



Towards a Transnational Black Feminist Theory of The Political Life of Marielle Franco

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Abstract

This paper examines the brief, remarkable presence of leftist Brazilian lesbian politician Marielle Franco, who was executed 14 March 2018 in what is a still unresolved case. Memorialising and examining Franco's case, this co-authored piece is a form of transnational Black lesbian feminist scholar-activism that both investigates her intersectional agendas of race, class, geography, gender, sexuality, and her institutionalised political struggles during her term as a minority force in Rio de Janeiro parliament. From this study of Franco's life, we theorise the stakes, successes, and the limits of visibility and invisibility of a Black lesbian woman *favelada* mobilising an intersectional Black lesbian coalitional politics within Brazil's established necropolitical infrastructure during a distinctly conservative political turn. With the support of an assembled archive of decolonial transnational feminism, we also consider Franco's agenda and theory-in-praxis – as she did – within a genealogy of diasporic Black (lesbian) intersectional struggles against (neo) colonialism. Speaking across languages and global Southern geographies, we situate our respective research and positional experiences of witnessing challenges and erasures of Black lesbians in genealogies of transnational feminism and mainstream politics in Brazil. We consider Franco's embodiment a premier site of transnational Black feminist theoretical possibility for delineating the diasporic, transnational phenomenon of Black lesbian symbolic annihilation, and look to Franco's case to illuminate survival strategies and limitations of Black lesbian existence in an environment of annihilation for questions about our futures.

Keywords: black lesbian, transnational feminism, black geographies, annihilation, Marielle Franco.

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Introductions and Invocations

This collaboration emerged from presenting as co-panellists at the annual "2019 Lesbian Lives Conference" in Brighton (UK). We were the only voices at the conference centering Black lesbian feminist invisibility and the global South. Our panel took place on the first anniversary of Marielle Franco's death. The successive presentations flowed like a dialogic invocation. They were an urgent call to uplift the embodied political life of Marielle Franco – a leftist Brazilian lesbian politician brutally executed on 14 March 2018 – and to consider its significance to Brazilian anticolonial resistance and transnational feminism.¹ Interfacing across Southern geographies, we learned that we both have witnessed the challenges and erasures of Black lesbians (as well as trans and gender non-conforming folks), and the ongoing historical record of their intellectual-sociopolitical contributions to politics in Brazil.

For instance, Marielle Franco was a Human Rights defender for ten years before her campaign in 2018. In her brief term as a politician, she cultivated various coalitions via her inhabitation of different worlds and epistemologies – institutional, communitarian, marginal. She translated these embodied, communitarian knowledges into concrete public policies (Meireles 2020). Though Marielle Franco's passing provoked transnational attention and memorialisation in activist networks, it was the first time many US-based activists became aware of Franco's work, and the work of Indigenous, Afro-Brazilian, lesbian, queer, trans comrades who were bravely fighting the vestiges of slavery in Brazil. Although #BlackLivesMatter was a movement resisting the erasure of Black lesbian, queer women, trans* and gender non-conforming (GNC) people's radical political-intellectual labour and death with its increasing global solidarity, there were largely no efforts to truly connect with the urgent protracted plight of Afro-Brazilian folks, or to issue a call to action to protect Black lesbian lives. Shortly after Marielle Franco's passing, the annual Decolonial Transnational Black Feminism Institute in Cachoeira (Brazil) convened. It offered an opportunity to centre the history of racial politics and social justice from the Brazilian Black feminist perspectives of professors, students, community activists, scholar artists, spiritualists – all holding different relationships to privilege and

oppression within Brazil's (neo) colonial racial systems.² But remarkably, even in the aftermath of Franco's execution, with an overwhelming majority of Black lesbian and queer women from Brazil and the diaspora in attendance, to many's disappointment, Black lesbian and queer sociopolitical-intellectual histories and issues were an afterthought (Glover 2018).

