

COLOMBIA'S ANTI-ISLAMIC HISTORY¹

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Abstract

This essay refers to the aspects of the history of Colombia as a narrative that, besides being directed to a young audience, intends to reflect how, through this medium, the idea of Colombian was constructed from a set of specific cultural elements that were contemplated through the bias of anti-Islamism, which is understood as a use of the past. It is addressed the idea that the Colombian historical narrative is constructed as Catholic in spirit and, in fact, not only from the figure of Christopher Columbus, but is written from traditions such as the biblical Genesis or the American settlement theories of a bishop developed both as the foundation of the explanation of the origin of the human being that, by the suggested history, must the Colombian, while excluding from it all the historical-cultural elements that, on the other hand, brim with multiculturalism and that, like the *almojábana*, exist as national patrimony.

Keywords

Anti-Islamism; almojábana; Al-Andalus; history of Colombia; uses of the past.

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Resumo

Esse ensaio se refere ao caráter da história da Colômbia como uma narrativa que, além de ser dirigida ao público jovem, pretende refletir como, por esse meio, a ideia de colombiano foi construída a partir de um conjunto de elementos culturais específicos que se contemplaram através do viés do anti-islamismo, entendido esse como um uso do passado. Aborda-se a ideia de que a narrativa histórica colombiana foi construída como católica em espírito e, de fato, não somente a partir da figura de Cristóvão Colombo, mas é escrita a partir de tradições tais como o Gênesis bíblico, ou as teorias de povoamento americanas de um bispo desenvolvidas ambas como alicerce da explicação da origem do ser humano que, pela história sugerida, deve ser colombiano, ao mesmo tempo que se excluem dele todos os elementos histórico-culturais que, por outro lado, transbordam de multiculturalidade e que, como a almojábana, existem como patrimônio nacional.

Palavras-chave

Anti-islamismo; almojábana; Al-andalús; história da Colômbia; usos do passado.

As every schoolchild learns, Columbus set sail with India on his mind's horizon. Rarely, though, do schoolchildren learn why Columbus sought to cross the Atlantic. Hoping for an alliance with the Grand Khan of the East, he aimed to retake Jerusalem and destroy Islam; more prosaically, his voyages promised an end run around the trade monopolies of the Ottomans and the Mamluks. And when Columbus arrived in the Americas, fresh from the battle which marked Spain's final defeat of the Muslim kingdom of Granada, he saw – or, more accurately, imagined – Muslims everywhere. Spanish conquistadors would claim to see mosques in Mexico, American Indians wearing "Moorish" clothing and performing "Moorish" dances, Turks invading New Spain from the Pacific, and West African slaves attempting to convert America's indigenous peoples to Islam. Filtering their experiences in the Americas through the lens of their wars with Muslims, Europeans in the New World engaged in a new version of their very old Crusades, a new kind of Catholic jihad. Long after the many Matamoros – Moor-slayers – who sailed to the Americas aboard Columbus's ships were dead themselves, Islam would continue to forge the histories of both Europe and the New World and the relationship between the two (A. Mikhail, 2017: 411)

The 2007 screenplay, 300: going through ancient history's trail to reach the Western Christian society's limits, to defend its limits

The teaching of ancient history, which relates modern nations to Rome or Athens (or to Ancient Greece), or to any Eastern city, has a moral and religious (and therefore economic and political) purpose. After the Second World War, the old religious and nationalist quarrels are reinterpreted, adopting geopolitical, local, regional, and global changes, in order to accommodate them to the current means of communication as well as the new world order's novel relations and tensions, actualities that, once materialized, began their own path and development, but that, as the concept of Palingenesis describes, resumed antiquity as a cultural weapon, just as in the 1960s and the 2000s, and Spartans were reinterpreted as protectors of the Western civilization against communists, Asians, Africans, LGBT, etc.

This notion of Palingenesis takes specific forms inside books, specifically in the textbooks which are used to educate human beings and, through the reading and studying of them, specifically cultural forms, even if subjective, in the educated bodies. There is a sacred trail (narrative) that, passing through both cities, takes the reader through the history of Christianity, marked by the biblical narrative, by the second part's protagonist, and by the sacred book's own history.

