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Antigone in Contexts of Dictatorships in Latin America: Looking at Ariel Dorfman's *Widows* and Jorge Andrade's *As Confrarias* from a decolonial perspective

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Orientador: Prof. Dr. Maria Rita Drumond Viana
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Florianópolis, 2020

To all the Antigones facing authoritarian regimes around the globe.

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RESUMO

O mito de Antígona, peça escrita por Sófocles por volta 440 a.C., persiste no imaginário ocidental há mais de dois milênios, sendo ressignificado de acordo com cada novo contexto em que ele aparece. Esta pesquisa discute duas dessas iterações que tomaram corpo em formato de peças na América Latina durante períodos de ditadura: As Confrarias, escrita por Jorge Andrade, fazendo referência ao regime militar brasileiro; e Widows, escrita por Ariel Dorfman, fazendo referência ao regime militar chileno, liderado por Augusto Pinochet. A análise tem como objetivo apontar como Antígona é latinoamericanizada em cada contexto, além de buscar entender como as personagens que vivem sob regimes autoritários resistem/encaram/denunciam tais regimes. Para compreender as ações destas personagens, dois conceitos se tornam indispensáveis: o de *active subjectivity*, como proposto por María Lugones; e o de *epistemic desobedience*, como proposto por Walter Mignolo. As análises apontam para a importância de se criar estratégias de resistência em comunidade, bem como para formas específicas de desobediência em contextos onde as vidas daquelas que fazem oposição ao governo estão em constante perigo. Além disso, percebe-se a insuficiência da figura de Antígona, nas peças analisadas, para caracterizar mulheres que resistem a regimes autoritários na América Latina, principalmente em consequência de um passado colonial e um presente de colonialidade que a personagem de Sófocles não enfrentou.

Palavras-chave: Antígona. América Latina. Ditadura. Resistência.

ABSTRACT

The myth of Antigone, playtext written by Sophocles around 440 b.C., has persisted in western thought for more than two thousand years, being resignified according to each new context in which it appears. This research discusses two of these iterations that take the form of playtexts in Latin America during dictatorship periods: As Confrarias, written by Jorge Andrade, referencing the Brazilian military regime; and Widows, written by Ariel Dorfman, referencing the Chilean military regime, which had Augusto Pinochet as a central figure. The objective of the analyses aims to show how Antigone is Americanized in each context, besides trying to understand how characters living under authoritarian regimes resist/face/denounce such regimes. In order to understand the actions taken by these characters, two concepts become imperative: that of *active subjectivity*, as proposed by María Lugones; and that of *epistemic disobedience*, as proposed by Walter Mignolo. The analyses point to the importance of creating resistant strategies in community, as well as to specific forms of disobedience in contexts where the lives of those who oppose the government are under constant threat. Besides, it is perceived how the figure of Antigone is insufficient, in the playtexts analyzed, to characterize women resisting authoritarian regimes in Latin America, mainly due to a colonial past and a present o coloniality that Sophocles' character did not encounter.

Keywords: Antigone. Latin America. Dictatorship. Resistance.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Talking about historical events - the past - is always a difficult task. The version of the past present in this research maintains a close relationship with Beatriz Sarlo's (2007) assertions, starting from the fact that "as 'visões de passado' [...] são construções" (12). Following this logic, it is also important to make evident that any version of the past is ideological, for it is not possible to tell the whole "true" History (any recollection is a fragment, a frame, and has someone's perspective implied); just as my main objective in choosing the methodology I did – a decolonial perspective – aims at recognizing and understanding the shackles introduced to/forced on us in the past so that we can write our own future with the freedom we are supposedly born with but that we have not yet been able to fully perform.

Bearing this in mind, it is not possible to discuss the dictatorships that happened in Latin America in the second half of the twentieth century without going back in time, around the 1500s, when a "new" piece of land was "discovered" by European explorers. The connection between the dictatorships and the arrival of the Europeans are not commonly recognized as part of the same process, and this introduction aims at connecting these events through a decolonial lens.

The first chapter of this thesis aims at presenting a historical background based on a decolonial understanding of how Latin America came to be what it is today. This is followed by a review of the literature in which numerous iterations of Sophocles' *Antigone* are presented, culminating in the two playtexts that will be analyzed. Before the analyses of the playtexts in the second and third chapters, there is also a theoretical framework part in which important concepts used are going to be explained. The fourth and last chapter holds a comparison between both playtexts analyzed and the conclusion to this research.

1.1 GENERAL CONTEXT OF INVESTIGATION (HISTORICAL BACKGROUND)

According to Anibal Quijano (2000), a new world system emerges together with the emergence of the new continent in the European maps. This system works primarily around two axes: the invention of a classificatory system through the newly

crafted idea of *race*; and a "new structure of control of labor and its resources and products" (534), that is, *capitalism*. From this point in history on, for the colonized peoples, all spheres of social existence begin to be influenced and shaped by European ideologies[1], a process of harsh physical and psychological violence. This is the beginning of a new conception of space and time supported by a Eurocentric perspective, where ideas such as 'center' and 'periphery' take place (a new configuration of space), as well as the idea that History is a straight line originating in the natural, primitive, backward man, culminating in the modern, up to date, advanced European (a new configuration of time). In sum, the societies colonized by Europeans in America were not seen as complex peoples in relation – to themselves and to the universe –, but as an inferior type of human beings ready to be exploited.

The recognition that America was not a discovery, but an invention, is not uncommon today; however, the implications of this assertion do not seem to be easily recognized at all times. Indeed, so many instances of life have been deemed "natural" and "normal" for so long that it is hard to realize how immersed in Eurocentric discourse we are: modernity is unavoidable.[2] Also, because of this naturalization of Eurocentric values, it is possible to affirm that we continue to live in a state of coloniality. What needs to become clear, and this should be a first step in direction of any meaningful change, is that modernity is not the outcome of coloniality; on the contrary, coloniality is in fact needed in order for modernity to exist. They are both sides of the same coin. They are the same story from two different perspectives. From the modern perspective, thus, America is a newly found continent with native primitive peoples that are waiting to be taught how to enter an advanced and progressive state of civilization. From the perspective of coloniality, however, "America" is an invention used to justify the exploitation of natural resources and bodies: a new name in order to erase and replace myriad cosmologies, ways of being, and histories that were already existent in the land.

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[1] According to Quijano (2000), the four spheres of social existence are: control of labor and its resources and products; control of sex and its resources and products; control of authority and its resources and products; and control of intersubjectivity. Respectively, the European correspondents to each of these spheres are: capitalism, bourgeois family, nation-state, and Eurocentrism.

[2] For example, think about the official languages of Latin American countries today and how our thought is molded by the language we speak; Also, think about the forms of government at work in Latin American countries today and how they were implemented; Or the cultural and technological influence enacted by modern countries such as the United States and some European ones on Latin America as a whole.

In *The Idea of Latin America* (2005), Walter Mignolo chose to entitle the first chapter *The Americas, Christian Expansion, and the Modern/Colonial Foundation of Racism*, expressing the important roles played by religion (Christianity) and racism in the realization of America. Following the ideas of Mexican historian and philosopher Edmundo O'Gorman, for whom "the invention of America implied the appropriation and integration of the continent into the Euro-Christian imaginary" (3), Mignolo affirms that "the idea of 'America' cannot be understood without the existence, previous to the discovery/invention, of the tripartite division of the world, with the corresponding Christian geo-political connotations" (24). The world divided into continents (Europe, Africa, Asia) as we know today is/was, thus, primarily a regional Christian invention that became an imposition of global scale. Besides, in the name of salvation, the colonizers felt it was their obligation to convert everyone they found into Christian faith, just as it was their right to take possession of the lands of those pagan peoples[3]. From this point on, it does not matter how the peoples in "America" named their own land, or the type of relationship they had with it, since their knowledge is relegated to "historical knowledge" and can only be placed properly in a museum. In other words, modernity is this erasure of everything that is not seen as an "essential historical process," and from its own logic it is justified in destroying whatever appears in the way of the "natural" human evolutionary process. As Mignolo suggests, what is new in all this is not that there is some specific society that believes their 'lifestyle' is better than others', for this had already existed; the new aspect of modernity, unprecedented in human history, is the fact that some specific society was able to turn its regional values into global ones, colonizing both the material and intersubjective dimensions of social existence.

