

NOT TO FORGET: MEMORY, POWER AND THE MALÊ ARCHIVE IN AMADO'S NARRATIVE

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses the relations between power, memory, and the archive that surround the Malês revolt, a historical event narrated in *Bahia de Todos os Santos: Guia de Ruas e Mistérios* (Bahia de Todos os Santos: A Guide to the Streets and Mysteries) by the writer Jorge Amado (1977). It seeks to share reflections, tensions, and intentions that the contact with post-structuralist and decolonial studies can trigger before history, as a movement of insubmission able to potentiate a critique of official thought and the elected narratives. The Malê resistance and endeavor to protect their identity is a power expressed in Amado's book, which denounces the physical, linguistic, religious, social, and historical violence experienced by the dehumanization of Black bodies and the erasure of the national history of these popular figures who had participation in struggles for freedom and were silenced in the nation's official narratives. The work developed also aims to understand how the Brazilian novelist approaches these structures forged in the relations of power and control of history and memory used as mechanisms to erase the identities of ethnic minorities on Brazilian soil. The development of this study relied on the theoretical concepts of Derrida (1995/2001), Deleuze (1969/2009), Foucault (1969/2008), Miguel (2003), Grosfoguel (1996), Quijano (2005), and Reis (1986).

KEYWORDS

archive, power, Malê, memory, history

PARA NÃO ESQUECER: MEMÓRIA, PODER E ARQUIVO MALÊ EM NARRATIVA AMADIANA

RESUMO

Neste artigo, se problematiza as relações entre o poder, a memória e o arquivo que circundam a revolta dos malês, acontecimento histórico narrado em *Bahia de Todos os Santos: Guia de Ruas e Mistérios*, do escritor Jorge Amado (1977), buscando compartilhar reflexões, tensionamentos e intenções que o contato com os estudos pós-estruturalistas e decoloniais podem provocar ante a história, significando um movimento de insubmissão capaz de potencializar uma crítica ao pensamento oficial e às narrativas eleitas. A resistência e a busca malê para resguardar sua identidade é uma potência expressa no livro amadiano, que denuncia a violência física, linguística, religiosa, social e histórica vivenciada pela desumanização dos corpos negros e o apagamento da história nacional dessas figuras populares que tiveram uma participação em lutas em prol da liberdade e foram silenciadas nas narrativas oficiais da nação. O trabalho desenvolvido tem por intuito ainda compreender como o romancista brasileiro aborda essas estruturas forjadas nas relações de poder e de controle da história e da memória utilizadas como mecanismos para apagar identidades das minorias étnicas em solos brasileiros. Para o desenvolvimento deste

estudo, foram utilizadas as concepções teóricas de Derrida (1995/2001), Deleuze (1969/2009), Foucault (1969/2008), Mignolo (2003), Grosfoguel (1996), Quijano (2005) e Reis (1986).

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

arquivo, poder, malê, memória, história

1. INTRODUCTION

We take a transdisciplinary approach given the contemporaneity of the narrative of *Bahia de Todos os Santos: Guia de Ruas e Mistérios* (Bahia de Todos os Santos: A Guide to the Streets and Mysteries), by the writer Jorge Amado (1977), which enables a dialogue with the knowledge that lies within the postcolonial and post-structuralist perspective and the decolonial thinking, to learn how the modern/colonial domination immersed in its cartography of power involves the historical event referring to the Malê revolt in 19th century Bahia. This episode, included in the narrative, largely illustrates how memory problematizes the unwanted other, this group's resistance stance and search for identity, and the denunciation of its erasure from national history. Silence is taken as a motto to rethink matters of power, history, memory, and the archive in official Brazilian historiography and the role of literature as an instrument to combat and denounce physical, linguistic, religious, social, and historical violence experienced by ethnic minorities.

Amado's narrative circumvents temporality to be immersed in the post-colonial, post-modern perspective. It reaches decoloniality by seeking the emancipation of types of domination and oppression, mainly concerning subordinated groups and the destruction of their memory through power relations, the disintegration of peoples and their cultures, their knowledge that disturbs, contests colonialism, the political and social excesses that exterminate and silence communities, peoples, intellectuals, artists, leaders, among others.

The post-colonial project identifies the oppositional relationship between the colonizer and the colonized to denounce the different forms of exploitation, domination, and oppression experienced by certain groups. Grosfoguel (1996) recognizes the importance of postcolonial studies and the South Asian group of Bhabha, Spivak. However, he adds that they focused on just a single epistemological strand of post-structuralist thinking stemming from the philosophies of Foucault, Derrida, and Lacan and thus have a problem in understanding modernity, proposing to decolonize both subaltern and colonial studies. However, here we are "re-reading the paradigm of modern reason" (Mignolo, 2003, p. 167), based on the theoretical conceptions of Derrida (1995/2001) and Deleuze (1969/2009) and the epistemologies of the South Latin for the proposed reflection because decolonial thinking does not deny reason, but expands the imaginary regarding the production of knowledge, stories, production of knowledge about other peoples.

