

Africa's Racialization Discourses in Brazilian History Textbooks (1950 to 1995)

Maria Telvira Conceição¹

¹Universidade Regional do Cariri (URCA), Crato/CE – Brazil

ABSTRACT – Africa's Racialization Discourses in Brazilian History Textbooks (1950 to 1995). This paper analyzes how the vision about Africa in Brazilian History textbooks, particularly those produced in the second half of the 20th century, assume a racializing dimension in the discourses alluding to the African and Afro-Brazilian people. It is a production that reallocates meanings and visions constitutive of a discourse mediated by epistemological assumptions and by a pedagogical bias, both anchored in a racializing platform. In this sense, based on data from a PhD study, it presents a kind of mapping of the discursive elements that compose the racializing content of these approaches, especially regarding to the written and the imagetic contents, which are foundational aspects for the understanding of the dimension of this issue in the scope of the school writing.

Keywords: History Textbook. Africa. Racialization.

RESUMO – Os Discursos da Racialização da África nos Livros Didáticos Brasileiros de História (1950 a 1995). O artigo analisa como a visão sobre a África nos livros didáticos brasileiros de História, em particular os que compreendem esta produção na segunda metade do século XX, assumem uma dimensão racializante nos discursos alusivos aos povos africanos e afro-brasileiros. Constitui-se numa produção que realoca significados e visões constitutivas de um discurso mediado por pressupostos epistemológicos e por um viés pedagógico, ambos, ancorados em uma plataforma racializadora. Nesse sentido, tomando como base dados de um estudo de doutoramento, apresenta-se uma espécie de mapeamento dos elementos discursivos que compõem o teor racializante dessas abordagens, sobretudo no que tange ao conteúdo escrito e imagético, aspectos fundantes para a compreensão da dimensão dessa problemática no âmbito da escrita escolar.

Palavras-chave: Livro Didático de História. África. Racialização.

Introduction

The recurring idea of demarcating the influence of the African universe in Brazil, in a certain way counting on the participation of each one, is part of a vocabulary and a vision that is anchored in assumptions that nurture an excluding logic based on a socioeconomic and an epistemological point of view.

In this dimension, the school writing (even though it is not the only one), when anchored in colonial categories, constitutes an essential element. In this sense, a fundamental question that comprises this problem is to think to what extent these categories are being reallocated in the writing of school History, mainly through textbooks, adding a discursive and racializing platform, whose content permeates not only the writing just mentioned, but also the perspectives on which these approaches are based when referring to Africans and Afro-Brazilians.

In the whole set of History of Brazil school writing, especially in the textbook production during the second half of the 20th century, which are the elements that form the basis of a racial discourse about Africa and how is this configured? This is a question whose facing implies the challenge of requiring new epistemological references that help to think the status of the school writing and its racializing bases.

Written Imaginaries, Africa Simulacrum

Picture 1 – Mozambique, Johann Moritz Rugendas, 1835



Source: Moura (2000, p. 443).

Picture 2 – Différentes Nations Nègres - Jean Baptiste Debret, 1834-1839



Source: Moura (2000, p. 374).

Both pictures above, even though limited as identification and distinction, are part of the recurrent imagetics in the History of Brazil school writing. Although generically, they bring an idea of who were the different African people who came to Brazil since the 16th century.

Imagetically represented, it does not reach by any way the demographic dimension of the transatlantic slave traffic, a mechanism that made possible, since the 16th century, the exile of an African population to Americas and Brazil, accounted in millions.

As Manolo Florentino reminds us (1997, p. 7), “[...] no other American region was so connected to Africa through the slave traffic as Brazil. Between the 16th and the 19th centuries, 40% of the almost 10 million African people imported to the American continent disembarked in Brazilian harbors”. However, it does not exempt its importance for reference articulation – discourses, imagery, contents – about Africa as a historic parameter to understand the Afro-Brazilian universe, specifically in History textbooks.

The place of the imagery in the construction of geographic and historic knowledge, among others, according to Wunenburger (2007), apart from representing a rereading of the rationalism, a remarkable dimension of the understanding around this category, also demands, when applied to the technologies of knowledge production – in this case, the knowledge aimed to the school teaching – to think how these imageries reallocate meanings to the spectrum of racialization through knowledge.

Concerning the African universe, thinking about the platform of the construction of these representations constitutes a task of unveiling processes of invention, as Mudimbe (2013) analyzes. For the author, the processes that invented Africa for the West were based on solid discursive structures, including the paradox of the alterity and the African identity, as meanders to mark the racial difference.

However, as this author highlights, this paradox acquires effectiveness, through knowledge as a fundamental mechanism of power. For him, “[...] the power-knowledge of an epistemological field is what makes possible a dominant or a modest culture” (Mudimbe, 2013, p. 27).

In the case of the African universe, this relation has been based on material and epistemological support, such as, for example, through visual, narrative and written devices, however demarcated and named, as Mudimbe emphasizes, “[...] according to the Western classification of thought and imagination, where alterity is a negative category of it”. For this reason, the author concludes that “[...] it is even significant that many European representations of the Africans, or more generally of the Continent, demonstrated this order of alterity” (Mudimbe, 2013, p. 29).

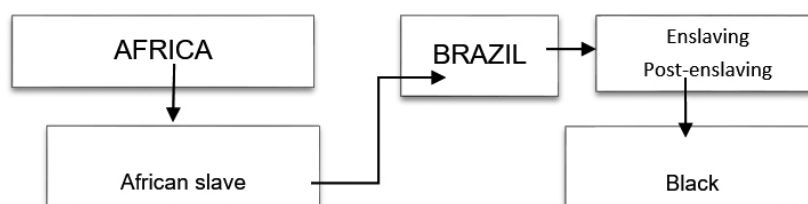
From this point of view, the idea of the invention, according to Mudimbe, when taking up these processes and mechanisms, ends up not only inoculating other ways of conceiving the world, social and cul-

tural practices, the African gnosis, but also producing a *trivialization* of these universes when confronted with Western paradigms. It seems that Trouillot (1995) shares the same understanding in his criticism pointed to the *silences* and *trivializations* of the Western History concerning the Haitian Revolution, including in History textbooks.

