

EDUCATION, HISTORY AND FICTION: THE KINDRED NOVEL IN THE TEACHING OF THE CONCEPT OF HISTORICAL TIME IN THE BASIC EDUCATION CLASSROOM



<https://doi.org/10.56238/arev6n4-303>

Submitted on: 11/18/2024

Publication date: 12/18/2024

Tallita Stumpp¹ and Leandro Couto Carreira Ricon².

ABSTRACT

The text, considering the challenges faced in education to consolidate practices that go beyond the teaching of traditional history, aims to think about the teaching of the concept of historical time through literary language as a historical source to be worked on in the history classroom of basic education. To this end, we intend to investigate the National Common Curricular Base, understanding it as a normative document that presents possibilities for non-traditional teaching, mainly due to the emphasis given to the processes and concepts fundamental to historiographical research. From this, we propose to think about the teaching of the concept of historical time from the novel *Kindred* (1979), by Octavia E. Butler, as a historical source, and to present a reading of the work as a contemporary historical novel, bringing the novelistic form closer to historiographical concepts.

Keywords: History Teaching, Historical time, History and fiction, History and literature.

¹ Master in Education (PPGE-UCP)

Researcher at the Study and Research Group on Theory of History and Education (UCP)

Graduated in Languages (UNESA) and Undergraduate in History (UFRJ)

Email: tallitastumoreira@gmail.com

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4050-7028>

² Dr. in Comparative History (PPGHC-UFRJ)

Permanent Professor at the Graduate Program in Education (PPGE-UCP)

Research Coordinator at Faculdade EnsinE

Email: leandro.ricon@ucp.br

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1893-4816>

INTRODUCTION

Elsa Nadai (1993) stated that the teaching of History, since the 1960s, has been designed in order to bring it closer to the production of knowledge about the past in substitution of a traditional teaching of History that, in addition to being elitist and Eurocentric, presents as its content an already finished knowledge, ready to be transmitted to students through the teacher, understood as a reproducer of knowledge produced by other subjects in spaces other than the school. Even so, there are many challenges faced in education to consolidate practices that go beyond the conception of memorization of chronologically arranged dates of the "great" deeds of certain historical figures.

Since 2017, Brazilian schools have entered the process of standardizing their curricula based on what is recommended by the National Common Curriculum Base (BNCC) which, approved in the midst of important political disputes, presents some of these aspects that have been discussed since the 1960s. Therefore, even though it is not unprecedented, the BNCC emphasizes processes, historical sources and concepts that constitute the basis of historiographical work as inherent to the teaching of History.

In this sense, this article aims *to think about the teaching of the concept of historical time through literary language as a historical source to be worked on in the History classroom of basic education*. To this end, we propose to (i) understand the National Common Curricular Base as a normative document that presents possibilities for non-traditional teaching; (ii) to think about the teaching of the concept of *historical time* from the novel *Kindred* (1979), by Octavia E. Butler, as a historical source; and (iii) to present a reading of the work as a contemporary historical novel, bringing the novelistic form closer to historiographical concepts.

Octavia E. Butler (1947 - 2006) was an African-American writer, considered by literary critics to be one of the leading authors of the 20th century. Her first novel *Kindred*, published in the United States in 1979, has as its protagonist Edana Franklin, a black woman who disappears from the living room of her apartment in California in 1976, reappearing in the slave state of Maryland in the early 19th century. Suddenly and unwittingly, Dana is taken to the past whenever Rufus Weylin, the son of a plantation owner and enslaved people, is in danger and returns to his present — 1976 — whenever his own life is put at risk in that past. On one of these trips, Dana discovers that her great-grandmother, Alice Greenwood, is an enslaved woman who will be raped by Rufus, giving

birth to Hagar Weylin, her grandmother. Thus, temporal fictionalization is one of the central aspects of the novel.

The article that now begins is divided into three sections: the first, *The BNCC and the concept of historical time in the teaching of History*, presents the conception of history present in the National Common Curricular Base, as well as the centrality of the processes and concepts brought by the document to the teaching of History. This excerpt is established in dialogue with Freitas (2018), Frigotto and Motta (2017), Ralejo, Mello and Amorim (2021), Freire (2021), among others. From this, we seek to argue about the use of literary sources in the classroom, considering the specificities of literary language from Candido (2011, 2012), Pinto (2020), among others; in the second, *Octavia E. Butler, writer*, we present the author and her work, justifying the choice of the novel *Kindred* as a historical source for teaching the concept of historical time; in the third section, *History and fiction in Kindred: a contemporary historical novel*, we propose a reading of the novel as a contemporary historical novel from Charbel (2016), Koselleck (2015) and Hartman (2020). To this end, from the dialogue between the Theory of History and Literary Theory, we bring together formal aspects of the work with historical concepts and, mainly, with the concept of historical time in dialogue with Walter Benjamin (1994).

