



THE CURRICULUM OF A HISTORY TEACHING COURSE AND THE REPRESENTATIONS OF ETHNICAL-RACIAL IDENTITIES: TENSIONS, CONTINUATIONS AND AMBIVALENCES

O CURRÍCULO DE UMA LICENCIATURA EM HISTÓRIA E AS REPRESENTAÇÕES DE IDENTIDADES ÉTNICO-RACIAIS: TENSÕES, MANUTENÇÕES E AMBIVALÊNCIAS

EL PROGRAMA DE UNA LICENCIATURA EN HISTORIA Y LAS REPRESENTACIONES DE IDENTIDADES ÉTNICO-RACIALES: TENSIONES, MANUTENCIONES Y AMBIVALENCIAS

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ABSTRACT: This paper in which the white hegemony and eurocentrism are problematized analyzes the representations of black, indigenous and white people in the curriculum of a History Teaching course. The curriculum is always related to representations of ethnical-racial identities and, as ethnical-racial studies have shown, it has consistently contributed to reproduce hegemonic representations, thus reinforcing the racial hierarchies constructed along the colonial period. The pedagogical project of the course was examined, the classes were observed from an ethnographical perspective, and a semi-structured interview was applied to students. It has been concluded that the black and indigenous differences should be made more visible, and the place of whiteness should be consistently questioned in order to problematize the stereotyped understandings spread in the History Teaching course.

KEYWORDS: Curriculum. Ethnical-racial identities. History course.

RESUMO: Neste artigo, no qual se problematizam a hegemonia branca e o eurocentrismo, analisam-se representações de negros, indígenas e brancos no currículo de um curso de Licenciatura em História. O currículo está sempre relacionado a representações de identidades étnico-raciais e, como os estudos étnico-raciais vêm mostrando, sistematicamente ele contribui para reproduzir as representações hegemônicas, reforçando as hierarquias raciais construídas no período colonial. Examinou-se o projeto pedagógico do curso, realizaram-se observações de aulas inspiradas na etnografia, e fizeram-se entrevistas semiestruturadas com estudantes do curso. Conclui-se que as diferenças negras e indígenas necessitam ser mais visibilizadas e que o lugar da branquidade deve ser sistematicamente questionado para colocar em xeque as compreensões estereotipadas que circulam na Licenciatura em História.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Currículo. Identidades étnico-raciais. Licenciatura em História.

RESUMEN: En este artículo, en el cuál se problematiza la hegemonía blanca y el eurocentrismo, se analizan representaciones acerca de los negros, indígenas y blancos en el programa de la carrera de Licenciatura en Historia. El programa está siempre relacionado a representaciones de identidades étnico-raciales y, como los estudios étnico-raciales vienen mostrando, contribuyen sistemáticamente para reproducir las representaciones hegemónicas, reforzando las jerarquías raciales construidas en el período colonial. Se examinó el proyecto pedagógico de la carrera, se realizaron observaciones de aulas inspiradas en la etnografía y también se realizaron entrevistas semi-estructuradas con estudiantes de la carrera en cuestión. Se concluye que, las diferencias negras e

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indígenas necesitan ser más visibles y el lugar de la “blanquidad” sistemáticamente cuestionado para poder colocar en jaque las comprensiones estereotipadas que circulan en la carrera de Licenciatura en Historia.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Programa. Identidades étnico-raciales. Carrera de Historia.

INITIAL CONSIDERATIONS

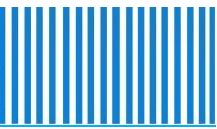
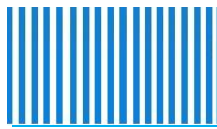
In this text, in which white hegemony and Eurocentrism are problematized, the representations of blacks, indigenous people and whites perceived in the curriculum of a Teacher Training Course in History are analyzed by looking at the pedagogical project of the course, classes attended and interviews with course students. The History Teacher Training Course that participated in this study was founded over 60 years ago and belongs to a public university in the state of Paraná, where there are many people of European descent.

Initially, we place the analysis in context, showing that the curriculum is always related to representations of ethnic-racial identities. As ethnic-racial studies have shown, the curriculum systematically contributes to reproducing the hegemonic representations, reinforcing the racial hierarchies constructed during the colonial period, which are still around and are maintained in the context of coloniality. Then we analyze the field research, showing that the representations of white superiority still mark the curriculum in that Teacher Training Course in History, despite occasional attempts to challenge them. Finally, we make a few remarks that signal the need for a systematic, non-sporadic questioning of the supposed white superiority that marks the curriculum of the course analyzed here..

THE ANALYSIS IN CONTEXT

Curriculum has become a polysemic concept and has been resignified by different theorizations and curricular (re) elaborations. There are disputes about curriculum meanings and contents because they aim to form specific subjects at the educational institutions for society and/or to collaborate in constructing a type of society, depending on political orientation. The curriculums prescribe, proscribe and (re) direct the course taken by the educational processes.