This co-authored paper is a form of transnational lesbian feminist scholar-activism that examines the embodied political life, unresolved case and transnational legacy of Marielle Franco as a premiere case study of the diasporic, transnational phenomenon of Black lesbian symbolic annihilation – a Black lesbian feminist concept that describes the critical functions of (in)visibility, asymmetrical solidarity, and memorialisation to Black lesbians' past-in-present relationship to death.³ This co-authored piece both investigates Franco's intersectional agendas of race, class, geography, gender, sexuality, and her institutionalised political struggles during her term as a minority force in the Rio de Janeiro parliament.⁴ From this study of Franco's political life and annihilation, we theorise the stakes, successes, and the limits of visibility and invisibility of a Black lesbian woman favelada (poor from the shanty towns) that mobilised an intersectional Black lesbian coalitional politics within Brazil's established necropolitical infrastructure⁵ during a distinctly conservative political turn.

The significance of Franco's political life and execution to Brazilian anticolonial resistance and transnational feminism is also a primary site for heuristic delineation of Black lesbian symbolic annihilation, which considers how their sociopolitical and intellectual labour and memorialisation is folded into necropolitical projects. Thus, we consider Franco's agenda and theory-in-praxis as she did: within a genealogy of Black diasporic lesbian intersectional struggles against (neo) colonialism, while engaging an archive of decolonial transnational feminism. This is an attempt to reterritorialise Black lesbian diasporic contributions and dialectically extend theoretical conversations concerning queer necropolitics, lesbian geographies, and decolonial feminisms to situate the diasporic, transnational phenomenon of Black lesbian symbolic annihilation.⁶

Witnessing invisibility's function in Black lesbians' relationships to mainstream Brazilian politics, coalitions, and intellectual histories, we look to Franco's case to teach us survival strategies for, and the limitations of, Black lesbian existence in an environment centered on the annihilation of our futures.

“Our steps come from far away”

Brazil was the destination of the largest cargoes of enslaved Black people from across "The Black Atlantic," and was the last country in the world to abolish slavery (1888).⁷ Marielle is a symbol of a long political struggle, as she used to say, recalling Jurema Werneck's saying: "our steps come from far away."⁸ After abolition, the civil-military dictatorships (1964-1985) and the subsequent democracy were built on pigmentocracy. The amnesty process after the dictatorships pardoned those who tortured and killed many, such as Carlos Brilhante Ustra, one of the country's biggest torturers. He is known for torturing former president Dilma Rousseff, who was elected from the Workers' Party (PT) in 2011 as Brazil's first female president, during the dictatorship period. During her impeachment process (2016), Jair Bolsonaro praised Carlos Brilhante Ustra on the floor of Congress. In 2019, Bolsonaro rose to the presidency. This is the national political context of Marielle's case and her intersectional political struggles.⁹

During Marielle's campaign, she adopted the famous phrase: "I am because we are" as her slogan. She often referred to the African philosophy *Ubuntu*, which stands for the interdependency between all living beings - the phrase and philosophy Nelson Mandela mobilised to incite South African liberation.¹⁰ Franco employed such concepts to signal Afro-Brazilian diasporic sociopolitical identity, transnational Black Solidarity and the continued relevance of African Philosophy to African diasporic and feminist liberation struggles and cosmologies. According to Fátima Lima (2018): "a genesis of intersectional studies can be found in theorists understood and self-understood as Black women and women of colour, trying to create not only a concept, but also

analyses that would account for the multiple oppressions that traverse different experiences" and we add different cosmologies.¹¹ Governing bodies have always ignored the inherent coloniality and trans nationality of its governed geographies that are a result of colonial occupation, slavery and forced diasporic migration. Similarly, law, institutionalised academic disciplines, valuations of knowledge, social justice coalitions and feminisms have historically suppressed and truncated Black women and women of colour's intersectional, diasporic, transnational, decolonial feminist archives of knowledge and social justice efforts, that speak to/across the colonial roots and geographies of oppression, for liberation. The existence of a Decolonial Transnational Black Feminism Institute in Brazil and our archival assemblage continues a legacy of speaking back to these unproductive conventions.