1.2 FROM AMERICA TO "LATIN" AMERICA

[3] As an example of this, Mignolo comments on the *Romanus Pontifex* bull, made by the Portuguese prince Henry the Navigator (1395-1460). In this bull the prince talks naturally about "taking possession" of some is-lands while the people on them were "subdued," and about the conversion of the natives to the Catholic faith (30-31).

America did not always have this name, even from the modern perspective. First, and during some time concomitantly, it was called “Indias Occidentales”, which quite well represents what were the expectations in relation to this “new” piece of land. Later, yet another change happened in the name of a large portion of the continent, or at least an imaginary part of it, that nowadays is known as “Latin America.” The history of the colonies always tended to be a mirror of the history of Europe, in the case of “Latin” America mainly because of its white Creole and Mestizo/a elite, who did not identify themselves with the native peoples and preferred to copy European ideals of human existence.

In the beginning of the nineteenth century, as the colonies in America became independent, a process of (national) identity formation began among the Creole and Mestizo/a elites. When looking for a European role model of civilization, those nations previously colonized by Spaniards turned their attention to France, for Portugal and Spain had been debunked by England and France with the status of imperial nations, and the latter still carried their latin heritage. This is how “Latinidad” becomes a postcolonial identity (Mignolo). On the one side, then, it works for the elites as a means of identification that still links them to European history, that will also function for the European immigrants coming to America in the second half of the nineteenth century. On the other side, the process of turning America into “Latin” America is one of exclusion, mainly of the Native Peoples and Blacks, who now also had to endure what has been called “internal colonialism.” This internal colonialism can be noticed, for example, in the transformation of “colonial exploitation” into “modern exportation” (Mignolo, 2005, 90), meaning that Europe was still in control of what was produced and how it was distributed, but now it was in the hands of Creole elites who were immersed in and aligned with Eurocentric values.

The origin of “Latin” America is, thus, concomitant with the emergence of national states in the region. Quijano (2000) gives an account of how nation-states came to be in Europe, taking France as an example, arguing that a nation-state cannot exist, and has never yet existed, without a considerable process of democratization of a society. As it has been briefly explained, the elites that controlled the now independent states in “Latin” America did not identify themselves with the Indians and Blacks, and could not conceive a nation where they could freely coexist as equals. A perfect example of the workings of coloniality, the seigniorial

elites suffered an extreme case of dependency ("historical-structural dependence")[4] and believed that their social interests were the very same of the dominant whites in Europe. Instead of paying critical attention to their specific current social and political situation, thinking and developing actual independent projects, the seigniors bought the discourse of modernity, simply imitating processes they saw happening in Europe, as if that would lead them to the developed state in which they believed Europe was (Quijano, 2000). Democratization, in this context, does not take the path of decolonization, where different peoples would freely coexist, but that of homogenization through elimination (for Indians) and exclusion (for Blacks). For Quijano, thus, "in no Latin American country today is it possible to find a fully nationalized society, or even a genuine nation-state" (567-568). Still, according to him, "coloniality of power based on the imposition of the idea of race as an instrument of domination has always been a limiting factor for constructing a nation-state based on a Eurocentric model" (569).

1.3 BRAZILIAN AND CHILEAN DICTATORSHIPS

The Brazilian dictatorship lasted from 1964 to 1985. According to the conclusion in the report written by *Comissão Nacional da Verdade* (CNV), an official group that had the objective of investigating what happened during those years, it was possible to confirm "434 mortes e desaparecimentos de vítimas do regime militar […], sendo 191 os mortos, 210 os desaparecidos e 33 os desaparecidos cujos corpos tiveram o paradeiro posteriormente localizado" (963), besides, the report concludes that "a prática de detenções ilegais e arbitrárias, tortura, execuções, desaparecimentos forçados e ocultação de cadáveres por agentes do Estado durante a ditadura militar caracterizou o cometimento de crimes contra a humanidade" (964).

The Chilean dictatorship lasted from 1973 to 1990. Similar groups were formed in Chile to investigate their dictatorship, the most known of them is popularly called *Comisión Valech*, which in the last of its reports states the following:

> Las víctimas reconocidas en esta etapa, 30 detenidos desaparecidos y ejecutados politicos y 9.795 víctimas de prisión política y tortura,

[4] For more on this term see Quijano (2000), 565-570.

> elevan a más de 40 mil los casos reconocidos por esta Comisión y sus predecessoras, incluyendo detenidos, desaparecidos, ejecutados políticos, víctimas de violência política, torturados y presos políticos durante los 17 años de la ditadura. Esta realidade readirma que el país sufrió entre 1973 y 1990 uma política de Estado em materia de violaciones de derechos humanos (51)

Therefore, what is the relationship between fake independent democratic nation-states and the military regimes that took place in Latin America in the second half of the twentieth century? First, it is important to highlight the still non-independent reality of Latin American countries. Following the end of the second World War, the US replaced the hegemonic status Europe had in the Americas, becoming a major figure in the political events that could influence their economic interests. This is the conclusion Vicente Gil da Silva (2008) comes to when analyzing the initiative called *Alliance for Progress* started by John F. Kennedy in 1961. Theoretically, *Alliance for Progress* aimed at economic cooperation between the US and the Latin American countries, however, as Silva demonstrates by consulting official documents in the US, the *Alliance* together with other programs influenced the internal social and political scenario in Brazil – and in other countries as well – according to US interests. As one of the memos from Lincoln Gordon – US ambassador in Brazil during 1961-66 – to John F. Kennedy in 1963 makes obvious:

> Efforts should be maintained to strengthen and encourage democratic anti-communist forces outside the government. The principal organizations involved are the Congress, the vast majority of the state governors, the military officer corps, the São Paulo industrial community, mass media of public information, the Church, and labor and student groups. This *effort should be directed at reducing the likelihood of a further leftist-nationalist* swing by Goulart and, if this proves impossible, to *prepare the most promising possible environment for his replacement by a more desirable regime* in the event that conditions deteriorate to the point where coups and counter-coups are attempted. The basic strategy, in short, should continue to be one of encouraging Goulart to constructive courses of action, *strengthening the forces restraining him from undesirable courses of action, and strengthening the prospects for a favorable*

> *successor regime* if the constitutional order breaks down. (209 in footnote. Italics are mine)

It is not a coincidence that the US government was one of the first to acknowledge the military coup in Brazil as a revolution, for they were (actively) closely related to that event. Also, in relation to the "communist" forces, one cannot forget the worldwide context of the cold war, the 1959 Cuban revolution, and the US preoccupation with the possibility of an anti-capitalist ideology spreading in American continent. As Silva's conclusion brings forth:

> [A]quilo que se denominou "ameaça comunista" na América Latina deve ser compreendido como um conjunto de ações de contestação de grupos políticos latino-americanos às estruturas socioeconômicas que, além de beneficiar as elites regionais, também asseguravam a realização dos interesses estadunidenses. Como se sabe, tais ações fazem parte de uma tradição de lutas sociais que marcam a história da própria formação do continente americano, caracterizadas como resistência a uma dominação estrangeira quase sempre apoiada por um grupo instalado no poder local. (221-222)

Thus, "communism" becomes a generic word signifying any threat to the US capitalist expansion into Latin American territories.

Another example of the US imperialist stance towards Latin America took place in the Chilean coup in 1973, when the army, backed up by the opposition to Salvador Allende's democratically elected government and the US, killed the socialist president who refused to surrender and give up his ideals. Patrício Guzmán's three-part documentary is one of the most impressive depictions of the events; *The Insurrection of the Bourgeoisie* (1975), the first of the three parts, starts at the presidential election of 1970 and portrays the attacks from the opposition to the government up to mid 1973, right before the coup that took place on September 11th. Confirming what has been said about regional elites and international imperialist forces, Guzmám exposes the (criminal) strategies used to diminish Allende's popularity and the US involvement with military training and monetary funding. If one is interested in how much the US has been involved with the Chilean coup, I suggest the reading of *The Pinochet File*, first published in 2003, a book written by Peter

Kornbluh after thousands of secret documents related to the relationship between the US and Chile from 1970 to 1990 were released by US authorities.