Knowledge is disseminated in the curriculums with interests, conveniences, connivances and mediations. The curriculum can be understood as something represented and something that represents. “Representing means, ultimately, to define what counts as real, what counts as knowledge [and what counts as curriculum]. It is this power of definition that is at stake in the curriculum conceived as representation” (SILVA, 2001, p. 65).

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Based on Hall (1997, 2003, 2010), we argue that we are not able to think about the realities and truths instituted by the prevailing forces outside the representation, the categories, classifications, conventions of meaning, language and culture. The material and the symbolic are articulated to give meaning to our experiences. We are led by the cultural meanings and by the representations, besides being conditioned by the material and economic circumstances, which must be signified but also transformed.

The cultural representations constitute curriculums and knowledge. They are meanings that depend on language and social conventions. “The process of signification is also a game of imposition of meanings, a power game. The text that constitutes the curriculum is not simply a text: it is a power text” (SILVA, 2001, p. 68). However, the power of defining the meaning of an education is never definitive, as there are always disputes, tensions and clashes.

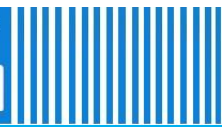
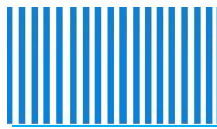
The curricular path acts to produce identifications and differentiations through representations accessed and (re) created in it. “It is precisely here, at this point, that the curriculum, like knowledge, becomes a battleground for representation” (SILVA, 2001, p. 68), since what comes to the surface is what and who needs to be represented, what and who needs to represent, what and who establishes the contents.

In elaborating classifications – identifying and differentiating – meanings are produced by representations and expressed in forms of representation in the curriculum, among other spheres. The identities/differences are signified by the cultural representations and classified: “The marking of difference is crucial to the process of construction of identity positions” (WOODWARD, 2000, p. 39). Identifications are delimited by differentiations.

When analyzing the marks of the representations of white identities in this study, we must also perceive how the black and indigenous identities are being represented. “All terms of identity depend on the establishment of limits – defining what they are in relation to what they are not” (HALL, 2003, p. 85).

The classificatory – identifying and differentiating – systems are relational. Generally, they hierarchize through associations made in historically constructed conventions of meaning, which must be problematized and questioned, since, in colonial practices, classifications were invented to place blacks and indigenous people in a position of inferiority, highlighting white people.

The power of representing indigenous people, blacks and whites in the curriculum is the power of defining these identities/differences (SILVA, 2000), even though not definitively, but with effects that can affect perceptions of subjects about themselves and others. Identities and differences, and also meanings, are mutant, constructed by the discourses incorporated by



subjects in different situations. We are now going to analyze how this process occurs in a teacher training curriculum in History.

THE ETHNIC-RACIAL REPRESENTATIONS PRESENT IN THE CURRICULUM OF THE COURSE ANALYZED

The field research was done by analyzing the pedagogical project of the course, which was last re-elaborated in 2012. The syllabuses of the disciplines and objectives of this training course were also analyzed. However, the records of observations of course classes and the interviews with the students were the sources that brought more elements to the analysis.

The classes of the disciplines were observed in the different student groups² of the course from December 2015 to July 2016. Information relevant to the discussions of the research referring to the participations of students and teachers in class was recorded in a field notebook in order to perceive the representations of indigenous people, blacks and whites. The class observations were inspired by ethnography, an interpretive experience of significant situations, translated into the form of records. Representations of contexts permeated by encounters, interlocutions, polyphony and by the co-authorship of the subjects who participated in the study are considered (CLIFFORD, 2008). This is one interpretation among many, but not the only possible interpretation.

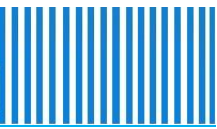
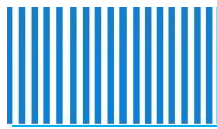
The interviews were made between July and December 2016 with last year students of the course (fourth year), because they were in the final stage of the Teacher Training Course in History. We also analyzed utterances of Joana, a second year student identified as indigenous, in order to have contact with the perception of an indigenous student of the course.

The semi-structured interviews were performed taking into account the relationships between interviewer and interviewee, but also the "... images, representations, expectations that circulate – on both sides – at the time and in the situation of performing them and later when listening to them and analyzing them" (SILVEIRA, 2002, p. 120).

For ethical reasons, the interviewees were named with pseudonyms; we do not directly cite the pedagogical project of the course nor place it in the references, to avoid the identification of the university. The names of the professors cited are also pseudonyms.

