

**Ancestry, nature and oral tradition in *Stories Brought by a Seahorse*:  
an exemplary case in Children and Youth Afro-Brazilian literature /  
*Ancestralidade, natureza e tradição oral em “Histórias trazidas por um  
cavalo-marinho”*: um caso exemplar na literatura infanto-juvenil afro-  
brasileira**

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ABSTRACT

In what is concerned to the African culture in youth Brazilian literature, the country is still shy to spread the readings of this important ethnographic bias present in its formation, even though Law n. 10.693/2003 has turned obligatory the teaching of Afro-Brazilian Culture in schools. *Stories brought by a seahorse*, published in 2005 by Professor and writer Edimilson Pereira, is one of these cases of success in the reception of the ancestral African culture, mainly if we take into the account the topic of identity of the African people who have settled here. With four short stories the author is didactic when he demonstrates the Afro-Brazilian culture, working with ability to recover oral tradition, the dreams and the destiny of humankind, as well as he recovers old folk songs and adapts them to the present. In fact, the book can never be read nor taken in terms of the traditional classic prose, but with the original properties which are inherent to it. The narrative, accompanied with the poetical illustrations from Denise Nascimento, is an invitation to the African mythical domains.

KEYWORDS: *Stories Brought by a Seahorse*; Afro-Brazilian literature; ancestry; oral tradition.

RESUMO

No que tange à cultura africana na literatura infanto-juvenil brasileira, o país ainda é carente de propagar a leitura desse importante viés etnográfico presente em sua formação, ainda que a Lei n. 10.693/2003 tenha tornado obrigatório o ensino sobre Cultura Afro-Brasileira nas escolas. *Histórias trazidas por um cavalo-marinho*, publicado em 2005 pelo escritor e professor mineiro Edimilson Pereira, é um desses casos de sucesso na recepção da cultura ancestral africana, sobretudo se levada em consideração a questão da identidade dos povos africanos que aqui se fixaram. Com quatro histórias curtas, o autor é didático ao demonstrar a cultura afro-brasileira, trabalhando, com oralidade e habilidade narrativa, os sonhos e os destinos dos homens, além de resgatar antigas cantigas e as transpor ao presente. O fato é que o livro jamais pode ser lido ou tomado nos termos da prosa tradicional clássica, senão com as propriedades originais que lhe são inerentes. Acompanhada das poéticas ilustrações de Denise Nascimento, a narrativa é um convite aos domínios da mítica africana.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Histórias trazidas por um cavalo-marinho*; literatura afro-brasileira; ancestralidade; tradição oral.

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## 1 Introduction

This study aims to establish dialogues between the African thematic and Brazilian literature for children and young people. First, it must be put into discussion the Afro-Brazilian subject, backed by Law n. 10.693, from January 9, 2003, that warranties in article 26-A that: “It is obliged the teaching of Afro-Brazilian History and Culture both in public or private Elementary and High-School education”. As well, the Law also points out in the 2nd paragraph: “The contents related to Afro-Brazilian History and Culture shall be lectured evolving the entire school curriculum, in particular the areas of Art Education, and Brazilian Literature and History” (BRASIL, 2013).

Nevertheless, although the law obliges the teaching of Afro-Brazilian culture, there is no much achievement in terms of equity in the instances of the construction of knowledge – substantially due to the fact that distinct surveys show the permanence of inequality amongst white and black people (black and brown) in the country (CARREIRA, 2016; GONÇALVES e SILVA, 2000; SOUZA E CROSO, 2007).

