

(NECRO)POLITICS, HUMAN RIGHTS AND LITERATURE: *ESCREVIVÊNCIAS* OF OTHER SUBJECTIVITIES TOWARDS NEW IMAGINARIES¹

(NECRO)POLÍTICA, DERECHOS HUMANOS Y LITERATURA: *ESCREVIVÊNCIAS* DE OTRAS SUBJETIVIDADES HACIA NUEVOS IMAGINARIOS

(NECRO)POLÍTICA, DIREITOS HUMANOS E LITERATURA: *ESCREVIVÊNCIAS* DE OUTRAS SUBJETIVIDADES EM DIREÇÃO A NOVOS IMAGINÁRIOS

HANNAH SILVA LINHARES²

ABSTRACT: Everything is political. Mobilized by the understanding of this statement, the present article originates. Observing the modus operandi of human rights in contemporary societies some contradictions can be revealed as those rights are intimately involved in dynamics that permeate them – and even surpass them. Those dynamics includes oppressions and silencing of subaltern voices, power relations, decision-making processes, recognition – and maintenance- of one's own condition as a subject of rights. These processes demonstrates the necessary entanglement between human rights and politics. In this sense, the struggles that constitutes human rights, must consider these power relations, acknowledge oppressions and listen to marginalized people voices, as they are tellers of their own stories. In this scenario, I argue that the concept of *escrevivências*, created by Conceição Evaristo is a literary tool that relates to standpoint theory, necropolitics denunciations and allows us a critic and an insurgent perspective of getting closer to social justice through human rights practices. Therefore, the methodological path traced here has the contribution of sociological studies and critical theory of human rights in order to surpass its legalist perspective and achieve an interdisciplinary one. For the theoretical path aforementioned, this is an other-based research in the sense that it suggests that the work of art here analysed is critical in achieving self and other knowledge. It is concluded that the use of *escrevivências* as a possible methodological concept, leads us to a more critical and inclusive academic writing as it comes closer to real life of marginalized people, and to the comprehending of their subjectivities that are outside the standard one. That should be the register of human rights, the way people actually live.

KEYWORDS: politics, necropolitics, human rights, *escrevivências*.

¹ *Escrevivências* is a neologism. It is an expression, a conception created by Maria da Conceição Evaristo de Brito, Brazilian well-celebrated writer and linguist. It is not the authors' intention to make an accurate translation of the term, even considering the lack of competence to do so, (and/or the probable loss of some levels of the sense of it) but rather, to explain it in a way that makes the analysis proposed by this essay understandable in a possible way. This new word comes from the combination of the words writing and experience. Meaning that one writes what one lives, experiments. In English, the best possible way we've achieved to translate it would be writexperience, as a noun standing for written experiences. From this point on, we will continue to use *escrevivência(s)* in its original form.

² PhD student in Human Rights and contemporary societies in Centre of social studies (CES) of Coimbra's University (UC), Portugal.. Master in Human rights at Universidade Tiradentes (UNIT). Bachelor in law at Universidade Tiradentes (UNIT). Coimbra, Portugal. ORCID: <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-3241-1512>. CV Lattes: <http://lattes.cnpq.br/96667628176627429>. E- mail: hannahlinhares@ces.uc.pt.

RESUMEN: Todo es político. Movilizados por la comprensión de esta afirmación, se origina el presente trabajo. Al observar el modus operandi de los derechos humanos en las sociedades contemporáneas se pueden revelar algunas contradicciones, ya que esos derechos están íntimamente involucrados en dinámicas que los impregnan e incluso los superan. Esas dinámicas incluyen opresiones y silenciamiento de voces subalternas, relaciones de poder, procesos de toma de decisiones, reconocimiento –y mantenimiento- de la propia condición de sujeto de derechos. Estos procesos demuestran el necesario entrelazamiento entre los derechos humanos y la política. En este sentido, las luchas que constituyen los derechos humanos deben considerar estas relaciones de poder, reconocer las opresiones y escuchar las voces de las personas marginadas, ya que son narradoras de sus propias historias. En este escenario, el presente ensayo sostiene que el concepto de *escrevivências*, creado por Conceição Evaristo, es una herramienta literaria que se relaciona con la teoría del punto de vista, las denuncias de la necropolítica y nos permite una perspectiva crítica e insurgente de acercarnos a la justicia social a través de prácticas de derechos humanos. Por tanto, el camino metodológico aquí trazado cuenta con el aporte de los estudios sociológicos y la teoría crítica de los derechos humanos para superar su perspectiva legalista y alcanzar una interdisciplinaria. Para el camino teórico antes mencionado, se trata de una investigación basada en el arte en el sentido de que sugiere que la obra de arte aquí analizada es fundamental para lograr el conocimiento de uno mismo y de los demás. Se concluye que el uso de *escrevivências* como posible concepto metodológico, nos conduce a una escritura académica más crítica e inclusiva, en la medida que se acerca a la vida real de las personas marginadas, y a la comprensión de sus subjetividades que están fuera de lo estándar. Ése debería ser el registro de los derechos humanos, la forma en que realmente vive la gente.