The results obtained by the different research instruments were organized around two categories of analysis: a) whites are usually represented as historical and superior subjects,

² The course had 137 students enrolled at the time of the study. Among these, seven self-declared as black and 86 declared themselves white in the online academic cadaster of the institution's site. We identified an indigenous woman of the Kaingang ethnic group in the course, and she gave us an interview. The other students did not self-declare.



whereas blacks and indigenous people are often rendered invisible, seen only as dominated and in a stereotyped manner; b) despite this tendency, there are times when white hegemony is questioned, and blacks and indigenous people are represented as historical subjects, their resistance is made visible and the stereotypes are challenged. Since these two processes coexist in the Teacher Training Course in History analyzed, it was decided not to separate them in the analysis.

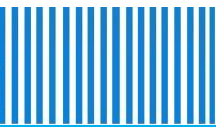
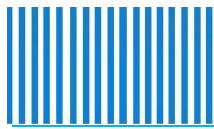
Analyzing the pedagogical project of the course, we can perceive that the intention was to train critical subjects, building their awareness through academic knowledge. This intention is closely related to the Eurocentric modern thinking, to moving from a state of intellectual immaturity and common sense to the maturity of a critical, rational, historical and scientific consciousness. This knowledge directs the subject to whitening through the fair lights of reason, when it makes them neglect other possibilities of knowledge that are not legitimized by science, even if this is not the intention.

The representations of the ethnic-racial identities/differences were present in the curriculum of the Teacher Training Course in History analyzed in our study. They were often submitted to normalization under the European hegemony, reaffirming whites as the powerful historical subjects who have knowledge. “The overvaluing of whites is a worldwide phenomenon, particularly current in places that were colonized by Europeans who implanted slavery” (SOVIK, 2009, p. 18).

We perceive in the course curriculum that blacks and indigenous people were often represented as carried along by the tide of events, cheated and dominated by the “powerful” whites. As one of the interviewees emphasized, “Although they are seen in a more critical manner, it is the white who colonizes, who is superior. At least there is a discourse of their superiority” (STUDENT MARIA). White people were represented as superior, but this superiority is sometimes problematized and criticized (as we shall show further on).

The syllabuses of the disciplines that were in the pedagogical project of the course and the classes attended were more focused on a white and European history, intending to train a critical teacher-researcher. Whites appeared most often in the contents of the course, either as historical characters or as references in the studies. Another university student emphasized: “... the History course seeks to give greater visibility to strata that other people, sometimes, in society do not even care about, to the strata that were really marginalized and ignored by society” (STUDENT GABRIELA).

The Euro-white-centric curriculum of this Teacher Training Course in History appeared to us ambivalent, because it articulated opposing issues: it gave visibility to the marginalized, but at the same time it was excessively focused on the history of the privileged groups. Even if this



were not the intention of the people involved, the teacher training curriculum made this ambivalent movement that we observed.

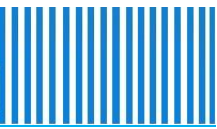
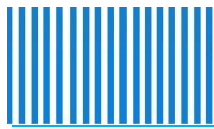
The histories of the non-whites were present in this curriculum, but we observed that they appeared as minor in comparison with the history of the whites, of Europe and of Eurocentric ideas. Often blacks and indigenous people are presented as if they were only part of the past in Brazil. “Even in the texts used, blacks only appear in the slavery period. Indigenous people appear only in Colonial Brazil” (STUDENT ERNESTO). This helped prevent students from observing the black and indigenous presence at other historical moments. It also helped render invisible the realities experienced by indigenous and black people in the present, reinforcing stereotyped representations.

In the course, stereotyped representations of the indigenous people circulated, as they were homogenized and attached to a frozen image as exotic, primitive people, inhabitants of the forest. “You have indigenous people, but they are represented as naked in the forest” (STUDENT BRENO). These representations originate in discourses that are highly disseminated in society and do not take into account “... practically all of the historical trajectory of the indigenous people, marked by resistance, flight, surrender, negotiations and attempts at extermination” (SILVA, 2012, p. 66).

As shown by the student cited, stereotypes still circulate in the Teacher Training Course. Stereotypes simplify differences and try to fix people in a naturalized image. They are related to the attitude of “[...] dealing with the presence of the other without having to become involved in the costly and painful process of dealing with the nuances, subtleties and profoundness of alterity” (SILVA, 2001, p. 51). This costly process of dealing with alterity shakes our views and places us in the position of eternal learning, since we do not know the others nor ourselves, other others. Everything can be different from what we supposedly know.

From the observations of classes and interviews performed, we can state that indigenous people and blacks were often represented, but as those who were described by the whites, as victims of historical processes and pressured to adapt to the colonial, Western European, national and white norm, in which the place reserved to their identities was that of inferiority, submission, resignation, integration, negativity and nullity.

One of the interviewed university students spoke of the contexts in which the indigenous people most appeared in the course discussions: “Typical of what one studies in the History curriculum. The indigenous people were here, then colonization, extermination, genocide of the indigenous people, including the Indians who inhabited Paraná” (STUDENT MARIA). The curriculum of the Teacher Training Course in History that collaborated with the study

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appeared to still be very unaware of the historical struggle of the indigenous peoples in Brazil and in Paraná.