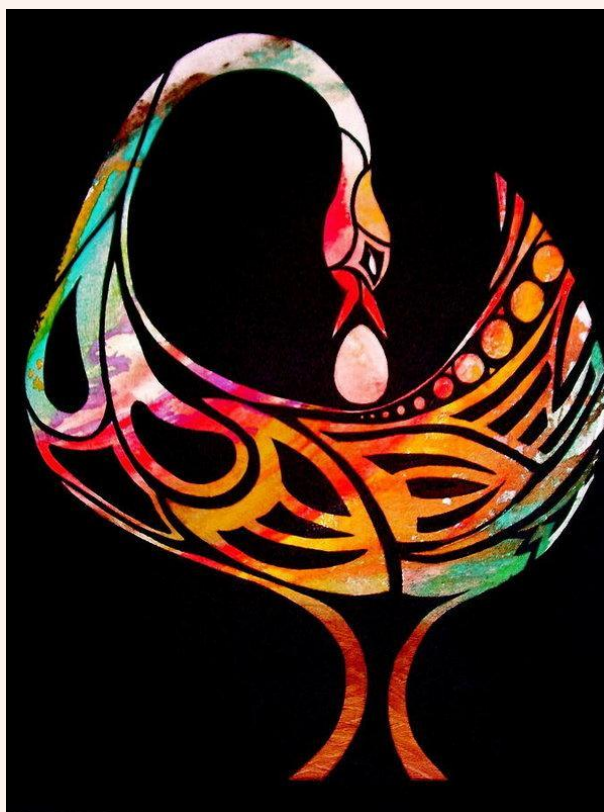
In fact, the approbation of Law 10.639/03 sustains a resizing of the ancestral matrices that form the diversity of Brazilian culture, so teachers, lecturers and researchers play an important role in this process not only in the struggle against race prejudice in the country, but also in the introduction and settlement of the African culture. *Stories Brought by a Seahorse (Histórias trazidas por um cavalo-marinho)*, by the Brazilian writer and Professor Edimilson de Almeida Pereira, is an example of literature to be worked following these parameters. The book, published in 2005 by Paulinas Editors, with illustrations by Denise Nascimento, stands out as an upbringing of African oral tradition, mostly in the stories: “The yellow book with white pages”, “The shepherd of the birds”, “The name of the sun”, “The boy of clay”. Here is the prologue:

These stories happened many and many years ago, when fishes had birds names. Then there were the owl-fish, the crow-fish, the dove-fish. Moreover, along with the seagull-fish, and with the peacock-fish they all moved the waters with their silenced wings (PEREIRA, 2005, p. 5)<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Hereby all the texts from *Stories Brought by a Seahorse* (2005) will be translated by the author of the article – including also the texts by Carreira (2016); Gonçalves e Silva (2000); Souza e Croso (2007); Adolfo (2014); Munanga, Gomes (2006); Cabrera (2004); Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2006); Boas

In Occidental Africa, mainly in Ghana and in Ivory Coast, it is widely cultured the symbol known as “Sankofa”, a bird that represents the Adinkra/Ashanti ideogram. Its head is bended like an arch, forming a circle. There is an egg carried by its beak, a metaphor for the germs of knowledge from the early ancestors, the tradition to be safeguarded by future generations (WILLIS, 1998, p. 17). In other words, it represents the voyage back to the past with the purpose of resignifying the present and preserve the future (WILLIS, 1998, p. 17).



**Fig. 1** – “Sankofa”, by artist Donna Lee Bolden Kerr

Retrieved from: <https://fineartamerica.com/featured/sankofa-donna-lee-bolden-kerr.html?product=art-print>, accessed on May 14, 2018.

Willis (1998, p. 18) explains that Sankofa has a symbolic connotation related to the recovering and to the valorization of the autochthonous African cultural references. This communicative nature maintains a fountain that spreads mythical backgrounds, as Pereira (2005, p. 5) points out in his preamble: “Many many years ago”. Adolfo (2014, p. 61-62) observes: “Because the supernatural interferences come from a time and a

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(1947); Vansina (1982); Brasil (2004, 2013), Mestre Suassuna (2010); Pandeiro (1974); Ribeiro (2006); Vigna (2001); Nascimento (2008); Duarte (2008); Hobsbawn, Ranger (1984).

space that no longer exist, and only because of that, they are extraordinary [...], and the narration presents a marvelous fact”. Therefore, history and myth are mixed in the amalgam of the African tradition, a strong force in the Brazilian culture: “In Brazil, our African ancestors enriched our culture with different forms of expressions and ways to relate to the magical and supernatural world” (MUNANGA, GOMES, 2006, p. 139). Thereby, Pereira seeks for the African oral tradition, as perceived in the popular beliefs materialized in analogies and metaphors that construct the myths of the birds. It is not by chance that poetic and cultural images of birds predominate in the book:



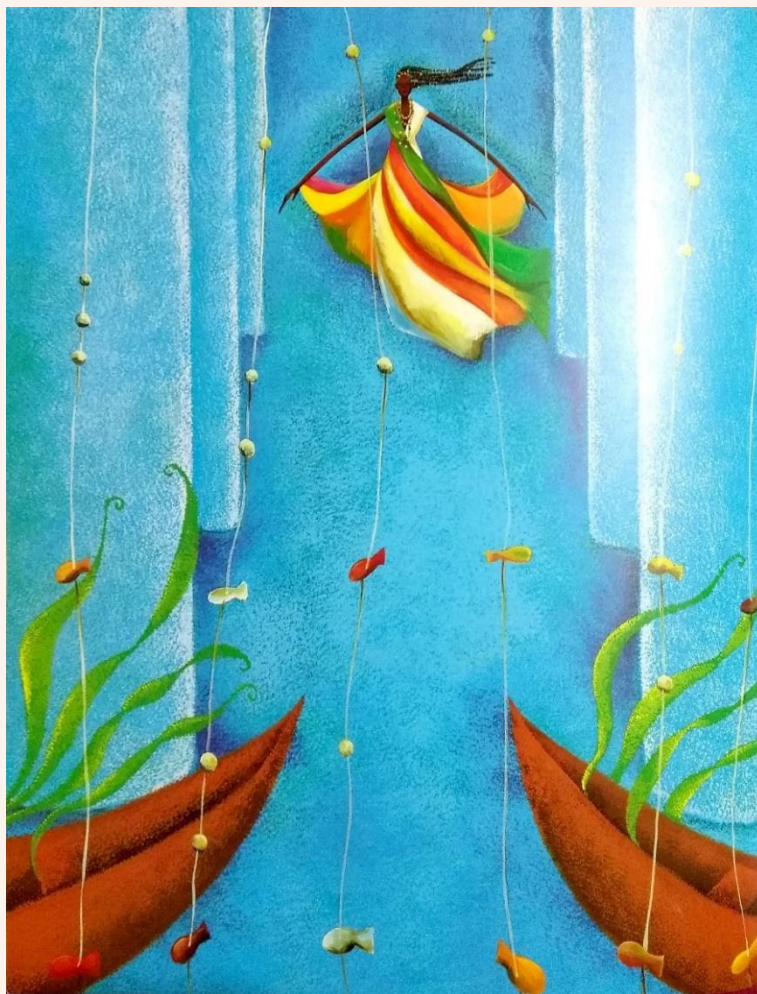
**Fig. 2** – Detail from page 25 of *Stories Brought by a Seahorse* (2005)  
(Illustrator: Denise Nascimento)





**Fig. 3** – Detail from the superior part of the cover of the book  
(Illustrator: Denise Nascimento)

The images of birds in the narrative are constant: from the forty-eight pages of the book, thirteen illustrate the animal – on page six there is the picture of a boy flying; yet pages 15, 19, 20, 21, 23, 24, 27, 28, 30, 34, 35, and 36 exhibit different birds illustrations. Furthermore, the characters are marked with long and curvy traces, as if the arms symbolized wings during a flight. Not so ever, when we go back to the prologue, Pereira does not maintain his view only bounded with the birds, but also with the fishes: “the owl-fish, the crow-fish, the dove-fish. Moreover, along with the seagull-fish, and with the peacock-fish [...]” (PEREIRA, 2005, p. 5). Following on, there is the representation of seaside objects: on pages 36, 38, 39, 40, 42, 44, 45 and 46 colorful fishes and whelks are observed. An emphasis on page forty-two: the image of a black entity, the Lady of the Waters:



**Fig. 4** – The Lady of the Waters, on p. 42 from *Stories Brought by a Seahorse* (2005) (Illustrator: Denise Nascimento)

Here is her description: “– The Lady of the Waters was waiting in a blue water hall, surrounded by transparent columns. The palace was ornamented with fishing boats, and the colorful fabric of the sails served as her dress” (PEREIRA, 2005, p. 42). Moreover, the chapter “The boy of clay” innovates since it abandons the idea of a whitened Yemonja, as it is commonly symbolized in Brazil. Her name comes from the expression “Iyê Oman Ejá”, or “the mother whose sons and daughters are fishes” (CABRERA, 2004, p. 27). Although the orishas are always related to the Afro-Brazilian religions, its most popular representation is way far from the black mother archetype cultured in the Abeokuta lands, in the margins of Ogun River, in Nigeria.

In fact, Brazilian syncretism has given new faces and looks to Yemonja, distinct from the original myth. In her classic *Yemonja and Oshun*, the Cuban researcher Lydia Cabrera emphasizes: “And now, forget about Mother Mary, [...], forget about the

Harbor Patroness, and places her sanctuary next to the sea, so we can hear what her double, Yemaiá<sup>2</sup>, tells us about” (CABRERA, 2004, p. 29).