This trail can also be understood to delimit the civilized universe, where enemies or slaves in general, all those that are not *us*, are clearly stablished and delimited within a map: Asians, Africans, and, having nothing to do with nationality or ethnicity, communists and socialists. The map marks not only the sacred sites, but also the civilization links that mark and define *Heródoto*, Unifesp, Guarulhos, v. 6, n. 1, 2021.1 p. 249-270.

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who and how that journey must be understood morally and culturally and the foundation of combat for the care and maintenance of the delimited borders.

This trail defines, for example, the Colombian state's genealogy as it appears in the classic textbooks of Colombian History. The peregrine, the reader of this story, will travel that trail up until the present day and, marked by the experience (and by having been registered as a citizen since birth), will comprehend, in a well written Spanish, drawn to learn to read and write, and with the help of Geography classes (that is, of the country's maps), how the Catholic virtues and values are the virtues of a good Colombian citizen.

Almojábanas

In my first and only trip to Spain, limited by my lean student resources, but accompanied by some excellent hosts, I got to know, in Zaragoza, in the "*Centro de Historias*" museum, the history of the *almojábana*, a dessert made in Al-Andaluz with cheese, flour and honey. The story of the Andalusian *almojábana* caught my interest because, in Saragoza, as well as in other Iberian cities, the Al-Andaluz testimonies mix up with other peoples' and other ethnicities' material culture that, at least in some school discussions, are either not mentioned at all or are characterized as in some old Mediterranean stories: as enemies or invaders that would later on become rivals, threatening the nation and therefore if they don't win, they are to be defeated and banished, killed, exterminated or integrated or dominated by the heroes, their people and their culture. By chance, sometime in the past, the *almojábana* arrived at the American continent, specifically and mainly at the "*cundiboyacense*" plateau in Colombia. To me, before that, it was a typical and tasty delicacy, a local small cheese and corn bread, soft, delicious, salted, with no honey, and, to me, up until that point, with no history.

Archeology, historiography, and the type of museum where I made my small discovery of the local delicacy's cultural story, all brightened a part of an incomplete narrative I learned: how did the *almojábanas* get to my country? I celebrated the feeling of ignorance.

In Colombia's history, there is no mention of the caliphate's habitants; of their African origins, very little or even nothing is taught to the "cafeeira" children, raised in Colombian originality, beyond being mentioned as defeated by the Catholic monarchs, Ferdinand II of Aragon, and Isabella I

of Castile, (who have their own statues in Bogota and a private school after their title). The country's name, Colombia, celebrates the discoverer of the Americas. And even with the different critical expressions about the narrative, still to this day, the "(Castilian) Language Day" is celebrated on the 23rd of April, and the "Race Day" is celebrated on the 12th of October. The Catholic medieval Spanish literature is (was, when they still read books in Colombian schools) part of the academic canon, of our traditions, of our "Colombian soul", as are the Roman (Catholic) stories and other privileged civilizations in the explanatory scheme of civilization's history.

Therefore, the exclusion of the Al-Andaluz tradition (even though millions of immigrants came from the caliphate region), of Jews (Colombia is also anti-Semitic, as well as a little homophobic, anti-protestant, and somewhat misogynistic), based its tradition in the conquering of natives and forgot, not by chance, of the millions of immigrants our Iberian and European ancestors brought from the immense African continent to substitute indigenous labor. A curious fact: they are almost never referred to as slaves, even when debating institutions such as the "*mita*" or the "*encomienda*".

Back to the *almojábana*: if you ask about its origin, not many people will have no answer. If, by chance, you ask, the country pride shall answer, possessing the one who is being questioned, that the *almojábanas* are, effectively, 100% Colombian. It is not worth trying to debate, further than the country's own philological pedantry debates, characteristic of the country's political history, about the origins of the delicious little bread. The anti-Islamic and pro-Roman Apostolic Catholicism historiographical and cultural propaganda (strengthened in the Counter-Reformation region), the far right Hispanism, a catholic institution that is always present in national politics and in the national educational system (primary, secondary and academic), helped in the development of an a-historical type of Colombian that defends their school historical narrative (not actual history, with dominant reports that various authors try to characterize as dissident memories), as a tradition (and there is no contradiction in that, as the notion of "cognitive dissonance" well explains).