Black slavery was mentioned more often than the indigenous one during the classes attended in the Teacher Training Course in History, possibly because it lasted longer (over three centuries). Another possible cause of this is the fact that blacks are often represented in the country's history as enslaved. "Predominantly, blacks appear as slaves, or former slaves, and so on. Generally, as slaves and poor" (STUDENT INÁCIO).

The marks of the history of slavery are still present today. However, we agree with Albuquerque and Fraga Filho (2012, p. 54) when they write that "... the history of Africans and their descendants cannot remain attached to the image of 'productive parts' that the imaginary of slavery has projected on the 'place' of blacks in the History of Brazil." Blacks were protagonists, even during slavery.

In the interviews with the students of the course, slavery was perceived as a process that caused inequalities in Brazil, since it generated wealth for a privileged white elite and exploited the blacks and indigenous people. The history of Brazil is strongly marked by the dominance of the white elites and the latter's role as protagonists in the events of the more distant and more recent past.

The enrichment of the corrupt white elite through the enslavement of Africans and the erasure of the history of slavery in Paraná and the history of non-whites were denounced in a class attended on the History of Paraná.

In the presentation made by a group of fourth year students about slave trafficking in Paraná, the students explained that this trafficking was done via the Port of Paranaguá, and even after it was forbidden, it continued to be done with the approval of judges who were suspected of being involved in the sale of enslaved Africans. The teacher of the discipline emphasized that "slavery was in the heart of white slavers" because it was a very profitable activity for them and that real estate was purchased, fortunes made and increased with inhuman, unworthy and criminal economic activities. He mentioned that a historical version favorable to the elites (constructed by the latter) was that slavery did not last very long in Paraná. According to him, there is an attempt at erasing this history and he gave an example of another one in another context: the construction of Mexico City, which was done during the Spanish colonization over the capital of the Aztecs. The professor announced the topic of the class discussion for the following week: the production of manioc flour during the 19th century on the coast of Paraná. He said that this was a sustainable indigenous agricultural practice (FIELD NOTEBOOK, July 14, 2016).

As in the class on the production of manioc flour by the indigenous people of Paraná in the 19th century as a practice of sustainable agriculture, in the curriculum of the Teacher Training Course in History analyzed we did not notice only representations of blacks and indigenous

people as passive in history. There are times when the protagonist role of blacks and indigenous people is highlighted in the classes, as we will show further on.

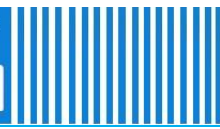
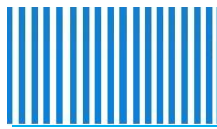
The whites were criticized in class because they were symbols of racial domination over the other cultural and ethnic-racial identities/differences. “The whites appeared in our classes marginalizing the rest of society, repressing and as though they had arrived here violently, imposing their race In the texts that one reads, whites are always depicted as superior to others in society” (STUDENT GABRIELA). Whites were also represented as oppressors.

The cultural and ethnic racial hegemony exerted by the white identities is expressed in the prestige that they enjoy, but also in the erasure and devaluation of the non-white identities. “The Eurocentric version of history was discredited in several ways, but it continues to ensure the cultural heritage of whites having a reasonable expectation of access to power and even to positions of command ...” (SOVIK, 2009, p. 58) to the detriment of others. Eurocentric history is also related to a very present white-centric history.

One of the interviewees remarked that whites appeared in the Teacher Training Course in History as “the great historical agents”: it is they who discovered Brazil, it is they who founded the Republic, it is they who commanded the empire, it is they who commanded the republic, they were the guys who helped in democracy” (STUDENT ERNESTO). Whites, Europeans and descendants of Europeans guided the directions of the historical processes in the syllabuses of the disciplines and classes attended. The descendants of Europeans were represented under the sign of superiorized whiteness.

From the notes taken in a class of Practice of Brazilian History we can highlight an example of the overvaluing of the descendants of Europeans, ignoring other important cultural references. As to the European immigrants who came to Brazil from the 19th century onwards, a third-year student said the following in the presentation about the use of comic strips to teach Brazilian History in his class: “Just as the comic strips, almost everything in Brazil was basically brought by immigrants, as we are seeing in Brazil III” (FIELD NOTEBOOK, July 1, 2016).

Repetitions of representations of white identity as superior to all other ethnic-racial identities naturalize this manner of representing it, seeking to make us believe that whiteness is always dominant. They try to erase the view of whiteness as a historical construction full of coloniality, and thus dependent on inferiorizing representations of blacks and indigenous people to be shown as superior, while also permanently reiterating it. We believe as Quijano (2002, p. 13) that with the end of the colonial period coloniality was established, which lasts until today: “The coloniality of power ... was and is active in every way, since it is part of the global context within which the processes occur that affect all concrete spaces of

**Article**

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domination.” This coloniality is based on the racialization of human groups, establishing a hierarchy according to which whites are superior.