PALABRAS CLAVE: política, necropolítica, derechos humanos, *escrevivências*.

RESUMO: Tudo é político. Mobilizado pela compreensão dessa afirmação, tem origem o presente artigo. Observando o modus operandi dos direitos humanos nas sociedades contemporâneas, algumas contradições podem ser reveladas, pois esses direitos estão intimamente envolvidos em dinâmicas que os permeiam – e até os ultrapassam. Essas dinâmicas incluem opressões e silenciamentos de vozes subalternas, relações de poder, processos de tomada de decisão, reconhecimento – e manutenção – da própria condição de sujeito de direitos. Estes processos demonstram o necessário entrelaçamento entre direitos humanos e política. Neste sentido, as lutas que constituem os direitos humanos devem considerar estas relações de poder, reconhecer as opressões e ouvir as vozes das pessoas marginalizadas, pois são contadoras das suas próprias histórias. Nesse cenário, defendo que o conceito de *escrevivências*, criado por Conceição Evaristo é uma ferramenta literária que se relaciona com a teoria do ponto de vista, com as denúncias necropolíticas e nos permite uma perspectiva crítica e insurgente de aproximação com a justiça social através de práticas de direitos humanos. Portanto, o caminho metodológico aqui traçado conta com a contribuição dos estudos sociológicos e da teoria crítica dos direitos humanos para superar sua perspectiva legalista e alcançar uma perspectiva interdisciplinar. Para o percurso teórico acima mencionado, esta é uma investigação baseada na arte, no sentido de que sugere que a obra de arte aqui analisada é fundamental para alcançar o conhecimento de si e dos outros. Conclui-se que a utilização de *escrevivências* como possível conceito metodológico, nos leva a uma escrita acadêmica mais crítica e inclusiva à medida que se aproxima da vida real de pessoas marginalizadas e da compreensão de suas subjetividades que estão fora do padrão. Esse deveria ser o registro dos direitos humanos, a forma como as pessoas realmente vivem.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: política; necropolítica; humano direitos; *escrevivências*.

1 INTRODUÇÃO

I know not dying is not always the same as living. It must have other ways, more amene exits. [...] Writing is a way of bleeding. (Evaristo, 2016, p. 109, translated)³

The present essay is mobilized by the interest of pointing out – and sharing – links between politics, human rights and literature as well as showing the importance of establishing those links as a critical perspective and possibility. Human Rights as an open field of

³ In the original text: “Eu sei que não morrer, nem sempre, é viver. Deve haver outros caminhos, saídas mais amenas. [...] Escrever é uma maneira de sangrar”.

contextualized historical social struggles, relates to juridical sciences as an abstraction. A moral suggestion that leads the way to dignified lives and ways of living – collectively. However, making a legalist approach of human rights – as the only possible way to analyse it - it is to analyse it far from the real life and real people. It is, to resume human rights as a discourse that do not serves to human emancipation. Far from the emancipation process, law does not serves community as a tool for transformation, it becomes a tool for oppression.

Looking with theses lenses, it is necessary to search for other alternatives; meaning to track other paths when the one we are in shows itself as insufficient. The alternative must come from a process of critical analysis in which the comprehension of the reality transcends what exists and consider what can exist. The reality becomes a space for possibilities, where the solutions arises as alternatives that inside a praxis, are accomplished (Santos, 1999).