Nevertheless, the sacred figure presented in *Stories Brought by a Seahorse* is not original from the seas, but from the rivers: “The boy recalled the stories he used to hear by the river [...]. Lots of the fishermen who decided to know the spells of the Lady of the Waters have never come back”; “Since that day, the Lady of the Waters rises from the riverbed and visits homes in search of a godchild who will not dissolve” (PEREIRA, 2005, p. 44, and 45-46, respectively).

In this case, here is Oshun, the orisha from the fresh waters. “The never-ending richness of Yemaiá-Olokun is in part owed to her younger sister, Ochún, who is the Lady of the Rivers, of Love, of Gold, of Corel, and of Amber” (CABRERA, 2004, p. 61). The anthropologist keeps enlightening: “Ochún was created by Yemaiá, and she rises from her creator’s breasts; and like her, she is integral and multiple. She owns several ‘ways’, potencies, and attractiveness” (CABRERA, 2004, p. 74). Among the plurality of types that configure the archetype of Oshun, the one found in *Stories Brought by a Seahorse* is not *Yeyé Moró*, who lives partying nor the seductive and smiling *Kolé- kolé*; however, she is more alike *Fumiké*, “related to *Obatalá*. She gives babies to sterile women. She loves children” (CABRERA, 2004, p. 74-75).

Certainly, this is one of the most known attributes regarded to Oshun: she is the orisha of fertility and beauty, the forces of Creation are centered to her - allied with feminine power, in the mythical African. Differently from the Bible, whose Creator traditionally resembles the paternal figure; the Yoruba orisha of life is female; so that is why the Lady of the Waters keeps rising up the riverbed in search of a son/daughter: she “is devoted to her sons/daughters” (CABRERA, 2004, p. 40).

In fact, oral tradition in Edimilson Pereira’s stories points to the African matrix. Ngal (1977, p. 337) understands that, in oral tradition, the act of speaking equals to the act of creating. Thus, narrating is creating, or narrating is the power to unfold the past on and on:

The oral performative situation builds on the past unconsciously, does not usurp its meaning from other texts, does not reflect on an effort of bridging time, hence the tradition is not unreflexive, malleable, and productive. Conscious intertextuality binds a text to the meanings of

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<sup>2</sup> Attention to the fact Yemonjá has a set of different names, according to the culture they are put into light.

another, brings it to a redoubled consciousness of the self (DOANE, 1991, p. 104).

Along with the consciousness of the Self arises the consciousness of the narrative, as Boa Ventura de Sousa Santos (2006) stands as a way to fight the dominant voice against the libertarian one. In other words, this consciousness could be described as a set of practices and discourses that deconstruct the colonial narrative written by the colonizer, and they work to replace it by narratives written by the point of view of the colonized (SANTOS, 2006, p. 239).

*Stories Brought by a Seahorse* (2005) is a book that represents the point of the view of the slaved, yet colonized, as a manner to rewrite the original culture. In this scenery, Pereira surely is a griot of his time, recapturing the past in stories, recreating from the fantastic, the marvelous. In the context to clarify and approximate the reader to the African narrative, the first chapter starts evoking the ancestral sense of time: “It all started in a morning [...]” (PEREIRA, 2005, p. 7). The author is aware of the power of oral tradition in African literature, so that is why in the opening paragraph of the book he seems to conduct the reader to the voyage of the elder, of tradition.

## **2 Ruptures with the hegemonic discourse**

In his Masters of Education dissertation by the State University of Bahia, Oliveira (2003) researched twelve books from canonical authors (published from 1979 to 1989), and he found the recurrence of the protagonism of black characters “with the purpose to expose poverty, prejudice, and to praise their physical aspects” (OLIVEIRA, 2003, p. 10). Pereira breaks such paradigm in *Stories Brought by a Seahorse*, running away from the adoption of stereotypes that associate the image of black people to misery, poverty, sorrow, and loneliness. On the contrary: the author writes with the ability to bring to life Afro-Brazilian stories, unfolding new meanings and identities to characters whose culture, traditions, thoughts, attitudes, and ideas are driven to an African concept of primitive.