In the racialized system of representations, whites “... are taken as natural, and it is therefore necessary to show the process of production of the meanings that construct this naturality based on ‘interested’ power relations” (SANTOS, 1997, p. 95). They are placed in a naturalized position of prestige at the disposal of which all must resignedly be.

This resignation at the disposal of whites is shown in a class of History of America II attended in the Teacher Training Course in History. The class shows the reification of black men and women in a specific context.

A presentation of a work by fourth-year students of the course on the sexuality of young blacks, men and women, in Colombia was being held. The students brought the information that skin color in Colombian society is a marker and functions as a code for inclusion or exclusion. According to what was said, black men and women are often represented as available to white men and women to satisfy sexual desires (FIELD NOTEBOOK, December 11, 2015).

The stereotyped representation of the black body attempts to render it exotic. Ambivalently, it is represented as desired and undesirable. “Black skin splits under the racist gaze, displaced into signs of bestiality, genitalia, grotesquerie, which reveal the phobic myth of the undifferentiated whole white body” (BHABHA, 1998, p. 138). The white body with its culturally identified/differentiated esthetics is hegemonically represented as normal.

It is possible to say, according to the observations and interviews with students, that discussions about the ethnic-racial relations were part of the curriculum of the course in which the study was performed. However, one interviewee pointed out that “The topic of Africa is taught in the first year. After that, we only talk again about racism in Brazil III [in the third year], with Professor X. I think that it should be discussed more” (STUDENT GABRIELA).

In the pedagogical project of the course, only the discipline of Thematic Topics in African and African-Brazilian History included in its syllabus the discussion of education for ethnic-racial relations, whose purpose it is to contribute to combat racial inferiorizations and superiorizations. One of the students said that the discussions about racism, prejudice and discrimination “in the course, it is one or another teacher who prefers them. The teacher of Topics in African and African-Brazilian History talks about them in every class” (STUDENT SANDRO). These discussions do not appear across many disciplines of the course.

The initiative of education turned towards ethnic-racial relations is guided by the perception that we cannot ignore ethnic-racial inequalities, but also “... one must remember the webs

spun in the history of the west that constituted the excluding, racist, discriminatory society in which we live and that many insist on preserving” (SILVA, 2007, p. 493). Although they were not very frequent, in the Teacher Training Course in History that collaborated with the study there were debates about ethnic-racial inequalities. There were even debates about this problem within the university where the course is offered: “Inside the university itself one sees the number, few people. Few indigenous people. Blacks one sees very few of them. Mostly you see white people” (STUDENT BRENO). These debates took place at some moments, inside and outside the classes.

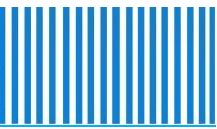
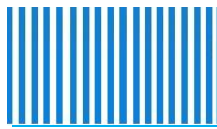
During a class on Thematic Topics in African and African-Brazilian History the racialized system of representations was criticized, as it values white people at the expense of devaluing black and indigenous people; the white standard of comparison for the other ethnic-racial identities; the discriminatory devaluation of black esthetics; the position of the university towards ethnic-racial inequalities; the normalization of the white world; and the naturalization of the white, Christian, male and elite person as the only historical subject.

Professor Agostinho discussed Neocolonialism with the first-year class of the course. In this class, he said that while whites are still positively represented, the other ethnic racial identities are represented as inferior. According to Professor Agostinho, blacks are sometimes related to physical strength and whites to intelligence. He criticized the notion of good hair (straight hair) and bad hair (curly hair) because it is discriminatory. The teacher criticized the whiteness represented as a position of authority and dominant standard of comparison for the other ethnic-racial identities. Also, according to him, the university – instead of being oriented towards the white elite – must be a venue to challenge the subalternization processes. He remarked that the white world is represented as the normal world and those shown as the makers of history are white, male, Christian, with school education and belonging to the elite (FIELD NOTEBOOK, December 15, 2015).

Criticizing the stereotyped forms of black and white identities, as this professor and others did, is essential to counter white supremacy. The bodies of subjects are marked by representations, because the latter render visible that which can be said (SANTOS, 1997), i.e. what is observable only becomes so because it is signified by discourses and representations. “The body is constructed by, shaped and reshaped by the intersection of a series of disciplinary discursive practices” (HALL, 2000, p. 121).

Esthetic hierarchizations, signified by racist representations, configure the valuing of certain physical characteristics of the devaluing of others. Schucman (2012, p. 87) explained that “... the more someone looks like a black or indigenous person, the more their image disagrees with what this generalized system of status attribution defines as beautiful, desirable or admirable.”