It should be noted that our objective in this work is not to propose a methodology or to elaborate a lesson plan, but to present a possible reading of the novel as a historical source for the investigation of the relations between history and fiction, from which historiographical concepts are raised in the attention given to the fictional narrative form. The choice of Butler's work *Kindred*, understood as a source rich in meanings that enable the work and reflection on the concept of historical time, was precisely due to the fictionalization of different temporalities.

THE BNCC AND THE CONCEPT OF HISTORICAL TIME IN THE TEACHING OF HISTORY

The National Common Curriculum Base (BNCC) states that

History does not emerge as a datum or an accident that explains everything: it is the correlation of forces, confrontations and the battle for the production of senses and meanings, which are constantly reinterpreted by different social groups and their demands – which, consequently, raises other questions and discussions (Brasil, 2017, p. 397).

In this sense, in addition to the selection of contents, the document emphasizes the processes involved in the production of historical knowledge, as well as the use of historical sources, which is in line with the concept of "historian attitude" (Brasil, 2017, p. 397) — also mobilized by the document.

The processes involved in the production of historical knowledge are (i) identification, situating objects in time and space and considering the plural forms of relationship between subject and object; (ii) comparison, as an exercise not of classification and hierarchization, but of understanding otherness; (iii) contextualization, as a way of locating specificities in different times and spaces; (iv) interpretation, considering the specificities of objects in their most varied languages and (v) analysis, which includes the understanding of the writing of history itself, problematizing totalizing conceptions and evidencing the incompleteness of the production of historical knowledge with regard to the production of meaning. In this sense, these processes involve "an aesthetic and, mainly, ethical understanding of the object in question" (Brasil, 2017, p. 400).

From the processes listed by the document and presented above, it is possible to perceive the centrality acquired by historical sources in the teaching of History in basic education. In addition, these processes aim to stimulate autonomy, seeking to replace pedagogical bases based only on the notion of didactic transposition, according to which the school would be the reproducer of the knowledge produced by researchers in higher institutions, such as Universities (CIAMPI, 2008; GALZERANI, 2008). The BNCC defines as part of the teaching of History, therefore, the very epistemological bases of the field, among which we highlight the concept of historical time and the multiple languages through which we relate to each other and to the world, producing meanings. This is because,

it is expected that historical knowledge will be treated as one way of thinking, among several; a way of inquiring about things of the past and present, of constructing explanations, unveiling meanings, composing and decomposing interpretations, in continuous movement throughout time and space (Brasil, 2017, p. 401).

Hence the mobilization of the concept of "historian attitude", involving as a specific competence of history for Elementary School "[c]omparing and problematizing the concepts and procedures that guide historiographical production" (Brasil, 2017, p. 402). It is precisely from this competence that we intend to reflect on how to include the concept of historical time in the teaching of History in basic education through work with historical sources –

Butler's literature, in our case – considering the plurality and complexity that such a conceptualization implies.

Now, the BNCC, constituted as a "normative document that defines the organic and progressive set of essential learning that all students must develop throughout the stages and modalities of Basic Education" (Brasil, 2017, p. 7), was marked by political disputes and raises different questions from the most varied areas of knowledge. As Freitas (2018) points out, the document is aligned with a neoliberal reformist perspective that, in addition to neotechnicist pedagogical bases, establishes "basic" content based on the downsizing of curricula, transforming education into a process of seeking results, based on the pair "competencies" and "skills", which deepens educational inequalities in a country already marked by social and economic inequalities. As for the BNCC for Secondary Education, Maciel (2019), Frigotto and Motta (2017) expose the anti-democratic nature of the reform brought by Law No. 13,415/2017, which originated from a Provisional Measure of 2016, which amended the Law of Guidelines and Bases of Education (LDB 9,394/1996).