Boas (1947, p. 31), differently from the overall categories established by the imperialistic views from the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, considers that “primitive” should not be, any longer, an adjective for “inferior cultures” (if compared to the dominant occidental



culture). His concepts for “primitive” contemplate intuition, experiences, so it manifests its knowledge directly attached with the “senses”. In order to find his primitive base, Pereira (2005) takes back the myth of Sankofa to describe societies that are bridged in the knowledge of Nature, therefore they reproduce an animist look over things. First and third chapters (“The yellow book with white pages”, and “The name of the Sun”) bring the protagonist as the Sun, which is personified along the book: “Everything started in a morning when the sun got tired of being yellow”; “Since then, the sun rises with a smile that embraces the city and shines the yellow and the non-yellow of all things”; “Near the beginning of the world the sun had a name. And people welcomed it as if they were hosting a visit at home”; “The sun seemed lost forever when, suddenly, the song of a bird [...]” (PEREIRA 2005, pp. 7, 16, 29, and 34, respectively). Second chapter, “The birds shepherd”, also gives place to personification, mainly in the dialogues of boy Domingos and a bird: “While I received the cares of a friend, the bird said / – I was born amidst the rocks that are next to the sea”; “The bird, thankful, asked Domingos: / – Boy, do you want to pretend that you were the sea?” (PEREIRA, 2005, p. 24). Last chapter, “The boy of clay”, follows the same characteristic, so the fish is described with human feelings, such as melancholy: “But one day he was visited by the fish that had disappeared in the waters. The visitor said: / - I have come to collect the promise made to the Ladies Waters, “It was a beautiful, but sad fish” (PEREIRA, 2005, p. 40 e 43).

Beyond personification (which is one of the main aspects that surround African animism), the dreams are also means that move the adventure of the narrative: “Ah, son, this is the book of the dreams”; “Who knows? Maybe one day, son, you write the story with that letters that come to us on dreams” (PEREIRA, 2005, pp. 8 and 10, respectively). It must be noticed that the objects chosen to be in touch with dreams are books and letters, approaching the young reader to a literary encounter. Condescending, the character who takes care of the objects is a “young book manufacturer” (PEREIRA, 2005, p. 15), whose skills to rename words make him a Creator:

And if everything was new, the boy understood that he should also use new words.  
The non-yellow of the sky, he called blue.  
The non-yellow of the prairies, he called green.  
The non-yellow of the apples, he called red.  
The non-yellow of the birds, he called black.  
The non-yellow of the book pages, he called white.

For the non-yellow of people, the boy mixed the names. Then people turned yellow, black, white, blue, and pinkish (PEREIRA, 2005, p. 16).

Attention to the fact that the boy who “filled the white of the pages [with] stories” (PEREIRA, 2005, p. 16) had the power to color his yellow world. The genesis of the creation of his Cosmos starts with the sky, then it goes to the prairies, apples, birds, book pages until it finally reaches the humans – and the humans are the most colorful ones. The macro voyage of the Cosmos to the micro that constitute humankind is illustrated, in the book, with young people, hand in hand, from different ethnicities.

Because he renames the Cosmos, the young character applies the metaphor of oral tradition related to the African people as a “way of preserving the wisdom of the ancestries”, for the “word has a mysterious power to create things” (VANSINA, 1982, p. 157). So it is fair to think that the genesis concept in first chapter is a strong metaphor in the construction of the young black identity – never a synthesis, but a formation process. It is a benefit to any student, from any ethnicity, to spread the richness of the Afro-Brazilian culture, since

[...] this memory does not belong only to the black people. It belongs to all, bearing in mind that the culture from which we get feed every day is the outgrowth of all ethnic segments from where it has developed, and each particularly contributed to the economic and social richness and in the formation of national identity [...] (MUNANGA, 2005, p. 16).

Gill Perry (1998, p. 5) echoes the traces of Boas, remembering that to the bourgeoisie from the end of 19<sup>th</sup> Century and first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> the word “primitive” was the synonym for “undeveloped and uncivilized”. Twenty-first Century cannot accept naturalistic views, for one of the basic precepts of the National Education Guidelines for Ethnic relations and for the Teaching of History and African and Afro-Brazilian Culture deals with the fact that:

The forms of prejudice, no matter its nature, do not find its roots in school, but racism, inequalities, and exclusions that are prevailing in society overflows there [...]. School plays a high role in quitting discriminations, as in emancipating the excluded groups when it eases access to scientific knowledge, to cultural registers, to rational achievements (that rule our social and racial relations), to advanced studies, indispensable for the consolidation and fixing of the nations

as democratic and equal spaces (BRASIL, SEPP/MEC; 2004, pp. 14-15).