For instance, like Chandra Mohanty (1988), decolonial feminists such as Yurdekis Espinosa Miñoso (2017) analyse how discursive colonisation by occidental Northern feminism must be deconstructed and superceded to highlight struggles and concepts from Latin American feminisms, avoiding what Miñoso calls "epistemic privilege." This effort should be to build a decolonial transnational feminism that emancipates the Latin American subaltern, where Spivak (2003) elucidates that the paroxysm of the subaltern is "a black poor woman of the Third World" (Spivak 2003). Scholars like Hortense Spillers (1987; 2003), an African American feminist whose work reminds one of the tendency to displace domestic colonialism of the US empire, along with Black lesbian feminist Evelyn Hammonds (1994), Aníbal Quijano (2000), Breny Mendonza (2004), and María Lugones (2010) have intervened to decolonise white feminist analyses of gender and sexuality, delineating how the imposition of racialised gender and racialised sexuality have been colonial tools of power and inhumane violence with persistent effects.

Though transnational feminism is type-cast as a present-day corrective, antiracist, anti-colonialist, decolonial feminism (Alexander and Mohanty 1997; Nagar and Swarr 2012), when fashioning feminist genealogies and praxes in and

outside of the academy, continual reminders to examine interpersonal and structural power dynamics at play are necessary. Black lesbian symbolic annihilation signals the neoliberal necropolitical tensions of Black lesbian women's historical and contemporary incorporation into feminist and queer sociopolitical and intellectual projects and genealogies. These genealogies have yet to show an in-depth understanding, or a call to action, to alleviate Black lesbian's particular polyvalent relationship to death and dispossession (Glover 2017, 2019).

Though interrogating the violence of androcentric, cis-heteronormative and homonormative social justice and academic projects, Black lesbian and lesbian women of colour feminists' contributions have historically been formative anticolonial theoretical-political advancements that *bridge*, and radically push, transdisciplinary scholarship and social politics toward intersectional transnational feminist theories and decolonial praxes.¹² Most notably, the Combahee River Collective (1977), a group made up of Black lesbians, and Audre Lorde's (1984) poetics about power, sameness, and difference, foregrounded theories and social justice politics conceptualised around intersectionality in diaspora from a Black lesbian feminist epistemology.

The work of Lorde and Jacqui Alexander (2006) in particular exemplified heuristic convergence of a Black lesbian onto-epistemology, Afro-diasporic Black lesbian feminist critique, and Third World feminism turned transnational feminism coalitional politics. Chandra Mohanty and Jacqui Alexander's 1997 edited volume, *Feminist Genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures*, is cited as the monumental feminist text defining transnational feminism as a type of feminism with particular theoretical and methodological tenets. Mohanty and Alexander dedicate *Feminist Genealogies* to Audre Lorde because her lifework taught them "accountability in envisioning, forming, and maintaining community;" and to devise nuanced analytic tools for understanding the world for liberatory knowledge and revolution (ix). Lorde and Alexander were key influencers of "transnational feminism," which centred geopolitics, spatiality,

history, and embodied theory in feminist analysis to advocate for reflexive praxis regarding unequal, complex levels of oppression and privilege between people in places to understand and connect global processes of [re]colonisation which undergird capitalism, life chances, and the various constructions of self, identity and culture. As Caribbean Black lesbian feminist immigrants, their analyses and critiques converged with Third World turned Transnational feminism's turn back to the Global South as urgent places to examine Black bio-necropolitical suffering and resistance. It has intersected with and influenced scholarship at the intersection of black feminism, queer-of-colour and trans-of-colour critique concerned with queer diaspora's particular vulnerabilities to poverty, marginalisation, exploitation, violence, and annihilation along lines of difference produced by the colonial legacy of cis-heteropatriarchal slavery, and antiblack ideologies about space, gender, and sexuality (Glover 2014, 2018).