Other representations of the black body appear if we consider the symbology of “... hairdos used by blacks today as forms of cultural recreation and resignification of those constructed

**Article**

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by blacks in the diaspora ...” (GOMES, 2003, p. 181). These representations configure the political meaning of an Afro-centered esthetics to counter “... the effects of a normative whiteness which moves from denial of the black body to its circumscription to adequate parameters of acceptance” (GOMES; MIRANDA, 2014, p. 88-89), which range from modeling the body to white standards to the adoption of spectacularized exoticism.

Positive representations of black bodies also have been propagated in Brazilian society, thanks to the actions of the black movements that challenge the white standard. “The narrative of ‘whiteness’ that permeated the construction of the ‘white’ identity, as Europe expanded throughout the globe, was explicitly based on privileged access to material and symbolic resources ...” (STEYN, 2004, p. 116).

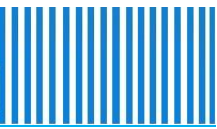
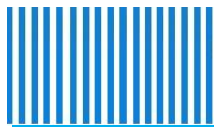
Showing the questions raised by the social movements of African descendants and indigenous people is essential, since the representations of the blacks and indigenous as inert subjects, incapable of strong action in history help reinforce the representations of the Europeans and the descendants of Europeans as motors of industry, culture and politics.

Some students and professors mentioned, based on theoretical references of History, that black and indigenous cultural elements infiltrated themselves into the white identities. “I think white people arrived here, took everything, appropriated a heap of stuff. Of course, they also brought things” (STUDENT GABRIELA).

White people were not immune to tensions and mixtures in the contact with the black and indigenous culture. However, one “does not want to suggest here that in a syncretic formation the different elements establish a relationship of equality with each other” (HALL, 2003, p. 34). On the contrary, in this process blacks and indigenous people were made subaltern and inferior, in spite all of these peoples’ struggle and resistance. Black and indigenous cultures were rendered subaltern, but much cultural resistance and negotiation of these peoples enabled various of these cultures to continue existing in some way.

Besides talking about the racist Brazilian elite at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century (who idealized the whitened Brazilian nation), about repression, violence and inferiorization aimed at the poor and non-white people in Brazil during this period, the teacher of Brazilian History III talked about the cultural and political resistance of black people and about a white person captivated by the black culture.

This teacher’s class about the period known as First Republic (1889-1930) in the third year of the course dealt with the elites of the country, who said that they were Republican, ashamed of black Brazil and in favor of whitening through social/racial/ethnic and cultural “hygienization” (greater Europeanization of the country). The teacher recalled an episode in Brazilian history known as the *Revolta da Chibata* [Rebellion of the Lash] (1910), in which black sailors rebelled against



the physical punishments to which they were submitted in the Navy, and the disputes for land in the country that were solved by exterminating peasants who were despised by the State. According to the teacher, the history of Brazil told in the First Republic was the history of civilization in which Indians and blacks were there to serve, a history of the great white heroes. In that class the teacher mentioned that the popular groups were submitted to repression by the State at that time. The *terreiros* of *Candomblé* in Rio de Janeiro were closed by the police and the forbidden African religions continued to be practiced clandestinely in the backyards. The professor went beyond the class topic and told a bit about Pierre Verger (1902-1996), described him as a rich Frenchman, a traveler (he travelled through different places in the world), photographer, a scholar of cultures who went to Salvador (the city where he lived until the end of his life), [where] he fell in love with the black culture and *Candomblé*, and created a foundation with a collection for the study of the blacks, *Fundação Pierre Verger* (FIELD NOTEBOOK, April 8, 2016).

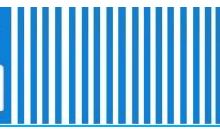
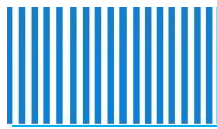
The teacher of History of Brazil III discussed a white identity permeated by negritude, a French-Bahian identity, showing that white identities were/are also modified by contact with the black cultures. Besides he showed that the black cultures can arouse curiosity, be sources of interest and of studies due to their relevance. Afro cultures reference many people.

We argue, with Albuquerque and Fraga Filho (2012, p. 58), that *candomblé*, samba and *capoeira* can also be represented, more than as “... proof of the force of cultures originated in Africa on the new continent, [as] political and symbolic strategies of the construction of identities and, therefore, of the struggle against racism”. The valuing of African, African-Brazilian and indigenous cultural elements contributes to the struggle against racism which inferiorizes non-white cultures, identities and differences.

The teacher of History of America I, in the third year of the course about Spanish colonization in the Caribbean, said that “the Africans were better at the art of metallurgy than the Europeans, and that the Europeans learned from the Arabs specifically how to handle horses in order to obtain a better performance from the animals” (Field Notebook, June 2, 2016). Negotiations and hybridisms construct different versions of the cultures, they constitute translations.

It is not only the blacks, the Indians and the other peoples who learned/learn, even under force, from the whites. The whites also learned/learn with the blacks, the Indians and the other peoples. This deserves profound reflection for other relationships and practices, because, like Bhabha (1998), we emphasize that this hybridism, negotiation and translation are fruits of historical needs of the ethnic-racial identities in specific situations – the needs to relate to another context and learn from others, often not mentioned.