The theoretical reflections of Foucault (1969/2008), Derrida (1995/2001), and Deleuze (1969/2009) are relevant for the discussion of important aspects of the present

study. Furthermore, we seek to align them with the perspective of decolonial thought that allows us to discuss other issues since this is not an approach of the subaltern reflecting its historical condition, but rather a critique of Eurocentrism, of the silencing imposed on the diminished other, from the writer Jorge Amado, a White man. We cannot evoke the category “place of speech” in its proper sense for this discussion but consider different perspectives to perceive reality. The author Walter D. Mignolo (2003), who produces one of the main theoretical-conceptual bases of decolonial thinking, widens the understanding of the theory concept, rescuing other forms of rationality outside Eurocentric modernity that theorize the legacies of colonization using two approaches. The first is “a strictly disciplinary position, from the viewpoint of someone to whom colonial legacies are a historical issue, but not a persona matter” (Mignolo, 2003, p. 160). It is a perspective of coloniality from the standpoint of no direct experience. On the other hand, the second happens by “someone whose colonial heritages are ingrained in their own history and sensibility” (Mignolo, 2003, p. 161).

Both perspectives align with the perspective adopted by the writer Jorge Amado. Although he saw himself as a mestizo man engaged in issues of ethnic minorities, he was a White man. However, he recalled history and memory of the Afro-Bahian population would not be forgotten in the vaults of history, as it is possible to note in his considerations through the sensitivity in selected excerpts from the work *Bahia de Todos os Santos* (Amado, 1977). The writer tried to highlight the importance of the memory and political significance of some popular figures in the political and social history of the city of Salvador and national history exactly because these voices are discredited and silenced even today.

Therefore, one of the premises of decolonial thinking is “to reinscribe in the history of humanity what was repressed by modern reason, in its version of a civilizing mission or its version of theoretical thinking denied to the uncivilized” (Mignolo, 2003, p. 158), denouncing the limitation and violence generated within modern society and its produced knowledge, disregarding experiences and knowledge in the name of Eurocentrism and its hierarchical supremacy.

By insisting on the links between the locus of theorization (being from, coming from, and being in) and the locus of enunciation, I imply that the loci of enunciation are not given but enacted. I am not assuming that only people from such a place could do X. Let me insist that I am not pouring the argument in deterministic terms but the open field of logical possibilities, historical circumstances, and individual sensibilities. I am suggesting that those for whom colonial legacies are real (that is, those to whom they harm) are more inclined (logically, historically, and emotionally) than others to theorize the past in terms of coloniality. I also suggest that postcolonial theorization relocates the boundaries between knowledge, the known, and the knowing subject (which is why I have emphasized the complicities of postcolonial theories with “minorities”). (Mignolo, 2003, pp. 165–166)

Mignolo (2003) does not impose barriers to limit knowledge production to a chosen group of subjects who belong to a specific geopolitical space. According to the author, people who have experienced coloniality would be more inclined to address the issue. However, this does not guarantee they will ponder this condition or may experience difficulty discussing coloniality and colonial difference.

In his proposal to decolonize knowledge, the scholar still understands that macro-narratives need to be submitted to the perspective of coloniality and review what is thought about globalization, aiming at changing the standpoint of enunciation, encompassing local and cultural histories, and remapping cultures of academic knowledge.

Postcoloniality is a critical discourse that foregrounds the colonial side of the modern world system and the coloniality of power embedded in modernity itself. Furthermore, it is a discourse that changes the ratio between geohistorical sites (or local histories) and knowledge production. The rearrangement of the geopolitics of knowledge is expressed in two different but complementary directions: 1. The critique of subordination from the perspective of subaltern studies; 2. The emergence of liminal thinking as a new epistemological modality between western tradition and the diversity of categories suppressed under westernism; orientalism (as objectification of the locus of the utterance as “alterity”), and area studies (as objectification of the “Third World”, as a producer of cultures, but not of knowledge). (Mignolo, 2003, pp. 136–137)

This article discusses the relations between power, memory, and the archive surrounding the Malê revolt, a historical event narrated in the Amadiano guide. It seeks to share reflections, tensions, and intentions that the contact with post-structuralist and decolonial studies, anchored in Mignolo's (2003) ideas, can provoke vis-a-vis history as a movement of insubmission which could potentiate a critique of official thought and narratives chosen from coloniality.

Exploring the notion of the archive in the Malês revolt narrative in the book mentioned above is attempting to make some approximations between the power of memory and the archival present in Amado's guide. The theoretical-philosophical conceptions of Jacques Derrida (1995/2001) on “archive fever” and its argumentative universe of deconstruction, as well as Foucault's (1969/2008) on knowledge and power, will be relevant for a reading proposed here.