In political terms, the City Council of Rio de Janeiro reproduces institutionalised antiblack and antifeminist cis-heteropatriarchal norms to maintain a *status quo* of the annihilation of Black lesbian feminists' presence and their decolonial political campaigns. After Rousseff's impeachment (2016), a rise of right-wing politicians and overt hate speeches became a common part of public political discourses. Franco had to develop strategies to maintain her coalitional political work in an explicitly oppressive, precarious environment and hostile parliament. Nevertheless, as we learn from Lugones (2010) "in our colonised, racially gendered, oppressed existences we are also other than what the hegemon makes us be" (Lugones 2010, 746). In Council, Franco exposed and denounced state violence against vulnerable groups. Franco also valued the ways the *favela* could resist inequalities and bring creative and unexpected solutions, while valorising their social wealth. Franco operationalised Black people's *corpus* of knowledge, mobilising Black lesbian feminist strategies to "survive" in the House (Meireles 2020).

Marielle Franco “in the house” as a council woman

Elected in 2017, Franco's presence in politics highlighted what Black lesbian feminist Lima (2018) describes as “fictional racism à la Brazilian mode,” which is the specific manifestation of embedded racism in Brazilian society. Despite being already criticised, the myth of racial democracy makes people believe that economic inequality is the single tenet of discrimination against Black people. To that end, Congolese anthropologist Munanga (2017) states that “it is by the geography of the bodies that we are seen and perceived before discovering our social classes.” The mixed-raced discourse (*miscigenação*) of homogeneity with no racial differentiation is fallacious when recalling Brazil's historical formation and nineteenth-century genocidal projects of white-washing the population through historical governmental policies.¹³

Although LGBT activism in Brazil dates to the 1970s, given Brazil's conservative parliament, public support from politicians or self-representative lesbian politicians is a recent phenomenon that began in 2000.¹⁴ Even in the most democratic periods, such as the years of a leftist government (2003-2016), there were some LGBT rights policies raised, but these were not made law. Franco's coalitional strategy included capitalising on the momentum of the women's struggle in Rio de Janeiro – known as the Spring Women's Movement (2015) –, and taking to the Council progressive debates and an accumulation of intersectional community worldviews and issues heard on the streets in social movements and from her lived experience pertaining to race, gender, sexuality, and poverty.¹⁵ Franco is remarkable in that of all the policies she advocated, only one – The Lesbian Visibility Day – was not made law.¹⁶ Franco was a part of the committee who awarded the 2017 Chiquinha Gonzaga honour to Jaqueline Gomes de Jesus – first organiser of a transfeminist book in Portuguese and one of the few Black transwomen to hold a PhD in Brazil – thus bringing attention to transfeminism while showing symbolic valuation in an honour traditionally dedicated to cis-women.¹⁷ Franco advocated for the diversity of families by drafting specific policies for single mothers instead of focusing only on nuclear families. Overtly standing for Black poor women's rights, Franco made long-term policy demands for mothers such as free evening child care. Additionally, she

defended a campaign against sexual harassment in public transportation, and The Day of Thereza de Benguela to honour important Black women, all which were passed into law.¹⁸ She also defended new measures granting young prisoners access to education. To get anything done in general, Franco used feminist strategies in the Council, such as denouncing mansplaining from other Council members and refusing to be interrupted in her speech. One of her most well-known statements was: “We won’t be interrupted.”

During and after the 2017 municipal elections, Franco's identity politics were a point of political negotiation of coalitional organising strategies and the stakes of her visibility. This maps onto a history of Black lesbian women's social justice organising being diffuse and politically contingent. This mobilisation of oppositional consciousness was due to navigating varying degrees of heteronormativity, white homonormativity, and asymmetrical solidarity, while remaining tethered to a broad investment in intersectionality.¹⁹ For example, her candidacy was not viewed as a lesbian campaign, but as a Black woman *favelada* campaign. Franco's lesbian identity only became publicly politicised after her election.²⁰ While lesbian issues were not a campaign point for her as a candidate, they were not hidden issues as she was deeply involved in lesbian activism, though not a part of any specific lesbian/bisexual group nor of the women's movements. Once elected, she was able to assemble and mobilise several lesbian movements around the municipality voting for a Lesbian Visibility Day into law. Franco renewed a dynamic in politics, one that considered the collective of people to be an on-going construction, with multiple layers, contexts and complexities. Her identity politics also illustrated how laborious and precarious (in)visibility can be when navigating politics with a Black lesbian intersectional coalitional agenda.