With regard specifically to the teaching of History, its three versions (2015, 2016, 2017) have also raised deeply significant criticisms and debates. In the context of discussions around the BNCC, which we consider crucial for a critical analysis of this document, we seek to establish a dialogue with the work of Ralejo, Mello and Amorim (2021), since, by identifying the gaps present in the BNCC, these authors provide us with an opportunity to envision new paths for the teaching of History. This is because, according to the authors, the curriculum and the teaching of History can be understood not as isolated fields of knowledge, but as "frontier space-times" (Ralejo; Mello; Amorim, 2021, p. 4), woven by different knowledge and power relations. This notion therefore makes it possible to recognize gaps that open up the possibility of non-traditional teaching, as it undertakes a perspective in which the role of the teacher is fundamental in the power relations that engender public educational policies. In this sense,

"[It is] in their [the teachers'] hands that the document will also be interpreted and materialized in the format of classes. Thus, we recognize that these subjects have a power relationship in this process, as those who produce meanings about the contents to be taught, and not only as reproducers of previous prescriptions" (Ralejo; Mello; Amorim, 2021, p. 10).

One of the possible horizons envisioned by the authors is precisely found in the concept of "historian attitude", present in the BNCC, as a specific proposal for history (Ralejo; Mello; Amorim, 2021). In our readings, we understand that this concept also finds

dialogue with what Paulo Freire says about the democratization of knowledge. According to Freire (2021), teaching to ask is an essential task, since all knowledge begins with a question. The act of asking, which is close to what the historian does with historical sources, is configured as a democratic and dialogical act because, when educating, it is not enough to teach historical content and characters distributed in a chronological timeline, but it becomes necessary to teach and learn the construction of knowledge itself, including questions and perspectives of the different subjects involved in the pedagogical relationship.

In addition, it is also possible to find gaps that enable the teaching of History that distances itself from the traditional conception, bringing to the classroom other temporalities that include the perspectives of historically subalternized groups and subjects, not only as contents, but as sources of knowledge production, highlighting their authorship. Therefore, we realize that literary sources — as a possibility of source among many others equally valid and significant — present themselves as important objects for the consolidation of other perspectives in the teaching of History and, notably, for the teaching of concepts, considering the specificities of the literary object (BITTENCOURT, 2018; ABUD, SILVA, ALVES, 2011; FERREIRA, 2013).

In one of his best-known texts, Antonio Candido (2011) affirms literature as a human right, considering it in its most diverse forms of expression by associating it with the human need for fabulation. In *A literatura e a formação do homem* (2012), Candido defends the humanizing character of literature, not because it would be in charge of prescribing certain behaviors, attitudes or ways of thinking, but because, by fictionalizing issues inherent to the human condition, it "makes us live" (Candido, 2012, p. 85). Based on what Candido states, we agree with the perspective that the democratization of literature, understanding it as a human right, includes not only access to literary works considered canonical, but also to works produced by historically subordinated subjects who had, along with their histories and perspectives, their productions erased throughout history (Machado; Silva, 2021).

Thinking about concepts in the teaching of history — specifically the concept of historical time, due to its disciplinary centrality — through work with historical sources in the classroom — in our case, literary sources — requires the consideration of the specificities of the literary object, making the dialogue between the Theory of History and Literary Theory, or the relationship between history and fiction, essential.

Regarding this relationship, Pinto (2020) points out that the historian launched into literary reading needs to perceive the active and creative dimensions of the act of reading and the distinct commitments of historiographical narratives (with truth, even if provisional and fragmentary) and literary narratives (with imagination). The author criticizes the view that literary texts are mirrors of reality. Instead, he argues that fiction, through processes of aestheticization and transformation, creates an artistic representation of reality. This representation, although not a faithful copy of the real one – which would even be impossible – allows the reader to access aspects of the human experience that would be difficult to grasp otherwise. The author, in this tone, continues:

Literature can indeed be an accurate seismograph, even for history: thanks to its creative freedom and the wide apparatus of aesthetic and language resources, it can quickly perceive what other narratives take longer to notice. It remains, however, that we, historians-readers, never ignore the aesthetic dimension of fiction; that we never disregard the work of writing itself: if fiction has something to tell us about the past, it should be sought less in a supposed immediate revelation of the "context", less in the "historical" information that the literary text offers us — and which, evidently, is not worthy of full trust — and more in discrete elements or associated with the work itself of text construction, to the cognitive context — and here the adjective reinvents the noun — that allowed it (Pinto, 2020, p. 35).