But how can we guide the question of the representations imputed to Africa as an important element in the problematization of the didactic production, especially within the scope of History? Based on what I learned in my doctoral studies¹, the Brazilian History school writing produced between 1950 and 1995 operated with at least two central references to allude and locate a kind of *historical framework*, concerning the African peoples who came to Brazil in the context of the transatlantic trade: Africa as a geographical place and a slave producer.

I begin by sketching a simplified representation of the way I interpreted this relation in the writings:

Flowchart 1 – General Representation of the Identification of African peoples in Brazilian History Guides - 1950-1995



Source: Elaborated by the author based on History of Brazil textbooks from 1950 to 1995.

One of the recurrent references in the consulted textbooks is a supposed association of the Africans and the continent itself to the slave condition, as something inherent and a tracer of their historical identity. In Brazil, both in the enslaving and in the post-enslaving context, the generality of the term *black* is a form of identification and distinction as an ethnic and social group. These two references are exemplary as a notion to construct and refer such identification. For instance: the first moment when this notion is employed and/or requested is when Africa is evoked as a place of geographic belonging of these peoples, from where they came as enslaved, their denominations, as in Rugendas and Debret's imagetic records (Pictures 1 and 2). Both in the delimitations of the contents and in the approach, there is an intersection between the two references (geographical and historical), with an emphasis on the geographical notion, initially.

However, it is paradoxical. They are references separated from the notion of historical traffic, even though the temporal framework of higher significance to think of Africa has been the 16th century, mainly for the approach of the transatlantic trade. In any case, 84% of the writings in question assigned a *historical link* with Africa by the allusion to the presence of blacks in Brazil, even though they are devoid of such

transit, since the allusions refer to Africa just as a starting point, not for exploring its relations with Brazil, historically speaking.

This allusion to the African continent is an African contingent, considering that they are not necessarily identified through the delimitation of themes or subjects, as 57% (or 11 of the guides)², more than half of them, do not list content specifications (such as chapter proposals, unit themes) about Africa, neither through visual flags, bearing in mind that in only 15% (in other words, 3 guides) from the mentioned writings included visual images about the African continent.

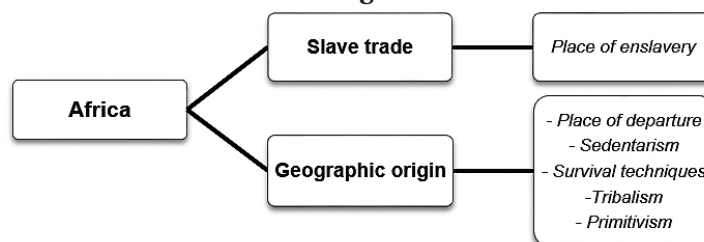
Africa written in these versions of History of Brazil is thought from the mobilization of non-visual, evocative images of an Africa whose memories were anchored under images without material support. On the contrary, they were anchored in notions and in an imagery strongly attached to the colonial universe or invented in this context, as shown by Amselle and M'Bokolo (1999).

Another reference that maintains the content of these allusions refers to the idea of the *influence* of these peoples in Brazil's cultural and ethnic composition. This assumption constitutes a pertinent, yet little developed notion, when compared to the expressiveness acquired by the economic and slavery meaning of these historical notions in the set of approaches.

In any case, they are notions specifically based on those writings whose approach bias addressed the Brazilian people's ethnic and cultural formation (Taunay; Moraes, 1964; Hermida, 1969; Silva, 1990) or, in a less comprehensive way, listed these influences (Holanda et al., 1973; Santos, 1986).

In this sense, it is instructive to understand that the notions about Africa were based on their historical link with Brazil. Based on those writings, I would like to present a synthesis of these identified references:

Flowchart 2 – References and Allusions to Africa in History of Brazil Writings - 1950-1995



Source: Elaborated by the author based on History of Brazil textbooks from 1950 to 1995.

Let's explain the representation above. There are two notions that are central to the allusion of a historical link between Africa and Brazil (Flowchart 2): Africa as a slave trading place, a notion emphasized in 11 guides, representing 57% of them; and as the place of their geographical

origin³, as it is possible to locate in 7 of these manuals, that is, 36%. Only 5% distanced themselves from both references, in this case represented by Joel Rufino dos Santos' writing (1979).

Regarding the first reference, it is observed that for 84% of them slavery constitutes the central content, if we consider its representativeness in the five decades to which the study guides are linked and marked by the notion of naturalization. What does this perspective evidence?

First, the semantic aspect itself of the idea of slavery. It is predominant in the allusions to Africa, which also explains the different bias where this emphasis is given. For instance: the delimitation of the thematic program and of the content explored in the approach development. In this case, it informs that the slave trade relations occurred in the African territory itself⁴.

The simplification of the process is another important element in the naturalization of the slavery perspective, as presented in the approaches in question. Returning to some examples: marking the contents of this trade relations, some aspects were emphasized, specifically the condescension and participation of local leaders⁵, the strategies and concomitance of violence in the capture, as in Koshiha and Pereira's writing (1980, p. 33): "[...] in Africa they are violently rescued: when the tribes are attacked by the Portuguese and/or by the war provocation between two tribes, being the defeated ones exchanged for tobacco and alcohol by the Portuguese", as well as in the violence of the capture, "[...] they used to invade and burn African villages. They killed with guns and captured as many as possible" (Silva, 1990, p. 43).

