

(Re)writing pain. The theme of violence in contemporary Afro-Brazilian women novelists

Cristina Stevens
University of Brasilia

cristinastevens@gmail.com

Abstract:

Articulating feminism with issues of race, this paper aims at presenting some Afro-Brazilian novels written by women, which expose the theme of violence – both physical, and the more complex, diversified manifestations of symbolic violence against Afro-Brazilians. In the relative absence of historical records, this fictional material can also be seen as (re)creations of their lives, the extreme cruelties they suffered not only under slavery, but also in contemporary society, and the ways they devise to overcome and transcend these experiences. Emphasis on the novels *Becos da Memória (Memory Lane)* by Conceição Evaristo e *Um Defeito de Cor (A Colour Defect)*, by Ana Maria Gonçalves.

Key-words: Contemporary Afro-Brazilian literature; Feminist studies, Race studies

Articulating feminism with issues of race, this paper aims at presenting Afro-Brazilian novels written by women, which expose the theme of violence against Afro-Brazilians. In the relative absence of historical records, this fictional material can also be seen as (re)creations of their lives, the extreme cruelties they suffered not only under slavery, but also in contemporary society, and the ways they devise to overcome and transcend these experiences. Emphasis on the novel *Um Defeito de Cor (A Colour Defect)*, published in 2006 by Ana Maria Gonçalves.

Ana Maria Gonçalves was born in Minas Gerais, in 1970; she graduated in publicity, and in her own *blog* (<<http://anamariagoncalves.blogspot.com.br/>> [last accessed 30.11.2015]) she begins to publish her first literary works, at about the year 2000. Traveling to Bahia in 2001 – the State in Brazil with a vast majority of its population formed by Afro-Brazilians, she came across a book, where she read for the first time about the Malês Rebellion¹. In the book, its author explains that the Muslim slaves who were the leaders of the Rebellion were very intelligent and cultivated people who spoke several languages; in Brazil, they were being used as teachers of their owners and their family. As this positive image of the early African slaves was practically non-existent in Brazilian historical records², Gonçalves decides to write a novel about this movement.

With this objective in mind, she moves to Bahia and dedicates herself to a very difficult research, trying to find as much historical material among the scarce records about the early Africans in Brazil. In her research, she identifies Luiza Mahin, an African woman from Costa da Mina, who came to Brazil as a slave woman. Despite her leading role in the Malês Rebellion, there is very scarce biographical information about her; Mahin is then transmuted into the fictional Kehinde, the main character in Gonçalves' 900-page novel *Um Defeito de Cor (A Colour Defect)*.

The novel cannot be characterized as a fictional narrative only: it can be read as a kind of diary, in which Mahin/Kehinde records her difficult life as a former slave; it is an epic narrative of a heroine, a slave who manages to buy her own freedom when she was only eighteen years old, after which she travels several times in Brazil and then back to Africa as an adult woman, and, finally, Brazil again in her old age. She records in great detail these several journeys, not only from the geographical, cultural point of view; her narrative also analyzes her complex, inward, psychological journeys, her incessant search for roots and identity.

This black woman protagonist gradually acquires legendary dimensions. At the same time, the novel can be read as a historical, anthropological, sociological

¹ A rebellion of Africans which took place in Salvador/Bahia in January. Approximately 600 Africans were involved, most of them Muslims (Males, means Muslim in Ioruba). According to historians, this was the biggest revolt of the African population in Brazil (Reis, 1986).

² It is worth noticing that, the Brazilian government, has passed a law that makes the teaching of African history mandatory for schools. What is also worth commenting is that this law makes it explicit that this history needs to be taught taking into account its positive aspects, because, the scarce records – produced by the perspective of the white population from where the slave owners came, tend to picture this population as formed by submissive, and not very intelligent people, sometimes considered less than humans, and as such, deserving to be treated as such. Unfortunately, this distorted image is still quite pervasive in the eurocentric *imaginary* of the Brazilian white population, even though the colour spectrum of us Brazilians is quite nuanced, varied and complex. The slaves (and former slaves) of Gonçalves' novel are quite brave, rebellious, cultivated and intelligent, and also very cooperative, *solidários* among themselves (Mathias, 2014).