Based on the considerations made, we propose, in the following sections, a reading of the novel *Kindred* (1979), by the African-American writer Octavia E. Butler, as a source to be worked on in the classroom in the teaching of the concept of historical time. This proposal, however, is limited to the reading of the novel as a contemporary historical novel, in dialogue with Felipe Charbel (2016), emphasizing formal aspects and historical concepts through the dialogue between the Theory of History and the Literary Theory. Therefore, it is worth explaining that we do not intend to propose a lesson plan or link this reading according to a teaching methodology, but to analyze the relations between history and fiction in the novel in question, evidencing the literary form and its possible relations with historiographical concepts, specifically the concept of historical time.

OCTAVIA E. BUTLER, WRITER

Daughter of Octavia Guy, a maid, and James Butler, a shoeshine boy, writer Octavia Estelle Butler (1947-2006) was born in Pasadena, California. Inclined to reading since childhood, she began to write her first plots as a girl. She won her first short story contest at the age of eighteen, at the school where she studied, and in 1968 she graduated as a technologist in Arts with an emphasis in History at Pasadena City College.

In *Positive Obsession* (2016), one of her few autobiographical essays, Butler shares her trajectory as a reader and writer, from childhood to the consolidation of her career. The author reveals the difficulties faced in accessing books, such as the dependence on books discarded by her mother's employers. The author tells of her admiration for the public library and its importance for her education, but also of the fear she felt of frequenting these spaces due to the racism she faced as a black child. In addition, science fiction and fantasy writing itself was crossed by these experiences, this being a production space dominated, in the United States, by white men.

These experiences run through the work of Octavia Butler, who thematizes issues of class, race, and gender through both science fiction and fantasy. His work consists of three series of novels: *Patternist* (1976-1984) which, of the five novels, had three published in Brazil; *Xenogenesis* (1987-1989), published in Portuguese between 2018 and 2021 under the title *Xenogenesis*; and *Parable* (1995-1998), also published in Brazil as *Semente da terra* between 2018 and 2019. In addition to the series, there are the novels *Kindred* (1979) and *Fledgling* (2005) and two collections of short stories: *Bloodchild and Other Stories* (1995), published in Brazil as *Filhos de sangue e outras histórias* (2020) and *Unexpected Stories* (2014), a work published posthumously.

Kindred, the novel to which we will focus in this article, had its first Brazilian edition, *Kindred: blood ties*, in 2017, almost forty years after its publication, with the translation by Carolina Caires Coelho by Editora Morro Branco. The story is narrated by the voice of Edana [Dana] Franklin, a black woman who, on June 9, 1976 — the day of her 26th birthday — disappears from the living room of the apartment she had just moved into with her husband, Kevin Franklin, in California, and reappears in 19th-century Maryland, before the American Civil War. From the bookshelf she intended to organize, the protagonist is taken to the middle of a river in which a child is drowning. The child is Rufus Weylin, son of Tom and Margaret Weylin, owners of a farm, and enslaved people. Dana saves Rufus from drowning and, when threatened by the boy's father's shotgun, returns to her apartment in California in the second half of the 20th century.

Butler is considered one of the most important science fiction authors of the 20th century and invites us to a deep reflection on time, history, and identity through her novel. By transposing a young black woman from the 20th century to a slave plantation in the 19th century, the author weaves a complex narrative that intertwines past and present, making

use of the imaginary in order to question the notions of historical time and the possibilities of fictionalizing the past.

The choice of *Kindred* for this analysis is justified by the rich exploration of the temporality present in the novel. The protagonist's constant time travels, between her contemporary life and the brutality of slavery, allow an in-depth analysis of the relationships between past, present and future, as well as the way in which history is inscribed in the bodies and memories of individuals considering different historicities.

In the next section, we intend to interpret it as an expression of the contemporary historical novel, considering not only its content, but also, and mainly, its form. In this sense, we will address how the relationship between present, past and future occurs in the work, how historiographical knowledge is mobilized in the narrative of the novel itself and the ethical questions raised by it about the forms of fictionalization of the past, bringing these aspects closer to the trends of the contemporary historical novel, in dialogue with Felipe Charbel (2016), Reinhart Koselleck (2015) and Saidiya Hartman (2020). We also intend to argue that the conception of historical time in the work is close to Benjamin's conception of history.