There are elements, although scattered, indicating the rereading concerning the vision about the practices and the violence of the slavery trade, what does not change in a certain way, neither authorizes classifying the approaches highlighted above as differentiated in relation to the others.

In this sense, it is important to remember the fact that the centrality of slavery, whose criterion is racial, is also central in the social arrangements of the slavery and post-slavery periods, as Quijano says, forming the "[...] basic social instrument for the classification of the population" (2005, p. 228) in the regions dominated by colonialism and later extended to beyond this historical process.

The connotations of racialization form an ample field of logics, especially when Quijano states that race is also *a mental construct*. In this perspective, capturing these constructions of racial content, in didactic approaches, as is the case of the school guides, implies an extreme effort of critical deconstruction, especially when the foundational processes of the slavery system are in question, not in the peculiar sense of the textbook, but in its context, that is only possible to be understood within this logic referred by Quijano as a natural association.

In these writings, slavery has an explanatory preponderance, while it occupies an almost *tangible* dimension supported on an excessively discursive basis, that goes beyond the trade relations and its

own institution, as a result of the modern/colonial world conformation (Lander, 2005). This is due to the fact that, besides an external contextual rationale in several writings, Africa is seen as a place of slavery production.

To justify this inference, I consider that it is pertinent to recover some instances in the analyzed writings, especially to point out that the idea of slavery as something justifiable was recurrent in most of them. However, as a structuring idea, it transcends the argument limited to the simple reminiscence of the theme, because there is a remarkable range of justifications, sometimes symmetrically focused. For instance, in the writings from the 1950s, there is a variation of this type of explanation, although the wording has been the same: emphasizing the idea of Africa as a place of slavery and slaves. Africa already was a place of slavery as in the Joaquim Silva's writing (1950, p. 85): "[...] In Africa, however, there always were slaves since immemorial times: the black continent rulers established military slavery and it was easy to acquire prisoners from them".

Borges Hermida expresses that perspective when he asserted that Africans were already slaves in Africa: "[...] For the agriculture, however, the Portuguese resorted to African slavery *because the blacks already lived in Africa as slaves and they were stronger than the indians* (Hermida, 1969, p. 66, emphasis added). The supposed truism of the practice was noted in Basílio de Magalhães' writing:

Portugal was the one that started modern slavery in the mid-15th century, the modern slavery, and it was the one that most developed the slave trade. *Thus, it was obvious that, to undertake the colonization of Brazil, they had to use the efficient black manual labor* because the amount of white men was not big enough and they were not resistant to the rigors of the tropical sugar cane plantation. (Magalhães, 1958, p. 44, emphasis added).

In addition to the activities of buying and selling people, which fueled the transatlantic trade, Africa was charged with the condition, as well as the responsibility, for it was seen as a supposed place of slavery, slavery as the subjective desire of the enslaved people, as in Silva's inference (1950, p. 86, emphasis added):

[...] *the arrival of the unhappy Africans to Brazil was desired by them* as an end to escape the horrors and suffering to which they were subjected along the trip. Slavery waited for them; but the new masters would be less inhuman than those from Africa and from the slave ships; however, a lot of them were highly cruel.

Already in the writings of the 1960s, as I previously stated, the recurrences are added to the emphasis on reasons and rationale for slavery. However, what stood out was the supposed argument that the Africans were already used to the condition of slavery. This was implicit when, for instance, the natives' freedom is opposed to the intrinsic condition, as in Vicente Tapajós (1960, p. 68, emphasis added):

[...] *the Amerindians, however, used to freedom* and living mainly from hunting, fishing and fruit collection. Therefore, they were not used to the agriculture, did not produce what was necessary, and great numbers died in captivity. Besides, the Jesuits, who were engaged in catechesis, opposed fiercely to their enslavement and obtained permission from authorities from the Kingdom and the Church to issue laws and bulls contrary to the captivity of native indians. *The settlers had to resort to the enslavement of black Africans.*

It was also explicitly endorsed, as postulated in Taunay and Dacamôr Moraes' writing (1964), for whom only blacks had conditions to work as in the slave labor in that context of emergence of the modern slave system:

[...] since the Portuguese were entirely devoted to mercantile activities, and the indians were still in the primitive nomadic condition (unfavorable to sedentary labor), *only the blacks would be able to bear the heavy agricultural effort*, since they were obliged to do it under the regime of slave labor (Taunay; Moraes, 1964, p. 37, emphasis added).

This view, more than the approach can indicate, is to think that the slaving practices throughout the Modern/Colonial world assigned an absolute naturalization of slavery, as it was used as a strategy, since *to each particular race corresponded a form of working*. According to Quijano (2005, p. 234), “[...] since the beginning of America, Europeans have associated unpaid work with dominated races because these were inferior.” In this logic, the white man controls the work and the results, while the servitude concerned to the indians and the slavery to the black people. This produced both a material profile and an identification, according to Quijano's criticism.

This point of view in the set of writings makes a significant range, in which even the inconsiderable mathematics from the colony white population, in that time, was considered, as in Vicente Tapajós's writing (1960, 68) (1960, p. 68): “[...] Brazil was a large country and the white population was very small. For this reason, the Lusitanians had to resort to slavery”, or the lack of adaptation of the native to that situation, as in Victor Mussumeci's writing (1961, p. 136):

[...] as the years passed, the Portuguese understood how difficult it was to enslave the Brazilian indians, who were the true owners of the land. They needed workers to work at the farm and in other activities, so they made a request to the government and it came with the permission from owners of mills - agricultural establishments where sugar cane is grown and sugar is produced - to receive slaves from Africa. By 1550, black slaves began to arrive. From that period on, along three hundred years, many Africans were brought to Brazil. They came in the dreadful slave ships and were sold in auctions.