Franco called on autonomous lesbian movements/groups to strategise ways to pass legalisation for the Lesbian Visibility Day in Council. The movements understood the need to undertake a pedagogical strategy due to anticipating resistance from Conservative parties. Their first strategy was a seminar on Labour

and Rights while other strategies focused on the power plays amongst political parties. Lastly, they organised an event called *Ocupa Sapatão*, a cultural activity held to celebrate and to promote the visibility of lesbians, bisexual and trans women, to be held on 29 August. The draft law was defeated by two votes and Franco declared: "This theme is not new; we are already on the streets. You have to respect our rights, this population's existence matters."²¹

Towards a Transnational Black Feminist Theory of Black Lesbian Symbolic Annihilation

Franco was last seen on 14 March 2018 at *Casa das Pretas* (Black Women's House), a place for gathering and knowledge production, run by Black lesbian feminists in downtown Rio de Janeiro. The event entitled "Young Women Moving Structures," brought four young women activists together to share organising strategies and their experiences to inspire hope. Marielle Franco was a speaker and moderator of the discussion. The event was part of a wider campaign, called "21 Days of Activism Against Racism!" where a series of events occurred from 1-21 March in remembrance of the "Sharpeville Massacre" and the United Nations' consecration of 21 March as the International Day to Fight for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.²² Ironically, but without coincidence, this would be Marielle's last day communing with Black lesbian feminists. En route from the event, Marielle's car was shot at 13 times, reportedly by two men in a vehicle that was following them to carry out this professionally-targeted shooting. She and her driver Anderson Pedro Gomes were killed. Marielle suffered four shots to her head. Much has been published about how necropolitics affects various oppressed groups from a transnational perspective, with the objective of exhuming the particular kinds of deadly conditions that affect their quality of life and increase their vulnerability to death. This work appraises both the value of oppressed groups in society and incites a call to action to protect their lives. However, there is a paucity of theorising concerning the relationship between necropolitics and Black lesbian life.²³

Jacqui Alexander's definition of neocolonialism, using a Black lesbian epistemology, contextualises power as operationalised through imperial or neo-imperial recolonisation. She argues that new forms of imperialist recolonisation occur through the alliance of corporate and state power, cultural imperialism and militarism, in the age of global capitalism, in accordance with imperial powers' interests. Alexander foregrounds "the shared violence of heterosexualisation so as to provide the connective web within and among colonial, neo-colonial, and neo-imperial social formations" (2006, 181-194). Ultimately, the reported motive for Franco's execution was her Black lesbian feminist political success *and* exposure, and her denouncement of neo-colonial necropower in the forms aforementioned, but particularly as it manifested in militaristic police occupation, brutality and corruption in *favelas* like her own with impunity. Following Fátima Lima (2018):

Depending on the places we occupy and the absence of social and individual rights that end up becoming privileges, some lives become an investment space for a policy of death. In order for us to combat and minimise the statistics and the different violence involving the experiences [of Black lesbian/bisexual women], we must, first of all, remove Black lesbians and bisexuals from invisibility. Our lives matter (Lima 2018, 78).

Invisibility and Annihilation

Marielle was born and raised in Maré – a *favela* enclosed by an opaque plastic fence, with a history of army occupation beginning in 2015, where houses and schools are filled with bullet holes. In Maré there are police barracks and young men openly carry pistols, machine guns and radios. This is reflective of "the violence inflicted by Rio's police on the community as they fight – and occasionally collude – with the drug gangs and another force active on the streets: the unofficial militias whose members include serving and former police officers."²⁴ Franco lived a precarious life-in-death situation whether she was "highly visible [and advocated her truth], or rendered invisible through the

depersonalisation [and annihilation] of racism” (Lorde 1994, 42). She denounced the violence inflicted by Rio’s police and its recent federal militarisation.