Even the country's name evidences this character. Ignoring the name that echoed an Andalusian past, "*Novo Reino de Granada*" (Granada's New Kingdom), derived from these territory's conquest campaigns by captains such as the Andalusian Gonzalo Jiménez de Quesada, it was baptized in honor of the "discoverer of Americas" (except for Brazil, of course), resulting in Colombia, in many ways a country that submits to the "baby Jesus", the "Sacred Heart", the "Virgin Mary", etc.

Henao and Arrubla's histories, which are paradigmatic in how much their works mold millions of children and teenager's historical national mentalities: how they learn to see, to comprehend, to think and use the past and locate it in a map or a calendar. In their texts, they gather this spirit and cover widely the role of God, Adam and Eve, Jesus, of missionaries, nuns and friars, bishops and popes, as positive historical national figures. They worshiped Virgin Mary themselves and their books have the "*Imprimatur*" seal. That is why we refer to school's histories and not to professional researcher's academic productions, that have an ample volume of texts that present the history of a "profound Colombia".

Effectively, both Henao and Arrubla's texts, differently from professional author's texts, at least to a certain extent of time, were read in schools and universities, assuring its study and implementation in schools by presidential decree and thanks to the educational system's network which is dominated by the ecclesiastic institution. On the contrary, the circulation of historiographical and archeological surveys in Colombia is always focused on a specific core or circle of readers, whose real influence in the public or private educational system, is always limited.

If there is a *presentist* thought in Colombian's idea of their history, this corresponds to the fact that, by teachers and professors in classes, it has – had – a moral molder character, not analytic nor critical. A made-up tradition to rise a nation from its contained fragments in a territory that, still to this day, continues to be unfamiliar to its habitants, because besides not studying a lot of national history, they study even less geography.

Islamophobia and Orientalism

Concomitant with "orientalism", present in the Western literary canon, or in stories that explain the presence of certain types of philosophies or sciences in our contemporary world and certain fantastic and rich lifestyle refinements, islamophobia is a bias that persists to this day and that would be reinforced during the Cold War, during all of the second half of the 20th century. The conflict between civilizations, marked by the anticommunist or anti-capitalist key, nationalisms, military and civil dictatorships, fights against colonialism and a great variety of elements of a geopolitical game that also utilizes "culture" and culturalism as a combat weapon: it is expressed, for example, as an interior armed conflict, as wars between neighbor nations, as diplomatic tensions, fights between the Israel state and Palestine, fights between white Christians and populations of African or Asian origin, and even Latin, origins, besides other bloody war

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expressions between “East or West”, culturally represented, for example, in specific films as “300”, or its remake, as wars between virile Greeks that confront the – among other stereotypes that are utilized thematically and graphically – effeminate and dangerous Orientals, Persians, Africans, etc.; or by orientalism, the domesticated form of integrating the cultural expressions of the near, middle or far “Orient” that are accepted both in everyday conversations, literature and even Disney movies; or by the resurgence of “hispanism” or “Indigenism” and other Latin American cultural notions included in the writing and the teaching of History to children with the objectives of rescuing Latin nations from the perils of the Chinese and Russian communism that the island of Cuba brought to dominated territories, since the end of the 19th century, by the United States and its geopolitical doctrines.

Contemporary historiography and archeology, the studies of art history or literature have recovered the importance of the Al-Andalus country, its ethnical and religious diversity, its science, its foods, its arts and literature, its politics, its architecture, its philosophy, and its complex relations to the African continent and to Europe. More than that, projects like this, have taken several surveys to Spanish children, to know and integrate the Islamic, and North African legacies, where Spain still has an important sociopolitical role, not mentioning, for example the important role of the Canary Islands in all its colonial history. The UN and UNICEF have published, for free, anthologies about the history of Africa, its relation to America and the whole world. Historical archeology reformulated the study of capitalism, integrating this history as the research axis. But, the study of national culture and material and immaterial culture, despite researchers’ and institutions’ best efforts, is still read through the lenses of the authors of textbooks. The idea of the adult’s history starts to be assembled in childhood and becomes the base, or one of the bases, of cultural and psychosocial systems that stablish in each human organism with its specific surroundings, ever since the early days of life, and for the rest of one’s life. This idea of history that is constructed, and at the same time keeps changing, is in constant synchronization, by the relations with the educational surrounding, by the media, by the cultural and human, economical, religious, familiar, etc. matrix, with public, institutional or institutionalized versions in the many areas where the “subjects” become adults.