In the writings of the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, with less relevance in the first decade, during which it was given more emphasis to the argument of the practice of slavery as the only resource and of the supposed adequacy of the African people to this condition, the economic discourse constitutes the content of the explanation about the African as the slave labor in the context of Brazilian and the New World colonization. Mostly, this perspective was considered central to all the works from the two decades, 1980 and 1990. For instance, in the writings from the 1970s, slavery hypothetically constituted the only resource to guarantee colonial possession, according to Carvalho: “[...] around the beginning of the 16th century, according to the Portuguese, slavery was the only resource they could use for the colonization of their lands in America, known by the name of Brazil” (Carvalho, 1972, p. 69).

Supposedly, only Africans held the necessary qualifications for the slave meta-condition, as they were considered the ideal slave, according to the author:

[...] não vinham esses portugueses dispostos a encarregar-se de trabalhos pesados. A quem caberia estes? A princípio se pensou na escravização do índio. No entanto, manhoso, conhecedor da terra e desacostumado ao trabalho, o indígena não chegava a produzir sequer o necessário para o seu próprio sustento. Foi então que se pensou no emprego do braço escravo negro para os trabalhos pesados. *Seria ele o trabalhador ideal*, a princípio para as plantações de cana e os engenhos de açúcar, depois para a coleta de ouro e pedras preciosas nas jazidas e mais tarde para as plantações de café do Rio de Janeiro e de São Paulo (Carvalho, 1972, p. 70, grifo nosso).

The demoralization of the native people and, sometimes, the conjectures regarding the qualification of black people were built up and took varied forms in the approaches, either through the discourse of resistance (Holanda et al., 1973) or because of the lack of adaptation of the natives to such condition⁶. In any way, it is important to point out that there were two central justifications.

In the writings of the 1980s, the descriptive emphasis of the slave process was increased by the discourse of the current economic order, sometimes focused under the profit perspective⁷,

[...] black slavery was twice profitable: at the level of the circulation of human commodities, allowing the accumulation by the trafficker bourgeoisie, and at the production level. When sold as a commodity, *the African generated large profits to the trader*, in opposition to the Indians, which slavery was a local, inner business (Alencar et al., 1985, p. 25, emphasis added),

sometimes as an economic need, exemplified in Renato Mocellin’s writings (1987, p. 46-47, emphasis added):

[...] we previously saw that the Portuguese Crown chose the black slavery to solve the labor problem. The choice was not because *the blacks work better or worse than the indians*. Actually, the black slavery generated an intense commercial activity that was related to the slave trade. According to some historians, it was the traffic that basically conditioned the black slavery, not the opposite.

In fact, it is impossible to lose sight of the slave trade foundations, at least until the 19th century. Somehow, only occasionally, in some approaches since the 1980s, this view of preference came to be questioned.

In the writings from the 1990s, the economic discourse became part of the approaches content concerning the slavery issue, even when the deconstruction of the idea that natives were not adapted was underlying, as previously mentioned:

[...] the African slavery in Brazil was not a matter of preference by the Portuguese for the blacks over the indians. Indeed, it was a matter of economic interest of the government and the Portugal mercantile bourgeoisie, which had already made great profits from the slave trade before the discovery of Brazil (Silva, 1990, p. 43).

Can we glance a change in the perspective of the approaches from the 1980s and 1990s in relation to the naturalization of the slavery experience, as a central framework, according to their content in these writings?

At first, if we resort to the broader context, the 1980s and the 1990s constitute a prominent moment in the review of the historiography about the subject (Mattos; Rios, 2005). There were also debates about social rights, supported by the Federal Constitution of 1988 and, fundamentally, the debates on the occasion of the abolition's centennial.

In general terms, the scenario that comprehends this process of historiographic is circumscribed to the second half of the 20th century. The questioning about the 1930s production, particularly the theses of cordiality and racial harmony of Freyre, whose influence is extended until the late 1940s, according to Mattos and Rios (2005), become object of criticism in the 1950s and 1960s, especially by intellectuals linked to the *Escola Paulista* - Roger Bastide/Florestan Fernandes, *Branços and Negros in São Paulo* (1955) and *Integração do negro na sociedade de classe* (1964), by Florestan Fernandes. For Mattos and Rios, the 1960s would mark *the first revision of the Brazilian slavery interpretative theories*, particularly the harmonic view constructed in the interpretations of the early 20th century, as the authors infer,

[...] the allegation of existing racism and the continued affiliation of a causal relationship previously established (the situation of the blacks as a result of slavery) were the rereading of the latter. Despite the casual relationship that had been inaugurated in the 1930s, if racism existed, slavery could not have been so gentle. Slavery in Brazil was then perceived by social scientists and historians as

the product of a society completely devoid of the coexistence between free and captive people, in addition to relations of violence and work, in which the slave would have really been transformed into mere goods (Mattos; Rios 2005, p. 21-22).

Although the historiographic revision in the late 1970s has shown signs of rupture with the structuralism paradigms of the predominant interpretations since the 19th century - the slave reification thesis; the cordiality paradigm etc., and even with the interpretations of the slave subjective *reification* of the *Escola Paulista* from the 1960s, as Chalhoub (1990) criticizes -, only in the 1980s and in the following decade the social history of slavery has been showed the blacks as protagonists throughout the whole slavery process. As Chalhoub points out, “[...] the violence of slavery did not make the blacks into beings ‘incapable of an automatic action’ neither in passive recipients of seigniorial values, nor in valorous and indomitable rebels” (Chalhoub, 1990, p. 42).

However, bringing these writings closer to this context would not be totally pertinent because it is not in the textbooks that we are going to measure them at first hand. Also, it is not from this point of view that I take them as the object of my analysis.