narrative, with many details of the harsh reality of the Africans under slavery in 19th Century Brazil. However, hers is not a narrative of submission to the unjust violence imposed on the slave population; in contrast to most of the official records of the time, the novel narrates the resistance, resilience³ of the black population in the face of such a cruel treatment. *Um Defeito de Cor* is also a rich and accurate description of the development of many African cities to where many freed slaves returned from Brazil in late nineteenth century (Guran, 2000). It can also be read as an epistolary novel, since it is actually a long letter which the mother writes to her son – Luiz Gama, born free and afterwards sold into slavery by his own Portuguese father. Later on, Gama became a poet, abolitionist, considered a key figure in the long struggle against slavery in 19th Century Brazil (Martins, 1996). Today, Mahin is acknowledged as the mother of the Brazilian abolitionist movement, as well as an icon for the Afro-Brazilian feminists.

By choosing Kehinde as the narrator/heroine of her novel, Gonçalves alerts us for the importance of the Afro Brazilians to tell the history of their lives from their own perspective; so far, it has been written basically by male, white historians and novelists (Carneiro, 2008).

Kehinde arrives in Brazil as a seven-year old child in 1817, after witnessing the rape – and consequent death, of her mother and only brother in Daome, Africa. At the beginning of the novel, she is a helpless victim – as women frequently are – of the bloody power struggle among rival tribes. She is sold into slavery, together with her twin sister and her grandmother, but they both die during the long journey, whose horrors are vividly narrated. Kehinde's inner feelings are not less painful, especially after the death of her only remaining relatives, caused by the extremely hard conditions of the journey: «But the worst of all sensations, even though I did not know then precisely what it really meant, was that of feeling I was a ship lost at sea, not only inside one» (Gonçalves, 2006: 61).

As we move towards this long and eventful narrative, we can feel the author's interest in stressing the gender-race dimension that the novel articulates throughout the novel. Like her mother, Kehinde is also raped; however, not as a powerless victim of male war rivalries, but as a victim of her slave owner's lust. On the eve of her marriage to the slave Lourenço, the fourteen-year old Kehinde loses her virginity, and this most violent act takes place in the presence of her fiancée, who afterwards is also raped and castrated. As countless black women, she experiences the monstrous forces of slavery in her own body, adding to the cultural, psychological and spiritual pains of her enslaved condition. While still recovering from deep depression caused by such a traumatic experience, Kehinde realizes she's pregnant of the man she hates most.

Helped mainly by her slave women friends, she overcomes this tragic event and gives birth to a son. The solidarity among women, that the feminist appropriately call «sorority» (Gamba, 2009), proves vital for Kehinde's recovery and survival. The birthing act is also shown in its physical details, in sharp contrast to most canonical novels, which erase this difficult experience that takes place in the woman's body; instead, most traditional novels substitute it for idealized images of motherhood. Despite the unfavourable conditions, this difficult, painful moment gives birth to more hopeful longings:

While crossing the sea, I united the waters of my entrails with those of Iemanjá [...] while I made incredible efforts and said my *orikis*⁴, asking Nanã, the mother of everything that exists, to give me a child without defects, healthy and intelligent, with the star of good fortune. I prayed for him to be taken in Her arms, guiding the child safely out of my body. (Gonçalves, 2006: 186, 189)

The motherly, sisterly support is pervasive among the female characters in the novel. This collective support can still be found in contemporary Brazil, where Afro-Brazilian women are still the most oppressed group in our social pyramid (Carneiro, 2011) and, as a consequence, they face a daily life of need, and other vulnerable, violent conditions. The violence that still constitutes a constant threat to the contemporary Afro Brazilian population, and more specifically, to women, is not only of a physical nature. Still seen by many as inferior, ugly people, their lives is made more difficult by the complex, pervasive expressions of symbolic violence⁵.

³ See Vasconcelos, 2014 (*No colo das Iabás. Maternidade, raça e gênero em escritoras afro-brasileiras*, PhD thesis, Universidade de Brasília).

⁴ Yoruba: text. They believed that calling someone by his/her *oriki* will inspire them, since it will calm their *ori* (brain).

⁵ For contributions on symbolic violence, see Bourdieu, Pierre (2007), *A economia das trocas simbólicas*. Org. Sérgio Miceli, São Paulo, Perspectiva And *A distinção: crítica social do julgamento*, São Paulo, Edusp.

