

The between worlds of dreams and oppression in the novel 'Marginais', by Evel Rocha /

O entre mundos de sonhos e opressão no romance 'Marginais', de Evel Rocha

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ABSTRACT

The present study is a decolonial reading of the novel *Marginais*, by Evel Rocha (2010), a representative work of contemporary Cape Verdean Literature. Objectively, based on the theoretical assumptions of authors such as Santos (2003), Nóbrega; Pinheiro-Carvalho (2022), Maldonado-Torres (2020), Rui (1985) among others, we seek to investigate the relationships that emerge between articulate domination and fragmented resistance in that novel from the memories of the main character, Sérgio do Rosário. Starting from the reading of the novel, we seek to highlight the intertwined historical-social context resulting from post-colonialism in Cape Verde and the consequent social and institutional relationships that are established when the new Cape Verdean social structures are reorganized and consolidated. In this sense, we analyzed the set of characters and their spaces with the main setting of Ilha do Sal, a place and space where the memories lived by Sérgio do Rosário and his childhood and youth friends known as the Pitboys of Ribeira Funda are narrated. Methodologically, this work, in addition to a literature review of the reference on decolonial theory, is a literary analysis that seeks to discuss the theme of dream and oppression in the light of decolonial studies. It is also characterized by a bibliographic clipping, whose descriptive and explanatory objectives seek to situate, describe and exemplify the various nuances that emerge from the relationship between Sérgio do Rosário's dreams and the reality of abandonment of the invisible people of Sal Island, perpetrated by power. public and its institutional spheres, of which we give special focus to the school.

KEYWORDS: Marginais; Cape Verdean Literature; Decoloniality; Domination and resistance.

RESUMO

O presente estudo é uma leitura decolonial do romance Marginais, de Evel Rocha (2010), obra representativa da Literatura Cabo-Verdiana contemporânea. Objetivamente, a partir dos pressupostos teóricos de autores como Santos (2003), Maldonado-Torres (2020), Rui (1985), Mignolo (2020) e das reflexões oriundas das pesquisas de Nóbrega e Pinheiro-Carvalho (2022), entre outros, buscamos investigar acerca das relações que emergem entre a dominação articulada e a resistência fragmentada no referido romance a partir das memórias da personagem principal, Sérgio do Rosário. Partindo da leitura do romance, buscamos evidenciar o imbricado contexto histórico-social resultante do pós-colonialismo em Cabo Verde e as consequentes relações sociais e institucionais que se estabelecem quando da reorganização e consolidação das novas estruturas sociais cabo-verdianas. Nesse sentido, analisamos o conjunto das personagens e seus espaços tendo como principal cenário a Ilha do Sal, lugar e espaço onde são narradas as memórias vivenciadas por Sérgio do Rosário e seus amigos de infância e juventude conhecidos como os Pitboys da Ribeira Funda. Metodologicamente, este trabalho, para além de uma revisão de literatura do referencial sobre a teoria decolonial, é uma leitura que busca discutir a temática do sonho e da opressão à luz dos estudos decoloniais. É também caracterizado por um recorte de natureza bibliográfica, cujos objetivos descritivos e explicativos buscam situar, descrever e exemplificar as diversas nuances que emergem da relação entre os sonhos de Sérgio do Rosário e a realidade de abandono dos invisibilizados da Ilha do Sal, perpetrados pelo poder público e suas esferas institucionais, das quais damos especial enfoque à escola.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Marginais; Literatura Cabo-Verdiana; Estudos decoloniais; Dominação e resistência.

1 Introduction: from the Cape Verde Archipelago to the Carnation Revolution

Throughout history the occupation process of the Cape Verde Archipelago started in the mid-fifteenth century with the presence of experienced Portuguese navigators who explored new domains on the Northwest coast of Africa. The archipelago is formed by 10 volcanic island hitherto uninhabited in addition to a few islets, the archipelago had a strategic geographic location between the maritime routes that connected Europe, South America and Africa, functioning as an important commercial warehouse along the Guinea Rivers, thus enabling the negotiations arising from the routes newly discovered merchants. Between the main activities practiced in this route, we have the traffic of human beings that were enslaved by Portuguese in the 15th century.

The records of the great navigations that took place throughout the 15th century, reveal, among other historical facts, important data that reiterate the commitment – permeated by an undisguised obstinacy – of kings and rulers regarding the exploration of the African continental coasts for later occupation and domination. However, in view of the 15th century maritime expansion plans engendered by these explorers, it was necessary to gather in the same expedition, a powerful fleet that would be commanded by an equally daring crew and minimally experienced in the open sea.