In this sense, Derrida's notion of archive (1995/2001) will be useful to think that historical memory constantly goes through stages of repression and maintenance in a conscious way. The archival evil would then be related to the erasure of memory and, consequently, would lead to political, social, and identity dominations. Its purpose is to deconstruct philosophical, literary, and political issues, as well as the dominant system, even if it is part of it, promoting the denial of the existence of the “other” through binary pairs inherited from the foundations of western metaphysics, which favor the first element and excludes the second: man/woman, rich/poor, nature/culture, form/meaning, White/Black, among others.

Regarding Latin America, the ethnic-racial hierarchies built throughout the European colonial expansion are one of the bases of the “coloniality of power”, as several researchers called it. Projects that claim to be radical today will not succeed without putting down the colonial/racial hierarchies of White/Eurocentric domination over non-European peoples, as Mignolo (2003) reminds us.

Given the context of Latin America, openness to epistemic diversity helps in the dialogue to think about the different historical realities, the experiences of the current moment, and their memories, which point to continuities and ruptures with cultural hegemony.

2. THE MALÊ REVOLT AND RESISTANCE

Drawing on this perspective, we will address Amado's narrative that recounts an important historical event in the city of Bahia. The city was the stage for mobilizing enslaved Islamic African peoples, which unleashed fierce opposition against three common practices inherited from the Portuguese colonial system: slavery, political excesses, and religious intolerance. In the attempt to build historical coherence through the concept of the archive and the coloniality of power, we realize that the guide's narrative describes an episode from one of the revolts that preceded the fight for the abolition of slavery and the independence of Brazil: the Malês revolt.

Of utmost importance for the country's history but, to this day, unrecognized and excluded from school textbooks, the great uprising, organized by the Black people of Muslim descent living in Bahia, gave rise to fighting that caused divisions within the city. The author-narrator-character sought to demonstrate the importance of memory about some figures who built the city's history but who are discredited voices in Bahian society. The following fragment addresses the historical traces, often silenced and forgotten, about the Malê revolt and its leader:

of Brazilian historical characters, my favorite. The most forgotten of all, buried in a deep grave by the slave-owners, from where he has not yet been removed to the pages of history, not even the one written with a capital H and generally concerned only with officially consented and consecrated personalities, not even of that other, truer history, made on the sidelines of the ruling classes' approval (...). Who knows the name, the deeds, the knowledge, the gesture, the face of Alufá Licutã? (...) He led the revolt of Black slaves for four days, and the city of Bahia had him as its ruler when the Malê nation ignited the dawn of freedom, breaking the shackles, and took up arms, proclaiming the equality of men. I know of no history of struggle more beautiful than that of the Malê people, nor of revolt repressed with such violence. (...) The cursed Alufá Licutã expects you to come and proclaim in the public square, amidst the people, his strength, his magnitude, his heroic presence. A hero not only of the Malê nation, a hero of the Brazilian people, and a hero of freedom still fighting slavery today. (Amado, 1977, pp. 27–28)

Jorge Amado (1977) suggests another distinctive approach to history, “with a capital H”, that of presence, and offers a decentered narrative driven by the intersections of individual and collective histories. The opposition involving the actions developed by the dichotomous pair of White (Portuguese government authorities) and Black (Malê people) is one of our points of analysis, precisely because of the violent relationship between colonist and slave, defining the revolt remembered in the work of the Bahian writer. The ideas defended by Derrida (1995/2001) in *Mal de Arquivo* (Archive Fever) provide insight into the need to invert these metaphysical hierarchies present in the excerpt above because

doing justice to this need means recognizing that, in classical philosophical opposition, we are not dealing with the peaceful side-by-side coexistence, but with a violent hierarchy. One of the two terms commands (axiologically, logically, etc.) holds the highest position. Deconstructing the opposition means, first of all, inverting the hierarchy at a given moment. (p. 48)

Derrida's (1995/2001) objection to this premise of western thought, with its logocentric roots, refers to the hierarchical structures that the philosopher wants to deconstruct and the process of sealed, closed archiving as a representative of the metaphysics of presence. We understand that the popular Black hero lacks essentialist representative conditions. Therefore he is outside the official history, as he flees from an accepted White model, the excluded element of western metaphysics, “the most forgotten of all, buried in a deep grave by the slave-owners, from where he has not yet been removed to the pages of history, (...) and generally concerned only with officially consented and consecrated personalities” (Amado, 1977, pp. 27–28).

The writer questions a place that is not dominated, oppressed, and discriminated against by western modernity and challenges it by proposing a new look at the Malês as subjects of their history, that is, the experience of subordinated subjects, these others invisible, who were and still are abused in their condition of being as a result of the process of physical and symbolic conquest.