This constitutes the main objective of the present essay. To think human rights practices beyond what it is, considering also, what it can be – become. The construction of these possibilities pass through the acknowledging of the essential entanglement between human rights and politics from an art-based perspective. The starting point is the belief “that the arts and humanities can facilitate social scientific goals” of understanding and guarantying human rights (Leavy, 2017, p. 195).

In that sense, it is argued that the concept of *escrevivências*, created by Conceição Evaristo is a literary tool that relates to standpoint theory, necropolitics denunciations and allows us a critic and an insurgent perspective of getting closer to social justice through human rights practices. Therefore, the methodological path traced here has the contribution of sociological studies and critical theory of human rights in order to surpass its legalist perspective and achieve an interdisciplinary one.

Conceição Evaristo, when describing what it means to write powerfully states: “I know not dying is not always the same as living. It must have other ways, more amene exits. [...] Writing is a way of bleeding” (Evaristo, 2016, p. 109, free translation). Directly inspired by this essential quote, the present work is divided by these three moments. The first one entitled *Escrever é uma maneira de sangrar*: relating standpoint theories and *escrevivências*, where it is presented the concept of *escrevivências* and established connections and links with standpoint theories and demonstrated the conceptual power that working with this concept can present for scientific writing (Evaristo, 2016, p. 109).

Following that, the third topic *Não morrer nem sempre é viver*: a discussion about (necro)politics and human rights, where it is presented the relations between one of evaristos’ short story and politics, specifically the concept of necropolitics from a Brazilian analysis.

Finally, for the conclusion of this work, it is the last moment called Deve haver outros caminhos, saídas mais amenas. In this last space it is concluded that the use of *escrevivências* as a possible methodological concept, leads us to a more critical and inclusive academic writing as it comes closer to real life of marginalized people, and to the comprehending of their subjectivities that are outside the standard one. That should be the register of human rights, the way people actually live, and that is the search we started, for other alternatives that are based in other subjectivities.

2 WRITING IS A WAY OF BLEEDING: RELATING STANDPOINT THEORIES AND *ESCREVIVÊNCIAS*

From a traditional and common perspective, the human condition itself entitle all humans as human rights subjects as they are universal (rights). A critical approach, however, allows us to question this universal characteristic belief, which is based on the idea of sameness. Meaning that as all human beings has the same essence, they all have the same rights. This idea emphasizes – or even, imposes - sameness instead of considering differences as a natural characteristic of the human race; it lacks to consider its uniqueness.

In that matter, this universal language (or discourse) of human rights ends up being a practice of exclusion because it has a basic standard of human being to be followed. The standard subject of rights has some limited characteristics, - male, white, hetero, christian – that condenses in a standard type of person. The construction of this specific subjectivity in an instrument of exclusion. First, because it denies self-determination of those who does not follow the standard joint of characteristics, opening spaces for domination; second because it denies equality, as the same invisible line that defines standard defines the off-standard also, and therefore, opens spaces for practices of oppression and suffering (Douzinas, 2007)

That meaning, the space of traditional and “universal” human rights perspective divides the subjects into rulers, ruled and excludes from the dynamic. In that sense, Douzinas (2007) states that humanity has been united by pain, pity and suffering. Therefore, the ones that don’t share standard life accepted experiences with the rulers, are oppressed by them entering the category of silenced, and therefore ruled (dominated) or excluded (Douzinas, 2007).

In this traditional perspective, rights are an end in itself. As they are institutionalized, they are guaranteed for all humans. Nevertheless, coming closer to reality and creating distance from the abstraction, rights, and human rights specially are a mean; they result from

⁴ In the original text: “Escrever é uma forma de sangrar”.

social struggles, from social mobilizations, they are not fixed, or given. In this scenario, it is crucial to acknowledge the political layer that involves human rights' discussions. The discourse of the traditional perspective of human rights theory states itself as universal and neutral, although, as mentioned this "neutrality" can be a tool for exclusion – oppression and domination – practices. The discourses of the reality that we make is always based on our own contexts as we do not see things as they are but, actually we see them as we are. In that matter we agree with the canonical citation of Robert Cox (1981, p. 129) which he states "theory is always for someone and for some purpose".

Resuming the discussion on the need to consider differences, it is necessary to add that such differences are in the order of not only physical or psychological characteristics but also covers different social scenarios and contexts. In this sense, we have chosen as an empirical path to develop this present work, to approach it from a critical perspective, problematizing and questioning these named points of the traditional theory of human rights as a non-practical, far from realities political discourse.