Despite many similarities between what happened in Brazil and Chile, there were considerable differences concerning how the populations responded to the threats imposed both by the regional elites and the US government. These disparities are mainly related to Allende's openly socialist aims which, supported by a large part of the population, almost made the political disagreement turn into a civil war. This impression is confirmed when one watches Guzmán's documentary, full of incisive and sometimes even violent speeches from the citizens towards the ones they considered their enemies. In Brazil, however, there was not such a character as Allende, with strong well-defined opinions and goals against capitalism and the US hegemony, for example, so that the population could not assume a vehement defense of the standing government. At the same time, a big part of civil society was in favor of the military government and agreed with their politics, influenced by conservative catholic ideals, as the *Marcha da Família com Deus pela Liberdade* demonstrates.

1.4 SPECIFIC CONTEXT OF INVESTIGATION

1.4.1 About *Widows* and its author

Ariel Dorfman was born in Argentina (1942) from parents that came from Odessa (now Ukraine) and Kishinev (Moldova); When he was at the age of two, his family moved to the US; in 1954, he moved to Chile, where he attended, and then worked, at the University of Chile; in 1966, he married Angélica Malinarich and, in the following year, he became a Chilean citizen; in 1968, he attended graduate school at the University of California at Berkeley in the US, returning to Chile in 1969, where he participated in the election of Salvador Allende for presidency in 1970, for whom he worked as a cultural advisor during the time of the president's mandate. At the time of the coup, Dorfman worked at La Moneda (the seat of Chile's president), and was supposed to be in the palace when the coup occurred; however, due to a coincidence, he exchanged his working day with a friend, Claudio Gimeno, who disappeared/was killed in his place. Not only this, his name was in a list of people

who should be called in case of emergency, but it was crossed off by Fernando Flores who, years after, told Dorfman that "someone had to live to tell the story" (Postel). Indeed, he has been telling the story of Chile, in many different ways, since then, and *Widows* is certainly part of this task.

Widows was first published as a novel in 1983, and it has also been written as a poem, which originated the whole story. The poem was written some time after 1976, while Ariel Dorfman was exiled, living in Amsterdam. In its lines, the reader accompanies what can be implied as a woman discovering that another male body had been found floating in the river. While the authorities do not want to acknowledge his identity because he is disfigured, the woman will not let that happen: "that body will have my name/ my son's my husband's/ my father's/ name/ I'll sign the papers tell them" (Dorfman 77). According to Dorfman, it was in 1985 that he received a call with the suggestion that the novel "cried out to be a play": "Thus began one of the longest and most arduous creative odysseys of my existence. The poem had taken a night to compose and the novel, a year. The play was to bedevil me for almost a decade" (Dorfman 81), he states.

1.4.2 About *As Confrarias* and its author

Born in Barretos (1922), a city in the countryside of the state of São Paulo, in a farmer's family, Jorge Andrade is acquainted with the rural context and culture, transposing his personal experiences of adaptation to the urban landscape to his texts. In 1954 Andrade graduated in Escola de Arte Dramática (EAD), a place that provided him with a consistent basis with which he became the well-known playwright he is considered today. According to Sírley Oliveira (2003), in this school the author was able to build a "national consciousness" and get in contact with important figures of the "universal" theater, such as Brecht and Sophocles[5]. Besides EAD, the Teatro Brasileiro de Comédia (TBC) was very important in Andrade's trajectory, providing him a space where he was able to get in contact with the

[5] For Andrade's playtext will not address Antigone directly, it is important to at least acknowledge he was aware of her existence, both by the text's author - Sophocles - and by people who are also known for resignifying the text - such as Brecht. Jacob Guinsburg (1996), in *Um teatro em rastro atrás: Jorge Andrade*, for instance, also points out the fact Andrade was familiar with Brecht and the Greek theater.

national theatrical scene and the audience. There, four of his playtexts were staged: *Pedreira das Almas* (1958), *A Escada* (1960), *Os Ossos do Barão* (1963/1964) and *Vereda da Salvação* (1964). It is with the company's support that the playwright receives recognition, even if some of that came together with criticisms[6]. In spite of this, as Oliveira argues, "foi o Teatro Brasileiro de Comédia o *locus* privilegiado do dramaturgo para divulgar seu projeto de dramaturgia nacional" (174).

As Confrarias, written in 1969, is part of a cycle entitled *Marta, a Árvore e o Relógio*. About this cycle, first published in 1970, the author himself explains that:

> não é um volume com dez peças escolhidas ou teatro até agora, mas um livro que conta uma história, não em dez capítulos, mas através de dez peças teatrais. Portanto é a conclusão do ciclo, do painel paulista que eu me havia proposto a fazer; mais do que isso, é o resultado de dezenove anos de um trabalho que procurava alcançar um objetivo fundamental: compreender uma realidade e atuar nela.[7] [8]

The position of *As Confrarias* in the "paulista panel" Andrade constructs, at first, might seem incongruous with the objective of this research, primarily because the story takes place in the end of the eighteenth century, and this study aims at the relationships between the playtext and the dictatorial regime that started in 1964. It cannot be forgotten, however, that the play was written in 1969 and, as Oliveira (2005) argues, the playwright focuses on "o Brasil no século XVIII, que vivia sob as amarras da política colonial, para pensar, refletir e intervir em seu próprio tempo, o Regime Militar, que sutilmente é o alvo de crítica do dramaturgo" (8). To support her assertion, she sums up Andrade's own words, who confirms:

> não importa se é século XVI ou XVII, o debate está também no século XX, no debate das multinacionais. Vale a pena importar o Know-how que nos explora? E investigar a História é também fugir a perspectiva histórica dos ganhadores. Por que é que o mártir da

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[6] For a more detailed discussion on Andrade's trajectory in TBC, with mostly positive and also not that positive reviews, see Oliveira (2003) 162-174.

[7] See: SOUZA NETO, Juvenal. Jorge Andrade: Um autor em busca de si mesmo. Dissertação (Mestrado), ECA/USP, 1987, p. 77. (in Oliveira, 2005, footnote number 2)

[8] Order of appearance of the plays in *Marta, a Árvore e o Relógio* is the following: *As Confrarias* (1969); *Pedreira das Almas* (1957); *A Moratória* (1954); *O Telescópio* (1951); *Vereda da Salvação* (1957-1963); *Senhora da Boca do Lixo* (1963); *A Escada* (1960); *Os Ossos do Barão* (1962); *Rastro Atrás* (1966); *O Sumidouro* (1969).

> Independência é Tiradentes e não um dos mulatos da revolução dos Alfaiates, na Bahia? A Inconfidência Mineira era uma revolução de mentira idealizada pelos historiadores, enquanto a revolta dos Alfaiates é uma revolução social, do homem, do povo. O teatro pode evocar essa história que foi surrupiada (8)[9]

Another author who suggests that Andrade's writings, even when addressing the past, cannot be understood as completely alien to the present is Anatol Rosenfeld (1982). He asserts that "[f]oi dito de Jorge Andrade que é 'o nosso grande poeta do ontem'. Isso certamente não significa que seja poeta *de* ontem. O poeta *do* ontem pode ser perfeitamente poeta de hoje" (103). Rosenfeld also affirms that "sua obra é, em essência, escavação do passado, rasto atrás, volta às origens, iluminação crítica do passado pelo presente e do presente pelo passado" (119). Following a similar line of thought, this study will focus on the possible relationships between Andrade's playtext and the on-going military regime of the time the text was written (1969), paying special attention to the forms of resistance enacted against authority figures.