As in other areas, we describe the development of a prosthetic memory, an integrated element in a particular organism, an inorganic extension of memory however that, is built, grows and changes, adapts and reorganizes constantly: in historical domain, specifically, it is composed of memories,

witnesses, stories, folklore and other elements manufactured by a third party that, for many reasons and by many contexts, motives, and avenues, become part of one's life experiences, of one's particular memory even if they never, as it usually happens, experienced said memory or story (for example, the life of Christ, or of Harry Potter). One's constant change, because humans change constantly, does not implicate, however, that the type of stories and objects that constitute memory get in conflict with, or try to violate the limits of public narratives that, as will be discussed in this text, present a strong mythical, religious, and moral component – in the human universe, during each of our lives.

They still praise, in children's stories, the Reconquest campaigns of the Iberian kings and queens, to explain who travelled to the new continent, or in general, of the European anti-Islamic campaigns to justify the Portuguese and Spanish journeys around the world, "discovering" it. Henao and Arrubla's histories of Colombia, published in the beginning of the 20th century, by winning the contest organized by the brand-new *Academia de História*, in the question of being the country's history teaching textbook, are the limit of the invented national tradition, the essential historical Colombian romance that, while a worthy example of what a paradigm is, while prosthetic memory, of Colombian futures, including historians, archeologists and educators. This contest also guaranteed its distribution all over the national territory and obtained the privilege of being the only official texts for teaching about Colombia's history, in private or public institutions in the country; they even had the privilege of counting on the Catholic Church's seal of approval that, moreover, was the one in charge of administrating Colombia's education since 1887.

The texts, the *Compendio* (Handbook for primary education), and the *in extenso* version for the secondary, were reedited and adapted until the 1980s in Spanish, and there are English editions dated from 2011. Along with other texts, they were not only textbooks for the teaching of national history, but of the Castellan language and of other contemporary national values or, if not contemporary, the republic's official ones. History *in extenso*, as the *Compendio*, establishes an original and politically conservatory chronology, coherent to the catholic mindset of both authors, of the *Academia*, of the type of Catholicism established in the country and of the Colombian political class, that having won the Thousand Days' War, was predominantly part of this political faction. The authors make use of the European and biblical history, specifically constituted, not only over an anti-Darwinist Uruguayan bishop's work, to establish, starting with the biblical Genesis, Man's origin and, from then on, the national history that results from a Christian peregrination that passes through Spain and gets

to America. Another explanation considers that human beings travelled through Asia to, as the texts explain, populate the Americas through the Bering Strait.

However, there is an idea of national history constituted upon the shoulders of Miguel Antonio Caro, philologist, Latin translator, ultra-Catholic and militarist politic, scammer and ultra conservative whose name is part of the *Instituto Caro y Cuervo*, guardian of the Spanish language (and of the conquered and enslaved) in the country. When quoting his words, Henao and Arrubla guide the reader, student, or pedagogue in understanding the importance of the past:

Entre los medios de avigorar el espíritu nacional, no sería el menos adecuado proteger y fomentar el estudio de nuestra historia, empalmando la colonial con la de la vida independiente, dado que un pueblo que no sabe ni estima su historia, falto queda de raíces que le sustenten, y lo que es peor, no tiene conciencia de sus destinos como nación. (Miguel Antonio Caro, cited in Henao e Arrubla, 1911).

Both texts seem to not have, on the other hand, any relation with other history teaching textbooks about the “Ancient World” that, in the Ministry of Education’s programs were, as it was since at least the 1990s, integrated in a subject denominated “Universal History” that dealt with simple reports about the formation processes of modern civilizations. The objective of these “universal” stories, many times written by European authors, was to explain the civilizing process that we denominate “Western civilization” and that is essentially a history of the Christian European estates, their relationship to the expansion of Christianity, the fights against Islamism, their colonies, and future ex-colonies. Important successes in that regard, for example in Spain – if we want to connect the universal history to the national Colombian history -, are the stories of successive dominant peoples or ethnicities and of the last victory of the great Christian family over pagans, Jews, and Islamic Europeans.