In other words, it would be to reaffirm that these approaches make sense; however, not in the immediacy with which these debates were being held, but in the field of academic production. The incorporation, or if we wish, the echoes of important ideas revisited definitely had importance and more acceptance in the writings after 2000. On the other hand, we must recognize that the changes achieved in the school writing have passed directly through educational guidelines and decisions. In this case, I recognize that there is an alteration of tone, in the case of the writings of the 1990s, as the rationale for the slavery no longer as a matter of preference for Africans (quotation above). Necessarily it is neither indicative nor illustrative of such a conclusion, in the sense of being considered as a result of the debates occurred in the academic field, as already mentioned.

As for the discourse that naturalizes African slavery, in the dimension with which it is presented in these writings, it demarcates form and content from the referred discourse and builds understandings about what would be a kind of *genealogy of the black history*, when these allusions become Africa, precisely to identify the necessity of their coming and permanence as slaves in Brazil, officially until the mid-19th century.

At least four justifications constitute this discourse basis in the context of the approaches in question: a) the economic necessity of a colonial system⁸; b) Africans ability to work with physical exertion⁹; c) their submission¹⁰, and d) racial and cultural inferiority¹¹.

In this sense, slavery as a reference for the perspective of the temporal and enunciative circumscription - in addition to being representative in the set of writings - for instance, in the totality of the works as theme, perspective and discourse, represents around 90% of the con-

tent, what constitutes an important element in the intelligibility and densification of the other discourses (classificatory and evaluative).

In relation to the statements about Africa as a place of geographic origin of the enslaved transported to the New World, it was an idea mentioned in all the writings within the research framework. With a high number of recurrence in the writings in the 1950s (4 works) and 60's (4 works), it means the totality of the selected writings in both periods, but also in 1970s (1 work), 1980s (2 works) and 1990s (1 work). However, some questions require special attention: Upon which parameters was this place named and identified? What is the content of these labels?

As exemplified in Flowchart 1, Africa as a geographical place was named from the following references: a place where the slaves came from, i.e., it refers to an allusion to the geographical place itself; as a reference to allude to the supposed social and cultural characteristics of that continent as, for instance, the sedentarism and the art of African people, however belittling them from the idea of their tribalism and primitivism.

In some writings, these localizations were textually specified, while others were not. As in Basílio Magalhães' writing: "[...] the blacks came to our land from various parts of Africa, whether from the West Coast, between Cape Verde and the Cape of Good Hope, or from the eastern coast (Mozambique) and from some regions of the interior" (Magalhães, 1958, p. 46). This reference about the localization, for the most part, was only general, from Africa. It is important to emphasize the aspects about the relation between Africa as a geographical place and the labels linked to it.

First, the evolutionary-civilizational stage was, undoubtedly, a reference of labeling and classification, be it to report to their slave condition when leaving the Continent, be it to send them to Brazil. However, in both cases through the labeling and adjectivation of Africa as tribal and primitive. In this sense, the writing of L. G. Mota Carvalho (1972, p. 68, emphasis added) is symbolic:

[...] we find in the middle of Africa, with tribes of simple black men *that only live, hunt, fight and dance, plant and harvest*. They live without greater concerns, since there is plenty of food and the *nights of festive celebration* are frequent.

The implicit understanding in Carvalho's writing suggests, at least, two reflexive movements: first, it is necessary to situate it beyond the school writing and its author, that is, to establish the universe where such conception makes sense. Second, it is important not to miss the point of how these notions involving the primitive term, attributed to the African peoples, were outlining a condition supposedly inherent to them.

The Western idea, particularly in that context, about the African universe, when referring to the cultural, social and economic practic-

es, the interactions with nature, the relation with the body etc., made emerge a set of stereotypes, and even more, it created representations resetting in the Western vision. An example mentioned by Carvalho in his writing is the vision about the body universe and forms of integration between daily life and nature.

According to Pinto (2001, p. 232, emphasis added),

[...] when the Portuguese arrived to the Meridional Africa, they were afraid of the naked bodies of the Africans - just like Pero Vaz de Caminha when he met with natives in Brazil - they were especially indignant with the movement of their bodies when stimulated by music. In their point of view, the *dancing mime* was overly insinuating and lascivious with immoral and reprehensible movements.

The clash of two distinct *cultural codes*, confronted in a symbolic process of physical violence and exploration, characteristic of colonialism in the African world. As Antonacci (2013, p. 229) emphasizes, it is about

[...] cultures that express, communicate, keep and convey memories and energies through body performances, associating time to space, man to nature, art to life. They produce and pass over cultures through messages and people in their presence and continuous 'fabrication' of bodies, in extraverbal interlocutions, through images, metaphors, figurations, representations, symbologies, meanings, rituals, rhythms, proverbs, divinations and other linguistic resources.

In addition, there would be a relation between the supposed primitivism and the assignment of a historical condition of ingenuity, conferred to African peoples, as the author's writing elucidates:

[...] so, in a certain moment, different white men start visiting the camps of the tribes, with their complicated and multicolored clothes, as extravagant as their different language that only one or two native chiefs could understand. It was the Portuguese who aimed to colonize Africa and, at the same time, exchange tobacco and liquor for men and women from the tribes. [...] *In their ingenuity and primitivism, the black leaders did not see no evil* in exchanges, and it was this way that the enslavement of blacks started and continued during many long years, tainting with cruelty and blood the land and the history of our motherland (Carvalho, 1972, p. 69, emphasis added).

About this question, in the 1950s Fanon already claimed that the colonial language that used to associate the blacks with an ingenuity disguised of *no (evil) intentions*. This author says that it is exactly "[...] the lack of (evil) intention, this agility, this deconstruction, this easiness of framing them, capturing them and to turning them into a primitive people that is humiliating" (Fanon, 2008, p. 45).

We cannot miss the point that this reference is a perspective based on a fundamental enunciative reference to support the racial difference – the cultural stage of the African people –, and that prevails in the writings from all periods, except in Joel Rufino Santos' expressive writing (1979).

The semantics unveilings of this reference, besides rich in adjectives, are based on the following characteristics: 1) civilizational inferiority¹²; 2) tribal¹³; 3) primitive¹⁴; and 4) childish¹⁵.