In this guide's 70s edition, Jorge Amado recovers these collective historical memories from a past to the pages of the great history, the one known and recognized by all, the western canon. His purpose is to urge the removal of these events from the walls of silence, from the violence committed not only against the participants of the revolutionary act itself but also the destruction caused by the death throb emerging even before this event becomes an archive, given the absence of documentary records that did not ensure the retelling of this heroic feat, because, to compose an archive someone has to authorize it, validate it, as follows: “who knows the name, the deeds, the knowledge, the gesture, the face of Alufá Licutã?” (Amado, 1977, pp. 27–28). This lack of records on the protest movement and the erasure of the image of the Malê militant suggests the historical violence he and his people suffered.

The perspective of “coloniality of power” by Aníbal Quijano (2005) makes us think about the continuous existence of colonial domination practices that persist after the

end of colonial administrations. They are products of colonial cultures that still permeate societies structured by the modern capitalist system, such as the fact that the Malê revolt is unknown to most Brazilians and does not appear in the great history manuals or textbooks. Hence, the post-coloniality born within the Eurocentric myth is a fallacy in considering the need for the decolonization of metropolitan centers.

Taking the differential in the power of the Deleuzian simulacrum, which establishes its nature regardless of the characteristics of representation, as a parameter, we understand that the popular Black hero lacks essentialist representative conditions, so he is outside the official history because he is a simulacrum, he diverges from an accepted White model.

This Malê simulacrum emerges from the depth where it was repressed to provoke the observer, here the reader, to take them out of their comfort zone, making them think about the impositions and enunciative limits defined by history revitalization of their political power of resistance.

This excerpt from Amado's work expresses the resistance of the Malê people through their commitment to their knowledge, culture, and identity, materialized by disobedience to the White hegemony that ruled the city and imprinted its Eurocentric values on Bahian society. The Malê posture was a decolonial strategy. The militants questioned coloniality, establishing decolonization as an objective since their projects were directly linked to the need to transform dominant relationships, structures, and institutions, even amid racism. According to Quijano (2005), this is the key factor in organizing the economy, politics, and various forms of power, knowledge, and existence.

The writer Jorge Amado politically activates, as we see it, the symbolic force of a Deleuzian simulacrum (Deleuze, 1969/2009) as he questions official history by leaving aside the trajectory of the Malê people in the struggle for their social, religious, and identity freedom. Thus, the narrative proposes rethinking the old sayings about this unwanted group, banned by the center, to reach another power through the literary text since it comes from the in-between place of history.

Deleuze (1969/2009) addresses the thought of Plato, who conceives simulacra as errors, as ill-founded copies of mimesis, here considered as the official history since it is a narrative of the nation, authorized as a translation of reality. The reversal of the simulacrum, idealized by the French philosopher, is useful to think and demand that the traditional history contested in the guide is no longer the chosen model, as it is just one truth among many others. Therefore, the concept of simulacrum will be used to recover the status of difference and highlight the fragmentation of identity.

Accordingly, Derrida (1967/2002) advocates the deconstruction of discourses to show the ambiguities and contradictions that guide western metaphysical thought and its canonical concepts, which tend to repress the second element of the dichotomy. The critical position of the philosopher in *A Escritura e a Diferença* (Writing and Difference; Derrida, 1967/2002) questions the ruling voices of western society by contesting the concept of truth and center that we perceive to be the core of elected history:

it was not a fixed place but a function, a kind of non-place in which substitutions of signs were made indefinitely. It was then the moment when

language invaded the universal problematic field; It was then the moment when, in the absence of a center or origin, everything becomes discourse – provided we understand each other on that word – that is, a system in which the central, original or transcendental meaning is never absolutely present outside of a system of differences. (Derrida, 1967/2002, p. 232)

Based on this thought, Derrida (1967/2002) displaces the domains and brings them closer to the scene of the issue since they are the *différance*¹ itself, an operator that designates the distinct, the non-identical, destabilizing the center to the detriment of differences, of minority groups. The popular hero Malê, invisible, not revered by society, much less by official history, appears in the narrative as a reminder of this contestation, this search for freedom and justice, still ongoing because prejudice still reigns. The narrative confronts the oppressive discourse produced by the elite of Eurocentric descent, always believed to be true.

Derrida (1995/2001) elaborates on the notion of “archive fever” to discuss the preservation of memory and history, entangled in power games that choose what remains or not in the archive, as the death throb wants to exterminate them. Derrida (1995/2001) defines it as follows: “it is not a principle. In fact, it threatens every principle, every archonship primacy, urge to archive. This is what we will later call archive fever” (p. 23). If the archive is repressed, it will soon have no space in memory, leading to psychic consequences (individual memory), or social and political consequences (historical memory). Concerning the Malê event, we only have the “wish for an archive” because memory is an instrument of power, of domination, which can paralyze actions, so only the data of someone’s interest, a dominant group, is included. In this case, for that period of the historical event, it is about the official history narrators’ White hegemony of western descent.