To conform to legal and formal equality is to conform to an equality intention, abstraction. When we analyse reality(ies) in a daily basis, we come across violations, violence and human suffering especially those that were – and still are – not included in the standard pattern of humanity. Subaltern people, crossed by a series of characteristics and social contexts – race, gender, class, sexual orientation, religion and others – remain segregated. Humanity, beyond legalism, is not a condition shared by all people; some were placed - and left – in a sub-human condition.

All these processes of excluding – or including – are decisions made, and those decisions have a direct impact on people lives. The decision-making process is political as involves power relations and that matters essentially for human rights, and for human dignity so, there is nothing on human rights that could be framed as apolitical; the social – and ideological – struggles are part of our own way to apprehend the world.

Therefore, situating where we are coming from is important for situating our own knowledge; it is an interesting addition for scientific research and politics both. That is the perception of standpoint theory, a political and social epistemology that gives a space for subaltern, marginalized groups' voices to be heard, allowing them to actually challenge the status quo from within. Alison Wylie (2003, p. 26) when explaining why standpoint theory matters, states that:

Those who are subject to structures of domination that systematically marginalizes and oppress them may, in fact, be epistematically privileged in some crucial respects. They may know different things or know some things better than those who are comparatively privileged (socially, politically) by virtue of what they typically experience and how they understand their experience. [...] Their aim is both to understand how the systematic partiality of authoritative knowledge arises – specifically, its androcentrism and sexism – and to account for the constructive contributions made by those working from marginal standpoints (Wylie, 2003, p. 26).

That means that considering the views from those who actually suffers, who are the subject of oppressions and violations should be constructive for the process of researching and looking for alternatives. The solution of the a contemporary social problematic like racism should pass through racialized people; as well as the gender differentiations problem's solution must pass through women and all other gender identity that are considered less valuable. This theoretical perspective argues, therefore that knowledge stems from social position, and because of that, the views and apprehensions of the world of those who belong to groups with more social power are more validated than those in marginalized groups (Wylie, 2003):

Moreover, it offers a framework for understanding how, far from compromising epistemic integrity, certain kinds of diversity (cultural, racial, gender) may significantly enrich scientific inquiry, a matter of urgent practical and political as well as philosophical concern (Wylie, 2003, p. 26).

Continuing in this idea, social location limits and shapes what we know. Our different experiences of world's social problematics take to the affirmative that our knowledge has a specific –limited – epistemic content. Power relations, then, inflect on knowledge and in that matter marginalized people's views are discredited. To balance this valuation of these different views in science it is to somehow, recognize the voice of those groups that were silenced throughout historical processes of material inequality and socio-political structures that had approached them in a violent way. In academia, specially it “is to approach inquiry from the perspective of insiders rather than impose on them the external categories of professional social science” (Wylie, 2003, p. 27).

As we refer to those ‘voices’ we are referring directly to a social location occupied by marginalized people, therefore the standpoint perspective is not an individual one but it refers to an individual that takes part on some social groups that share oppression experiences. These oppressions, as standpoint theory sees it, are given accordingly with the position we occupy. In that sense, race, gender and social class forma a matrix of dominations that intersect at different points. Luiza Bairros (1995), afro-brazilian scholar concludes on that:

So a working black woman is not triply oppressed or more oppressed than a white woman in the same social class but (she) experiences oppression from a place that provides a different view of what it is to be a woman in a racist and sexist unequal society⁵ (Bairros, 1995, p. 461, translated).

The standpoint of black women on what it is to be black and woman is enriching, as it is different and unique. However, those experiences permeate the domination process that becomes an obstacle for these voices to access determinate places – and spaces – of power. The experiences of these marginalized groups, socially located in a non-humanized – or sub-humanized - way causes its intellectual productions, knowledge and voices to be treated also in an subaltern way (Almeida; Bezerra, 2019).

Conceição Evaristo, Brazilian linguist and writer challenges this logic with her writing, her stories that “were not made to lull the children of the big house, but to wake up the slave quarters”⁶ (Evaristo, 2007, p. 21, translated). She writes a subaltern narrative, close – but not the same as – to a bibliographical experience, as she writes her own *escrevivências*. As a black woman, her *escrevivência* makes it explicit the misadventures of one who knows by living the intersectional, inferiorized condition of being black and women. Then, comes up a speech of a body that is no longer just described by others desires, but it is now, living, written, self-managed of its own representation.