Philips (2018) reports that unnamed police officers and prosecutors have confessed they believe her murder to be linked to her political success and her denouncement of police abuses. Interviewed community members share this sentiment. She exemplified how Black lesbian existence “actually identifies an ethic and a set of social relations that point to the instability of white supremacist cis-heteropatriarchy and to a possible critical emergence within that instability” that could upset the order of things, thus needing to be annihilated (Ferguson 2004). Franco’s annihilation dilemma – of high Black lesbian visibility and execution in contrast with the required erasure and invisibilised vulnerability to necropolitical death of people like her– maps on to the historical precedent of Black lesbian feminist leaders and populations who continue to be invisibilised, quietly annihilated, and/or restored to life only *in-death*. They are then posthumously exploited in memorialisation, in service of futures except for those like their own. To quote Franco’s last twitter post on 13 March, the day before she was executed, the urgent question is: “How many more have to die for this war to end?” Can we acknowledge Franco’s symbolic annihilation as symbolic of Black lesbians’ structural relation to death? Is her death a sacrificial bridge to freedom and an intellectual and sociopolitical ingenuity where one only receives transnational solidarity as the “living dead?”

Legacy

Franco’s execution gained local and international attention and a call to action to solve her criminal case and refute efforts to criminalise *her* after death.²⁵ Monica Benício, Franco’s widow, has been an important figure in supporting lesbian visibility policies – from giving talks, to taking part in Mangueira Samba School’s 2019 parade with a section honouring Franco –, and as a character witness in Franco’s ongoing case to hold her murderers accountable. Benício denounces the slow resolution of the case and the State’s established

corruption.²⁶ Moreover, there are suspicions of spurious alliances between police officers and the suspects, with evidence of connections between the suspects and paramilitary groups in Rio, and even with President Bolsonaro's family.²⁷

As Franco's legacy, four Black women deputies who carry on her intersectional political work were elected to public office: Talíria Petrone, Mônica Francisco, Dani Monteiro and Renata Souza, all from the leftist PSOL party. Importantly, Erica Malunguinho, a Black trans woman, was elected to the State Congress in São Paulo. They were all inspired by Marielle Franco's work. Paradoxically, Black queer women politicians (and, generally, Black lesbians) continue to answer the calls to action to protect Black lives. However, as heard from Mônica Francisco, elected state deputy in Rio, there is still concern about her safety, since not much can be or is being done to diminish her vulnerability in the parliament. Therefore, continuing Franco's legacy means still facing the same dangers Franco did. Franco's lingering unresolved case with revealed connections of paramilitary groups and state authority helps maintain the vulnerability of the elected deputies.

Additionally, Anielle Franco, her sister, created the Marielle Franco Institution to defend her memory and promote access to education and legal counsel for Black and poor people. Regarding the specific agendas for lesbians/bisexuals, Franco's efforts have stimulated an increase of events that promote different levels of sociability and safe spaces through a web of support amongst lesbian movements/groups. One example is the 2019 extension of the Lesbian Visibility Day into a Month, particularly centring Black lesbians' presence and discourses, with several events happening inside the *favelas*. Internationally, we have seen movements and conferences happening in *remembrance* of her. A street in Lisbon and a suspended garden in Paris have been approved to carry her name.²⁸ Similar to Audre Lorde's legacy, Franco inspired transnational Black lesbian feminist *memorialisation* across the globe.²⁹

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Video Material

Franco, M. *Speech in the Lesbian Visibility Day at Council*.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kzNM2IAiEQU>.

¹ Transnational feminist scholarship is considered: 1) an extension of women of colour feminism and activism in that it is a mode of critique of whiteness and US centrism within dominant feminist scholarship and activism; 2) a theoretical and methodological approach to feminist analysis that emphasises historical context, politics of location or standpoint, geopolitics, and intersections of oppressions on behalf of patriarchy, empire, colonialism and globalised capitalism; and 3) a form of feminist praxis in research, writing, and activism that centres collaboration across difference (Glover 2014).