The contacts between different ethnic-racial identities in situations of exchange, conversation and/or dialogue can provoke approaches and sensitization in the Teacher Training Course in History, besides making it possible to challenge prejudices and stereotypes invented about the differences.



Inácio, one of the students, told that during his practical training period as a teacher, with 7th grade classes of an elementary school, his group chose to work on the topic “indigenous peoples of Paraná.” The group invited two indigenous students of their university, including Joana, to give a talk to those classes. “They talked about what indigenous people are in Paraná today. They told how their life is like in the village. How is the village, how they organize and how they came to the university.” These 7th grade pupils heard the indigenous university students talk a bit in their languages: “They talked in Guarani and Kaingang for the pupils to hear” (STUDENT INÁCIO).

The initiative described in the previous paragraph, possibly, had useful effects in the sense of collaborating to fight stereotypes, prejudices and racism. It shows how the course curriculum – often – takes place, changing and affecting other spaces, in the activities outside the university environment requested/demanded by the teacher training course for its educational proposal. Besides, it shows the interest of some pupils in getting to know about the indigenous people of Paraná through the latter themselves and to disseminate this knowledge with the help of the indigenous people at the school.

The indigenous student of the Kaingang ethnic group of the Teacher Training Course in History researched, reported: “... we went to do work in the village. When they [the History students] arrived there, they took a fright: ‘Gosh, I did not imagine that it was like this, I thought that Indians were there naked.’ I said, ‘No, Indians do not go around naked’” (STUDENT JOANA).

Curricular experiences such as those described by Joana and Inácio can favor the production of representations that will contribute to deconstruct the forms of prejudice and discrimination in teacher training. Stereotypes can be deconstructed when the contacts with the black and indigenous differences become more intense and frequent in contexts that are favorable to their presence.

The stereotyped representations of blacks and indigenous people are incorporated by the different subjects. There is also the possibility of clashes and distancing due to the difficulty of ridding oneself of strongly rooted representations. “The situation of someone whose best certainties are shaken is, first and foremost, one of existential weakness” (GRÜN; COSTA, 1996, p. 101). The unfinished process of unlearning and relearning is quite difficult, it requires humility, and people will not always be prepared to do this. The context is impregnated with unfair representations that affect the subjects.

We also observed that conflicts occur when the “certainties” related to blacks and indigenous people are questioned: “People quarrel when [fellow university students] talk about blacks and indigenous people. It is a quarrel in the classroom. [Some] say that we shouldn’t be here”

(STUDENT JOANA). One can see that there were disputes about the truth, so that certain cultural representations of realities would remain stronger than others. They also sought to have certain representations taken into account and change conceptions.

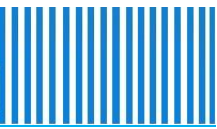
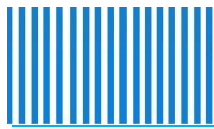
In the Teacher Training Course in History analyzed here, we perceived – in the syllabuses of the disciplines, in the classes attended, and in the interviews – that only few moments were dedicated to exposing and debating the struggles of the ethnic-racial groups that were at a disadvantage. “Look, in the course the indigenous culture and the black culture are not much discussed” (STUDENT BRENO). The space dedicated to showing the forms of resistance against domination was very small, but also for the study of the different indigenous and black peoples.

There was little space for discussion about the construction, permeated by impositions and unequal power relations, of the meanings that made whiteness superior. One interviewee remembered a discipline in which this discussion was included in her class: “... this issue of the whites was much discussed, as far as I recall, in History of Brazil III, in which we studied how this idea of superiority of whites over blacks and indigenous people was formed” (STUDENT RAFAELA).

Based on the analyses of the syllabuses, interviews and records of the classes attended during the study, we may say that the indigenous peoples and blacks appeared more as participants in the historical processes in the disciplines of History of America I, History of Brazil I and III, Thematic Topics in African and African-Brazilian History, and History of Paraná. However, it is also in these disciplines that one talks most about the whites, explicitly, placing them in a context of advantage. “Forms of black and indigenous resistance also appear in History of Paraná” (STUDENT TONI).

There was no discipline of Indigenous History in the course. Teachers of the Training Course in History that collaborated with this study might argue that this teacher training was in agreement with Law 11,645/2008³, since discussions about the indigenous history ran across different disciplines in the course. However, in a curriculum organized by disciplines, the absence of a discipline of Indigenous History placed this topic as something that was not considered very important. There was not much space for this topic to be worked on in the training of History teachers at the university due to the strong Eurocentric emphasis of the curriculum. “There were moments when we discussed the role of the indigenous people, the issue of the indigenous people, but also very little” (STUDENT INÁCIO).

³ Law n° 11645 of 2008 makes the teaching of African-Brazilian and Indigenous History and Culture mandatory in the public and private school system (Brasil, 2008).