The author attributes to her childhood the beginning of her writing process, “the accumulation of everything that she heard and saw” back then, all ancestral knowing, creativity to support their survival and the resistance gestures of her family - lead mostly by women – everything inspired her. The orality was always there as “hearing and talking were the only defense, the only medicine” (Souza, 2018, p. 36). In a small text, telling about her mother gesture of “writing the sun” in the paper land, with a twig as a pencil, a moment that marked her she stated:

⁵ In the original text: “Assim uma mulher negra trabalhadora não e tripla mente oprimida ou mais oprimida do que uma mulher branca na mesma classe social mas experimenta a opressão a partir de um lugar que proporciona um ponto de vista diferente sobre o que e ser mulher numa sociedade desigual racista e sexista”.

⁶ In the original text: “histórias que não foram feitas para ninar as crianças da casa grande mas, para acordar a senzala”. Explaining this frase, she continues to say that: “Our 'escrevivência' is not made to put those in the big house to sleep, but to wake them from their unjust sleep. [...] Why do I say this? There is a figure in the Brazilian imagination that bothers me a lot, which is the image of the black mother. She works in the big house and raises the children of the colonizing offspring. One of the functions this woman had was precisely to tell stories to put the boys to sleep. [...] I always think about how enslaved women were involved in something serious: the issue of speech, which, I imagine was also commanded. She had to speak. When I affirm our writing, I think of it as a text that today is not committed to the big house. We write what we want to write. It is not canonical literature that will tell me what story to tell and what to choose for it” (Evaristo, 2019, p. 21-22, translated). In the original text: “A nossa *escrevivência* não é para adormecer os da casa grande, e sim para acordá-los de seus sonos injustos. [...] Por que digo isso? Tem uma figura no imaginário brasileiro que me incomoda muito que é a imagem da mãe preta. Ela trabalha na casa grande e cria os filhos da prole colonizadora. Uma das funções que essa mulher tinha era justamente a de contar histórias para adormecer os meninos. [...] Sempre fico pensando, assim, em como a mulher escravizada estava inscrita em algo grave: a questão da fala que, imagino, também fosse comandada. Ela tinha que falar. Quando afirmo nossa *escrevivência*, penso nela como texto que hoje não está comprometido com a casa grande. Nós *escrevemos* o que queremos escrever. Não é uma literatura canônica que vai me dizer que história contar e o que escolher para isso.

It was from that moment, perhaps, that I discovered the function, the urgency, the pain, the need and the hope of writing. Is it necessary to commit one's life to writing or is it the other way around? Commit writing to life?⁷ (Evaristo, 2007, p. 18, translated).

Such personal – and unique – way of writing in a particular mix between real life experiences and fiction gives Evaristo's writing a power. Her stories gain a sense of insubordination. Sharing her apprehension of the world, - a subaltern one considering her social context, race and gender - she becomes the teller of her own story, with her own standpoint, with her own voice, she take the power out of hand of others. In this process, she goes beyond the search of representation, as she becomes an expression, a literary image of self-representation.

Conceição Evaristo although writing with her context, inspired by her own story, shares a collective point of view. Her enunciation case is individual in that sense but at the same time imidiatety collective, considering others that share the same space in the same marginalized groups. Thus, when she dares to write her *escrevivências* she is opening up a denied space for all black marginalized, subaltern women. In this sense, her writing is political. It is the true register of human rights as a struggle, as an open field that allows changes, corrections, transformation. That demonstrates that as she said, her life is intimately committed to writing – as it allows her an insubordination voice - and her writing is committed to life – as an *escrevivência*.

Evaristos' *escrevivências* as a portrait of real life bring real social problems discussions in raw way. In her writings as a reader, you face death, violence, social injustice and unjustifiable cruel inequalities scenarios, as she puts it writing is a way of bleeding. For academic writings is the same, once you becomes compromised on discussing and looking for alternatives to contemporary realities problems, writing also can become way of bleeding, a password for us to use to access the world.