1.5 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Sophocles' *Antigone* is one of the most well known playtexts of all times. Winner of the dramatic competition of 441 or 440 BC in Athens, Greece (Rosenfield), it has been translated, adapted, resignified and entered in different types of dialogues up to the present days. Among the translations/adaptations there are names such as Hölderlin, Anouilh and Brecht, to cite some European ones; Griselda Gambaro, Félix Morisseau-Leroy, and Sara Uribe, to mention some American ones. Among people who engage with the playtext there are names such as Goethe, Schlegel, Hegel, Lacan, George Steiner, Derrida, Judith Butler, and Kathrin Rosenfield, just to reference a few. This list is an indication of the persistence of Antigone's myth in Western thought, but not only, among which are relevant resignifications that deal with the classical opposition between Antigone's disobedient act and Creon's

[9] From: ANDRADE, Jorge. Teatro não é palanque. *Isto É*, São Paulo, 19 abr. 1978, p. 46.

tyrannical attitude. Jorge Andrade's *As Confrarias* and Ariel Dorfman's *Widows* are instances of these resignifications.

1.5.1 Sophocles' Antigone's Plot Summary

Antigone's siblings – Eteocles and Polynices – have killed each other. Despite having agreed that they would share the position of king, Eteocles does not keep his promise, not allowing Polynices to become king as well. After discovering he will not be the king, Polynices plots a siege against Thebes, which ends up in the mortal battle against his own brother. Creon, their uncle, becomes the king and decrees that Polynices must not be buried, with a death penalty for anyone who goes against it, because of the siege he had plotted against the city (of which, it is important to remember, he should be the king, had Eteocles kept his word). This is the background for the playtext, in which Antigone defies Creon's decree twice going to Polynices body to perform the burial rites, committing an act of disobedience.

1.5.2 Resignifications of Antigone

According to Kathrin Rosenfield (2002), "a pólis grega é organizada em torno de práticas rituais que são, ao mesmo tempo, gestos religiosos, sociais [...] e políticos", the polis "desconhece a separação moderna dos domínios político e religioso", and "arte, em particular a literatura, está firmemente integrada nas práticas políticas, educativas e religiosas" (Rosenfield). The Athenian dramatic competitions, then, in which plays such as *Antigone* were performed, interweave domains of life that in contemporary times we tend to discuss and analyze separately. This statement can be confirmed when the numerous versions of *Antigone* produced after Sophocles' are looked at, especially in contexts where the Greek myth is summed up because of specific aspects of the playtext that will be highlighted, such as dictatorships. In the following sections some of these versions will be discussed, first briefly mentioning some European ones, then focusing more extensively on Latin American ones, for this is the specific context of investigation of this research.

1.5.3 In Europe

Gary Chancellor (1979) compares three of the best known European versions of *Antigone*: Hölderlin's translation (1804), Anouilh's (1942), and Brecht's (1948). His choice is based on the argument that each of these playtexts emphasizes, respectively, religious, personal, and political elements, which, according to him, is a tendency in "most versions of the story that have appeared since Sophocles'" (87). Concerning the 1804 translation, Chancellor highlights the "slight mistranslation[s]" that inform Hölderlin's interpretation of the playtext, rather stressing religious questions when compared to Sophocles', Brecht's, or Anouilh's versions. For Rosenfield (2002), however, Hölderlin's translations highlight "o lado sombrio e inquietante do drama político e genealógico que se revela nos interstícios do conflito jurídico", evidencing that other interpretations are possible. Regarding Anouilh, Chancellor stresses the emphasis put on "the private lives of the individuals involved" (89), so that a love scene between Antigone and Haemon is added, and "Creon is portrayed as a philosophical, sentimental uncle, not wanting to harm the little girl he has known from infancy" (89). According to Chancellor, both Antigone and Creon have made absolute choices that they cannot take back once made public: Antigone, in choosing to bury her brother, accepts her inevitable death – even after Creon, who "wants to save [her] because of his emotional ties [...] offers to get rid of the witnesses if she will only promise not to break the law again;" and Creon, in choosing to fulfill the role he accidentally came to have, cannot let Antigone live once her misbehavior becomes known. For this, Chancellor concludes that Antigone is an "existential figure:" "the fact of her existence as a given essence which she chose to become conflicts with the absolute demands made on her by life in a 'rational' world" (93).[10] Finally, with respect to Brecht, Chancellor asserts that the playwright "wants to eliminate the influence of fate from his play" (88), suggesting that "the fate of man (sic) is to be found in man himself" (89). In contrast to Anouilh's Creon, here the tyrant "offers to spare Antigone if she will make a public apology, sacrificing her ideology by recognizing his as superior (89). Following "P. Ivernel remarks," one of

[10] Jordi Malé, somewhat contradicting this reading, suggests that Anouilh also gives a political meaning to his play, just as Brecht (170). However, he also suggests that Anouilh's version has a "psychological" side and is "more ambiguous [...] in relation to the attitudes and motivation of the protagonist" (175). In Malé, 2013, 170, 173, 175.

the most interesting comments Chancellor makes about this play is related to Creon's use of Antigone's ambiguous words against herself when she says "that she would rather live in a ruined Thebes than in a conquered Argos, meaning that it would be wrong to enslave the people of Argos, but simultaneously implying that she hopes her own people lose the war" (94). Interestingly, Chancellor does mention that her motivation is "the unjust war," but he does not reference the Nazi regime Brecht was openly attacking, for he opens the play with "Berlin. April 1945."

Jordi Malé (2013) discusses seven Catalan versions of Antigone that emphasize religious and/or political aspects of the Greek myth[11]. Guillem Colom, for instance, Christianizes Sophocles' Antigone by changing both plot and dialogues, and adapting them to fit his religious purposes. Thus, Antigone does not assert that she would not have done the same if the deceased was, instead of her brother, her son or husband, and in the outcome of the story she does not commit suicide, for that would be a sin, instead dying of "physical and moral fatigue" (165-166). By also following the author's religious beliefs, Salvador Espriu's *Antígona* takes a different route, rather highlighting god's "impassivity" and "indifference" towards the death of Antigone's brothers, who she sees kill each other, revealing Espriu's "skepticism and agnosticism" (168). According to Malé, the religious connotations are downplayed while the fratricidal war between the brothers becomes "the key concept of the play" (170), a reference to the Spanish Civil War (1936-39) that was coming to an end (the play was written in 1939). For such a reference is made, "Espriu is careful to avoid [...] the audience taking sides for one or the other", because he wants to "show that neither cause is better than the other and that the fight is senseless" (170). Still at war, which had been going on for three years, Malé argues that Espriu's writes his Antigone aiming at "peace and reconciliation;" His work is not only political but "ethical." However, when Espriu rewrites the play in the 1960s, during Franco's dictatorship, significant changes are noticed, impelled by the context. The primary change is the addition of a character, Lúcid Conseller (Lucid Counselor), an *alter ego*

[11] In the order of appearance in Malé's article: Guillem Colom's *Antígona* (1935), Joan Povill Adserà's *La tragèdia d'Antígona* (1962), Salvador Espriu's *Antígona* (1955, written in 1939), Josep M. Muñoz Pujol's *Antígona* (1965, revised in 1967), Romà Comamala's *Antígona* (1986, written in 1985), Pere Alberó's *Antígona* (1992, written in 1990), and Jordi Coca's *Antígona* (2002).

of Espriu[12], who accuses himself and others who have remained indifferent and silent "before injustice and the suffering of others," thus also implicating the Catalan audience of the 1960s[13] (172). Espriu's versions of the Greek myth are interesting examples of how Antigone has been resignified in contemporary times in order to expose moments of social instability and tyrannical governments. In Malé's words: "When expressing their worries about reality and history, Catalan writers have found in the Greek myths fertile material" (180).

1.5.4 In Latin America

Antígona González (2012), written by Sara Uribe, defines itself as "una pieza conceptual basada en la apropiación, intervención y reescritura" (103). Commissioned by actress Sandra Muñoz, the play is a monologue based on Sophocles' *Antigone* and many other source texts that support the author's task to talk about the contemporary Mexican context. This context, according to Tamara R. Williams (2017), is that of a "U.S.-backed drug war in Mexico" (3), and the debilitated State's complicity with security forces and drug cartels, where massacres take place, leaving behind unidentified bodies and violence unaccounted. One of these massacres happened in 2010, San Fernando, killing seventy-two people, mostly "undocumented migrants from Central and South America" (6), another one, interrelated, "in 2011, was the mass murder of 193 people at La Joya ranch in the same municipality" (6). The writing of *Antígona González* began after the bodies of this second massacre ("tortured, raped, mutilated and then burned in mass graves" (6)) were found, inspired by the collective blog-project *Menos días aquí*, a collective of activist volunteers who count the deaths committed by violence, because "queremos ponerles nombres, rostros. Dejar de banalizar la muerte" (*Menos*). The title of the play, *Antígona González*, is indeed the name of one of these volunteers.