The intimate relation among reading, literature and school are constraints that may encourage young readers to exploit Afro-Brazilian culture and literature. *Stories Brought by a Seahorse* is a case of memory that fixed its roots in Brazil, as it can be seen in the popular songs recovered by the author:

My sabiá<sup>3</sup> chanted  
On the branch of its living  
'Seems he guessed  
Time was coming (PEREIRA, 2005, p. 30).

The figure of “sabiá” (thrush) is a notorious symbol of nationalism in Brazil – not only if we compare it with the canonic “Song of Exile” (1846), by Gonçalves Dias; however, it stows these Capoeira verses: “Sabiá sang over the orange tree (2 x) / I will play my berimbau<sup>4</sup> and fight capoeira (2 x)” (MESTRE SUASSUNA, 2010). However, this is not the only song documented in chapter “The name of the sun”:

I saw the sun  
I saw the shinning moon  
I saw my love  
Wandering round the porch (PEREIRA, 2005, p. 33)

As in the former song, this one also stands for Capoeira: “I saw the sun / I saw the shinning moon / I saw capoeira calling me to play” (LAGOA AZUL, 2018). Other than in Capoeira, the verses: “I saw the sun / I saw the shinning moon” are found in a traditional samba song from the Recôncavo<sup>5</sup>: “I saw the sun, I saw the shinning moon / I am not afraid to walk on the sea”, version from Samba de Roda Amor de Mamãe (Cachoeira), recorded on August 2004, at the Dannemann Hall, in St. Félix (IPHAN/MINC, 2005). These verses are found too in the introduction of the song “My Zabelê”, an adaptation from Gervásio Horta by Jackson do Pandeiro: “I saw the sun, I

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<sup>3</sup> “Sabiá” is a symbolic national songbird from Brazil. In English, Rufous-bellied thrush (*Turdus rufiventris*). Source: “*Turdus rufiventris*”. International Union for Conservation of Nature. Retrieved from: <http://oldredlist.iucnredlist.org/details/22708882/0>, accessed on Nov. 26, 2013.

<sup>4</sup> Berimbau is a musical bow; a single string percussion instrument original from Angola, eventually incorporated into the practice of the Afro-Brazilian martial art Capoeira. The faster the berimbau plays, the faster the capoeirista moves.

<sup>5</sup> “Recôncavo” is a region located in Bahia where the Portuguese colony had sugar cane and tobacco plantations.

saw the shinning moon / I saw my love in the sugar cane plantation (repeat chorus)” (PANDEIRO, 1974).

Edimilson Pereira lets it clear his purpose to work with the African culture in Brazil, above all using the verses of a Samba de Roda, declared Oral and Immaterial Heritage of Humanity by Unesco on November 25, 2005. In that time, Gilberto Gil was the Minister of Culture, and he describes the importance of this rhythm in the Brazilian culture in the booklet of the CD *Samba de Roda – Heritage of Humanity*:

Samba de Roda, from the Recôncavo Baiano, deserves this recognition. It is one of the basis of a wider and more complex manifestation, which is the Brazilian samba. More than this, it is the origin, the preserved matrix from where it comes all the magnitude of the samba musical expression. I am a Brazilian musician, and I have as my primary formation Samba de Roda. Nowadays, even after my contact and of my natural influence of other samba types – like the one from Rio, the electrified one, the Salvador type, and from other Brazilian spots –, my musical and my aesthetic impulse with samba basically comes from Bahia, naturally closer to my life. This proximity clearly shows me that Samba de Roda is still alive and brightening in Cachoeira, Santo Amaro, São Francisco do Conde, and in all over the Recôncavo. However, due to the fact it is linked to the economic fragile communities, it its resentful and it must be supported (GIL, 2005 apud IPHAN/MINC, 2005).

Pereira (2005, p. 31) continues his song research along the book, this time he displays in a whole page the following adaptation of a nursery rhyme: “Rosemary at water’s edge / Cries over the land where it was born / Why won’t I weep / For a love that was once mine?”. It is interesting to perceive that the author – also a poet –, does not simply reproduces the songs, but he himself recreate them. Attention now to the original font, a popular tradition of four verses collected by João Simões Lopes Neto in *Cancioneiro Guasca*, originally published in 1954: “Rosemary at water’s edge, / Marjoram at the other side; / My love, far from here, / Is the one who gets my affection” (LOPES NETO, 1999, p. 74).