3 NÃO MORRER NEM SEMPRE É VIVER⁸: A DISCUSSION ABOUT (NECRO)POLITICS AND HUMAN

“Gosto de escrever, na maioria das vezes dói, mas depois do texto escrito é possível apaziguar um pouco a dor, eu digo um pouco... Escrever pode ser uma espécie de vingança, [...] Não sei se vingança, talvez desafio, um modo de ferir o silêncio imposto, ou ainda, executar um gesto de teimosa esperança. Gosto de dizer ainda que a escrita é para mim [...] a senha pela qual eu acesso o mundo”. (Evaristo, 2005, p. 2)

⁷ In the original text: “Foi daí, talvez que eu descobri a função, a urgência, a dor, a necessidade e a esperança da escrita. É preciso comprometer a vida com a escrita ou é o inverso? Comprometer a escrita com a vida?”

⁸ “Not dying is not always the same as living”, translated freely by the author.

To think Human rights through Evaristo's work – literature – means to “rethink” human rights. Through her work, it is possible to decondition our lenses of analysis of rights and, literally see other realities. A careful reading of her work allows us to transcend a superficial analysis of human rights and politics. She provokes a change in the way we look and apprehend different realities, a reconstruction of meanings and places of senses.

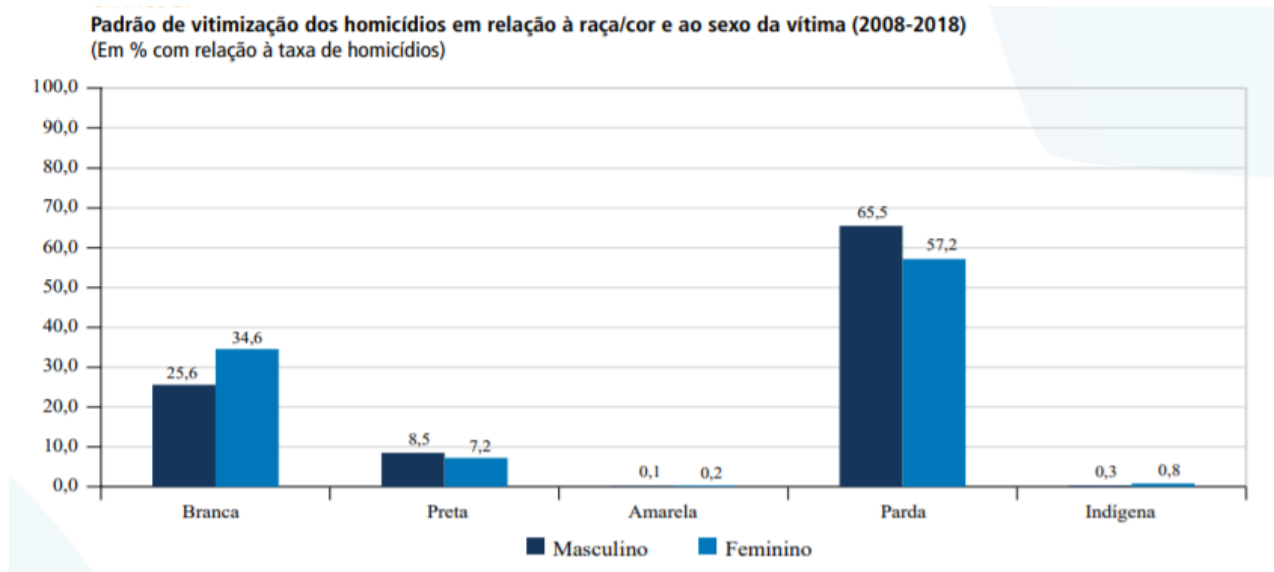
From this point on, we intend to propose a critical and creative capacity marked by literature and applied to human rights, confronting horizons, possibilities and moving towards the transformation of realities. In this sense, we argue that Conceição Evaristos' work have a fundamental role in the humanization of human rights.

The book *Olhos d'água*, by her authorship, is a book of short stories, - little only in terms of the number of pages. Her poetic prose, raw for bringing through elements of orality, everyday expressions in her writing, all in a conscious way, doing what she calls “craft work”, her contaminated by life writing way – *escrevivências*, exactly the reason why the author's work is an important contribution to the present research that wants, precisely, to contaminate human rights by life, by other reality(ies), and subjectivities.