One of the most remarkable aspects of Uribe's text is the indiscriminate use of citations and her prose-like "notas finales y referencias", in which she talks about her sources. Williams suggests that the text relinquishes "the privilege and authority of

[12] Following Carles Miralles (1993), in introduction to Espriu's *Antígona*, Malé affirms that this *alter ego* is "used by the author to distance himself from his 1939 work" (171)
[13] Malé also suggests this following Miralles (1993).

the highly individualized proprietary lyric 'I'," exposing "Uribe's dependence on, dialogue with, and ongoing participation in, the always collaborative and communal practices that the process of writing entails" (12-13). In this "communal practice," then, the reader finds:

> Crime notices and obituaries, investigative reports including testimonies from survivors and family members of the dead and disappeared, biographical and bibliographic notations, reflections and quotations from legions of preceding Antigones (by Sophocles, Gambaro, Marechal, Zambrano, Yourcenar, etc.), as well as her most renowned critics (e.g. Steiner, Butler, and Pianacci) and verbatim segments from websites and blogs such as the aforementioned *Menos días aquí* (12).

Purposely easy to find on the internet, Uribe's text is an invitation to think about the role Latin Americans have attributed to Antigone in its recent history, not as an imposition, but as a questioning strategy:

> : ¿Quién es Antígona dentro de esta escena y qué
> vamos a hacer con sus palabras?
>
> : ¿Quién es Antígona González y qué vamos a hacer
> con todas las demás Antígonas?
>
> : No quería ser una Antígona
> pero me tocó (15).

Mentioned by Uribe, Leopoldo Marechal's *Antígona Vélez* (1951) is an Argentine version of the myth. "Escrita como un largo poema en verso libre, el texto contiene innumerables fragmentos de letras de tango, que en su distorsión y alteración, plena de nuevos significados y entrecruzamientos" (21) says Uribe, also affirming that "la interpretación de Antígona sufre una radical alteración en Latinoamérica – en donde Polínices es identificado con los marginados y desaparecidos" (21). In Marechal's playtext, situated in the nineteenth century conquest of the "desert lands," in fact populated by native peoples who are joined by

Ignacio Vélez (this version's "Polynices"), the primary "new meaning" "revolves around the land," to use Moira Fradinger's words. In a chapter entitled "Antigonas: On the uses of Tragedy" (2014), Fradinger argues that "Marechal nonetheless performs an antiliberal critique of national liberal historiography" (230) in this playtext she calls the "first fully 'Americanized' version of Antigone" (230). The argument is based on the fact Marechal, through Antigone, is able to expose a very regional subject such as the conquest of supposedly new land and subsequent erasure of native peoples, an erasure also performed through the generalization of different populations by the title "Indian." In agreement with Fradinger, Braulio Fernández-Biggs and Joaquín García-Huidobro (2013), conclude their analysis of the playtext by stating "Marechal's play takes up Sophocles' story and introduces it into the magnificent epic of the conquest of the American land" (237), confirming that "the land, here too, is in its way a protagonist" (236). In turn, Fradinger concludes her chapter suggesting that burial could be understood "as the act of typing a name to the land" and that "both Antigone and Creon could be said to dispute over land for burial: Antigone claims a right to the land; Creon leaves the brother landless in death" (236).

Still about the Argentine context, M. Florencia Nelli (2009) brings about some of the reasons why Antigone became an important figure to talk about the country's history, mainly after the dictatorship: "It was easier to reflect on the recent events by 'showing' them as having occurred long ago and far away" (72). Some of the main connotations present in Sophocles' play, according to her, are the burial and mourning denial for corpses, and "the opposition between women and men" -, which in Argentina will instantly sum up the images of mothers and grandmothers marching in Plaza de Mayo, refusing to continue silent, as many people indeed preferred to stand. For these reasons, Nelli, who focuses on performances instead of the texts, argues that even the staged versions most similar to Sophocles' *Antigone* will certainly make the Argentine audience remember the recent military regime, its deeds, and the population's reactions to them. When thinking about Latin American iterations of Antigone, thus, even the most close to the "original" play will lose their attachment to the Greek B.C. context, at once being recontextualized, "distorted and altered," assuming new meanings based on the regional history.

Another Argentine version mentioned by Uribe is *Antígona furiosa* (first performed in 1986): "La argentina Griselda Gambaro utiliza la figura de Antígona para criticar el gran número de desaparecidos durante la dictadura militar que existió en su país. Antígona Furiosa es un pastiche" (25). There seems to be an agreement that it is impossible to think/write about *Antígona furiosa* without acknowledging its involvement with the recent history of the country, mainly the Dirty War (name by which the 1976-83 military dictatorship in Argentina is known) and the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo's resistance to the State's deeds. Annette Wannamaker (2001) is possibly the one who makes this most explicit, but others such as Nelli (mentioned above), Iani del Rosario Moreno (1997), and Fernández-Biggs and García-Huidobro (mentioned above) also mark this element of the play(text). Also deep-rooted in the regional context, this is another "fully Americanized" Antigone, a "pastiche" (Moreno, Wannamaker, Nelli, Uribe) of specific references that range from the historical events already cited, specific language use, to literary characters such as Hamlet's Ophelia and of course Sophocles' *Antigone*[14]. Due to this undeniable relationship between the playtext and the country's history, analyses of both text and performances will usually happen by pointing out parallels. Nelli, for instance, remembers the "subtle reference" made in the text about the victims that "were drugged and taken on aeroplanes to the River of La Plata, in Buenos Aires, where they were dropped with tied hands and feet" (75)[15]; Moreno and Wannamaker evidence the male characters' efforts to "mock and dismiss" Antigone, a similar treatment received by the Mothers from the military leaders and many civilians, who considered them "crazy." At last, it is meaningful to bring forth Wannamaker's conclusion in which she makes evident both the common and specific grounds Antigone paths in Latin American territory, giving "form and voice to a collective bitterness and anger at a nation that slaughtered its own people, disposed of and denied the existence of their bodies, and then pardoned those responsible for the slaughter," a common experience in many of the continent's countries, and the play's making "visible the role that patriarchal constructions of gender played within the Dirty War and the role that public

[14] For more on the relation between this term and the play(text) see Moreno (123-125) and Wannamaker (74).

[15] "Polynices cries out for earth. Earth is what the dead ones ask for, not water or contempt".

performances of gender played in producing and resisting monolithic constructions of nation" (83), a specific experience of Argentinians, starred by their Mothers[16].

Romance Quarterly has an issue entitled "Reception of Greek and Roman Drama in Latin America" (2012). In the introduction, Konstantinos P. Nikoloutsos alerts that "numerous adaptations they [figures of ancient drama] have inspired [in Latin America] are unknown, even as titles, to the majority of classicists in the northern hemisphere" (1). The still peripheral status of Latin America and the languages with which such work is produced are some of the reasons why this "unawareness" occurs, the author suggests. On the choice of the term *reception* instead of *tradition*, Nikoloutsos points to the "syncretic, hybridized nature of Latin American rewritings of Greek and Roman drama" (3), which can be confirmed by the few resignifications that have already been discussed above, in which the myth is "Americanized" and immersed critically into specific sociopolitical contexts. Due to the importance of such an issue, the articles that deal with Antigone will be briefly discussed in what follows, for they, just as my research, are also part of the attempt to fill this still present gap in scholarship concerning the importance of the reception of *Antigone* in Latin American territory.