An overview of the images constructed by patriarchal and colonial ideology about Afro-Brazilian women can give us an idea of the great emphasis on their bodies, as objects to be used and abused by men. In Brazilian canonical literature, the image of black women and of the *mulata* was traditionally constructed in simplistic, cruelly distorted, prejudiced images; the vast majority of these characters are seen as domestic servants or eroticized, «infertile»⁶ women. They are never seen as mothers, matriarchs, strong women, main characters; on the contrary, they are always sexually available to satisfy man's sexual drives, adding to the arduous tasks of daily slave labour or in the kitchen, where they seem to enjoy their servitude, like Bertoleza⁷.

Beautiful and appetizing *mulatas* such as Rita Baiana and Gabriela people Brazilian novels, thirsty for sex and eager to satisfy men's sexual urges; many other black female characters, sometimes envious spiteful of the beauty and youth they lack, are seen as «mules», destined to heavy work in the fields or in the slave owner's kitchen. Most Brazilian children have sweet memories of several of Monteiro Lobato's children's books about the *Sítio do Picapau Amarelo (The ranch of the yellow woodpecker)*, where the image of black cook «Tia Nastácia», happy to prepare the delicious meals in the family's kitchen, is seen by most readers as quite romantic.

The role of the black woman as mother was also cruelly distorted, especially during the violent reality of slavery, when black women slaves did not mother their offspring; instead they were *amas de leite* (milk nannies), feeding the white children of their oppressors. They had to face the consequences of a white, patriarchal society; moreover, these women still suffered in the hands of white women. In *A Colour Defect*, the unhappy and childless Ana Felipa, the slave-owner's wife, reacts with insane fury against her husband's preference for his slave women. Her anger was translated into horrible acts of cruelty and torture against these women, already sexually abused by their male oppressor. She not only manages (at least temporarily) to take Kehinde's son away from her, but also, in a fit of rage caused by jealousy, she tears off the eyes of Veridiana (another slave which had also become pregnant by Ana Felipa's husband), and serves them as a meal.

The experience of motherhood for a woman slave was usually a painful and cruel experience; most often, their children had been the consequence of rape by white men. At the same time, the black men did not always treat black women in a loving, affectionate manner; sometimes, black women were the only escape valve for the fury, powerlessness, frustrations and cruelty which the black men had to endure in the hands of their masters. At the same time, these black mothers had to cope with their constant anxiety of losing their children, so often having to move far away from their mothers, because they were frequently sold into slavery to other masters. For example, in *Beloved*, a novel by the Afro-Brazilian novelist Toni Morrison, this utter pain is given full voice:

Anybody Baby Suggs knew, let alone loved, who hadn't run off or been hanged got rented out, loaned out, bought out, brought back, stored up, mortgaged, won, stolen or seized. So Baby's six children had six fathers. What she called the nastiness of life was the shock she received upon learning that nobody stopped playing checkers just because the pieces included her children. Halle she was able to keep the longest, Twenty years. A lifetime. Given to her to make up for *hearing* that her two girls, none of whom in her adult teeth, were sold and gone and she had not been able to wave goodbye. To make up for coupling with a straw boss for four months in exchange for keeping her third child, a boy, with her – only to have him traded for lumber in the spring of the next year and to find herself pregnant by the man who promised not to and did. (Morrison, 1987: 23)

Afro-Brazilian women writers' fictional narratives⁸ also reinforce the image of black mothers as varied and complex, with different reactions and attitudes to cope with the cruel reality of their lives, not only as slave women, but also in contemporary society, where their condition has not improved much. See, for example, the novel *Becos da Memória (Memory Lane)*, by Conceição Evaristo (2006); she presents us a mother who is forced to perpetuate the violence black women has endured for so long; the mother sells her daughter into prostitution, in order to save the whole family:

⁶ According to traditional race theories, the cross-breeding between different races would result in sterility in the second or third generations. This idea is also related to the origin of the word *mulato/a*, which comes from 'mule' a hybrid offspring, created as a result of the cross-breeding between the mare and the ass, which resulted in these sterile animals. The words *mulato/a* were adopted in a pejorative way to describe the children of the slaves and black women.

⁷ Bertoleza and Rita Baiana are female characters in *O Cortiço*, by Aluisio de Azevedo (1890). Gabriela is another *mulata* in Jorge Amado's novel *Gabriela* (1958).