For instance, Taunay and Dicamôr Moraes (1964) make a fundamental reference to the enslaved Africans' cultural inferiority:

[...] if the slavery of the colonial era were characterized by the use of elements of appreciable cultural level... but no! Except for the Aztecs and Incas, whose manifestations were greatly affected by the brutality of the conquest, the other *Amerindians* or *native Africans* were 'peoples of lowest cultural level' when compared to that their masters. [...] Rome would not have been what it was if it had not counted on what the slaves brought, recruited from all parts of the known world and concentrated in that country the best and culturally high. The Roman civilization owns a lot to them and learned a lot from them. The slave was not the simple unconscious machine of heavy labor that their American successor is (Taunay; Moraes, 1964, p. 115, emphasis added).

Although these references allude to a geographic or cultural place, the archetypes are the Western civilizational values. So, the memories from part of this Africa transported and anchored in bodies (Antonacci, 2013; Cornneton, 1993) have been neglected in the production of these writings to which these constructions are anchored.

Thus, the logic of naturalization is weaved from a set of *intelligible* arguments about Africa: the simplification of the domination process that led to slavery; the emphasis on the semantics of slavery; the content of the rationale given to qualify the African people as slaves - inheritance, habit, synchrony ideal color / slave, for instance - without missing the supposed economic needs of that context and the idea of a commercial object.

Therefore, although it is not thematically and quantitatively expressive, the contents and approaches about Africa in the writings in question are significant, when they refer to African peoples, specifically when addressing slavery-related contexts and processes. There is an intelligible racial connotation through these references when the connections between Africa and Brazil are guided by representations originated in the colonial categories, exemplified in the notions that supposedly would explain the inferiority of the civilizational stage of the African people in that context. At the same time, it is also rational. These two characteristics mark the imagery content that we can locate in these writings.

However, if these points of reference are adjusted to a vocabulary that translates the essence of how the Africans and Afro-Brazilians are described among us, in a world marked by coloniality, in accordance to Lander (2005), on which discourses were they based? What are they contents? To what extent is it pertinent to consider them as indicative of a racialized view?

Africa's Classificatory Discourse in the History of Brazil Textbooks

Discourse is nothing more than the *reverberation of a truth* emerging in front of your own eyes; when everything can take the form of discourse and be spoken, and it can be spoken about everything, it happens because when all the things were manifested and exchanged their sense can return to the silent interiority of its own consciousness (Foucault, 2013, p. 46, emphasis added).

If the *discourse* is the *reverberation of a truth*, as defined by Foucault, even if it marks the limitations of any truth and operates with the principle of exclusion of others, it is a fundamental dimension of the production of others, of alterity, according to Mudimbe. So, that is a requirement for thinking about what were the discursive formations in the Western thought concerning Africa and the universes related to it.

However, special attention will be dedicated to the idea of production and discourse control. According to the author,

[...] in every society discourse production is at the same time controlled, selected, organized, and redistributed by a certain number of procedures that has as its function to conjure its powers and dangers, to dominate its random event, to avoid its heavy and terrible materiality (Foucault, 2013, p. 46, emphasis added).

The discourses that set up African and Afro-Brazilian peoples as targets summarized an almost *universal* vision in terms of categories, vocabulary, categorizations employed and they, themselves, are part of the discourse of the excluding universality.

Following the approaches that refer to the history of slavery or aspects of it, as already discussed in the previous topic, I would like to draw attention to some important elements to think about this discursive dimension within the scope of the school writing about History.

The first observation I highlight is the notion of classification as a central aspect in the mentioned approaches, especially through vocabulary, that is, the recurrent use of a vocabulary based on the verbs *to compare and to qualify*. The comparative content that involves from historical processes, and ways of living and perspectives of experience in society is what I emphasize in my observations and subsequent considerations.

In all the consulted textbooks, there is a comparative discourse focused on the evolutive aspect, although totally adjectifying. These

comparisons are diverse and involve the comparison between a supposed African's cultural stage¹⁶ and the hypothetical *cultural distance in relation to the Europeans*¹⁷.

The comparison is marked by the idea of primitivism and tribalism as the main labels, even when referring to different historical experiences as the *quilombismo* in Brazil, or in the recovery of a supposed *intelligibility* of the context that explains the presence of Africans in the History of Brazil. To illustrate this inference, I mention the following example: in Taunay and Moraes, the underlying idea is that the African people were exploited as slaves because of the agricultural stage in which “[...] black men, considered in Africa as having reached a totally agricultural culture, were used by the Portuguese as soon as D. João III decided to apply an agrarian colonization in Brazil with the cultivation of sugar cane” (Taunay; Moraes, 1964, p.37). However, the assertion is more emphatic when comparing this cultural stage with other peoples, inside and outside of the implementation circuit of modern slavery, as in the previously author's mention that Africans *did not have an appreciable cultural level*.

In Holanda et al. (1973), both the idea of primitivism and the *steps* of civilization are highlighted in the identification of the enslaved: “[...] among the groups that came to Brazil and their respective origins, *the Bantu group is the most primitive. They lived in regions of Congo, Angola and Mozambique, that were Portuguese colonies at the time of the slave trade*” (Holanda et al., 1973, p. 68, emphasis added). It is only in relation to indigenous peoples that it is possible to establish a somewhat positive comparison: “[...] *black men were more advanced than the Brazilian natives, especially those from the Sudanese group, who had been influenced by the Arabic culture*” (Holanda et al., 1973, p. 68, emphasis added).