The discussion on *Antígona furiosa* continues here with Nancy Kason Poulson (2012). Besides confirming the elements already mentioned, she adds to the conversation an interesting parallel "between the biological fratricide in the Greek original and the metaphorical fratricide carried out in Argentina" (48). After a brief contextualization on the story of General Juan Domingo Perón (who was elected president in 1946, reelected in 1952, and resigned in 1955, fleeing to Spain in exile), Poulson informs the significant influence he continues to exert on Argentine politics even while far from the country, endorsing "the work of both his right-wing and left-wing supporters" (49). "However [she continues], on his return to Argentina, he recognized the right-wing group as his legitimate supporters and condemned the activities of the left-wing" (49), which will lead to the "metaphorical fratricide" she argues for is also present in Gambaro's playtext.

Mexico reappears in this issue with M. Florencia Nelli, who talks about *Usted está aquí*, a play by Mexican writer Bárbara Colio (2009). Nelli begins her discussion

[16] Mothers were also important in other contexts, as in Chile, but Argentina surely had the most well known public demonstrations and the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo have become a mark in History, not only of Argentina.

by explaining that this play "cannot be fairly described as a new version or adaptation of Sophocles' *Antigone,*" but "resonances of the Greek tragedy can be heard throughout the play" (55). In this version, Antigone becomes the mother of a kidnapped, a situation Mexican society has become habituated with[17], who does not surrender to the "normality" of such a happening, and does everything she can to find out the whereabouts of her son. Nelli suggests that "*Usted está aquí* acknowledges the vital role of mass media in modern society, but also warns about some of their most pervasive and corrosive powers (60). This role is present in the playtext through newsreader voices that give information about the city, ranging from the temperature to the congratulations to the mother who has found the ones who kidnapped her child. During this congratulation, however, the voice begins to be overlapped by another voice that announces the opening of a shopping mall, and the information received becomes confusing. Even though the events take place at "Thebes," as the playtext progresses, Nelli argues, the audience/reader realizes the parallels between what happens in the plot and the Mexican reality. As the title suggests, "you are here" plays with the question of "being," what it really means to be here, or not be at all, the absence. At the end, "the real world bursts into the play" (63) with phones ringing and the characters coming off their fictional roles, alerting the audience/reader that what happens in that fictional world is also happening in their real lives, that they/we/"you are here" as well.

Victoria Brunn (2012) discusses Luis Rafael Sánchez's *La pasión según Antígona Pérez* (1968), a Puerto Rican resignification of Sophocles' tragedy. Borrowing her short summary, this play is:

> set in the imaginary Latin American Republic of Molina in modern times, centers around a university student who rebels against the authoritarian rule of a brutal dictator at the cost of sacrificing her own life. The young heroine buries the publicly exposed dead bodies of the Tavárez brothers, who made a failed attempt to assassinate Creón Molina, the military ruler of the republic (37).

The Latin Americanness of the play(text), Brunn states, is reinforced by the slogans that appear on the walls with messages such as "EL CANAL ES DE

[17] There is a small section in the article entitled "A Hostage Society" in which the author explains this habituatedness (58).

PANAMÁ," "MINAS DE BOLIVIA PARA LOS BOLIVIANOS," and "YANKIS GO HOME" (37). Besides, when introducing herself, Antígona replaces her country of origin with "Continente, América," "her physical appearance betrays a mix of races typical for a Hispano-American" (44), and at some point in the play when people start to say "Antígona, no cedas," "Antígona, no sufras," she replaces her name with "América:" "También yo comenzaré a gritar: América, no cedas; América, no sufras" (44). Again, thus, Latin American common colonial background finds in Antigone a voice with which to scream against fictional authoritative regimes that are mirrored in and easily identified with real ones. Also, Brunn asserts, the choice of *Antigone* is a Brechtian strategy that aims at a "defamiliarization effect" (39), with which the audience should be able to better realize what is portrayed, looking from a distance, not feeling too implicated. However, based on reactions to stagings of the play(text), Brunn alerts that this distanciation was not achieved, proving right Nelli's (2009) suggestion that Antigone has become, not only in Argentina, it seems, a figure that will immediately remind its audience of the military regimes that took hold of the Latin American countries. Having this in mind, Brunn then problematizes this instant identification concerning gender representations both of *Antigone* and Antígona. Despite being probably "the most notorious female transgressor" of her place and time, Antigone ends her story "removed from the polis," and "like a wife," for she dies beside Haemon, which restores the gender boundaries she has trespassed (42). Criticism of *Antígona Pérez*, according to Brunn, has praised the playwright for the way he has portrayed this female character, but Brunn contests this scholarship arguing that:

> by placing the focus on a glorified, but at the same time fetishized, female body, *La pasión*, in spite of its outward intent to promote women's participation in public life, does not challenge machismo, but rather perpetuates, perhaps unwittingly, its hierarchical patterns (43).

Her argument follows by questioning how fully – if at all – has Antígona entered the public space, for her act is justified by the "brotherhood" with her comrades, that is, kinship, which for Brunn is "a space traditionally identified as feminine" (43). Besides, she affirms that the stage itself and the position of Antígona on it reinforces her predicament, for she is in a space literally "inferior to that

occupied by the power brokers" (43). "Notably [the author continues], Antígona's eagerness to die is also partly dictated by her desire to be like 'los hombres grandes' who 'no acaban cuando mueren'" (44). According to her, "Sánchez's heroine happens to be an unintended illustration of a woman who is deeply immersed in traditional discourse, embodying the old texts at the expense of her own physicality" (45). Brunn's discussion is instigating for she exposes a trap many people in contemporary times fall into by trying to make pro-feminist texts, by, better than pointing to who is right or wrong, questioning, for instance, *at what cost is female protagonism achieved*?

1.5.5 *As Confrarias*

As for the plot, *As Confrarias* tells the story of a mother trying to find a place to bury her son. Set in Minas Gerais, around the time of the *Inconfidência Mineira*, that is, late eighteenth century, a place where the Church (the "confrarias") is an institution with great power, but still under the domination of the Portuguese Crown. As the story develops, the reader discovers that Marta's son was killed by the authorities for being an actor whose performances questioned the *status quo* and invited the population to do the same, a profession that renders one unable to be allowed and buried in sacred ground. So we find Marta going from *confraria* to *confraria*, asking for a place to bury her son, even though she knows her request will always be denied, refusing to let the memory of her son and what he represented be forgotten.

Not much has been written about the relationship between *As Confrarias* and *Antigone*, or the connections between the playtext and the dictatorship context in which it was written, mainly because these relations are not openly shown in the text. Sírley Oliveira's (2005) article is possibly the clearest instance of argumentation on the links between the playtext and the dictatorship, bringing to mind the text's "most precious element": "sua historicidade" (5). According to the author, "o momento da escrita de *As Confrarias* coincide com o da construção de um ideário em torno do 'progresso da nação' e a necessidade de superação do ruralismo, em busca do ideal de urbanização e modernização" (9), thus, Marta's husband violently losing the land where he planted to the ones in search of gold would be a representation of this

moment. Besides, the social and political concerns Marta's son had with his engagement with art, his profession as an actor which allowed him to openly share his criticisms of the society where he lived, is also an indication pointed by Oliveira that *As Confrarias* is dealing with the 1969 context in which it was written, when contestatory art faced censorship and its participants also ran the risk of "disappearing." Catarina Sant'Anna is another scholar who has affirmed Andrade's insertion of the dictatorship context into *As Confrarias*, suggesting also a "pastiche" – a "short circuit" – of contexts:

> A história é o grande eixo de inserção, o grande ponto de cruzamento-base para aproximações iluminadoras, para analogias de todo tipo. Entram em curto-circuito *o Brasil da ditadura militar pós-64* (...) o Brasil colonial da Conjuração Mineira no século XVIII (com Tomáz Antônio de Gonzaga), a França pré-revolucionária do século XVIII (com Beaumarchais), a Roma do século I a. C – (do Luculus de Brecht ou de Catão de Garret), a Grécia de Sófocles (qtd. in Sírley 2003 181 italics added).