Institutional power holds the archive, as it selects the information and conveniently disposes of it, organizing the narratives based on its interests, which implies political consequences. That occurs in historiography since official policy privileges repression, enabling the “archival fever”, the provoked forgetfulness, and, consequently, the erasure of memory. In this sense, the writer demands that those who are submerged in history not only have a place in the archives but that they be a living memory since the Black Malê leader must be remembered, revered, and proclaimed in “public, amidst the people, his strength, his magnitude, his heroic presence. A hero not only of the Malê nation, a hero of the Brazilian people” (Amado, 1977, pp. 27–28). The philosopher’s ideas somehow dialogue with this passage from Amado, nonconformist with this past being silenced, this great personality of Brazilian history being ignored. According to Derrida (1995/2001), the archive would relate to the present and the future, the past referring to those times.

Historical narratives emerge through power relations that select, exclude, and refute historical facts and characters beyond the control of the commanding voices that govern a society. Taking Foucault’s studies (1969/2008) in *Arqueologia do Saber* (Archeology of

¹ French term coined by Jacques Derrida (1967/2002). *Différance* plays a game with the word *différer* meaning both to differ and to differentiate. Words and signs would never evoke what they mean to the philosopher.

Knowledge) as a reference, power is formed by power games that negotiate at all times through strategies, and memory is one of them since it is built and linked to forms of hierarchy and subordination. These power relations can be approached from two angles: the first concerns selecting the memory of who or what should be spared from oblivion; the second is about the subjects involved in creating this memory. These Foucault's (1969/2008) considerations suggest that electing a certain truth as absolute is a metaphysical mistake since a movement of repression and meaning is undertaken in the construction of memory.

For Pierre Nora (1993), places of memory remain aware of the automatism of memory and its need to create archives: "if what they defend were not threatened, there would be no need to build them. If we truly lived the memories they involve, they would be useless" (p. 13).

Nora (1993) organizes and presents his distinctions between memory and history, arguing that "memory is life, borne by living societies; it remains in permanent evolution, open to the dialectic of remembering and forgetting, unconscious of its successive deformations, vulnerable to manipulations and appropriation, susceptible to being long dormant and periodically revived" (p. 8).

History, on the other hand, is the "reconstruction, always problematic and incomplete, of what no longer exists" (Nora, 1993, p. 9). He states, "history is perpetually suspicious of memory, is always suspect to history, whose function and true mission is to suppress and destroy it" (Nora, 1993, p. 9). This thought is revisited by Beatriz Sarlo (2007) when she says that the past always harbors the conflictive, referring to the fact that it participates both in memory and in history: "history is not always able to believe in memory, and it is suspicious of reconstitution that does not have memory at its center" (p. 9).

The certainties arising from the notion of truth of essence, of existence generate the movement of deconstruction that deceives them and the signs of the official discourse of ethnocentric history, prompting the verification of their meanings, proposing a decentering of their power structures. In such a way, the Malês promoted an upheaval of the center for the sake of differences. They represented language, the intellectual and writing domain; they were the force of *différance* and escaped the imposed rules. In addition, they represent one of the dichotomy elements that suffered exclusion precisely because they were the target of the influence of power.

Derrida's (1995/2001) considerations in *Mal de Arquivo* (Archive Fever) interact with Foucault's (1969/2008) ideas because, for him, power dominates the archives and memory and organizes history. Therefore, it establishes the "official history" through which events circulate, serving specific interests, eliminating everything that bothers through the political control of memory. According to Derrida (1995/2001): "effective democratization can always be measured by this essential criterion: participation in and access to the archive, its constitution, and interpretation" (p. 16). The access, constitution, and interpretation of the archive are, in other words, the movement of unveiling, deconstructing this official historical construction, making a critical reading of these forms of repression, of ready-made meanings and invented memories, closed in themselves,

reinterpreting them. As for documents that do not even integrate the archive, we can say that clippings, elections, and selections are made because, to become part of it, certain requirements that are directly linked to the power relations that govern a society and that negotiate the production and meanings of things through the manipulation of language and archives must be met.

Thus, literature supplements the archive since it is a document endowed with symbolic value. Amado's work has made room for and retold the history of this minority group, bypassing the exclusionary device of traditionally authoritarian historical narratives and other forms of discourse.