The Reconquest history and the history of the discovery of the American continent, or of the Portuguese expansion through the Asian or African continents, are accomplishments ended by pious conquerors, carrying crosses, flags and the roman catholic religion that reacted against Muslim arbitrariness (as well as Jewish or protestant’s arbitrariness). Islamophobia (and the persecution of Jews or protestants), are evident themes considering the absence of reports about their importance in the formation of Spain or Europe. Indeed, the omission of the history of slavery or of Africans concerning Colombia’s national history also occurs.

In civilization’s histories, the “universal history”, Egypt is briefly mentioned and, maybe, in some excerpts of African history, specifically

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Carthaginian, related to Rome (all catholic history is proud to inherit latinity, the catholic religion and other roman cultures). The rest of the ancient populations mentioned, usually, are part of the biblical history, because, again, the history of Eastern civilizations is “Eastern” history. Indeed, it has already been mentioned that Colombia’s national history is a double peregrination that starts in the biblical Genesis and culminates with the establishment of the conservatory republic in 1886, tying together the education plan, the institutionalization of a single form of Catholicism, linguistic unity and the invention of traditions and the history of Eastern civilization: Colombians are the result of this process.

An additional element to comment on. The definition of “false” or “true” in Henao and Arrubla’s texts helps establishing narrative authority upon the reader, and the value judgements that they apply to the text to qualify character’s actions or characterize them, indeed, as incarnations of Christian values (to facilitate the reader’s identification to the characters). While history, as the Bible, is characterized as “true” or “truths”, indigenous cosmologies (they do not mention any African, Jewish or protestant belief systems in their narrative) are treated as “myths” and “legends”, fictions that have but literary value, just as Greek or Roman myths (in the sense of stablishing an ancient American history) in the reader/citizen’s formation.

The route traced by the narrative links permanently the manufactured past to the reader, be that an individual who studies the text and integrates it as prosthetic memory or, even better, increasing the effectiveness of the incorporation process, a set of students whose individuality synchronizes through the reading and public study of the texts.

The only evident space for the aperture to Islamic culture³ transmitted through the media comes from children’s literature (and through the movies, television and, curiously, less through the internet), where different versions of multiple “tales” taken from many translations of “*One Thousand and One Nights*” become referents to a magical universe made for entertaining children while they learn Spanish; even then, as all that 20th century cinema volume categorized as “*Swords and Sandals*”, the Islamic universe is defined, be as a Turkish *telenovela*, belly dances, or as a fast food dish, like Habib’s sfihas.

³ In Colombia, in the Orinoquia region, there is a festivity which is a national patrimony, funded in 1735, named “*Cuadrillas de San Martín*”, where the galas (Spanish people) combat the moors (the Arabs) by horse, and the Guahiba ethnicity, the drunkards.

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If there is anything that shapes and defines the notion of “social memory” it is when a pedagogue and institution’s group and authority collaborate in the persuasion of an individual. Because the history we talk about in here is not developed for the student to turn into a critical researcher of the past, but to make a citizen. The effectiveness of this teaching method and methodology would mark not only half the 20th century in Colombia, but in all of America as well.

The Chilean link of writing of Colombian history: analogies to build paths between universal history and national history

Nuestra juventud ha de embeberse en los nobles ejemplos de abnegación, de piadosa fidelidad, de amor a la justicia, de cordial misericordia i de cristiana grandeza. Los ojos de los niños han de brillar de santa indignación cuando vean falseada la verdad i perseguida la inocencia, sus corazones han de exaltarse al comprender que se desconoce la virtud i que se oprime la libertad, manifestándose dispuestos a defenderla. La juventud debe crecer moral por la enseñanza de la historia.

While many authors explain Henao and Arrubla’s texts through different lenses, very few, maybe even none of them, mention the authors that they cite to structure their texts – sometimes almost literally – and compose, in this process, what would be the national history’s teaching pedagogy. The pedagogic work they mention (Henao and Arrubla, 1911: 5), is called “*Metodología (sic) de la Historia*”, awarded in the “*Certamen Pedagógico*” competition, commemorated in 1893, by the Chilean author José María Muñoz Hermosilla.