Moreno, already cited for her words on *Antígona furiosa*, also talks about *As Confrarias* and states that "en As Cofrarias se crea un paralelo claro entre las sublevaciones de los inconfidentes y el ambiente represivo del Brasil de la época militar de los 60 y 70" (117), again mentioning the important figure of José as an actor in this parallel. Moreover, Moreno is one of the few who has suggested the reference to *Antigone* in the playtext: "El tema de la muerte sin sepultura sugiere el mito de Antígona. Pero en esta obra la decisión de la protagonista es totalmente la opuesta" (118). Furthering this "opposition," she continues:

> Marta espera que el cadáver putrefacto de su hijo sea la razón que obligará al pueblo de Ouro Preto a trabajar junto por una meta que ayude a todas las personas. La motivación de Marta es totalmente opuesta a la de la Antígona de Sófocles. La joven griega decide que ella debe enterrar a su hermano Polinice con todos los rituales necesarios porque nadie va a poder llorar por él, y sin una tumba las aves de rapiña le destrozarán las carnes (118).

This suggestion of “reverse” Antigone has also been made by Rosenfeld (1996), who asserts that:

> invertendo a atitude de Antígone, que se sacrifica a fim de dar sepultura ao irmão, apesar da proibição do rei Creonte, Marta surge como a mãe impiedosa, mercê de um ato de piedade talvez superior, visto manter o corpo do filho José insepulto para que o morto sirva aos vivos (110).

Andréia Garavello Martins (2012) also makes evident the connection to Antigone’s myth, justifying this link with yet another element, the “execratedness” of José’s body by the authorities. For the author, the playtext:

> não só dialoga com Antígona pelo tema em comum, um cadáver insepulto, mas também pelo cadáver de ambas as peças ser execrado pelas forças dominantes. José, filho de Marta, não se encaixa em nenhum dos padrões exigidos pelas igrejas e seus confrades: ele não é branco, não é negro, é pardo, e ainda é ator – as pessoas que se dedicavam a esse ofício não tinham o direito de serem enterradas em solo sagrado (307).

Martins also briefly mentions the discussion on the “excluded” by “race, gender or social class” present in *As Confrarias*, and Marta’s facing the Church – the institution in power and authority figure – as aspects that link both playtexts (307). The characters’ biological similarity is another element evidenced by the author: “é a oposição da mulher diante do poder por causa de sua força ligada à terra fértil, útero gerador de toda a existência, dilacerada pelos interesses do Estado (307). At last, Martins remembers the significance both of the exhumation of the bodies “to comprehend, defend and accuse,” and of the “liberation and redemption of the past” to the protagonists: “Marta torna úteis seus mortos; Antígona se sacrifica para pôr término à maldição de sua família” (308).

Interestingly, even though the connection between *As Confrarias* and Antigone has already been suggested, just as the link between the former and the dictatorship during which it was written, the resignification of *Antigone*’s myth performed by Jorge Andrade has not yet been scrutinized, mainly in what concerns

the specific ways through which this myth is recast to denounce authoritative regimes taking place in Brazil or Latin America.

1.5.6 *Widows*

Very few has been discussed about Dorfman's playtext so far. To be more precise, there are only two articles I could find. Beginning with Michael "Raúl" Brown's (2013), we are invited to look at the widows as experiencing Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) due to the events they have been through, and their journey in the playtext is understood as a Narrative Therapy, a means through which they can finally heal their wounds. In this view, the widows are seen as presenting their own narratives in opposition to the official one given by the authorities, the idea of authorship x authority. In fact, the playtext would be a type of therapy session in which we see the widows starting to build their own stories in order to calm down their "troubled waters" by "breaking the dam of memories." The river, thus, is a representation of their insides full of the past trauma they have not been able to overcome, a past that the women have tried to bear by becoming silent, by building a dam in which memories are drowned. The act of going to the river and bringing out a disfigured body is seen as this process of allowing one's memories to be externalized so that one can make sense of them. According to the author, "Narrative Therapy is discourse shifting, returning narrative agency to the subjugated" (46); In sum, using the author's own words

> Dorfman features a series of women who in their resistance to the official story find peace by Chile's troubled waters via the same process present in Narrative Therapy: they externalize the problems that continue to plague them and search for meaning in their experiences; they unpack their hidden traumas and wrap a story around them; and they re-author their own lives and confront their abuse(r) with the new narrative (54).

The second article, written by Moira Fradinger (2013), is not only one of the few discussing *Widows*, it is also the only one that makes the connection between the playtext and Sophocles' *Antigone*. In order to make this link, Fradinger poses the following question: "What is the ban against burying Polyneices but the *forced*

disappearance, not so much of a corpse (Polyneices lies rotting under everyone's eyes) as of a *name* (a symbol) of the community?" (66). The author's main argument, however, does not have to do with *Widows* being a rumination of *Antigone* in Latin America, instead, she argues that the playtext is "not so much the drama of a 'politics of memory' as the drama of 'the memory of the political.'" That is, for the author, the field of the political does not exist in the widows' context, which would hinder a politics of memory to arise. First, then, the women must remember what it is like to have a political space in which opposition and antagonism can/should take place, a space that authoritative regimes do not allow to exist. Fradinger argues that the names given by the widows to the bodies that appear in the river is the invention of a narrative to oppose that invented by the authorities, thus creating this antagonistic space, that is, creating a political space of opposition that was not allowed to exist up to that point.

1.6 PROCEDURES (THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK)

1.6.1 Active Subjectivity

Maria Lugones' theorization on the *Tactical Strategies of the Streetwalker*, tenth chapter within the book *Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes: Theorizing Coalition Against Multiple Oppressions* (2003), will be helpful in trying to unveil Sofia's (*Widows*' protagonist) strategies of resistance. Central to this research will be Lugones' understanding of active subjectivity, which, in opposition to the modern conception of agency, "make[s] clear the possibility of resistance and its conditions" (211). Agency, in Lugones' conception, is a fiction that "hides the institutional setting and the institutional backing of individual potency" (210), thus being inefficient to account for the resistance against the oppression caused by these same institutions which allow one to have agency. This perspective will be not only significant but also necessary for opening up possibilities when thinking about resistant positions, which can assume different meanings depending on the interpretive angle one looks from.

1.6.2 Epistemic Disobedience

Thoreau's essay on Civil Disobedience offers an interesting parallel with disobedience/resistance taking place in Latin American countries, as both of them share a common colonial past full of dissatisfaction from the governed in relation to

the governors. Despite these correlations, which are important to remember as part of a colonial resistance that has been ever present for as long as there were colonies, this research will speculate about resistance from a decolonial perspective, in which the resister would be enacting a process of "desprenderse," which means "epistemic de-linking or, in other words, epistemic disobedience" (45). As Walter Mignolo (2011) affirms "'delinking' is then necessary because there is no way out of the coloniality of power from within Western (Greek and Latin) categories of thought" (45). It is within this apparent paradox, of de-linking from Greek through Greek, that both playtexts will be analyzed.

Besides these two concepts, there are other two that have influenced the way in which I make meaning of the playtexts analyzed, even though they are not always made explicitly. For this reason, they are going to be mentioned here as well.

1.6.3 Performativity

My analysis has been influenced by the theoretical perspective of performativity, a concept I borrow from Judith Butler, for whom performativity is a "reiterative and citational practice by which discourse produces its effects" (*Bodies That Matter* 2); to say that something is performative, then, implies that it has been repeated, and is available to being repeated in the future, so that it has achieved a recognizable shape, a materiality – "its effects." Indeed, Butler claims that materialization is achieved through the reiteration of regulatory norms, which suggests that performativity, repetition, and materiality are closely related.