Ana Mafalda Leite, motivated by Ngal’s thoughts (1977), defines the oral tradition as an evidence transmitted by a generation to the next. This is manifested in the knowledge of recognizable texts such as in proverbs, short stories, songs, among other examples. From the textual constructions, we find “the symbols and mental attitudes that are characteristic from traditional space”, and in this universe, the oral



tradition marks form “an open testament, liable of multiple reformulations, but it is never a steady testament” (LEITE, 2005, pp. 151-52).

Leite (2005) follows on her explanations attesting that oral tradition, instead of written records, are inherent characteristics “from millenary wisdom in Africa” (LEITE, 2005, p. 154). The originality of the African novel and short stories – African prose – would be, then, exhibited in the fact that it results from a double heritage: traditional and modern, in which oral tradition survives in written practices:

[...] the tradition of orality remains predominant, serving as a central paradigm for various kinds of expression on the continent [...]. In this primary sense, orality functions as the matrix of an African mode of discourse, and concerning with literature, the *griot* is its embodiment in every sense of the word. Oral literature thus represents the basic intertext of the African imagination (IRELE apud LEITE, 2005, p. 154).

Nevertheless, *Stories Brought by a Seahorse* springs out as an important vehicle of oral tradition, respecting the *National Curricular Reference for Elementary Education* (1998, p. 49): “The development of the ability of the students’ oral expression considerably depends if school is built under an environment that respects and welcomes different voices and diversity”. This observation may be complemented with the positioning of Vigna (2001), that youth books are created from a mix of symbols, and the coexistence of verbal and non-verbal languages are means of aesthetic experiences that develop themselves as “identity makers” (VIGNA, 2001, p. 191).

Surely, *Stories Brought by a Seahorse* is a way more achieved book if we compare its discourse with the hegemonic thought, for decades adopted in Brazil – and that still leaves its impressions. On the opposite side of a colonized formation, the slaved were “randomly captured among the tribal people, whose dialects and languages were not intelligible to one another”, and this happens to be the foundation of the “linguistic and cultural diversity” of the African people in Brazil, as Darcy Ribeiro notes down in *The Brazilian People* (RIBEIRO, 2006, p. 102-103). In his notorious *Afropolitanism*, Mbembe (2007, pp. 27-28) adds that this matter must capture not only the geographical focus, but also “itinerancy, mobility and displacement” in the history of the African continent, and in this context we need to display “a conversation between the past and the future, between Africa and the world” – and not the opposite.

Pereira applies this concept in his book, not by chance finishing the stories with the following paragraph: “This is a story from the elders. The ancient people knew the truth since the world was formed” (PEREIRA, 2005, p. 46). Take a notice that the notions of knowledge and wisdom are always linked with the ancient in the African narrative, in a way oral tradition remains alive:

Revolving the layers of time, unscrambling memory in search of vestiges that translate a time of life, reliving each gesture, each word, each object of a singular epoch, where the episodic is not important, but the leftover pieces of the narrative (NASCIMENTO, 2006, p. 53).

Undoubtedly, to unscramble memory and to relive each gesture, word or objects seems to be the movements that validate the foundation of the myths, once in these knowledge and advices human find the answers for the fundamental problems of life. Therefore, mythology recounts its own true, and this is a powerful tool to lead the students to find new routes lenient to their real stories: “It is a navigator of dreams” (PEREIRA, 2005, p. 26).

## **Conclusion**

Duarte (2008) says:

While many in the academic field still question if Afro-Brazilian literature really exists – and let’s point out here the perversity of this questioning that sometimes does not want to hear an answer –; day after day researches proves the contrary, within the vigor of these writings [...]. In fact, this literature exists, and it is alive in the sense of our historical and spatial times as folks; in fact, it does not simply exist, but it unfolds it multiple and diverse forms before our eyes (DUARTE, 2008, p. 11).

Pereira supports Duarte’s discourse (2008) when he evokes the African universe in his book. The author affects the narrative with identity marks: if myth is the language from which humankind is in continuous dialogue with reality, then we keep living “made up traditions” (HOBSBAWN, RANGER, 1984, p. 27), implying a desire of constantly resurrecting the past. Notwithstanding, Pereira is conscious in *Stories Brought by a Seahorse* when he gives the young reader the responsibility to learn rites, habits, cultures, and knowledge that truly belong to them.

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