⁸ See also, the short stories and poems published in *Cadernos Negros, Toda Mulher Sangra* (Lia Vieira), e *Leite de Peito* (Geni Guimarães), *Vozes Femininas no Quilombo da Literatura: a interface de gênero e raça nos Cadernos Negros*, Ma Dissertation (Mathias, 2014), and Vania Vasconcelos PhD (mentioned before).

The girl's mother dreams of milk, bread, money. She dreams of the medicine that her sick child needs, and a job for her drunk husband. She dreams of a better future for her daughter, less haunted by poverty. The mother dreams of a life without so much need. [...] One day, a man arrived to supply the bars of the *favela* with cigarettes. Unlike us, he speaks roughly and with the hands in his pockets. The girl's mother looks at the man's hand. They look at each other. She already knows the man's vice. He is also aware of her needs. He is quick, straightforward, cruel. «How much do you want, woman?» The girl's mother does not reply. The man gives her some money. The mother calls the girl. «Nazinha, follow the guy!» The man takes the girl by the hand and leaves. (Evaristo, 2006: 33)

Kehinde experiences the death of her first son, because he was playing with knives as she was working; her second son is sold back into slavery by his Portuguese father, and she never meets him again. At the same time, however, Kehinde does not surrender to pain. As so many Africans, she believes that African mythical mothers also give them strength to face the violence they are victims; one of these is Iemanjá, the mother the queen of the waters. It is in the sea that Kehinde gives birth to her first son, it is during a sea voyage that she conceives her twin children. It also is near the sea that she has some of her deepest, saddest reflections about her utterly unhappy condition:

There was an great silence inside and around me; not even the birds sang, and the wind did not howled either. The waves did not make any sound as they crashed. Nothing, nothing, nothing. [...] I sat on the sea shore, contemplating this at this nothingness, willing to do nothing. I cried for all those deaths that seemed to be inside me and occupied such a vast space within myself that I had no room for any other feeling. My eyes burned with salty tears, as if they were made of sea water. I felt as if my loneliness had the vastness of the sea, as big as my journey from Africa to Brazil had been, as wide as my mother's smile when she danced, as strong as [her sister] Taiwo's hold on my hand, as we both watched the little river of blood that flowed from [her brother] Kokumo (Gonçalves, 2007: 101).

When her slave owner dies, his wife Ana Felipa decides to use Kehinde as a *negra de tabuleiro*; by this time, she had learned how to read and write with the help of some black African male friends. This was a kind of contract which allowed slave women the freedom to sell goods in the streets, provided they could pay for their living expenses, as well as pay a great part of the profit to their owners. This condition was very common at that time (Farias, 2008); her historical model, Luiza Mahin, was also a *negra de tabuleiro*. An unforeseen consequence of this 'freedom' to move around the city with some degree of independence is that, contrary to the white women, confined to the strict limits of home, church and family, these black women circulated among the public space, where they acquired invaluable experience with which, as it happens with Kehinde, they could join key moments of rebellion and other political, social and economic processes that were taking place in 19th Century Brazil.

When Kehinde was only 18, she manages to buy her freedom and that of her son; she had received an statue of Oxum as a gift and, unexpectedly, she finds some money hidden inside the statue – another motherly figure of the African religious pantheon. Together with this money, and her intelligent grasping of Ana Felipa's dark secrets, she manages to become a free woman at such an early age.

After the painful events of her early life as a free woman, when her Portuguese partner sells their son into slavery, Kehinde decides to return to Africa, quite distressed after several years of endless, unsuccessful search for her lost son. On her journey, she meets the African John, who did business between African and England. They get married and their twin children are born in Africa, where Kehinde becomes a successful, highly respected builder of houses, sending her children to study in Europe. She then becomes a leading figure among the *retornados*, the freed Afro-Brazilians who decide to return to their mother country (Guran, 2000).

Kehinde's constant travels from Africa, in Brazil, back Africa, and, finally, in Brazil again, always searching for her lost son, reminds us of Roland Walter's concept of «errância esquizofrênica» (esquizophehic wandering). These journeys, both geographic and symbolic, is closely associated with the diasporic experience and it is strongly present in Afro-Brazilian contemporary works (Santos, 2007),

which explore not only its painful aspects, but also the enriching effects of a hybrid personality. According to Walter, «the wandering continues, you cannot escape this condition because the past isn't gone, it is lived in the present; in the black diaspora experience, time does not move on, but accumulates to form [the Afro-Brazilian] collective memory» (2011: 168).