HISTORY AND FICTION IN *KINDRED*: A CONTEMPORARY HISTORICAL NOVEL

The novel *Kindred* consists of a prologue, six chapters, and an epilogue. The chapter titles are, respectively, "The River", "The Fire", "The Fall", "The Fight", "The Storm" and "The Rope". Except for the sixth chapter, each of the titles refers to the danger of death from which Dana needs to save Rufus and, with each trip to the past, Dana returns to the future when her own life is at risk. "The Rope" refers to the suicide of Alice Greenwood, an enslaved woman whom Dana meets as a child and who, in the future of the past, will be raped by Rufus Weylin, giving birth to Hagar Weylin, Dana's grandmother. What makes the character travel to the past is the risk of the death of Rufus, her ancestor, which means the indirect risk of her own death, the risk that she, Dana, will not exist in the future. What makes her return to the present is the direct risk of her death, often engendered by the very character whom she needs to save. In other words, in Butler, in order to continue living, the past cannot be totally changed.

Now, time travel is one of the main themes addressed by narratives classified as science fiction. From *The clock that went backward* (1881), by the American writer Edward Page Mitchell (1852 - 1927) — probably the first short story that uses a machine, the clock,

as a resource for the characters' journey to the past — to the German series *Dark* (2017) — produced by the streaming company Netflix — the narratives of what is conventionally called science fiction deal, in different ways, the paradoxes and consequences arising from the possibility of human beings traveling in time. However, Butler makes use of this narrative resource, evidencing not the machine, the dream or the alteration of consciousness, but the generational and socio-historical links that involuntarily connect the present to the past. It is the past that is present for the protagonist, and not only for her, but also for Kevin, a white man to whom Dana is married and ends up being taken to the history of the United States that precedes the period of the Civil War. In this sense, it is precisely the lack of explanation of this displacement and the focus on generational and socio-historical ties that make the presentification of the past sudden and involuntary.

Although it was published in the 1970s, it is possible to say that Butler's novel presents significant aspects that meet the trends of the contemporary historical novel. This, according to Felipe Charbel (2016), has some characteristics: a self-reflexive form, that is, in the novel there is a reflection on the very making of the novel, or on how to fictionalize historical events. There is, in these novels, a questioning of the modern conception of History, which encompasses the idea of progress and the erasure that this conception undertakes on subalternized subjects. These characteristics are shared by the "historiographical metafiction", conceptualized by Linda Hutcheon, in *Poetics of Postmodernism* (1991), and which refers to novels published between the 1960s and 1970s, but which differ from the contemporary historical novel by emphasizing the provisionality and fragmentarity of historical knowledge about the past. Historiographical metafiction, in this sense, can be interpreted as a fictional form that was expressed in the context in which the narrative or fictional dimension of historiography began to be approached by different theorists of both History and Literature. According to Charbel (2016), this last characteristic is fundamental to understand the differences presented by the contemporary historical novel, since instead of using fiction to produce novels that question History as being only a discourse, it proposes to try to make past historical events present as difference.

The way in which Butler constructs the narrative resource of time travel is radically close to what Charbel calls *pathos of authenticity*, that is, this "expectation of making present, even if in an incomplete and fragmentary way, the irreducible difference of past

historical events, providing a kind of 'substitute experience' of the past" (Charbel, 2016, p. 61-62).

There is also an effort in the novel to recreate distinct historicities and, more than that, also to put them in conflict. Dana makes the future intervene in the past using her knowledge to teach other enslaved people to read and write, to take care of the sick and to try to interfere in Rufus' own education. The protagonist's companion often questions her intentions, stating that she is "playing with the story", emphasizing the perspective that the story "[...] has already happened" and, therefore, "[c]ertly we cannot change it" (Butler, 2019, p. 134), to which Dana responds that she cannot "close her eyes" (Butler, 2019, p. 162). From the perspective of great-grandmother Alice, Dana is like a "white black woman" (Butler, 2019, p. 257) because she speaks "like white people", knows how to read and write, questions the limited knowledge of doctors at the time, or establishes an ambiguous relationship with Rufus.

At a certain point in the narrative, Dana begins to question the ease with which the two would have adapted to that time: "We weren't in, really. We were observers watching a show. We were watching history happen all around us. And we were actors. We never forgot that we were interpreting" (Butler, 2019, p. 159). Although, to use Koselleck's (2015) categories, Dana and Kevin's space of experience and horizon of expectation are different, in the narrative they are limited to the space of experience and the horizon of expectation of the context in which they are inserted, marked by the power relations established in that 19th-century society, evidencing different strata of a certain permanence of these relations in time. Even so, this space of experience and horizon of expectation are not totally limited, allowing for small changes and transgressions in this temporality. Therefore, the way in which the novel presents the past tensions the very challenges and limits of doing so, mainly because the protagonist herself perceives herself as an observer of this past, even when inserted in it.