Este punto de contacto juega un rol mui eficaz, por lo cual precisa buscarle i ponerle de manifiesto en cualquiera forma que sea. Así, por ejemplo, la historia de los persas i de los asirios está bastante ligada a la historia del pueblo hebreo; la historia de los apóstoles se relaciona con el paganismo de Gresia i de Roma, el establecimiento del cristianismo con la persecución de los cristianos; en la época de los grandes inventos se hace el descubrimiento de América, que señala una nueva edad llena de ventura para los pobladores del globo; la reforma religiosa trae la libertad del pensamiento, promueve el cultivo de las ciencias i de la instrucción del pueblo, etc.

His history student project is moral civic, specifically, and less chronologic-analytical. As Henao and Arrubla posteriorly, Muñoz establishes a link between the soul’s virtues and the notion of truth, that Colombians cite directly from the gospel according to Saint John.

The study of history is proposed as an exercise to constitute the soul, as a civilizing project specifically in the subject’s level. It is not a sense of community or participation and political ethics. The subject is part of the nation and communes – by prosthetic memory – with national memory,

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his culture and language – hispanists’ dearest unifier and civilizing element – and by this medium, the subject evolves, he grows, an identity with respect of others that commune with the same principles (and that can prove they were born in the country where the narrative is set. Knowing the history of another country negates one’s nationality and identity).

The analogy, a form of establishing identity between the Ancient World and the Modern World is one of Muñoz’s most evident pedagogical methodologies. To present the ancient world’s history as an alien narrative, to the educational process, lacks objective. The purpose of teaching history is, literally as in *Blade Runner*, to program in each body a prosthetic memory for the youth to have a past, to make them civil, peaceful, and good citizens. The past, in this sense, is narrative and linguistic space that grants by its longevity, an added value to people, objects, ideas, but that lacks analytical fundament.

It is also a source through which atemporal and eternal virtues of the Christian doctrine originate that, in its glory, as it seems, welcomes all universal history as a fundament and result, a sustenance that floats through the organism of Adam and Eve’s children, the mark of being created by a demiurge, of the creation of everything by the one and true Christian biblical God, that is, however, also the mark, when disputed by the biblical text, of the inhumanity, malice, cruelty or perverseness of the enemies of God’s people. This analogy rescues this sustenance and its human manifestations, judged by Christian values from the 17th century and from then on, and makes it a study tool for the classroom.

This analogy is used to eliminate the temporal perspective of the notion of past and make it a memory domain that is always present. Just as Rome became the capital of the Roman Empire, it is also represented as the center of Catholicism’s political, economic, and religious universe, Colombia’s official religion, today very important and powerful among other forms of Christianity in the country, Bogotá becomes, in the historical report, the center of the narrative universe of the conquest, colony, independence and republic (historiographic periods that structure the “history of Colombia”), but also, and not by chance, of stories of the pre-Columbian times.

Pueblos como los paraguayos, los saguntinos, los numantinos, los antiguos romanos, espartanos i atenienses, serán hasta el fin de los siglos un tipo de patriotas, en que en una o en otra forma ha imperado el cumplimiento del deber en que se han reflejado, por tantas i tantas pruebas de amor al trabajo, al orden i a la paz, las más relevantes dotes de civismo.

It is not about understanding processes or differences, but about establishing patrimonial links, sacred and moral as Freud had already pointed out in 1909, between the infant's mind and figures that are turned literally familiar, by the narrative. The text's figures substitute or are explained and described according to affective models. We incorporate these behavior models, by stories' characters, by the analogy not only historical, but by the relationship that children develop with their parents. Characters and values blend and, as in the baroque Christmas figure, the Christian discourse becomes, literally, familiar, an element of the home, of school or of any public space.

From the point of view of the development of morality, understood as behavior, the moral superiority and authority derives from this model, and the analogy to the ancient world, by universal history, becomes true and physically in the body, and then, in the group. But beyond the idea of fiction or of truth, the opposition pair of the utilitarian court in this pedagogical text, it is valuable for the teaching of the language and of moral values. Furthermore, other stories and narratives, many of them lived by the subject, others read, others listened to or any other way they might have gotten in contact with them, will be confronted throughout the time with these versions that become teaching material in school.

Wittgenstein described this process as "identifying others' gods from ours". Thus, the role of the Islamic or the African universe in this scheme is, for example, different from the one in Brazil, where Africa and slavery were part of the genesis of the republic, while, as other authors have already treated, indigenous are treated in a different way from, for example, the Colombian case. In Colombia's stories, to this day (even with the existence of a mandatory "Afro-Colombian cathedra"), mentioned, indigenous and slave religiosities and moral values are rejected.