With the abolition of slavery in 1888, many of the Africans decided to return to their origins; they felt that by doing so, they would forget the sad memories of the extreme violence they had experienced in Brazil. However, most of them soon realized that tragic experience had become part of what they had become (Vasconcelos, 2014). Kehinde makes the best of her double consciousness; she accepts the game of «living in the frontier» (Anzaldúa, 2005). Back in Africa, where she spends most of her life, she adopts elements of Brazilian culture as her own, but keeps her strong connections of her original Ioruba culture, the religious beliefs and daily habits, which she had kept alive even when she was living in Brazil. She survives not only the physical violence she had suffered, but also the – not less harmful – symbolic, psychological violence to which she had been exposed. She accepts her ambivalence, her contradictory, *mestiza* nature, as well as that of the former slaves with whom she lives.

Through the novel's main character, we can see how Gonçalves exposes the forces of continuity/similarity and rupture/difference, an intrinsic element of diasporic people that are constantly being integrated, negotiated in multiple, complex ways. The utter violence of the African diaspora and its consequences on the culture and mind of several million people is positively transformed by Gonçalves' epic heroine; instead of feeling like a two-headed monster, she gives evidence of an ambivalence that places her in a privileged position with which to analyze different aspects of their lives. When she was already living in Africa, her analysis about the power relations involved in defining the 'true' religions and the 'superior' cultures shows her understanding and critical assimilation of different aspects of the cultures which had formed her:

He did not like my comment suggesting that all religions are sisters or, at least, cousins. He said that, probably yes, but only at the beginning, when the true Christian God wasn't known, but that now the only truth was that the Catholic Church was the only one accepted by God. [...] Later on, I realized that he [the priest with whom she was talking] was not the only one chosen by God, he was just better prepared to discuss religious issues. God listened to us all, provided that we spoke from deep inside our hearts, and in the name of good (Gonçalves, 2006: 839).

Like some characters in Conceição Evaristo's *Becos da Memória*, who manage to be enduring, hopeful, despite the unjustly cruel reality of their lives, Gonçalves's Kehinde has a resilient attitude towards life; she never stops fighting, searching, hoping to build a better future for herself, her family, the African people in general. She evolves from *resistência* (resistance) to *re-existência* (re-existence) (Souza, 2009) – moving from the reaction and struggle for independence, and reacting against its negative consequences, towards a better understanding of her diasporic condition and how to use their «ambivalent consciousness» in the best possible way. This is the path that these female writers have been promoting in their creative narratives, like so many other intellectuals and activists engaged in promoting a better future for the Afro-Brazilians.

The narrative closes when the blind and sick, old Kehinde is about to disembark again in Brazil, in an endless search for her lost son. The novel's open end might imply that the search of this black woman's narrator/protagonist cannot end. Whatever was taken so violently from her – from the African people, from the African continent, the birth of civilization – can never be fully recovered: her motherland, her roots, her family, her children, her past. The violence they suffered is far reaching, complex and with unpredictable consequences.

Novels like Conceição Evaristo's *Becos da Memória*, explore the consequences slavery in our contemporary society, where the vast majority of its black population still belong to the lowest positions in the socio-economic pyramid, as we have already remarked: prostitution, high crime rates, prejudice, are some of the consequences of the violence of slavery that can still be seen among the black population in Brazil (Gonzalez, 1982).

Contemporary social reality shows us that between Brazilian women of African descent, a majority of female are heads of household, forming and maintaining matrifocal families. In literature by African-Brazilians women writers, images of mothers emerge that surprise and overcome all the stereotypes and transcend the physicality and violence that pervades their lives. These women are far from being defeated by suffering, which they refuse to accept as their lot. Despite the violence perpetrated against their bodies and spirit, they find within themselves the strength to transcend this harsh reality. Kehinde rose from slavery into becoming a successful business woman in Africa; at the end of the novel, her journey back to Brazil also symbolizes her search for a deep understanding of her Afro Brazilian roots, her hybrid nature.