So, for the Portuguese navigators to win in unknown marine territories they need to deal with a hostile and treacherous nature. For example, “before the 15th century, Bojador was a kind of psychological barrier to Europeans. Medieval legends said that, beyond that point, there would be monsters, boiling waters and Satan himself waiting for the most unwary sailors”, as highlighted by Gomes (2019, p. 88). The historian also adds that it was while sailing in the open sea and surrounded by mysteries and “by the invisible forces of nature, that the Portuguese found the ten islands of the Cape Verde Archipelago, located about five hundred kilometers from the coast of what is now Senegal” (GOMES, 2019, p. 88).

Once beyond Cape Bojador¹, the limit of the navigable sea at that time, also known as Cape Fear, the fleet with the European explorers docked on the African islands. Above the administration of the Portuguese Diogo Gomes (1420-1520) and the Italian António de Noli (1409-1497), an experienced Genoese navigator who emigrated to Portugal and was hired by the Portuguese crown; the mission realized that the islands that made up the Cape Verde Archipelago did not have natural resources favorable to staying on dry land, nor valuable minerals, such as gold and diamonds, for exploration and commercialization. The region's climatic condition made it impossible to use agriculture to produce food on a large scale, as the Portuguese crown desired. Thus, considering the scenario so unfavorable to the explorer in this geographic part of the Atlantic Ocean, the Cape Verde Archipelago remained as a trading post, that is, as a strategic center for

¹ Located on the coast of Western Sahara in an area controlled by Morocco, Cape Bojador remained for a long time a mythical place in the imagination of navigators due to the hostile navigability conditions. In the poem *Mensagem*, Fernando Pessoa mentions Bojador, referring to the historical fact of the risky crossing: “Quem querer passar além do Bojador, Tem que passar além da dor. Deus ao mar o perigo e o abismo deu, Mas nele é que espelhou o céu” (PESSOA, 1986, p. 16).

the supply, distribution and disposal of goods, including in this commercial enterprise, the trafficking of human beings captured for the purposes of trading in the lucrative overseas slave trade.

The process of occupation and, finally, the colonization of the Cape Verde Archipelago began with Santiago, considered by the colonizer to be the most favorable island for the organization of a settlement, followed by Fogo Island, initiating the population of the archipelago in 1462. Later, the other islands were successively populated according to their location around Santiago, that is, Santo Antão, São Vicente, Santa Luzia, São Nicolau, Sal, Boa Vista, Maio, Santiago, Fogo and Brava. According to historian Martins (2015), the process of occupation of the archipelago followed the colonization protocol of the Portuguese crown in the 15th century:

The occupation of the islands took place through the importation of slaves, from the Rivers of Guinea, who began to cultivate and raise cattle for subsistence. Then, sugar cane was introduced, cultivated along the lines of the islands of Madeira and the Azores, at the same time as it began to become a Portuguese warehouse for the African slave trade. Already at the beginning of the population of the archipelago – in the middle of 1460 – D. Afonso V issued a letter of privileges to the inhabitants of Cape Verde. These could freely enter the Guinea Rivers in search of slaves and other products. (MARTINS, 2015, p. 20)

We observed that the negotiation of people for the purposes of slavery was legitimized by the Portuguese crown, which, in addition to the search for products and wealth, sanctioned the capture and commercialization of people in the Rivers of Guinea for the slave trade, which became a highly disputed market in the region, during the 16th and 17th centuries. It is worth mentioning that in the 17th century the Portuguese crown began to obtain more profit from the slave trade than from the sugar cane surplus itself – the main commercial activity until then –, which proves the aggressiveness of the metropolis in terms of exploiting the colonies to profit making.

Nonetheless, with the passage of time and with the end of the overseas slave trade in the region beyond Bojador, there was a decrease in the trading posts, causing the weakening of the trade routes that included the islands of Cape Verde. This means that centuries later, with changes in the interests of the great empires caused by foreign pressures and new international protocols, the region faced a relentless period of commercial decline that, added to the constant climatic degradation and the geographic configuration of the archipelago, led Cape Verde to an unstable population occupation and marked by the presence of the colonizer.

After five centuries, Cape Verde had to face the intertwined process of breaking with colonialism in terms of political, social, economic and structural emancipation. Thus, like the other colonies that remained for so long under the yoke of the metropolis, before independence, the

archipelago received the political status of a Portuguese overseas department²; denomination given to all administrative regions overseas, created by the Portuguese Estado Novo in the 20th century.