Turkish people and Muslims explain, on the one hand, the Spanish Reconquest glory that resulted in the creation of the Empire, and by the other, the glory of Cristóbal Colón's Christian campaigns and of his successors, who expanded the Catholic Kings' domains and, therefore, of the Spanish language and Catholicism and Africa is a continent that the Portuguese had to circumnavigate to go to the East Indies. The only reference to the Spanish moors, at least in Muñoz's text, declares that: "*está fuera de duda que los moros españoles emplearon la pólvora en el arte de la guerra desde principios del siglo XII.*"

From the indigenous' side (since Africans are not even mentioned), their stories and material culture are irrelevant to the narrative; their languages are reduced, as in the case of the *almojábanas*, to an innocuous philological *Heródoto*, Unifesp, Guarulhos, v. 6, n. 1, 2021.1 p. 249-270.
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little story (to explain the name of a place, for example); however, their relics serve, as in the Mexican and Peruvian cases, to establish a civilized and monumental past, of the Spanish Reconquest period.

Thus, for example, the famous San Agustín statues, found in Colombia's south-eastern Andes are compared to the material culture of Mediterranean cultures such as the Etruscans and is named without any proof or arguments, "Empire" to the territory conquered by the Spanish in the "*cundiboyacense*" plateau region where it is founded and established, by posterior historical processes, Bogotá, that centuries later changed the Colombian republic's capital and was named, by its citizens – and against all evidence – the "south-American Athens".

However, it wasn't the Greek language, but Latin, and the Ancient Rome, the language and inspiration of Colombian grammarians, such as Miguel Antonio Caro that, even being hispanists, never addressed the Al-Andaluz traditional marks in the Spanish language from New Granada, with the same passion that had been expressed for Latin (or Greek), the Vatican language, the Roman ecclesiastical apostolic catholic institution, a body that would administrate the youth's education in the country, administrator of governing communities of the top national universities. To this day, it is the prevailing view, and it holds the legitimate political power in Colombia.

Catholic Xenophobia: from the Santiago route to the present

Colombia was not immigrant's favorite destiny⁴: besides having few opportunities to progress economically in this country, Colombian natives participate and cultivate the anticommunist and antisocialist fear (today named as "*castrochavismo*" by Colombian fascists, a mixture of a longtime Colombian-Venezuelan rivalry, hatred towards the unsuccessful Chávez and of fear of the Cuban Revolution), which expresses itself as xenophobia. Even in colony times, because it seems to be almost one of the colonial traditions inherited by Colombians, foreigner control, of Jews, converted Jews, and, as in almost all colonies where slaves were the source of income and of fear, they would combat political, economic, and religious differences.

⁴ Regarding Eastern immigrants, to this day, between ethnical groups or, foreign migrants, there is a notable Syrian Lebanese community (largely Christian, but there is an Islamic minority, especially on the North, in the Caribbean Colombian coast) integrated to the national society and a much less noticeable Jewish community.

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It is not strange to hear, for example, in the media, of the links between communists and Venezuelans and of Iranians as a source of evil that feeds off the violence and terrorism in Colombia on the one hand. On the other hand, and even having Venezuelans as an object of *antichavista* propaganda, Venezuelan immigrants are target of the xenophobia of a country that has received few immigrants in all its republican history. There is a history that links Colombians and Venezuelans, that will not be addressed here; however, it has been translated, by official political propaganda, in another type of nationalist Colombian xenophobia.

At the end of the 19th century, as in the beginning of the 20th century, or in half of it, at the end of it and in the beginning of the 21st, foreigners are unwanted if they are Chinese, Cuban, "African", Venezuelan, among others that were disconnected from the unsuccessful projects of racial and cultural whitening (this last one succeed by the hispanist education), possible sources of the disturbance of national catholic values, of the order of things, of commerce, of the geopolitical order etc.

Between 1884 and 1885, and linked to the radical liberal project of the modernization of education in Colombia, a civil war flared up (among other reasons, for the power of radical liberals, but also for the presence of protestant instructors of Prussian origin), that allowed, by the victory of the ultra-catholic, anticommunist, antisocialist, xenophobic and hispanist, "*La Regeneración*" party, the genesis of the Republic of Colombia, its constitution and, posteriorly, literally, its history being written by two party agents of this faction, Henao and Arrubla.