In *Ponciá Vicêncio* (2003), another novel written by Conceição Evaristo, we are given one more example of the transcendence of pain transformed into remarkable, deeply moving fiction. The main character's several pregnancies never come to full term, as if she did not want to transmit to her children the legacy of suffering and consequent insanity in which she finds refuge. She not only suffers from the white population, but her own husband beats her up ferociously on a regular basis, as if wanting to remove her from her state of torpor which might mean to her the only strategy to escape so much unjust suffering. Although Ponciá does not produce babies, she creates art, through which she will preserve the memory of her black ancestry. In close association with myths of creation, the clay that she finds in the river is transformed into human images of her African heritage, which will serve as the basis for a better future for Afro Brazilians.

In fiction, as well as in real life, several of these remarkable – though utterly invisible – women are head of families which they try to improve as best as they can. They also become religious and community leaders, thus expanding the range of their positive action. They gradually and increasingly overcome their traditional roles as «human mules» of slave labour, the selfless, sweet and devoted *amas de leite* of colonial times, the exotic *mulatas* of man's erotic phantasies.

A philosophical debate is being developed around the area of ethics and feminism, with emphasis in what they call «care ethics». Evolving from an «applied ethics» which addressed questions such as equal rights for women in all areas, elimination of violence against women, etc., some feminist philosophers as Marilyn Friedman e Angela Bolte (2007), emphasize the importance of care ethics; for them, this rather neglected attitude has to be valued as extremely necessary for contemporary society. It should not have a secondary importance, mainly because it is associated only with traditional women's role. We have not yet discarded, they argue, patriarchal notions which structured the world in binary poles matter/spirit, culture/nature, immanence/transcendence – where the first of these pairs are usually associated with women.

In ending this paper about violence, we would like to express our optimistic feelings about the future, in the same way that the mood that pervades the novels briefly analyzed here is one of courage, endurance, intelligence, transcendence. Brazilian society has been witnessing the positive effects of the reaction against this condition; the main agents of this irreversible change towards improvement are the black population, but Brazilian society is welcoming and participating in this process as well.

In her book *Overcoming Speechlessness*, the African-American novelist Alice Walker narrates how women are victims of the terrible ethnic conflicts as well as the dire consequences of colonial occupation in Rwanda, Congo, Palestina, Israel. Walker visits these regions as part of the non-governmental association *CODEPINK*, which involves women struggling for peace. Walker talks directly to these poor victims, who had suffered sexual abuse and severe mutilations; and they also had witnessed – in a position of complete powerlessness – their children and relatives being killed with unspeakable cruelty. Walker explains that, for quite some time, she could not express all that horror with words. Believing however, that silence does not solve or protect anything, she decides to record this experience which must provoke strong feelings and reaction on all readers. Despite the dire details Walker describes, she ends this shocking narrative with moving words of optimism and hope; as she danced with these women, these heroines,

true, unacknowledged ‘warriors’ in the everyday ‘struggle’ for life, like the heroine of Gonçalves epic:

Sorrow, loss, pain, suffering, all pounded into the floor for over an hour. Sweat flowing, wailings and tears around the room. And then, the rising that always come from such dancing; the sense of joy, unity, solidarity, and gratitude, to be in the best place one could be on earth, with sisters who have experienced the full measure of disaster and have the heart to rise above it. The feeling of love was immense. The ecstasy, sublime. [...] I also knew that this Spirit [...] that knows how to dance in the face of disaster, will never be crushed. (2010: 59, 60)

Literature has contributed to transformations of historic processes. Many works, like Gonçalves’ novel, have been problematizing the difference between historical truth and aesthetic truth; they create more critical perspectives towards the inescapably narrative construction of what is considered to be real fact; at the same time, these works also question the arbitrary nature of the selection of people and events in the construction of traditional history.