Among the *escrevivências*, we highlight a short story from the aforementioned book: *We agreed not to die*⁹. Constructed in scenes, all of them with an everyday intimacy, and bringing the trajectory of a group of people, residents of a slum, they open up the social vulnerability of the black population that, marginalized, lives with the imminence of death daily. All scenes have death, in some way, present, several of them are interpellated by the noise of gunfire in the slum. And so, Conceição Evaristo takes us to the place of problematizing the racist ways of being and acting, which have taken place in Brazilian society since colonization. When they (the characters) agree not to die, they refuse to be part of the cruel statistics of genocide of the black population, an ongoing process in Brazil.

According to data from the Institute for Applied Economic Research (IPEA) (2020), in 2018, a woman was murdered in Brazil by every two hours. “Although the number of female homicides showed a reduction of 8.4% between 2017 and 2018, if we look at the scenario of the last decade, we will see that the situation has improved only for non-black women”, states the research report that demonstrates the worsening of racial inequality in Brazil. In 2018, 68% of women murdered in Brazil were black. We can analyse those number in the graphic below:

⁹ “A gente combinamos de não morrer”, freely translated by the author.



Pattern chart of homicide victimization in relation to race/color (IPEA, 2020). Available at: https://www.ipea.gov.br/portal/images/stories/PDFs/relatorio_institucional/200826_ri_atlas_da_violencia.pdf

The graphic shows the pattern of victimization by race/color and indicates a superiority of homicides among black men and women (black and brown) in relation to non-black men and women. The difference is large and illustrates a scenario of the politics of the death of the black population. For black men the percentage reaches 74.0% and 64.4% for black women. When comparing with the same indicators from the previous edition of Atlas 2019, it is possible to observe that black victimization has increased even more, since these rates for men and women, respectively, were 73.15% and 63.4%. Race, as a social construction, rectifies positions of domination in which whiteness was conceived as a rule and other ethnic groups are therefore placed in anormality to be dominated. The colonization process established the values of whiteness as superior, and these became universal in political, economic, cultural, and religious terms, bringing irreparable losses to minority ethnic groups. Law, and especially human rights, were also conceived under the same way of thinking and conceiving the world that, since then, is intended – pretentiously – to be universal (Oliveira, 2020).

The importance of the literary work that we present is exactly here, in the raw, intimate evidence that it brings from its reading of a reality that perpetuates itself in inhumane conditions. The politics of death, resulting from a process of dehumanization, - also inherited from colonization - reification of black bodies - which were reduced to labor and merchandise - demonstrates the project that racism is and leads us to identify it "as a fundamentally political cultural engineering that does not dispense with the power to generate and establish differences, prejudices and discrimination" (Oliveira, 2020, p. 3).

Let us observe that the short story presents, through a particular language, exactly the reality transmitted by the interpretation of the data and graphs presented. Therefore, the presence of a relevant social content in the work remains explicit. The daily lives of all the characters in the narrative reflect common situations in many Brazilian slums, issues that concern the social relations caused by drug trafficking, the evident fragility of guarantees for the survival of the black and marginalized population, exposure to summary elimination, to disposability, to necropolitics as a way of managing the lives of subjects (Campelo, 2018).

However, when reading Conceição Evaristo's short story, in addition to the data interpretation, it is possible to access an experience that touches us, which makes this reality tangible through imagination and sensitivity. It mobilizes us when, and instead of just numbers, we have access to the feelings of and relationships between people – characters. It is a process of humanized, personal recognition.

Therefore, the reading experience of Evaristos' work puts us in front of a relatable narrative and this is one of the main aspects that compose the justification of the choice to build a social juridical analysis from her work. She portrays the complexity of lived experiences of black women in a specific context, through several details and nuances. Her work is a reliable example of the differential aspect of working based on fiction literary genres, being the capacity of cultivating self-reflection, and disrupting dominant narratives through creation, imagination, sensitivity (Leavy, 2017).