When we consider the historical context of Cape Verde, we will see that it was from the foundation of the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde³ (PAIGC), led by names like Amílcar Cabral and other political leaders committed to independence; that the archipelago gathered elements essential to the struggle for the sovereignty of the insular territories of Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau, independence consolidated on July 5, 1975, as a result of the Carnation Revolution⁴ that began in 1974.

In this way, we understand that in the same way that the Carnation Revolution contributed to re-dimensioning political and social organizations in the second half of the 20th century, both in Portugal and in the former colonies; inevitably, these paradigm shifts had an important influence on postcolonial artistic productions. It is precisely in the context of Cape Verdean post-colonialism that we will find the literary production of Evel Rocha, contemporary writer and author of the novel *Marginais*, literary corpus of this study.

Considering the assumptions of decolonial studies, in the next sections we will reflect on the 'between worlds of dreams and oppression' in the novel *Marginais*, to situate the polarization between the oneiric field of the character Sérgio do Rosário and the reality experienced by this protagonist from childhood to youth, in the context of post-colonialism in Cape Verde.

Thus, after adapting the literary project of the writer Evel Rocha, we will identify, based on Santos (2003), the specificities of post-colonialism as well as the characterization of the civilizing crises in modernity. In the third section, we will present, by way of a summary review, the plot of the novel *Marginais*, listing the characters identified as Pitboys of Ribeira Funda, to reflect on this intertwining between oppressors and oppressed, in the light of Althusser's ideas (1998), the function of school understood in this clipping, as an ideological apparatus of the State.

In the decolonial studies area, we will bring the ideas of Maldonado-Torres (2020) and Mignolo (2020), in order to summarize the implications regarding the attachment of knowledge,

² Currently in Africa, the Azores Archipelago and Madeira Island remain Portugal's overseas territories.

³ On September 19, 1956, Amílcar Cabral, Aristides Pereira, Luís Cabral and other island leaders created the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC), which defended the independence of Cape Verde and Portuguese Guinea from Portugal.

⁴ Movement that overthrew the Salazarist regime in Portugal, demanding the dissolution of the Portuguese Empire and initiating the process of transition to democracy. End of the Portuguese Colonial War and independence of Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, and São Tomé and Príncipe.

and, therefore, the kidnapping of the reason 'of other' when considering the relationship between articulated domination and fragmented resistance. In this sense, we understand the existence of an oblique field, where on one side are Sérgio do Rosário's dreams and on the other side his reality due, implying a paradoxical polarization, since it is flexible and refractory at the same time.

2 From postcolonialism to Evel Rocha's literary and ideological project

As it happened in the former colonies Angola, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, São Tomé and Príncipe and in Brazil; in Cape Verde, the Portuguese language became the official language of the country, starting to be used in the publication of books, newspapers and other means of communication. Despite the presence of the Cape Verdean Creole language as a mother tongue, the Portuguese language assumes preponderance in the media and also in the means of production, circulation and reception of Cape Verdean Literature in the context of post-colonialism, indicted in the sphere of modernity.

In order to understand such ideas, it is necessary to highlight some aspects linked to this discussion, since, for decolonial thinkers such as the Argentines Walter Mignolo (1941a) and Enrique Dussel (1934a) and the Peruvian sociologist Aníbal Quijano (1928 - 2018), among others, modernity and coloniality are influences of a single reality. In this sense, Mignolo (2020, p. 2), for example, categorizes that “coloniality, in other words, is constitutive of modernity – [since] there is no modernity without coloniality”. For Pinto (2019, p. 102), “it is in the understanding of this binomial modernity-coloniality that a theoretical space opens up to think about a new world relationship”.

We are facing a discussion of a theoretical nature that links concepts such as 'modernity', 'coloniality', 'colonialism' and 'postcolonialism' for the understanding of the literary text either as an ideological project or as an aesthetic project of the writing of the colonized subject. However, when we think about literary production in Portuguese in Cape Verde, it is important for us to highlight the specificities of Portuguese postcolonialism highlighted by Boaventura Santos (2003), in order to understand such specificities from two meanings:

The first is that of a historical period, the one that follows the independence of the colonies, and the second is that of a set of practices and discourses that deconstruct the colonial narrative written by the colonizer and seek to replace it with narratives written from the point of view of the colonized. [...] In the second sense, it is part of cultural, linguistic and literary studies and makes privileged use of textual exegesis and performative practices to analyze systems of representation and identity processes”. (SANTOS, 2003, p. 66)

In the second meaning pointed out by Santos (2003), understanding the production of narratives – of the colonizer and the colonized – requires an attitude of textual interpretation and apprehension of performative practices, in order to analyze the modes of social representation of these subjects. That is, we are facing a reflection organized around the identity conformation of subjects who alternate within an intertwined process of ruptures and permanences. In this connection, Cape Verdean Literature emerges, linking the modes of production and reception of literary works in the context of Portuguese postcolonialism.