In (re)constructing the lives of Luiza Mahin and her son Luis Gama, Gonçalves gives us a creative expansion and interpretation of historical facts. Her aesthetic truth fills in the vacuum of historical records, providing a more complex view of what must have been this cruel and long lasting experience of slavery, from the perspective of the black woman slave. Gonçalves uses literature as an important element to what the Brazilian woman historian Tânia Swain conceptualizes as «history of the possible». Her ideas invite literature to contribute with this new vision of history. Meanings that hide themselves in traditional history’s focus, the past irreparably lost, can be (re)created in the polissemic of literary language, that might help transform this cruel condition:

The role of the historian, I believe, is not to confirm traditions, corroborate certainties and expose evidences. It is to destroy them in order to relive the freshness of multiplicity, of reality’s plurality. To find a History of possibility, diversity, of a human being not bound only by its sex, sexuality, domination, possession and polarization. It is to create restlessness, interpellation, incite change, raise issues and research tirelessly the diversity so to escape the tyranny of the univocal, the homogeneity, the monotonous repetition, which makes us confirm an endless History of domination and exclusion between feminine and masculine. (Swain, 2007)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Anzaldúa, Glória (2005), «La consciência de la mestiza», *Revista Estudos Feministas*, vol. 13, n. 3, set/dez, pp. 2-12.
- Carneiro, Sueli (2011), *Racismo, Sexismo e Desigualdade no Brasil*, Coleção Consciência em Debate, São Paulo, Selo Negro.
- Carneiro, Sueli (2008), «Quando o preconceito se faz silêncio: relações raciais na literatura brasileira contemporânea», *Revista Gragoatá*, n. 24, pp. 203-219.
- Gonzalez, Lélia (1982), «A mulher negra na sociedade brasileira», in Luz, Madel T. (org.), *O lugar da mulher: estudos sobre a condição feminina na sociedade atual*, Rio de Janeiro, Grall, pp. 87-106.
- Guran, Milton (2000), *Os Agudás, os brasileiros do Benin*, Rio de Janeiro, Nova Fronteira.
- Evaristo, Conceição (2006), *Becos da Memória*, Belo Horizonte, Mazza Edições.
- Farias, Juliana Barreto (2008), *Cidades Negras: africanos, crioulos e espaços urbanos no Brasil do século XIX*, Rio de Janeiro, Alameda.
- Friedman, Marilyn - Bolte, Angela (2007), «Ethics and Feminism», in Alcoff, Linda Martin - Kittay, Eva Feder (eds.), *Feminist Philosophy*, Malden, Blackwell Publishing Ltd, pp. 81-101.
- Gamba, Susana Beatriz (2009), «Sororidad», in Gamba, Susana Beatriz (coord.), *Diccionario de estudios de género y feminismos*, Buenos Aires, Biblos.
- Gonçalves, Ana Maria (2006), *Um defeito de cor*, Rio de Janeiro, Record.
- Martins, Heitor (1996), «Luiz Gama e a consciência negra na literatura brasileira», *Revista Afro-Ásia – CEAO/UFBA*, n. 17, pp. 87-99.

- Mathias, Adelia Regina da Silva (2014), *Vozes femininas no Quilombo da Literatura. A interface gênero e raça nos Cadernos Negros*, Dissertação de Mestrado, Programa de Pós Graduação em Literatura, Universidade de Brasília.
- Morrison, Toni (1987), *Beloved*, New York, Plume Books.
- Reis, João José (1986), *Rebelião Escrava no Brasil: a história do levante dos malês*, São Paulo, Brasiliense.
- Santos, Sônia Beatriz dos (2007), «Feminismo Negro Diaspórico», *Revista Gênero*, vol. 8, n. 1, pp. 11-26.
- Souza, Ana Lúcia D. (2009), *Letramentos de reexistência: culturas e identidades no movimento Hip Hop*, Tese de Doutorado, UNICAMP, Campinas.
- Swain, Tânia (2007), «Os limites discursivos da história, imposição de sentidos», *Labrys*, n. 9, <<http://www.labrys.net.br/labrys9/libre/anhita.htm>> (acesso em 12/01/2015).
- Vasconcelos, Vania Maria Ferreira (2014), *No colo das Iabás. Maternidade, raça e gênero em escritoras afro-brasileiras*, Tese de Doutorado, Programa de Pós Graduação em Literatura, Universidade de Brasília.
- Walker, Alice (2010), *Overcoming speechlessness*, New York, Seven Stories Press.
- Walter, Roland (2011), «Tecendo Identidade, tecendo cultura: os fios da memória na literatura afrodescendente das Américas», in Mendes, Algemira - Ferreira, Elio (org.), *Literatura Afrodescendente: memória e construção de identidades*, São Paulo, Quilombhoje, pp. 159-172.