The writer triggers a political stance as he questions the official history by leaving aside the trajectory of the Malê people in the struggle for their social, religious, and identity freedom. Therefore, the narrative proposes reconsidering the old sayings about this unwanted group, banned by the center, by the voice of command, since it comes from the in-between place of history, to reach another power through the text that oscillates between reality and fiction. As an external element to the structure, the center does not participate in the game of difference, and it does not promote dynamism within the structure. In the words of the guide-writer:

the repression was so great, so excessive, that even today, the word Malê is still somehow cursed; even today, the Malê ancestry is hidden, silenced, when the reasons for fear have already been forgotten. (...) Little is known about the revolt and its leader. Pedro Calmon dealt with the subject in a novel that seems to have become a victim of the slavers' diktat because, as one of master Pedrinho's first books, I have not heard that it has been reprinted. As for the rest, silence. It is worth asking, where are those young Bahian historians, some with such quality and intellectual courage, who do not research the Malê revolt and do not raise the magnificent figure of the chief? (Amado, 1977, p. 29)

The diversity of non-European peoples and their epistemic diversity harbors "other" knowledge, experiences, cosmologies, and worldviews, with their political bodies of diverse spatio-temporal dimensions seen as "inferior" compared to the so-called "superior" knowledge of White and European origin, selected by those who have a western segregational stance rooted in epistemic racism/sexism in the modern/colonial world and their privileges of narrating. The Malês became a constant threat to the urban slavery supremacy, as they managed to dismantle the military domination of the city from January 25 to 27, 1835. The rebels were restrained by accusations that prevented the Malê project from materializing, leading to the imprisonment and, in some cases, the death of the movement's leaders and members. The Malês sought to maintain their culture so persecuted in Bahian society, overcome social and economic subservience, and fight racism, religious intolerance, and intellectual control. They mastered reading and writing and passed on this knowledge, and the Muslim religious practice, to other Blacks. For such merits, they were not well regarded by slave-owners; they were different and unwanted.

The writer from *Bahia de Todos os Santos* (Amado, 1977) recounts this event so that it can be narrated by other forms of knowledge, as it needs to be remembered through the exercise of memory. The Bahian historian João José Reis (1986) recognizes the importance of this episode and introduces it into his enunciative universe. He archives it as it was and still is the target of historical bankruptcy organized by certain sectors of Bahian/Brazilian society, considering that this great historical event is still unknown and absent from national history textbooks — narratives of this other that is so much part of the Brazilian formation and identity. Thus, we see how the discourse is negotiated in society's existing power relations. According to the researcher:

during interrogation on February 11, 1835, Licutan refused to disclose the name of any of his collaborators or disciples. He even denied that he was a Muslim, despite all contrary evidence. However, he kept his Malê dignity and identity before himself, the other Africans waiting to testify, and the interrogators. He told the judge his name was Bilal, to which the official angrily replied that he knew his African name was Licutan. The slave insolently replied: "It was true that he was called 'Licutan', but he could take any name he liked". The judge, out of ignorance, missed the fact that Bilal is a very common Islamic name and, in the defendant's case, a name carrying a singular symbolic meaning. In Muslim tradition, Bilal is the Islamic name of the Black helper (*muezzin*) of the Prophet Muhammad, and in West Africa, Bilal became the very denomination of the *muezzin* position (literally the assistant who "pulls" the faithful in prayer). The revolt was still alive in the heart of Licutan, or Bilal, despite the failure on the battlefield. (Reis, 1986, p. 161)

The victory against the Africans in 1835 was achieved through the strong White apparatus, the denunciations of insurgents, and a lack of unity, of partnership with African descendants of different religions and ethnicities. This anti-Portuguese revolt caused a permanent feeling of insecurity between enslaver and slave and did not end the resistance of enslaved people in Bahia. The punishment received by Licutan would be no less severe, given the proportion of his contestation, having to experience an indignant torture, with whippings and punishments:

the victims were stripped naked, tied up, and flogged on the back and buttocks. Two locations were chosen for this: the Campo da Pólvora de Novo and the Água de Meninos barrack, the same place where the last battle of the uprising was fought. There were times when the authorities feared that the whipping would disturb the peace in the city. The Malê master Licutan's sentence of 1,000 lashes would be executed in a "public place as long as it is not on the city streets". (Reis, 1986, p. 270)

From the moment these subjugated people, during a long period of history, react in an incisive, resistant manner so that they do not annul their cultural and religious references, their issue then becomes public. Despite the oppressive coexistence with the

hegemonic values of western history, it gains strength. Thus, a heterogeneous, dissimilar flow is marked by the rupture with certain chosen models of conduct, establishing an identity with the mark of difference.

Hence, *Bahia de Todos os Santos* fits the literary proposal of “recovering subaltern speech, recovering the voice of the silenced, resorting to the reconstitution of History as the basis of a denounced discourse, directed against another, hegemonic and diametrically opposed” (Augel, 2006, p. 9), proposing a rewriting of these past accounts of the country, within the guide, the fiction, the narratives more broadly, by bringing these events and popular heroes marginalized and forgotten in the basement of official history. It thus reconstructs a history that stands on the margins of the ruling classes’ approval.