If in the first meaning proposed by Boaventura Santos (2003), it is necessary to consider the historical period chronologically to base the discussion on reasons of political interests and economic analysis, in the second meaning “postcolonialism contains an implicit or explicit critique of the silences of postcolonial analyzes in the first sense” (SANTOS, 2003, p. 66). Thus, we understand that it is necessary to return to the historical aspect of colonialism, whenever necessary, to understand 'the silences' pertinent to the linguistic, literary and cultural aspects of subaltern subjects.

Considering the two acceptations addressed by Santos (2003), we observe a literary emergence of an aesthetic and ideological nature, which reveals realities experienced by Cape Verdean characters who, although subjectivized in the context of Portuguese colonialism and postcolonialism, legitimize stories of existence and resistance.

Born in Espargos on Ilha do Sal, in the Cape Verde Archipelago, Evel Rocha (1967a) represents, alongside writers such as Orlanda Amarílis (1924-2014), Corsino Fortes (1933-2015), Dina Salústio (1941a), Fátima Bettencourt (1938a), Vera Duarte (1952a) and many others, the definitive inscription of Cape Verdean Literature in the aesthetic universe of Portuguese-speaking African Literature in contemporary times.

Among his artistic fortune, Evel Rocha published in the last two decades a diverse work between prose and poetry, with emphasis on *Versos d'Alma* (1997, poetry) and *Estatuas de Sal* (2003, novel). In his production, it is possible to perceive the author acclimatizing the subaltern subject in the Cape Verdean island scenario, specifically on the Ilha do Sal, – the author's birthplace and place of speech –, outlined by a wide range of feelings and collective positions, among the which we will focus on the short life of Sérgio do Rosário or Sérgio Pitboy, central character of the novel *Marginais*, published in 2010.

3 *Marginais*: a vagabond's notes

Sérgio do Rosário Araújo was born in the urban outskirts of Ilha do Sal, his life was marked by the premature death of his sisters and raised by his mother in the midst of hunger and extreme poverty. Sérgio is the protagonist of the novel, since he was a little boy he had the dream of being a football player in Europe. Due to the recurrent episodes of humiliation, discrimination and psychological violence experienced at school, Sérgio abandons his studies and, still in his adolescence, he suffers the oppression of his sister-in-law and older brother who expel him from home, taking advantage of the absence of his mother who had moved to Italy and whom they would never see again.

Living in the dangerous streets of the outskirts, at the mercy of the notorious local violence and without maternal support, Sérgio quickly dives into the world of juvenile delinquency accompanied by his street friends, assuming the leadership of a group of marginalized people who use marginality as an individual and collective protection mechanism. Thus, known as the Pitboys of Ribeira Funda, Sérgio Pitboy, Pianista, Pé-de-Cabra, Perua, Comida-de-Tchuque, Beto Vesgo, Fusco, Lela Magreza, Mirinha, Zefa Manquinha, Mirna and others, respond to the oppression of local authorities through thefts, robberies, fights and crimes in the most varied levels of violence.

After the frustration of his plans of becoming a football player, Sérgio Pitboy embarks on delinquency, passing through addiction, alcoholism, prostitution and finally entering the criminal underworld where he experiences the consequences of prostitution tourism, drug trafficking and prison. . As an adult, Sérgio Pitboy tries to resist cocaine addiction, to become a singer on Ilha do Sal, however, the extreme physical weakness and the second prison lead him to a recurrence of tuberculosis that causes his death at the age of 23, without having knowledge that he had a 12-year-old daughter, little Gertrudes, who was a victim of rape and recurrent sexual abuse consented to and negotiated by her own mother, was already walking down the same winding road as her father.