**Article**

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University students found other reasons for the importance of the discipline Thematic Topics in African and African-Brazilian History in the curriculum of the Teacher Training Course in History: “Having the discipline that will deal precisely with the African culture makes you think that there is a culture that was silenced during the writing of Brazilian history. You rethink this” (STUDENT TONI). Disciplines and curricular contents may serve to provoke reflections about what is silenced. Blacks were “... much more than the hands and feet of their masters, since they reinvented, based on a rich cultural repertoire, on the experience of the diaspora, themselves and the population groups which whom they related” (Albuquerque and Fraga Filho, 2012, p. 55).

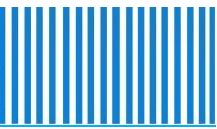
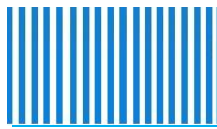
By analyzing the interviews, the field book notes and the syllabus of the discipline of Thematic Topics in African and African-Brazilian History, we can say that this discipline was dedicated to showing the historical and cultural role of blacks, Africans and African-Brazilians as protagonists.

Hall (2003, p. 40), despite dealing specifically with the Caribbean context, makes us also think about our educational realities after the black diasporas as regards “... the matter of interpreting ‘Africa,’ rereading ‘Africa,’ or what ‘Africa’ could mean to us now, after diaspora.” This has also been a task for the curriculums of History in Brazil, recognizing the relevance of the African-Brazilian cultures to study histories with antiracist representations.

The effort of this task of performing a rereading of Africa in the History classes, as highlighted by Albuquerque and Fraga Filho (2012), is not to show a black paradise violated by European tyranny, nor to underestimate the potential of Africans and descendants of Africans for negotiation and resistance vis-à-vis the power of emerging European capitalism. The same can be said of indigenous history. One cannot make little of the actions of the indigenous people and blacks in the older and more recent history.

The initiative of giving due acknowledgment to non-whites as subjects of history might create “a process that will denaturalize the idea that some ethnic-racial groups have their history associated with glory and conquest, while others with slavery and passivity” (PASSOS, 2013, p. 78).

Without privileging their historical tactics of struggle, resistance and survival to colonization, to slavery, to domination processes, to racisms, to attacks on their communities and to the expropriation of their lands – which still continue – when the sufferings of indigenous peoples and blacks were denounced in the course, it looked as though these peoples submitted passively or were weak and defeated by the powerful whites. This was an effect of marks of the historical superiorization of the white identities.

**Article**

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We observed that in the classes the indigenous peoples and blacks were a lot more associated with submission than insubmission; with exploitation than with gratifying work; with the absence of freedom and not with the struggle for it; with a precarious life and not with the abundance of resistance strategies; with suffering and not with fighting injustices; with lack of knowledge and not with recognition as a subject with other forms of knowledge, other cultures and other histories.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Telling indigenous and black histories as the histories of the vanquished, even if this is not the intention, may disparage the struggles of these peoples which continue. The histories of winners/defeated constitute a binarism that makes the winners superior, collaborating to reiterate the notion of white supremacy, even involuntarily. These histories were perceived in the classes of the course analyzed in this research project.

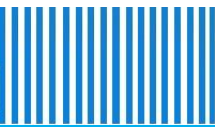
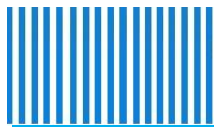
Although it is not the intention of the Teacher Training Course in History which was researched, the ethnic-racial differences were, very often, reduced to the superiorizations of white identities and inferiorizations of black and indigenous identities. In this way, the course, even if not intentionally, may reinforce the Euro-white-centric representations that support racism, contributing to make one perceive the black and indigenous differences as passive, without content and inoffensive in the curriculums. In this sense it may keep black and indigenous people away from places that are important and valued, maintaining the hierarchized order produced in the colonial period which is systematically updated by coloniality (Quijano, 2002).

The representations and narratives present in the History course, even when used critically to justify and challenge an unequal present, (often) ambivalently, contributed to reduce or erase the role of black and indigenous subjects in history as protagonists, ignoring their activities, negotiations, resistances and the infiltration of their cultures and knowledge into society over time. In the course, ambivalently, criticisms and connivances with Euro-white-centrism coexisted.

Less frequently, non-Eurocentric representations and narratives were infiltrated into the curriculum of this Teacher Training Course in History, challenging meanings that superiorized whites and devalued blacks and indigenous people. We concluded that the black and indigenous differences should be made more visible and that the place of whiteness should be systematically questioned, in order to challenge the stereotyped comprehensions that circulated in the curriculum of the Teacher Training Course in History.

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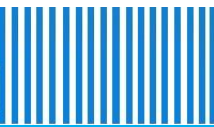
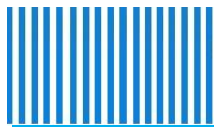
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