Thus, the dominant historiographic project, born, perhaps, more because of the desire to figure in the world scenario than by a request from the community, in Colombia up until 1980, is part of a political project institutionalized in the constitution of 1886 that was only modified in 1991. Even with the modernization of de 1991 constitution, the cathedra of History would be eliminated from Colombian classrooms to this day.

The project, conservative and catholic became official shortly after the conservative victory in the civil war of 1903. In terms of historiography, it was expressed in the foundation of de *Academia de Historia* of Colombia in 1902. It was them who, in 1910 organized the contest that gave the official place to Henao and Arrubla's texts. Except for the period of liberal and modernizing influence of the 1930 and 1940 administrations, it would become the centralist national project that lasted the longest, consolidated since 1950.

After three years of partisan, urban, and rural violence, that would start with the assassination of the presidential candidate Jorge Eliecer Gaitán, national catholic conservatism would consolidate with the autocratic, fascist and ultra-catholic government of the far right politician Laureano Gómez, substituted by Gustavo Rojas Pinilla's anticommunist and Bolivarian dictatorship, which, in 1957, would be substituted by a military junta and later by the dictatorship of the Liberal and Conservative parties, named "*Frente Nacional*". This last one born not only from the conclusion of the military's dictatorial period, but as a Pan-American response (supported by the USA) to the Cuban revolution of 1958.

In this period, which went from 1950 until 1980, Colombian culture would become institution, not only by textbooks, but by the consolidation of the *Academia de la Lengua*, of the *Instituto Caro y Cuervo*, the *Instituto de Estudios Hispánicos* and by the foundation and transformation of the old *Escola Normal Superior* (liberal, with even the participation of Paul Rivet) into the *Instituto Colombiano de Antropología*, under the dictatorship and by the foundation of the INFRAVISION, an institute dedicated to the production of public television and with the *Instituto Nacional del Turismo*, that, along with radio stations, and traditional newspapers of powerful Colombian families (*El Tiempo*, *El Espectador*, *El Siglo* and even of the Catholic Church's Sunday newspaper), became the official organ of international media. In this period, and by the hand of social scientists, Colombian culture is reinterpreted from hispanist basis (never eliminating it), less manufactured in the knowledge of Spanish history, but in imported images of fascist Iberian and Latin-American regimens and of the first scientists trained in the US.

In the scheme of culture and history, positive race concepts would be integrated, coming from, among other places, Brazil (triple ethnicity) and the United States, therefore, integrating original and afro descendant peoples in the official discourse. It would only be in 1991, when both "ethnicities" participated in the drafting of the Constitution, but the war of many civil society's sectors, of politics and religion, of *narcos* and paramilitaries that would follow the signature of this document and that would consolidate in 2002 when, under the political effects of the official speech of the Colombia plan, reality is reinterpreted and turns *guerrillas* into *narcos*, has made that this project materializes slowly and violently.

After being transformed into *narcos*, and with the arrival of the new government in 2002, there is a comeback of anti-Islam thoughts, with the

September of 2001 attacks in the United States⁵: communists transformed into narco-terrorists, monsters also funded by Islamic extremists. In contrast, and with the help of advertising agencies and cultural industries, Colombia's fascist cultural model, based on its conservative, catholic, and hispanist historiographic tradition, but also in the contribution of certain anthropological discourses, became an omnipresent discourse: an a-historical and folkloric *colombianidad* would be the media's educational weapon to help in the pacifying of new generations.

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⁵ Born since the 1960s and 70s, part of the Cold War against the Soviet Union, China, and Cuba, fueled by the Arab Israeli conflict, by the media, and by Hollywood during the R. Reagan and Bush administrations in the subsequent years, and monstrously materialized in the support of the war between Iran and Iraq, the war in Afghanistan, in Beirut, and by the Kuwait invasion and posterior war – characterized by the media as a crusade – against Iraq in the 1990s.

⁶ We list the references of texts and pages used (studied, analyzed, debated, etc.) during the master's and doctoral research at UNICAMP (2006-2013), supervised by Pedro Paulo Funari, from which we built this essay.

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