3.1 Between two worlds: dream and oppression

In *Marginais*, Evel Rocha (2010), unfolds in thirty-five chapters the nuances of discrimination, violence, exclusion and abandonment experienced by the character Sérgio Pitboy, from his childhood to the age of twenty-three. Narrated from the perspective of the excluded, the work presents the opposition between two worlds: the world of dreams and reality of Sérgio. Among

the specificities of the work, we highlight the presence of two narrators – the narrator and a narrator-character –, a resource used by the author to guarantee fluidity and confer legitimacy to Sérgio Pitboy's memories narrated in the 1st person singular:

I would like you to read this document and keep it for me. I don't know if anyone will want to read this, but to me it's priceless. In these pages I managed to drown a lot of sorrow and if I didn't die before it was because my mind was busy with these notes. For some time, I managed to anesthetize the anguish that unfortunately engulfs me. Here, I try to describe the two worlds where I lived compressed: the world of poverty and the world of the wealthy, as some call it, but for me they are the world of exploiters and the exploited. You are the only person who can help me. If you think it's worth publishing them, do it, if not, tear them up or burn them. (ROCHA, 2010, p. 13)

We observe that the first narrator prefaces and also closes the narrative of Sérgio's memories while the second narrator-character, – Sérgio himself –, is in charge of telling his story by registering it on separate papers, in the guise of a diary that are later entrusted to the narrator, revealing in this circumstance the existence of a probable friendship between them in the past. It is the narrator who receives the writings from Sérgio's hands at the opening of the novel and witnesses the wake and burial of the leader of the Pitboys, in the epilogue.

Located in an ambivalent sphere in the context of a society in transformation due to the influxes of colonialism and postcolonialism; The Cape Verdean novel narrates Sérgio do Rosário's growth from childhood to youth, with the predominance of chronological time, from 1977 to 1999. In this scenario that historically corresponds to the constitution of the Cape Verdean nation state, we follow the reorganization and the consolidation of new social, political and economic structures in Cape Verde in the intermittency that precedes independence from Portugal and the first multi-party elections that took place only in 1991.

Always permeated by Sérgio Pitboy's dreams, first as a football player in Europe, and later as a singer on Sal Island; the novel exposes the reader to the existence of two irreconcilable worlds. The existence of these two worlds created by the author denounces the predominant oppression relations in the beautiful Ilha do Sal from its spaces of abandonment perpetrated both by nature and by the public power. And he denounces: "we are mistreated by the law, doubly mistreated by the miserable condition of life we lead. [...] All our revolt had only one target: intolerance". (ROCHA, 2010, p. 29; 30)

Hence, the author narrates aesthetically through the bias of the grotesque, the episodes in the life of Sérgio and the Pitboys of Ribeira Funda, weaving the narrative between the unusual and the oneiric, between the sarcastic and the pseudo-poetic, between revulsion and emotion. Episodes that lead the reader to the perception of collective suffering from individual suffering, because it is through Sérgio's memories that other subjects made invisible by the historical context of postcolonialism can be put in perspective:

The house where I was born was on the alleyway of the municipal bilge [...]. From this famous bilge were born the nicknames with which we are known until today [...] Pianista (Ricardo), Pé-de-Cabra, Perua, Comida-de-Tchuque (Jorginho), Zefa Manquinha, Beto Vesgo, Fusco, Lela Magreza, Mirinha. My life has always been a patchwork of memories, an accumulation of horrors. All I had to do was dream – I insist on the word dream because without it I would not survive. If the law didn't work for the underprivileged, it would be up to us to take justice into our own hands and keep dreaming. (ROCHA, 2010, p. 38; 62)

Sérgio Pitboy's memoirs translate a universe of absences indicating the negligence of the public power, detailing extreme violence, neglect, hunger and the suppression of individual and collective rights, for this reason, Pitboy "would prove to the world that we were not born only to be in the statistics and marginal, the lightning rods of the human curse, and end up in a nameless grave". (ROCHA, 2010, p. 29).

In the episode in which Sérgio is rejected by the manager of the Portuguese team, the reality of the miseries experienced in Sal imposes itself on the dream of becoming an international football star. Despite Sérgio and Jorginho having an exceptional performance on the field, however, in the medical examinations the dreamy boy is rejected by the Portuguese examiner who explains, in the guise of a sentence "I really liked your dribbles, you have an unusual potential for a kid of yours size, you have the stature of an ace, however, you are very underweight, the big toe of your right foot is fragmented, you have some spots on your lung and I am afraid you will stop playing" (ROCHA, 2010, p. 82). In this moving episode, the boy raises his voice in an uncontainable lament before the crowd that witnessed the end of a dream and the 'hope of being people':