In Magalhães' approach, this comparison serves to classify the Africans themselves, based on criteria of the Western civilization:

[...] we cannot say they were all on the same step of the ascension ladder of civilization. So, the black men from the Angola-Conguense Mozambique's group (presently so-called 'bantu culture'). They were behind the *yorubas, evês, fântis-axântis, hauças, tapas, mandes and fulas* (from the Sudanese group); the latter experienced the Islamic influence. The former were at the stage of pure warlock (worshipping trees and crude symbols) and collective property, with a rudimentary organization of the family and its patriarchal government. Those who received a certain influx from Islam (like the famous Malais from Bahia) were relatively more advanced, and it was they who took part, in our land, in rebel movements to organize the *quilombos*, or to help those who would show them the path to freedom (Magalhães, 1958, p. 46).

It also serves to classify the African culture recreated in Brazil, and the place occupied in this process:

[...] both had a significant influence in our evolution, in many of the sectors even more than the indians. *That is verified not only in our melting pot, but also in our lexicon and folklore, especially in a large number of superstitions* (Magalhães, 1958, p. 47, emphasis added).

In the writings from the 1980s, two ideas served as the basis to this discourse. The first one is the idea of a subsidiary culture, as in Koshiba: “[...] in fact, there is a black influence in certain sectors, but it is restricted to daily life: *superstitions, vocabulary, cooking, medicines*. Just a few, if we consider the richness of their culture” (Koshiba; Pereira, 1980, p. 36, emphasis added).

The other notion concerns the overlapping of the economic to the cultural dimension. That is not to say that the African people have an insignificant or tribal culture, as already mentioned, but rather that the resignification of the perspective of inferiority transported to the logic of the rudimentary, in what refers to the consume capacity within the capitalist logic. For instance, in Alencar et al. (1985), the superposing of the economic in relation to the choking of the slavery strength and not to the life forms and recreation of the amalgamated universes throughout the historical route of these peoples in the History of Brazil:

[...] the slaves resisted, in a symbolic way, to the domination in their religious cults. The *macumba* was, and still is, a freedom ritual, a protest and a reaction against the white man's God. Praying, drumming, dancing and singing were the way to alleviate the slavery oppression (Alencar et al, 1985, p. 27).

Another example emerges from Teixeira and Dantas' writing, whose ideas of a *rudimentary mental development* supposedly would explain the black exclusion from the Brazilian society in the late 19th century:

[...] the man who belongs to that social system is totally unprepared to respond to economic stimulus. He almost does not possess habits of family life and no idea of goods accumulation. His rudimentary mental development limits his 'needs'. For the slave work is a curse and idleness is life, a detected preference, is considered a dream out of reach and the salary increase is above the needs that are stipulated by his level of subsistence. (Furtado, 1963 apud Teixeira; Dantas, 1974, p. 52-54, emphasis added).

The notions of tribalism, primitivism, animism, exoticism, rudiments are explicitly present and not necessarily underlying in the school vocabulary; they are understandings that crossed the approaches of the studied period.

In this respect, it is important to point out that dimension – the content of the classification and the vocabulary used –, such vocabulary is more than a recurrence. It constructs writings in which the discourse of classification assumed a diverse form – in terms of what mediated

the use of the content of the classification (contents, processes, historic events alluding to Africa or Brazil) -, even though it predominates, at the same time, strengthened on Euro-centered theoretic and epistemological bases.

In such practices, a significant number of colonial categories vocabulary is used, as previously mentioned. For Amselle and M'bokolo (1999), the ideas of ethnicity, tribe etc., usually assigned to the African continent - even nowadays -, are taxonomies created in the European colonial period and, as such, must be "epistemologically questioned" (Amselle; M'Bokolo, 1999, p. 15) as it was a process of extreme violence that turned historical experiences into colonial categories that serve the interests of each respective social context.

According to Amselle, this European logic transformed pre-colonial *espaces d'échange, espaces linguistiques, espaces culturels et religieux* from values and criteria of a society of classes and supported by State-Nation parameters, as Europa defined itself, to read these African historical experiences. It resulted from this not only what the author calls *découpages territoriaux*, divisions of land, but "[...] it disarticulated these relations among the local societies" (Amselle, M'Bokolo, 1999, p. 38), calling it tribalism and, later, ethnic issue.

The supposed distinction of the *African influence* in the studied works¹⁸ is countered by the notion of destitution or hindering of the mentioned influence. An example are the emphases that signal a condition of inferiority from an always comparative approach. Sometimes, this idea is shown in the religious aspect, as in Mocellin (1987, p. 50, emphasis added):

[...] blacks from many beliefs came to Brazil. *Most of them, however, were adepts of animism.* [...] Actually, even when they were baptized as Catholics they never abandoned their primitive religion, as explained by the sociologist Gilberto Freyre,

or in the exotic condition of the culture recreated in Brazil, as in Basílio de Magalhães: "[...] as the scholar Artur Ramos appropriately claimed, all these *exotic elements* amalgamated here, having contributed to various aspects of the whole Brazilian civilization, biologically, socially and economically considered" (Magalhães, 1958, p. 198, emphasis added). Although the author recognizes its significance for what he calls the *whole Brazilian civilization*, this contribution follows the landmark of the exotic.

What escaped to this almost concise judgement in relation to the African universes has been the object of construction of a critique that considers issues faced under different aspects: for Lander, for instance, there are two historical dimensions in the basis of this thinking:

[...] the successive separations or partitions of the 'real' world that happen in the Western society and the ways how it is building the knowledge based on this process of successive separations. The second dimension refers

to the way of articulation of modern knowledge with the power organization in special the colonial / imperial power relation constitutive of the modern world. (Lander, 2005, p. 23).

In the first case, the separation referred by Lander were, essentially, between *the sacred and the human*, between *culture and nature*. Despite being religiously originated – in this case, from the Jewish-Christian culture-, the author infers that this separation is completed under the aegis of the illustration and the rise of modern science, as “[...] historical landmark of the separation represented by the ontological rupture between body and mind, between the reason and the world, as formulated in the works of Descartes” (Lander, 2005, p. 24).