In addition to the conflicts between different historicities, the time in the past and in the present of the protagonist do not pass in the same way. Staying for two months in the past, Dana returns to the present on the same day she had disappeared from home (Butler, 2019, p. 187). In this sense, time in the past is prolonged in relation to the present of the characters, while the present seems to shrink in the face of the prolongation of the past. This prolongation of the past also brings the novel closer to "the traces of a presentist

historical culture" (Charbel, 2016, p. 63), which is expressed in the attempt to reconstruct the past in such a radical way that it becomes present suddenly and involuntarily.

Considering these aspects, it is possible to say that what entangles the present, past and future in the narrative is the protagonist's need to survive *in* the past and survive *the* past, which is suddenly and involuntarily presentified through generational and socio-historical links. And what would be the chances of surviving this past?

To try to ensure her own safety in 19th-century slave-owning Maryland, Dana keeps a canvas bag strapped to her waist containing items that can help her survive. In addition to clothes, medicine bottles, and a pocket knife, Kevin goes to the library looking for manumission letters that can be forged and history books that can help her. Books on "the history of black people" (Butler, 2019, p. 75), the "history of slavery in the United States" (p. 185) and maps of Maryland are mobilized in the plot as instruments that can enable the protagonist's survival.

The uses of history books as a possibility to help the challenges of surviving the past are related to another feature of the transformations of the contemporary historical novel that attempt the production of historical knowledge through the forms of the novel, of fictional resources that, however, do not "rival historical science" (Charbel, 2016, p. 65). In addition, the character resorts not only to the historiography of slavery, but to other historical events considered traumatic in search of help to face it:

So I ended up getting distracted by one of Kevin's World War II books: a memoir of concentration camp survivors. Stories of aggression, starvation, filth, disease, torture, all kinds of humiliation. As if the Germans had tried to do, in just a few years, what the Americans had practiced for almost two centuries (Butler, 2019, p. 188-189).

Later in the narrative, the history of slavery is sought as an aid not only in history books, but also in fiction: "I read books about slavery, fiction and non-fiction. I read everything I had at home, no matter how unrelated to the subject it was. Even *E the time took*, or part of it. But his version of happy little black people wrapped in love was too much for me" (Butler, 2019, p. 188). If, on the one hand, the history books leave Dana "depressed, scared" (Butler, 2019, p. 189), the fictionalization of a happy life of enslaved black men and women in *Gone with the Wind* is "too much" (Butler, 2019, p. 188).

This excerpt condenses the traces of a tension that runs through the entire novel and that is related to another aspect that we propose to analyze: the ethical questions raised by the novel about the forms of fictionalization of the past. For Saidiya Hartman (2020), the

archive to which the historian resorts to carry out his research on enslaved subjects is fictionalized in "a death sentence" (Hartman, 2020, p. 15). The word that was recorded and that makes up the documents in the archive is the word of those who engendered the very violence of the enslavement of black men and women, constituting a "grammar of violence" (Hartman, 2020, p. 18).

Hartman, then, reflects on how to write the history of these subjects without this writing replicating violence and silence, since "the irreparable violence of the Atlantic slave trade resides precisely in all the stories that we cannot know and that will never be recovered" (Hartman, 2020, p. 30), which leads the author to propose a critical fabulation as a possibility for writing this history. When referring to Butler's novel, Hartman states that the protagonist "ends up accepting that they [violence and domination] made their own existence possible" (Hartman, 2020, p. 32).

From the reflections proposed by Hartman, what conception of history can be perceived in *Kindred*?

Nothing in my education or knowledge of the future had helped me escape. Still, in a few years, an illiterate fugitive named Harriet Tubman would enter this country nineteen times to lead three hundred fugitives to freedom. What had I done wrong? Why did I continue to be a slave to a man who repaid me for saving his life by almost killing me? (Butler, 2019, p. 282).