I died at that moment! [...] remained immobile, letting out my pain: that year, I was almost raped by a policeman, I lost Zizi, I lost the right to go to school, I saw my mother traveling to a faraway land, my brother kicked me out of the house, teacher Izilda humiliated me. I was in front of everyone and, to make matters worse, I received the news that I had no future as a football player. My body was too small to hold so much anguish and suffering [...] Don't do this to me, no. (ROCHA, 2010, p. 82)

In the future, the spots on the lung that masked a serious condition of lung disease suppressed Sérgio's dream of becoming a singer on the tourist nights of Ilha do Sal. As an adult, Sérgio is unable to deal with a double torment: cocaine and tuberculosis. We see that surrendered at the first and prostrated by the second, once again, the boy's dreams are confronted with the lived reality and in this he succumbs, burying with him all the "hopes of being people".

In the Cape Verdean novel *Marginais*, in addition to the precarious sanitary, economic and structural conditions of the urban outskirts of Ilha do Sal, we observe that, with the exception of those subjects outlined by the color of local power – such as the character Dr. Apolinário –, all the other characters receive nicknames and remain outside the interests of the State, living nourished by introjected revolts against forms of domination.

3.2 The school as a form of ideology and repression

We understand that in the context of late modernity, there are different modes of expression and forms of domination to represent the exclusion of subjects in society. For the protagonist of *Marginais*, Sérgio Pitboy, Ilha do Sal was divided into two scenarios: the world of explorers and that of the exploited. To describe this dualism, Rocha (2010, p. 13) gives voice to the narrator-character who explains: "I try to describe the two worlds where I lived compressed: the world of poverty and that of the wealthy, as some call it, but for me they are the world of explorers and that of the exploited".

From this exploration perspective – which erases the existence of subjects, suppressing their individual identities to the extent that it creates identity derivations to legitimize the existence or non-existence of the other –; derive structural conflicts that determine the civilizing crises in late modernity, as postulated by Santos (2003) in Cultural Studies. In *Marginais*, the invisibility and non-existence of the oppressed in the context of postcolonialism is symbolically represented both by the absence of their names – which suppresses their citizenship – and by the absence of their rights, marking the cycle of conflicts.

The existence of such conflicts points to an articulated domination that has in colonialism, capitalism and patriarchy – in hetero-patriarchy –, the means for the realization of these crises. Therefore, this perspective contributes to sanctioning the non-existence of these subjects, in a continuous process of oppression that makes invisible, conforms and subordinates the identities of

the other. The suffering of old Nhô Simão and his family, faced with the fire that consumed their shack and all the belongings he had, represents this invisibility for the State:

[...] the rest was turned into dung and ashes. Nhô Simão, hugging his five children, still wept heartlessly over the loss of what he had gathered during a lifetime. He had a tanned face and an open wound on his back from the flames as he tried to save something. The firefighters did not show up and apologized for the difficult access to the house due to the narrow and twisted streets. [...] Our neighborhood was close to the City Hall building, but miles away from the autarchic sensibility. The autarchy continued to do what it had always done for the poor: nothing. (ROCHA, 2010, p. 144)

We are facing an organized polarization in two opposing worlds. On the one hand, the fragmented resistance constituted by those made invisible by the State: the Pitboys of Ribeira Funda. On the other hand, we have the articulated domination formed by power and institutions: Dr. Apolinário (corrupt lawyer and politician); Djosa and Raul (the rapist police); the Politicians, the Court, the Church, the School, the Tourists, Mr. Amândio (merchant, sexual abuser and rapist of little Gertrudes) and Rambo (Dr. Apolinário's São Bernardo breed dog who was fed prime meat, causing the Pitboys to revolt).

As this postulate expands, we understand that in terms of articulated domination, subjects and social organizations guarantee the permanence of systems of reproduction of symbolic values, silencing fragmented resistance and suppressing the subject's identity marks. However, in terms of functionality, this scenario calls for the existence of institutionalized spheres – school, Church and State – to legitimize such a process. For example in *Marginais*, the school converges to the exclusion of subjects like Sérgio Pitboy.