According to Lander (2005, p. 25), if this conception “is not present in other cultures” it is in the basis of the Western tradition. Certainly, a significant part of Africa shares *worldviews* that are different from the ones alluded by the inferences in the writings here examined. The critique of Sodré (1988) and Antonacci (2013), among others, call attention to this difference, that is not only conceptual, but, in fact of *worldviews* that are not based on the rationalist speculation. Here and there, these universes say other ways of conceiving and relating to the world. Perhaps, as Trouillot (1995, p. 54) infers, “part of these cultures have not been alienated” to this dynamic of Cartesian partitions.

In some writings, especially when the content addressed concerned the cultural formation of Brazil, this coefficient, besides being specific, translated a conception already exhausted by the temporal reference itself, when these contributions were made. For instance, in language formation¹⁹:

[...] Indians and the blacks contributed to the formation of the Brazilian language. Not only with a few words that enriched the vocabulary, but also mainly with the way of speaking, with the overt and spontaneous way of pronouncing the words, absolutely different from the typical closed and heavy Portuguese way (Silva, 1990, p. 109).

Concerning this aspect, it is worth highlighting, in relation to the language contribution, that the predominant discourse present in these textbooks is guided by the perspective of the influence. It is a view from the 1930s that shall be seen, as pointed out by Fiorin and Petter (2009, p. 16) at least from two distinct plans, the linguistic and the ideological, to counter the view or the debate about the influence of African languages on the Portuguese spoken in Brazil, as inferred by Emílio Bonvini (2009, p. 2, author’s quotation):

[...] our interpretation of the presence of words in the Portuguese spoken in Brazil is the following: it’s merely a phenomenon of ‘linguistic borrowing’ made by the Portuguese, absolutely normal in itself, caused by a situation of contact between languages for which the use of concepts like ‘influence’, ‘creolization’ or even ‘semi-creolization’ seems inappropriate.

Final Remarks

Based on the aspects pointed out in the article, we must not lose sight of the fact that the didactic production space in Brazil, particularly regarding History, constitutes a fundamental dimension of the discourses production that, in their whole, contribute to the foundation of a racializing vision of Africa. Text and contexts, the discourses and their epistemic and cognitive justifications are elements to confront this debate in Brazil, with severe suspicions that it does not concern to the 1950s to 1996s only, but to present production.

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Notes

- 1 The data from this text are part of my doctoral dissertation entitled *Interrogating Racial Discourses in History Textbooks. Between Brazil and Mozambique - 1950 - 1995*, presented in the History Social Program at PUC / SP in March 2015.
- 2 Nineteen books produced between 1950 to 1995 were used as objects of the doctoral study already mentioned.
- 3 The term slave is from the source vocabulary.
- 4 As in Joaquim Silva (1950), Basílio de Magalhães (1958), Vicente Tapajós (1960), Alfredo Taunay; Moraes (1964), Luiz Koshiha; Denise Pereira (1980); Francisco Alencar et al. (1985), Renato Mocellin (1987), Nelson Piletti; Claudino Piletti (1993), José Jobson Arruda; Piletti (1995).
- 5 Perspective found in Basílio de Magalhães (1958), Vicente Tapajós (1960), Alfredo Taunay; Moraes (1964).
- 6 As in the examples mentioned in Nelson Piletti; Piletti (1993), Jobson Arruda; Piletti (1995), Ricardo Dreguer; Eliete Toledo (1995); and Francisco de Assis Silva (1990).
- 7 As in Luiz Koshiha; Denise Pereira (1980) e de Francisco Alencar et al. (1985).
- 8 As in Hermida (1969), Carvalho (1972), Teixeira; Dantas (1974), Koshiha; Pereira (1980) Alencar et al., (1985), Santos (1986), Mocellin (1987), Piletti; Piletti (1993), Arruda; Piletti (1995), Dreguer; Toledo, (1995).
- 9 In Magalhães (1958), Tapajós (1960), Mussumeci (1961), Carvalho (1972), Holanda et al. (1973), Silva (1990).
- 10 In Taunay; Moraes (1964).
- 11 In Silva (1950), Magalhães (1958); Taunay; Moraes (1964), Holanda et al. (1973).
- 12 As in Magalhães (1958), Taunay; Moraes (1964), Holanda et al. (1973).
- 13 See in Carvalho (1972), Tapajós (1960), Koshiha; Pereira (1980), Mocellin (1987), Nelson Piletti; Claudino Piletti (1993), Jobson Arruda; Nelson Piletti (1995).

- 14 In Holanda et al. (1973).
- 15 In Silva (1990).
- 16 In Silva (1950), Magalhães (1958), Taunay; Moraes (1964), Holanda et al. (1973), Mocellin (1987).
- 17 In Holanda et al. (1973).
- 18 This conception is present in manuals by Magalhães (1958), Taunay; Moraes (1964), Holanda et al. (1973), Koshiba; Pereira (1980), Silva (1990), Dreguer; Toledo (1995).
- 19 In accordance with the specialized literature from 1530, with the beginning of the trafficking to Brazil, 'speakers of approximately 200 to 300 African languages' came to Brazil (Petter, 2006 apud Oliveira; Lobo, 2009). Besides the extraordinary quantitative aspect, both in spoken and written, the African languages, as recalled by Oliveira; Lobo (2009, p. 6), are the basis of the 'historic formation of the Portuguese Brazilian language'. Concerning the Portuguese written in Brazil by Africans in the 19th century, see Lobo; Oliveira (2009).

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Maria Telvira Conceição holds a PhD in Social History by the Social History Program of PUC-SP and a Sandwich at Universidade Pedagógica de Maputo-Moçambique. Presently, she is a full teacher at the History Department of URCA in the field of teaching practice, History of Africa and Professional MSc in History Teaching.

E-mail: mtelvira@yahoo.com.br