This excerpt from the novel shows that, by recreating and placing different historicities in conflict, Butler seems to question a conception of History based on progress: on the idea that if someone from the future could experience the past, they would have the power to change everything and save everyone, because the future would be better and superior to the past and its historical agents. In this sense, it is possible to affirm an approximation between the conception of History present in the novel and the theses *On the concept of History* (1994), by Walter Benjamin. This is because Butler uses fiction to "sweep history against the grain" (Charbel, 2016, p. 67) through literary narrative, another characteristic of the contemporary historical novel.

According to Benjamin, in his sixth thesis,

[A]rticular the past historically does not mean knowing it "as it actually was". It means appropriating a reminiscence, as it flashes at the moment of danger. It is up to historical materialism to fix an image of the past, as it presents itself, at the moment of danger, to the historical subject, without his being aware of it. [...] The gift of awakening in the past the sparks of hope is the exclusive privilege of the historian convinced that even the dead will not be safe if the enemy wins. And this enemy has not ceased to win (Benjamin, 1994, p. 224-225).

The fictionalization of time travel in *Kindred* dialogues deeply with Benjamin's conception of History. Dana's need to survive in the past, the interaction between past and present, and the problematization of historical representation in the work evoke the idea of a "moment of danger" present in Benjamin's work. At the same time, the search for meaning and the hope for a different future, present in Butler's narrative, connect with the "sparks of hope" that, according to Benjamin, can arise from History. Following Benjamin's perspective, *Kindred* reveals the dialectic between memory — with the dead who are also not safe with conservative history — and the sparks of hope, emphasizing that Harriet Tubman was not someone from the future, but a historical agent, just like Edana Franklin, in a time that was not "homogeneous and empty, but a time saturated with "nows" (Benjamin, 1994, p. 229). The story of Dana and her ancestors demonstrates that the past is not a dead time, but a battlefield where epistemological, aesthetic, ethical, and political forces confront each other. The figure of Harriet Tubman, as well as Dana herself, therefore represent the 'sparks of hope' that can arise.

From this analysis, we can perceive, therefore, a relationship between the conception of historical time as fictionalized in the novel and Walter Benjamin's conception of historical time. For Benjamin, history is not a linear sequence of events, but a set of fragments that can be reconfigured and reinterpreted from different perspectives, especially those of the vanquished in history. Dana's time travel presents itself, in this sense, as fictionalization that allows her to experience different temporalities, producing forms of knowledge about the past that question the present.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The present study proposed an analysis of the novel *Kindred* (1979), by Octavia E. Butler, as a historical source for the teaching of the concept of historical time in basic education, considering the possibilities opened by the BNCC. Throughout the analysis, we seek to establish a dialogue between the Theory of History and the Literary Theory, bringing together formal aspects of the work with historiographical concepts, especially with the concept of historical time. The choice of *Kindred* is justified by the rich exploration of temporality present in the novel. The protagonist's constant time travels, between her contemporary life and the brutality of slavery, allow an in-depth analysis of the relationships between past, present and future, as well as the way in which history is inscribed in the bodies and memories of individuals considering different historicities.

Throughout the research, we were able to observe that Octavia Butler's novel presents characteristics that bring it closer to the contemporary historical novel, such as the self-reflexive form, the attempt to make present the irreducible difference of past historical events and the problematization of the forms of fictionalization of the past. Based on the reflections proposed by Saidiya Hartman (2020), on the difficulties of writing the history of slavery without replicating violence and silence, we question the conception of History present in the novel. At the same time, the approximation with *Walter Benjamin's theses On the Concept of History* (1994), on the moment of danger and the sparks of hope, allows us to affirm that Butler's work, by "sweeping history against the grain", contributes to a reflection on the role of memory and History in the construction of possible futures.

The reading of *Kindred* as a historical source for the teaching of History in basic education opens up a range of possibilities for the problematization of the concept of historical time. When working with a novel that addresses themes such as slavery, racism, and gender, students may be invited to reflect on the different temporalities present in their own lives and in the lives of their ancestors, as well as on the power relations that guide history. It is important to emphasize that the proposal of this work is not limited to the analysis of a single literary work, but seeks to contribute to a broader debate on the importance of including literary sources in the teaching of History. By working with different types of sources, students can develop reading, writing, and critical analysis skills, as well as appropriate different languages and perspectives to understand the world.

