: Antropólogos haitianos repovoando as narrativas históricas da Antropologia. *Revista Brasileira de Ciências Sociais* - Vol. 35 N° 103. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1590/3510404/2020>
- MUCCHIELLI, Laurent. 1997. “Sociologie versus anthropologie raciale: l'engagement décisif des durkheimiens dans le contexte ‘fin de siècle’ (1885-1914)”. *Gradhiva*, 21, pp.77-92.
- PRICE, Hannibal. 1898. *De la réhabilitation de la race noire par la République d'Haïti*. Port-au-Prince: Les Éditions Fardin.
- PRICE-MARS, Jean. 1928. *Ainsi parla l'oncle: Essais d'ethnographie*. New York: Parapsychology foundation.
- ROSSIGNOL, Marie-Jeanne. 1992. “La première Constitution d'Haïti et la presse américaine: étude de cas”. *Revue Française d'Études Américaines*, 52: 149-160.
- SALA-MOULINS, Louis (1987). *Le Code Noire ou le calvaire de Canaan*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.
- SCHOELCHER, Victor. 1882. “Lettre de M. Schoelcher, sénateur”. In: Louis-Joseph Janvier, *Les Détracteurs de la race noire et de la république d'Haïti*. Paris: Marpon et Flammarion, pp. 1-3.
- SCHWARCZ, Lília Moritz. 2005. *O espetáculo das raças: cientistas, instituições e questão racial no Brasil*. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras.
- SEYFERTH, Giralda. 1996. “Construindo a Nação: Hierarquias Raciais e o Papel do Racismo na Política de Imigração e Colonização” In: Marcos Chor Maio; R. Santos Ventura (ed.), *Raça, Ciência e Sociedade*. Rio de Janeiro: Fiocruz Editora: 41-58.
- SILVA, Roberto Jardim da. 2020. *Joseph Anténor Firmin: conflitos teóricos e políticos entre Haiti e França*. Curitiba, Tese (Doutorado em Sociologia - Setor de Ciências Humanas da Universidade Federal do Paraná).
- SAINT-JOHN, Spencer. 1886. *Haïti: Ou, La République noire*. Paris: E. Plon, Nourrit et Cie.
- THOMAZ, Omar Ribeiro. 2011. “Eles são assim: racismo e o terremoto de 12 de janeiro de 2010 no Haiti”. *Cadernos de Campo*, 20(20): 273-284.
- TOMICH, Dale. 2009. “Pensando o ‘impensável’: Victor Schoelcher e o Haiti”. *Mana*, 15(1): 183-212.
- TOLENTINO, Hugo Dip (2014 [1984]). *Origine du préjugé racial aux Amériques*. Colección Bohio.

- TROITINHO, Bruna Ribeiro. 2021. “Raça, colonialidade e poder desde Anténor Firmin”. *Tessituras. Revista de Antropologia e Arqueologia*, 9(1): 281-300.
- TROUILLOT, Michel-Rolph. 2016. *Silenciando o passado: poder e a produção da história*. Tradução de Sebastião Nascimento. Curitiba: Huya.
- VASTEY, Baron de. 1814. *Le système colonial dévoilé*. Cap-Henry: P. Roux.
- VASTEY, Baron de. 1816. *Réflexions sur une lettre de Mazères, ex-Colon français, adressée à M.JC.L. Sismonde de Sismondi*. Cap-Henry: P. Roux.
- VIDAL, Catherine. 2004. “Cerveau, Sexe et Idéologie”. *Diogène*, 4(208): 146-156.
- VOLTAIRE, François-Marie Arouet. 1978 [1735]. *Tratado de metafísica*. São Paulo: Editora Abril.
- WADE, Peter. 2017. “Raça: natureza e cultura na ciência e na sociedade”. In: Maria Gabriela Hita (ed), *Raça, racismo e genética em debates científicos e controvérsias sociais*. Salvador: UFBA: 47-80.
- WINTER, Fernanda. Winter. 2013 [1787]. “Introdução”. *Locus: revista de história*, 18(2): 259-281. Special Issue Pensamentos e sentimentos sobre os males da escravidão.

Frantz Rousseau Déus

PhD in Sociology from the Institute of Philosophy and Human Sciences (IFCH) and Postdoctoral Researcher at the “Uhayele Affirmative Action Project: inclusion, access, and retention of Black individuals in the Stricto Sensu Graduate Program in Nursing at Unicamp” at the School of Nursing – University of Campinas/UNICAMP, Brazil.

frantzrousseau@ yahoo.fr

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3073-3796>

Editors

Andrea de Souza Lobo (<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7525-1953>)

Antonio Carlos de Souza Lima (<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5260-236X>)