

**Marson, Izabel Andrade. *Política, história e método em Joaquim Nabuco: tessituras da revolução e da escravidão*. Uberlândia: EDUFU, 2008.**

Over the last five years, a small group of academic dissertations have returned to studies of Joaquim Nabuco, offering new angles of analysis to situate and contextualize this statesman and abolitionist's life and writings. Izabel Andrade Marson's *Política, história e método em Joaquim Nabuco: tessituras da revolução e da escravidão*, a revised version of her *tese de livre-docência* for the Department of History of UNICAMP, focuses on Nabuco's analysis of "revolution" and "slavery" in *Um Estadista no Império* and *O Abolicionismo*, as well as his trajectory as a politician and historian, providing perspective on the formulation and revision of his interpretations over time and according to situation. However, while the title of Marson's book suggests a focus on Nabuco and his writing, the contribution of *Política, história e método* reaches well beyond these subjects.

Marson divides her work into four chapters, each dedicated to what she refers to as *Domínios*—particular aspects of Nabuco's method as historian and his trajectory as politician—including sources, time, memory and history. The first chapter focuses on the principal sources that informed Nabuco's analysis of liberal revolutions—specifically the Independence, the 7<sup>th</sup> of April (the abdication of Dom Pedro I), and the Praieira rebellion—in *Um Estadista no Império*. After a well-organized introduction, Marson analyzes John Armitage's *História do Brasil* (1836), Francisco Torres Homem's *O Libelo do Povo* (published under the name "O Timandro"), Teófilo Ottoni's *Circular dedicada aos senhores eleitores de senadores pela província de Minas Gerais* (1860), and Justiniano José da Rocha's *Ação, Reação, Transação* (1855). Marson concludes that while Armitage, Timandro and Ottoni saw revolution as an action in line with a nation's sovereignty, for Rocha and Nabuco revolution, in Brazil's case, was synonymous with barbarism and anarchy.

In the second chapter, Marson studies the path of the “feudalismo, *latifundia*, servidão, escravidão” argument, used by those who supported the monarchy to attribute the causes of political conflict to the social effects of feudalism and poor land distribution, rather than to its form of government. Marson demonstrates how, in *O Abolicionismo* and *Um Estadista no Império*, Nabuco reformulated this argument on the basis of Henry Koster’s *Travels in Brazil* (1816) and materials found in *O Progresso* (1846-1848). While Koster emphasized slavery as the obstacle to Brazilian progress, *O Progresso* held that it was the concentration of land in few hands that served as a hindrance to change. In *O Abolicionismo*, Nabuco combines these views, emphasizing slavery as incompatible with liberalism and suggesting an agrarian reform to decenter the power of the latifundia. In *Um Estadista no Império*, Nabuco uses the arguments in different ways: emphasizing Koster’s version when referencing slavery and adopting the argument of *O Progresso* when attributing the uprising to feudal politics.

In the third chapter, Marson describes the Praieira revolt (1848-1849), as well as the arguments of its protagonists and their accusers, before demonstrating Nabuco’s interpretation of the event, published between 1896 and 1899, and his later avoidance of the subject in political speeches due to political pressures imposed by the revolt’s surviving protagonists. Marson determines that Nabuco’s argument was informed by his choice of sources, the homogenizing nature of his linear narrative, his father’s involvement in the judicial process, and the political pressures of the moment.

In the fourth and longest chapter, at nearly 100 pages, Marson focuses on the engineer and *senhor de engenho* Henrique Augusto Milet’s seven articles published in the *Jornal do Recife* between 1874 and 1875. Marson points out areas of contrast in Milet’s and Nabuco’s arguments, including views on the middle class, Brazil’s singularity, and slavery. One of Marson’s most effective points in this chapter is that Nabuco’s characterization of those who supported slavery as opposed to liberalism and progress does not fit well with Milet’s arguments, which favor gradual

abolition to protect small landowners. Marson concludes that Milet's arguments were influential and representative of a sizeable sector of the Pernambucan population, which caused Nabuco to take a more moderate approach in his arguments.

Based on these chapters, Marson argues that Armitage's, Ottoni's and Timandro's images of revolution have sunken into obscurity, as have Milet's arguments in defense of the "middle class" and the small producer. Nabuco's interpretations have survived to inform our understanding of history, due to his fame as an abolitionist, holder of political office, journalist and historian, as well as owing to his conciliatory demeanor after the declaration of the republic, when rather than focus on petty politics he opted for "*pátria*, nation and humanity" (283, quoted from *Minha Formação*). Through Marson's careful analysis, the reader gains new perspective on the political nature of Nabuco's writing and his trajectory from involvement in politics as "knight-errantry" to politics with a capital P, which focused on the greater human drama. *Política, história e método* is a valuable contribution to the study of Joaquim Nabuco's career and historical writing, as well as to the study of the intellectual history of slavery and liberal revolt in Brazil.

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**Almino, João. *O diabrete angélico e o pavão: enredo e amor possíveis em Brás Cubas*. Belo Horizonte: Editora UFMG, 2009.**

João Almino's recently published book *O diabrete angélico e o pavão: enredo e amor possíveis em Brás Cubas* brings fresh air to the appreciation of Machado de Assis's most studied, analysed, and scrutinised novel, *Memórias póstumas de Brás Cubas*. Almino's starting assertion is Virgília's central role in the novel, a centrality seldom (or indeed never) acknowledged by critics, both in Brazil and abroad. According to the essayist, the reader would benefit from