[...] I was the fool, the undisciplined one, who only knew nonsense, the stupid one occupying the back seat. [...] The teacher was not interested in me because she never knew what it was like to go to school hungry. She affronted me with the idea of being different from the overwhelming majority of the class. If anyone smelled a smell of foot odor or snuff, they all spied on me and a handful of other unfortunates, the common people of the class; if a theft happened in the living room, I was the first to be searched. [...] We were born with the mark of the beast, bearing the fate of failure at school [...]. School taught me that I am an individual who is incapable and predestined to be bad. (ROCHA, 2010, p. 42; 55)

When we look at the school as a social institution, we will see that this educational structure arises from hegemonic patterns that have always opposed interests among individuals: of men over women, of parents over children, of administration over ways of life; and several other pairs

that represent forms of power in dispute. In this sense, the essay by Althusser (1980), entitled *The Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses*, provides the basis for Marxist critiques of education by pointing out how power relations and forms of submission occur within social structures in terms of permanence and reproduction of power patterns.

Thus, we can understand that the permanence of capitalist society as it is configured on Ilha do Sal and nowadays in general, is sustained precisely because there are mechanisms or institutions that are responsible for guaranteeing its current state of control. In this sense, society remains structured from a double apparatus: the State's ideological apparatuses – religion, the media, the school and the family – exercising control through persuasion, repression and ideology. And the State's repressive apparatuses – the police and the judiciary – exercise control through force, a hermetic, institutionalized and indissoluble force.

According to Sergio Pitboy:

It is necessary to vandalize the interests of the bougie[bourgeoisie], which gets rich easily, so that the State can look at us, the marginalized; it is necessary to vandalize the patrimony of the Colonels of the Ilha, conquered at the expense of the weak, so that they cry with rage as we cry for a piece of bread and for our rights. (ROCHA, 2010, p. 40)

We need to consider that Sérgio's experiences at school are marked by symbolic exchanges between those made invisible by the institution that exercises power and the institutionally established patterns of subalternity. As an example of this social imbrication and its operational modes, we see the episode of Sérgio's dismissal as a student representative elected by the class and in charge of reading the Lyceum's 'honor speech' during the illustrious visit of the foreign inspector.

In that episode, Sérgio do Rosário won the election, obtaining the majority of the class's votes, however, contrary to the legitimate result and Sérgio's right, the teacher determines that "Mirreille will be the representative of the class". And ignoring the presence of the boy, she adds: "it doesn't make sense to elect an undisciplined, rascal to represent the class, besides, he doesn't know how to read" (ROCHA, 2010, p. 56).

This event characterizes, among many others, the relationship between oppressors and oppressed in the novel *Marginais*. Thus, considering the conception about the ideological apparatuses of the State, we understand that the school - as an institution - shapes and redefines the ways of doing about the ways of knowing, establishing a strict control over the formation of the individual in what begins a process of pawning knowledge.

And this pawning of knowledge suppresses the forms of knowledge and foreshadows the abduction of the reason of the other from the negation of his rationality and, consequently, imprints the cultural assimilation imposed by the power of the dominator. In this sense, this seizure is imposed by the imperialist dominant culture and fed on the bases of capitalism, as Nóbrega and Pinheiro-Carvalho (2022) point out. Thus, this pattern of control proper of the domination, meets the set of interests of the society that requires certain training of the subject for the purpose of reproduction of their ways of knowing, doing and, consequently, their forms of power.

The reflection, in this sense, points to the fact that the social institutions that make up the ideological apparatus of the State in the context of postcolonialism, exert a compressive force on the subject beyond the epistemological character when it comes to the production/reproduction of knowledge, but, above all, on the ontological character of the individual, intending to conform, submit or even render invisible the full and integral nature of the being.

Going back to the episode of the election at the Lyceum where the chosen student would represent the class, when faced with the accusation of having done a 'campaign for voting', Sérgio defends himself justifying: "without knowing what 'campaign for voting' meant, I gave him my word of honor that I hadn't influenced anyone, but the teacher told me that I don't have a word of honor. Poor people don't have a word of honor". For this reason, he concludes: "school taught me that I am an incapable individual and predestined to be bad" (ROCHA, 2010, p. 55; 56).

We observe that this relationship between reality and representation ranges from the broader field of domination - metropolis versus colony - to the ordering of a specific reality with which the subject needs to connect to the other, with a view to fulfilling his social role - school versus learner -. Hence the importance of a perspective that critically analyzes these relationships of pledge of knowledge, the kidnapping of the reason of the other and other forms of domination that emerge in the context of postcolonialism. And in this sphere, decolonial studies have played a very valuable role in the context of modernity.

[...] allowing us to identify and explain the ways in which colonized subjects experience colonization, while providing conceptual tools to advance decolonization. [...] Decolonial thinking and theory require a critical engagement with the theories of modernity, which tend to serve as epistemological frameworks of the European social sciences and humanities (MALDONADO-TORRES, 2020, p. 33).