In an excerpt from the story, bringing the elaborations of Bica, one of the central characters, without knowing the whereabouts of the husband and father of her child, says (or thinks):

- There must be a way not to die so soon and to live a less cruel life. I live messing with my mother's soapoperas. However, I know that it violently separates the two worlds. She knows that the truth of the small screen is fiction. My mother always sewed life together with iron threads. I'm hungry, another hunger. My milk gushes out for the food of my son and other people's children. I want to infect other mouths with hope. [...] Between Dorvi and his companions there was a pact not to die. I know that not dying, not always, is living. There must be other paths, milder exits. My son sleeps. Outside the dry sonata continues to explode bullets. At this point, bodies lying on the ground must be oozing blood. I write and remember a verse I read one day. "Writing is a way to bleed". I add: and with a lot of bleeding, a lot and a lot... (Evaristo, 2016, p. 109. translated).

The passage begins with a statement that gives us a tone of indignation. All the characters in the tale seem to be neighbors of death, in the scenarios, the impression given is that because you are who you are, death is right there, on the corner, in the 'lost' bullet that finds you. Genocidal practices and policies are aimed at black populations in revoltingly deliberate ways. Abdias de Nascimento (1978) points out that genocidal practices against the black population in Brazil are practiced by the institutions themselves - hence, institutional racism is spoken of

- with the purpose of physical extermination of black bodies, as well as, through convincing of the black population itself that their human condition is only recognized once whiteness is adopted by them as an existential model. It means a symbolic violence, “persecutions and denials of the legitimacy of African languages, religions and cultural aspects”, that is, cultural manifestations and affirmations. (Oliveira, 2020, p. 5)

The author of *We agreed not to die*, puts us directly in front of this reality. It is possible to observe, in the excerpt above, the tone of familiarity with death, the simple and direct way in which Bica refers to the bodies that must be bleeding on the floor while she writes - and bleeds in her own way, by writing - the iron lines with which her mother, who lost a murdered young son, sewed all her life, bring the harshness of this reality. It puts us in direct confrontation with it, in an almost tangible way. In the end, Bica's small son – because he's still breastfeeding –, who sleeps, is lulled to the sound of bullets.

This policy of death is what Achille Mbembe (2016) defines as necropolitics, a kind of extension or actualization of Foucault's concept of biopolitics. Meaning a decision-making process that decides who can live and who can not. Mbembe articulates this argument based in the formation of the state itself back on the colonization process. The colony was a space that no rules were applied, a space where violence and domination ruled against colonized population. This colonial process structured state and contemporary society as its marks can still be seen. Necropolitics is the colonial wound that still hurts.

4 DEVE HAVER OUTROS CAMINHOS, SAÍDAS MAIS AMENAS¹⁰

“E como a escrita e o viver se con(fundem), sigo eu nessa escrevivência a lembrar de algo que escrevi recentemente: ‘O olho do sol batia sobre as roupas estendidas no varal e mamãe sorria feliz. Gotículas de água aspergindo a minha vida-menina balançavam ao vento. Pequenas lágrimas dos lençóis. Pedrinhas azuis, pedaços de anil, fiapos de nuvens solitárias caídas do céu eram encontradas ao redor das bacias e tinas das lavagens de roupa. Tudo me causava uma comoção maior. A poesia me visitava e eu nem sabia”.

(Conceição Evaristo)¹¹

Evaristo, armed with her writing, denounces a racist and genocidal policy, undertaken to exterminate the black population – physically and symbolically. The power of her work, then,

¹⁰ “There must be other ways, milder exits”, freely translated by the author.

¹¹ Deposition during the *I Colóquio de Escritoras Mineiras*, in may 2009, in Faculdade de Letras da UFMG.

is undeniably great in the sense of raising awareness and carrying an alert that should reverberate in us, readers, as loud and deep as the symphony of “lost” bullets that lull the child who, in our society, already born racialized, marginalized, neglected and with a goal in itself, varying according to the dark tones of their skin. “They agreed to kill us, but we agreed not to die”, and they continue to resist, refusing to bleed for a system that does not recognize their humanity and, therefore, violates it daily.

In that sense, the identity claimed as a black marginalized establishes itself as a transgressive, historical and political subject. The reading experience of Evaristo’s *escrevivências* is pedagogical. It leads us to a place of questioning and criticizing the effectiveness of human rights politics in the matter of not giving – because they have already one – but acknowledging and considering marginalized people’s voices. *Escrever* as a method, is a rupture of silencing, constituting a tool that contributes to academical writing as the example of its relation to standpoint theory’s argument on the historical need to recognize situated knowledge and social positioning. *Subaltern voices* teaches us about political and cultural resistance.

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