² Cachoeira is recognised as a Black city, historical home to Ameri-Indigenous populations, ports for slave-trading, the war of Independence of Bahia, the sugarcane production, and past-in-present site of Candomblé houses, the oldest Catholic sisterhood of Black women in the world, and Samba; The Decolonial Black Feminism Institute is an educational institute organised to bring diasporic, Black, decolonial, and transnational feminist schools of thought together in a curriculum to discuss social justice issues plaguing Black women. For more, see: <http://www.dialogoglobal.com/bahia/>

³ Glover, Tay. 2018. "Grammars of Blackness: Dialogics of Black Female Flesh, Black Lesbian Symbolic Annihilation, and Mutable Gender." Paper presented at 'TRANS(form)ing Queer,' the Eleventh Annual DC Queer Studies Symposium. University of Maryland, College Park; "Exploring Black Lesbian Symbolic Annihilation." Paper presented at Lesbian Lives Conference 2019. University of Brighton, England.

⁴ Meireles, Flavia. 2019. "The Political Life of Marielle Franco." Paper presented at Lesbian Lives Conference 2019, Brighton, UK, at Transnational Queerness 2019, at McGill University, Montreal, Canada, and at UDELAR University of Montevideo 2019, Uruguay.

⁵ "Late-modern colonial occupation that differs in many ways from early-modern occupation, particularly in its' combining of the disciplinary, the biopolitical, and the necropolitical" (Mbembe, 27). In this digital age and neo-colonial world order of global white supremacy and antiblack domination, necropower is an analytical expansion of biopower- the Foucauldian term for the use of sociopolitical power to control people's right to life and qualities of life. Necropolitics describes colonialists' right to kill, and create necropolitical power structures that determine one's relationship to death and what Achille Mbembe terms "death worlds" – new and unique forms of social existence in which populations are subjected to conditions of life like particular forms of physical, social and civic death, enslavement that make them the living dead, thus experiencing life-in-death.

⁶ Glover, Tay. 2018 *Decolonizing Demonic Grounds: Black Queer Lesbian and Femme Unbelonging in Diaspora*. PhD diss., Evanston, IL: Northwestern University.

⁷ Gilroy, Paul. 1993. *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

⁷ Gilroy, Paul. 1993. *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

⁸ Jurema Pinto Werneck is a Black feminist, physician, writer who holds a PhD in Communication and Culture at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro. Activist in the Brazilian Black women's movement and in Human Rights, she assumed the Executive Board of Amnesty International Brazil in February 2017. In 2006, she published the book "Black Women's Health: Our Steps Come From Far Away." <https://anistia.org.br/noticias/anistia-internacional-brasil-anuncia-nova-diretora-executiva/>

⁹ Meireles, Flavia. 2020. *Social Movements and Artistic Contexts: Struggle for Bodies and Land at Neoliberal Capitalism in Brazil*. PhD diss., Department of Communication and Culture at Federal University of Rio de Janeiro.

¹⁰ Reference: *Revista IHU On-Line do Instituto Humanitas Unisinos – IHU – Universidade do Vale do Rio dos Sinos – Unisinos*. <https://pt.scribd.com/doc/217871719/UBUNTU-EU-SOU-PORQUE-NOS-SOMOS>.

¹¹ In the original: "uma gênese dos estudos interseccionais pode ser encontrada em teóricas entendidas e autocompreendidas como mulheres negras e mulheres de cor, tentando criar não apenas um conceito, mas análises que dessem conta das múltiplas opressões que atravessam diferentes experiências" (Lima 2018).

¹² Moraga, C. and G. Anzaldúa. eds. 1981. *This Bridge Called my Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*. London: Persephone Press.

¹³ Known as white-washing projects (*embranquecimento*), governmental policies throughout the nineteenth-century were executed in order to erase Black and indigenous people, genealogies and land. One of the measures was the *Land Law (Lei de Terras 1850)* that facilitated immigrant occupation of indigenous lands through marriage to indigenous people. Another measure was facilitating the immigration of European people to work in rural and urban areas. Referring specifically to Black people, there were no state measures to absorb this population after abolition.

¹⁴ For one recent effort in documenting the LGBT movements in Brazil see Green, James L., Márcio Caetano, Marisa Fernandes and Renan Quinalha. eds. 2018. *História do Movimento LGBT no Brasil*. São Paulo: Editora Alameda.