REFERENCES

1. Abud, K. M., Silva, A. C. de M., & Alves, R. C. (2013). Aprender história por meio da literatura. In K. M. Abud, A. C. de M. Silva, & R. C. Alves (Eds.), *Ensino de história* (pp. 41–58). São Paulo: Cengage Learning.
2. Benjamin, W. (1994). Sobre o conceito de história. In W. Benjamin, *Magia e técnica, arte e política: Ensaio sobre literatura e história da cultura* (7th ed., pp. 222–234). São Paulo: Brasiliense.
3. Bittencourt, C. M. F. (2018). *Ensino de história: Fundamentos e métodos* (5th ed.). São Paulo: Editora Cortez.
4. Brasil, Ministério da Educação. (2017). *Base Nacional Comum Curricular (BNCC)*. Brasília.
5. Butler, O. E. (2019). *Kindred: Laços de sangue* (C. C. Coelho, Trans.). São Paulo: Editora Morro Branco.
6. Butler, O. E. (2016). *Obsessão positiva* (A. Packer, Trans.). São Paulo: Fundação Bial.
7. Candido, A. (2012). A literatura e a formação do homem. Remate de Males. Available at <https://periodicos.sbu.unicamp.br/ojs/index.php/remate/article/view/8635992> Retrieved on October 13, 2022.
8. Candido, A. (2011). O direito à literatura. In A. Candido, *Vários escritos* (5th ed., pp. 171–193). Rio de Janeiro: Ouro sobre Azul.
9. Charbel, F. (2016). A ficção histórica e as transformações do romance. In F. Charbel, H. B. de Gusmão, & L. L. da S. Mello (Eds.), *As formas do romance: Estudos sobre historicidade da literatura*. Rio de Janeiro: Ponteio.
10. Ciampi, H. (2008). O professor de história e a produção dos saberes escolares: O lugar da memória. In A. C. Ferreira, H. G. Bezerra, & T. R. de Luca (Eds.), *O historiador e seu tempo* (pp. 203–221). São Paulo: Editora UNESP: ANPUH.
11. Ferreira, A. C. (2013). Literatura – A fonte fecunda. In T. R. de Luca & C. B. Pinsky (Eds.), *O historiador e suas fontes* (pp. 61–92). São Paulo: Contexto.
12. Freire, P., & Faundez, A. (2021). *Por uma pedagogia da pergunta* (11th ed.). Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra.
13. Freitas, L. C. de. (2018). *A reforma empresarial da educação: Nova direita, velhas ideias*. São Paulo: Expressão Popular.
14. Frigotto, G., & Motta, V. C. da. (2017). Por que a urgência da reforma do ensino médio? Medida Provisória nº 746/2016 (Lei nº 13.415/2017). *Educação & Sociedade*, 38(139), 355–372.
15. Galzerani, M. C. B. (2008). A produção de saberes históricos escolares: O lugar das memórias. In A. C. Ferreira, H. G. Bezerra, & T. R. de Luca (Eds.), *O historiador e seu tempo* (pp. 223–235). São Paulo: Editora UNESP: ANPUH.
16. Hartman, S. (2020). Vênus em dois atos. *Revista Eco-Pós*, 23(3), 12–33.
17. Hutcheon, L. (1991). Metaficção historiográfica: “O passado do tempo passado”. In L. Hutcheon, *Poética do pós-modernismo: História, teoria, ficção* (pp. 141–162). Rio de Janeiro: Imago Editora.
18. Koselleck, R. (2015). Espaço de experiência e horizonte de expectativa: Duas categorias históricas. In R. Koselleck, *Futuro passado: Contribuições à semântica dos tempos históricos*. Rio de Janeiro: Contraponto.
19. Machado, R. C. M., & Silva, D. V. S. (2021). Ensino de literaturas e decolonialidade: Por uma educação literária democrática. *Gragoatá*, 26(56), 1207–1240.
20. Maciel, C. S. F. dos S. (2019). Uma avaliação da Lei nº 13,415/17 a partir da legística e das metas do PNE. *Educação & Realidade*, 44(3), e2019.
21. Nadai, E. (1993). O ensino de história no Brasil: Trajetória e perspectiva. *Revista Brasileira de História*, 13(25/26), 143–162.
22. Pinto, J. P. (2020). Do fingimento à imaginação moral: Diálogos entre história e literatura. *Tempo*, 26(1), 25–42.
23. Ralejo, A. S., Mello, R. A., & Amorim, M. de O. (2021). BNCC e ensino de história: Horizontes possíveis. *Educar em Revista*, 37, e77056.