This movement from the margin emerges from the depths where it was repressed to provoke the observer, here as the reader, to take them out of their comfort zone, making them think about the impositions and enunciative limits defined by history. They are traces of the colonized world discursively constructed from the colonizer’s perspective that almost destroys the memory of the civilization of the native peoples and the African trafficked to Brazilian lands. The narration of episodes related to the Malê revolt promotes the revitalization of their political power of resistance and freedom.

The writer Ana Maria Gonçalves (2009) is an example of the realization of a text, the symbolic effect of literature through the experience of reading, and the impact and stimulus caused on the receiver to understand reality. *Um Defeito de Cor* (A Color Defect), she wrote in 2009, narrates, in its prologue, that the writer was looking for a new destination for her life when she entered a bookstore in São Paulo looking for travel guides, with illustrated information about Cuba, its culture, history, and people. She headed to their section, and, suddenly, several guides fell off the shelf, but she could only hold one, *Bahia de todos os Santos: Guia de Ruas e Mistérios*, by Jorge Amado. Reading the invitation in Amado’s guide, the work’s prologue, she found a reason to travel to Bahia in 2001, when her whole affectionate relationship of interest and historical and literary instigation for the city of Bahia began. The writer says:

it was *Bahia de Todos os Santos — Guia de Ruas e Mistérios*, by Jorge Amado. That’s where the first Serendipity² took place. At the time, I was tired of living in a big city, tired of my profession. I had just split up and wanted a new life, in a new place, doing different things and, who knows, fulfilling an old dream: writing for a living. From the day Jorge Amado’s book fell into my hands, I knew the place to be happy had to be Bahia. (Gonçalves, 2009, p. 10)

After this unusual contact with the narrative, fruit of chance, according to Gonçalves (2009), who seems to fictionalize this encounter, she decides to venture through Amado’s mysterious city, to the point of reading the narrated city itself, its streets, and historical characters. She appropriates the work, and that is when the reception takes place, updated during the contact provided by the reading, allowing interaction processes and

² “Serendipity then came the term used to describe a situation where we discover or find something while looking for something else, but for which we had to be, let’s say, already prepared” (Gonçalves, 2009, p. 9).

experiences between the work and who receives it, leading to an artistic experience. From that moment on, Gonçalves (2009) decided to embrace the reception, coming to the city of Bahia, as she was in search of happiness:

still in the bookstore, standing in front of the shelf, I opened *Bahia de Todos os Santos* and started reading a prologue titled “Invitation”: “And when the guitar moans in the hands of the serenader in the bustling street of the busiest city, don’t you have, girl, a minute of indecision. Answer the call and come. Bahia awaits you in its continual celebration”. (...) At the time, I had the feeling he had written those words exactly for me, which became a certainty when I kept glancing at the sweet and tempting invitation. Bahia. Bahia was waiting for me, and Jorge Amado was still alive to introduce me to it. In a later passage, he said: “*come, and I will be your cicerone*”. (p. 10)

Amado created the tourist guide with literary writing, considering his skills as a novelist. Therefore, he gets to people’s emotions in his interference, reaching the goal of making the “reader-traveler”, in the words of Netto Simões (2002), roaming through an unknown place, imagining, being touched, in some way, by the text he reads and assuming the condition of tourist-reader, when traveling, moving to meet the real city. At that moment, the writer focuses on the reader and, with his poetic writing, consolidates this reality, an effect of meaning, affectively involving the reader, materializing the purpose of the text. For Iser (1976/1996), the literary work has two poles: the artistic — which designates the text produced by the author — and the aesthetic — which is the materialization produced by the reader, who updates the text:

the role of the reader unfolds historically and individually, depending on the experiences and the previously constructed understanding the readers introduce in the reading. It is not random but arises from the fact that the roles offered by the text are always performed selectively. The reader’s role represents a range of achievements that, when reached, are given a particular update. (p. 78)

As far as Gonçalves (2009), a Black writer who identifies with the narrative, especially the section addressing the Malês’ history, the guide made her travel through the universe of words. Then it made her want to come and check what had been told about the power of the past, which is still very present, given the identity and historical heritages of the population, the elected and official narratives that suppress and erase other narratives, and faces.