When we observe the reality of Sérgio Pitboy and the marginalized and oppressed of Espargos, Santa Maria, Ribeira Funda and the other regions of Ilha do Sal, we can see that the

school, the Church and the State do not operate by the principle of neutrality, on the contrary, each institution seeks to reproduce its micro-power, aiming to maintain control over the subject, and therefore for each social segment. In this sense, decolonial studies favor a critical analysis of these aspects for the identification and explanation of the symbolic modes and exchanges that occur within societies and how such forms of domination and resistance operate.

And if 'art imitates life', the novel *Marginais* by Evel Rocha allows the reader to enjoy literary figurations that emerge in lives pressed by pain, suffering, privations and abuses. Figurations that reveal the reality of subjects oppressed by the local power, coloured by the heritage of colonialism and who use equally oppressive ways to fight among "the social cream, the politicians of the square, the merchants and tour operators, good citizens who fill the pages of newspapers, who are at the conferences for equality and for a culture of peace", according to Mirna's outburst when describing certain colonels of Santa Maria. Colonels, politicians, merchants, local authorities and a few other lovers whose fragile and doubtful virility, "are the same ones who use us, lick us and then throw us away" (ROCHA, 2010, p. 143).

Final considerations

The novel *Marginais* by Evel Rocha (2010), pertaining to contemporary Cape Verdean Literature, emerges in the great scenario of African Literature of Portuguese Language, presenting the reader the nuances of lives marked by the inheritance of colonialism and postcolonialism on Sal Island. The novel narrates the story of characters such as Sérgio Pitboy, Pianista, Beto Vesgo, Fusco, Mirna, Lela Magreza "and so many others who were kidnapped by human organ sellers who bill [sic] thousands of escudos in organ banks for accident victims abroad" (ROCHA, 2010, p. 30).

In this brief study, we saw that the reading of *Marginais* demands more than an openness to the reader's aesthetic experience with the literary text. Considering the realistic character that naturalizes the subversive models and the subjective contours of the marginalized characters in Evel Rocha's narrative, the novel requires a disruptive theoretical contribution that brings the reader closer to the totality of the historical-cultural aspects of postcolonialism. And indeed, it is from the assumptions of decolonial studies that we can understand, in part, the relationships between domination and resistance that emerge from Sérgio Pitboy's memoirs.

In this reading of *Marginais*, although indigence and the naturalization of violence appear as integrating aspects of the subjects, the author gives voice to the characters in the guise of a defense of the invisible people of Cape Verde. Thus, Evel Rocha proposes a significantly dystopian look at the residents of Sal Island, a people historically “plagued by inaction, by neglect, by criminal human disrespect, because Cape Verde does not have the petroleum, gold and diamonds that sharpened the greed of the colonizers”, as highlighted by Duarte (2012, p. 95). As we have seen, Sérgio Pitboy represents this human scourge, the product of colonial disrespect, deprived of guarantees and rights and left adrift by the newly organized State.

Based on decolonial studies, we realize that when we analyze the role of social institutions – the school –, for example, we will find that in terms of fragmentation of identities, Evel Rocha's marginalized people represent existences that, although invisible, rage in their dreams, resisting oppression of articulated domination. We also found that the ideological apparatus of the State works as a mechanism of control, subordination and conformation of identities with a view to reproducing hegemonic patterns and interests.

When we think geographically, we will see that the Cape Verde Archipelago with the Barlavento islands to the north (from where the wind blows) and the Sotavento islands to the south (from where the wind flows), are more than 3 thousand km away, if we take the island of São Luís, the capital of Maranhão, as a starting or finishing point. However, even separated by the immense Atlantic, which witnessed the countless crossings of Calunga Grande over the centuries, Ilha do Sal in Cape Verde and the island of São Luís, in Maranhão, Brazil, both colonized by the Portuguese, can keep, in addition to colonial heritage, other relations of identity approximations.

This brief digression points to an emergence in terms of research with the African and Afro-Brazilian literary text from the point of view of decolonial studies, to identify the approximation and distancing relations between identities united by the Portuguese language. Studies that contribute to indict the existence of subjects who, although invisible and experiencing devastating situations like Sérgio do Rosário in *Marginais*, resist from literary art, an art engaged with reality, as stated by Rui (1985, p. 02), “ thus reinforcing the identity with literature. [...] And when my literature overflows, my identity is a weapon of struggle and must be an action to interfere in the total world so that the universal world is conquered”.

CRediT

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