¹⁵ Meireles, Flavia. 2019. *Contemporary Feminisms in Brazil*. Paper presented at the venue called *Study Night* group at *Sense Labs*, at Lünenburg University, Germany, under organisation of Prof. Dr. Christoph Brunner.

¹⁶ Meireles, Flavia. 2019. *The Political Life of Marielle Franco*. Paper presented at Lesbian Lives Conference 2019 (Brighton, UK), at Transnational Queerness 2019" at McGill University, Montreal, Canada, and at UDELAR University of Montevideo 2019, Uruguay.

¹⁷ Honour Chiquinha Gonzaga is a title given by the Council City to distinguished women on democratic, humanitarian, artistic and cultural fields in all levels (municipality, state, federal instances). Fonte: <http://www.camara.rj.gov.br/homenagens.php?m1=homenagens>; E.N.: Composer, instrumentalist, conductor, abolitionist from Rio de Janeiro, (1847 - 1935). Greatest black female personality in the history of Brazilian popular music and one of the greatest expressions of the struggle for freedom in the country, promoter of musical nationalization, first conductor, author of the first carnival song, first choro pianist, presenter of popular music in the elegant halls, founder of the first copyright protection society.

¹⁸ E.N.: 25 July is officially the Day of Thereza de Benguela and Black Women's Day in Brazil. Tereza de Banguela was a leader of Quilombo de Quariterê [Quariterê maroon society] in the state of Mato Grosso. Quilombo de Quariterê existed from 1730 to 1795, and Benguela's leadership was in force until 1770, when she was arrested and killed by the State.

¹⁹ Glover, S. Tay. 2017. "Black Lesbians—Who Will Fight for Our Lives but Us?": Navigating Power, Belonging, Labor, Resistance, and Graduate Student Survival in the Ivory Tower. *Feminist Teacher* 27 (2-3): 157-175.

²⁰ E.N.: *favelada* could be translated to: from a slum or from the hood.

²¹ Can be seen at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kzNM2IAiEOU>.

²² On March 21st 1960, South African police opened fire and killed 69 people at a peaceful demonstration in Sharpeville, against the apartheid laws, a kind of internal passport that regulated circulation in the country. The city of Sharpeville was selected by President Nelson Mandela for signing the constitution of South Africa, in 1996.

²³ See: Haritaworn, J., A. Kuntsman and S. Posocco. eds. 2014. *Queer Necropolitics*. Routledge; Riley, Snorton C., Jin Haritaworn, Aren Aizura and Susan Stryker. 2013. "Trans Necropolitics: A Transnational Reflection on Violence, Death, and the Trans of Color Afterlife." *Transgender Studies Reader*: 66-76; Smith, C. A. 2016. "Facing the Dragon: Black Mothering, Sequelae, and Gendered Necropolitics in the Americas." *Transforming Anthropology* 24 (1): 31-48.

²⁴ Philips, Dom. 2018. "Marielle Franco: Brazil's Favelas Mourn the Death of a Champion." *The Guardian*. March 17. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/mar/18/marielle-franco-Brazil-favelas-mourn-death-champion>

²⁵ Article "Judge Turns Defendant under Slandant against Marielle." <https://oglobo.globo.com/rio/desembargadora-do-rio-vira-re-por-calunia-contra-marielle-23861252>.

²⁶ Article "State Refusal for Federal Level Investigations has Opposition from Moro." <https://brasil.elpais.com/brasil/2020-02-11/federalizacao-do-caso-marielle-franco-tem-oposicao-de-moro-e-segure-indefinida-no-stj.html>.

²⁷ <https://brasil.elpais.com/brasil/2020-02-09/suspeito-de-envolvimento-no-assassinato-de-marielle-e-morto-em-operacao-policia.html>.

²⁸ <https://oglobo.globo.com/rio/marielle-franco-sera-homenageada-com-nome-de-rua-em-lisboa-23835848> and <https://g1.globo.com/mundo/noticia/2019/04/21/marielle-franco-vai-virar-nome-de-jardim-em-paris.ghtml>.

²⁹ Bolaki, S. and S. Broeck. 2015. *Audre Lorde's Transnational Legacies*. Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press.