The epic narrative in the guide about the heroic deeds of the Malês, with their popular revolutions and unknown in the widely distributed history manuals, also seduced the reader Ana Maria Gonçalves to know these stories, spaces, and places. Surprised by the invitation and the information received about the revolutions of this group excluded from the great narratives, the writer accepts the suggestion the writer makes to historians to study it. Furthermore, he even suggested someone tried to write such a saga in a novel,

as it would be a good subject. From this fortuitous reading of the guide, Gonçalves found a reason to write. The writer then decides to come to the city of Bahia to get to explore, experience, and validate everything she had read:

I think I left the Cuba guidebooks on the floor, delighted with what I had just discovered, because, although I did not belong to the category of “young Bahian historians”, it was clear that the provocation about writing a novel was for me. For almost a year, through the internet, phone calls to Bahia, searching in bookstores, libraries, second-hand bookstores, and borrowed material, I researched the brave, intelligent Muslim slaves Malês, who had been banished from history. Until then, I had never heard of them. That was also a desperate year because all I wanted was to be in Bahia, walk the streets the Malês had walked, enter the churches they had entered, and swim in the sea they had swum. For I was sure that the book wouldn't come out if I weren't there. I believed that something in the air of Bahia would make me hear and feel them, much more than just knowing about them. (Gonçalves, 2009, p. 11)

The problem with history, as with literature, is wanting to represent reality, and this is not easy because the truth is ideological. However, Amado (1997) extrapolates the limits of reality. He goes beyond it by providing a lively and insinuating portrait of human experiences, provoking his readers and making them believe these narratives that might not reach people's emotions with so much impact if told by the official history. He uses the enchanting power of writing in a poetic tone that seduces the reader so that it makes them want to confirm what they have read.

When she got to Bahia, more precisely in Salvador, the writer (Gonçalves, 2009) did her research about the Malês but realized that there was already ample material on their trajectory, which made her give up writing a book on this topic, as she had concluded that other people had already accepted Jorge Amado's invitation. However, to this day, all we know is that this heroic and combative history is unknown to the Bahian and Brazilian people. Gonçalves (2009) had yet another unusual experience because when she traveled to one of the Baía de Todos os Santos' islands, Itaparica, she learned that a priest had donated to a family the old documents from an old church on the island. The tourist eventually found these papers unexpectedly — at least, that is how she narrates it — when she met a 6-year-old boy who was using them to draw. She got the child and his family to donate this material. After analyzing it, she realized that it was written in archaic Portuguese and that it was about the life of a slave that no one knew if she really existed, at least until that moment, although the documents provided real data. It is unlikely that these old papers were used by the child to draw. It seems that she wants to prove the unimportance of that slave's life in her book.

Through them, she learned a little about the life of a very special blind slave who traveled from Africa to Brazil looking for her son. On the crossing, she tells her story, marked by rape, violence, and slavery. Kehinde is her name, and she is also the main

character of the novel Gonçalves (2009) wrote. She was captured in Africa and boarded a slave ship to Brazil as a child. Once in Brazil, the girl was bought by a Bahian farmer to be his daughter's attendant. During her lessons, Kehinde also learns to read and write.

After some time, the girl is raped, has a child, and manages to buy her freedom after a fierce existential struggle. She meets Alberto, a White man with whom she gets involved, but they part. Kehinde could be Luísa Mahin or Luísa Gama, the supposed mother of the poet Luís Gama. She would have been involved in organizing the various uprisings of enslaved people in Bahia in the 19th century. Among these protesting movements, she would have participated in the Malê revolt. The accuracy of the story described in the documents found by Ana Gonçalves, which are now recounted in her book *Um Defeito de Cor* (Gonçalves, 2009), is not known. However, the writer takes Amado's proposal and undertakes a movement of historiographical metafiction to rethink and rescue memories silenced over time and oppressed by the official discourses of power that govern nations.

3. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Amado propose is that the Malê event does not become a fixed, crystallized memory, a reference to a past temporality, but, as we understand it, that the Malê discourse is pulled from the past, from its inertia, to rediscover some of its lost vitality, as we can see in the aesthetic effect, of historical repair, produced in the writer Ana Maria Gonçalves (2009).

Therefore, the *Bahia de Todos os Santos* (Amado, 1977) guide is not meant to be a repository of dead words since it has a mission to fulfill, a saying to the readers of the present and the future, who will learn about this historical fact it describes, giving it meaning, regardless of time. Thus, the work becomes the place of *différance*, of difference, of deferral, allowing the memory of literature to problematize historical, political, and cultural issues, as it is characterized by the ability to build the memory of a people, seeking to update it, so it does not become a dead archive.

The group's resistance and search for their identity are exposed, as is the denunciation of their national erasure and silencing, used as a motto to rethink questions about power, history, memory, and archive in Brazilian official historiography and the role of literature as an instrument to combat and denounce physical, linguistic, religious, social and historical violence experienced by ethnic minorities.

Accordingly, it is of utmost importance that cultural differences are represented and the relations of power and knowledge around them to give epistemic answers of subalternity to the Eurocentric project of modernity seeking to overcome the relations of poverty, invisibility, exploitation, and oppression stemming from power relations.

Translation: Tatiane Almeida Ferreira

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Submitted: 03/12/2021 | Accepted: 07/01/2022



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