1.6.4 Iterability

Repetition, however, is not a very precise term, thus another concept that has hovered this research is iterability. My claim that "repetition" does not suffice is based on Derrida's *Signature Event Context*, in which he states "[...] the intervention of an utterance [énoncé] that in itself can be only repetitive or citational in its structure, or rather, since those two words may lead to confusion: iterable" (17-18). Repetitive, citational, and iterable are, thus, somewhat synonyms, but, at least according to

Derrida, “iterable” does not lead to confusion, being this the more precise term I intend to use whenever this specificity be needed. The closest Derrida comes to giving a straightforward definition of iterability comes within parentheses: “iterability-(iter, again, probably comes from itara, other in Sanskrit, and everything that follows can be read as the working out of the logic that ties repetition to alterity)” (7). The term is more specific than repetition because it makes explicit the fact that, in repeating - be it whatever it is -, the possibility, or rather the inevitability of difference arises. Actually, Derrida argues that iterability is a constitutive characteristic of writing, without which it could not be considered writing, since it also implies that, once a sign has been written, it does not depend on the producer of the sign, or her intention, to pass on a meaning. It gains a life of its own in which, even though the same sign, it might gain different meanings depending on context, insofar as it is intelligible for the reader. Iterability is what makes it possible for me to borrow the concept of “performativity” (which Butler uses to refer to gender) and “recognize other possibilities,” using Derrida’s own words, concerning the performative meanings of *Antigone*’s protagonism in Latin American contexts.

2 AS CONFRARIAS

Most of the scholars who have suggested the link between *As Confrarias* and *Antigone*[18] do not go further than making evident the relation between José’s unburied body and Polynices’. The only difference concerning their bodies seems to be the way through which they are made still important and relevant by the ones who refuse to leave them forgotten: Marta fights to have her son José remembered by the society and recognized by the authorities, keeping him unburied in order to do so, while Antigone takes on the task of burying her brother by performing the funeral rites. Before thinking about this “opposition” (keeping unburied x burying), however, it is important to understand how Polynices’ body has been resignified in Latin American territory and what new meanings it has acquired on the other side of the Atlantic after more than two thousand years.

[18] “*Antigone*” in italics will always be a reference to Sophocles’ *Antigone*, the playtext, unless it is within a quote where it was not originally italicized.

It is paramount to keep in mind that in being recontextualized to the twentieth century the unburied body will receive plenty of new meanings, thus the "simple" link between Polynices' body and, as in my case, José's body, must be understood as a reference to a huge amount of bodies that, for varied reasons, have been kept – in acts of violence – outside the realm of intelligibility. When summed up in the context of the Nazi regime, for instance, Antigone's efforts to make a body that is not recognized by the authorities remembered and accounted for will almost certainly remind the reader/audience of the holocaust and the less-than-human status Jews' bodies were granted. When Espriu rewrites his Antigone in the 1960s, as shown in the review of the literature, Polynices' body will represent all those Spanish people who have suffered due to Franco's dictatorial regime. At last, the resignification of the myth in the second half of the twentieth century in Latin America has been, as Moreno (1997) argues, one of the means chosen by authors to question the realities their countries were experiencing (115), which in many cases mean dictatorships.

In numerous Latin American contexts, classical Greek figures, among them Antigone, have been invested with local concerns to represent the struggles staged against authoritative regimes, such as the many dictatorships that took place in the continent. In these contexts, Antigone's act of civil disobedience arises as an awfully great analogy, not only due to her defiance, but also the unburied body she refuses to forget. Just as Antigone cannot forget her brother, going against the decree invented by Creon, the "Antigones" from Latin America will not forget the thousands of disappeared (killed, tortured) family members and friends, going against what is expected from a "good citizen," also committing acts of civil disobedience. Regarding the "disappeared," Nelli (2009) writes an illuminating definition, drawing from the then *de facto* Argentine president Lieutenant General Jorge Rafael Videla's words:

> A *desaparecido* 'is not there', neither dead nor alive. As Videla defines the term, it looks like in a way the person has magically vanished, disappeared leaving no trace behind. However, the person did not disappear by his/herself (sic), he/she was *made* to disappear, and most important of all, he/she was made to disappear by agents of the government itself. By cleverly denying *desaparecidos* a legal entity, even a reality, the government washed their hands of the

> problem, declining the possibility of giving a particular treatment to the case of abducted people (70-71)

The seemingly simple relation between Polynices' and José's unburied bodies is, in fact, a strategic analogy that allows authors to denounce the power abuse committed during dictatorships, sometimes while it is still taking place, as in the case of *As Confrarias*. Moreover, as Nelli and Brunn (2012) have suggested, it seems that in post-dictatorships Latin America *Antigone*'s myth will always at once attain a supposedly distancing and/or defamiliarizing effect that will, nevertheless, instantly remind its reader/audience of the cruel regimes and resistances performed against them. Keeping in mind the importance of the unburied body and its reference to the "disappeared" in Latin America, it will be meaningful to begin the analysis of *As Confrarias* by understanding the reasons why José became an unburied body and why Marta's choice to keep him exposed becomes particularly powerful.

Martins (2012) reminds us of the excluded status both José's and Polynices' bodies are granted by the dominant forces. She states that "José, filho de Marta, não se encaixa em nenhum dos padrões exigidos pelas igrejas e seus confrades: ele não é branco, não é negro, é pardo, e ainda é ator – as pessoas que se dedicavam a esse ofício não tinham o direito de serem enterradas em solo sagrado" (307). As the author points out, José's color and profession make impossible his full recognition as a citizen in his society; for Martins asserts that an actor does not have the right to be buried in sacred land, it is necessary first to clarify the social role played by the Church (the "confrarias") in the playtext to better understand José's position as a "pardo/mulato"[19] actor and Marta's struggle to have him recognized by the Church.

Rosenfeld (1996) writes a fairly accurate description of the Confrarias, making evident their segregating and even excluding functions:

> Cada uma das quatro Confrarias representa uma classe, uma situação social e, concomitantemente, determinados interesses econômicos, preconceitos, ressentimentos, ódios e ambições. A Ordem Terceira de Nossa Senhora do Monte Carmelo é dos brancos mais ricos, congregando os elementos do alto mundo econômico; a

[19] The difference between "pardo" and "mulato" is not clear in the text. People in the third confraria prefer to be called "pardos" rather than "mulatos," so that it seems like "mulato" sounds pejorative, however "mulato" is used throughout the text to refer to mixed descendance.

> Confraria do Rosário, dos negros, reúne a mão-de-obra humilde, escravos e ex-escravos, aliás desinteressados em resgatar os negros de outras "nações" africanas e despidos de solidariedade social e racial; a Irmandade de São José, dos mulatos, abriga os artistas e artesãos, ao passo que a Ordem Terceira das Mercês, irmandade da classe média, é liberal pelo menos na intenção, admitindo elementos de todas as origens[20]. (111)

First thing that jumps to the eye, taking into consideration Martins' assertion, is that "Irmandade de São José, dos mulatos, abriga os artistas." Why, thus, is an actor not allowed in there? In the first Confraria Marta delays the most she can before telling that her son was an actor, because she knows he will not be accepted in there once this is known. As it can be noticed in the following dialogue, being an "actor" is parallel to being "impious," "a face of the demon," "bastard," "infidel," and "suicidal:"

> PROVEDOR: (Pausa tensa) Seu filho foi ator?!
>
> MARTA: De muitas personagens... no palco e fora dele!
>
> PRIOR: (Ri) Afinal... apenas um *ímpio*, uma *face do demônio*!
>
> SÍNDICO: (Rindo) Mais uma boca de mundo que estropia verso.
>
> TESOUREIRO: É para o que servem estes *bastardos*.
>
> PRIOR: Só mesmo quem nada conhece de premissas canônicas, pede solo sagrado para ator!
>
> MINISTRO: Não sabe que *infiéis*, *suicidas* e atores não podem ser enterrados em igrejas?
>
> MARTA: (Impassível) *Sei*.
>
> MINISTRO: Que um homem que interpreta todo e qualquer papel, inclusive o do demônio, tem afinidade estreita com esses personagens?

[20] This is the order the Confrarias appear in the text and they may be referred to as "first," "second," "third," and "last" Confraria in this chapter.

> MARTA: Também sei.
>
> PROVEDOR: *Quem se presta a representar certos papéis, auxilia a corromper costumes e até mesmo a pôr em risco certas firmezas da fé e de nossas instituições*. (539-551, italics added)

The prejudice and loath towards the profession, thus, is related to the interpretation of roles. According to the church "representing certain roles, helps corrupt habits and even put at risk certain firmness of faith and of our institutions." This passage makes clear that actors are not welcome in this society primarily for the threat they can represent to the *status quo*, in which the Confrarias hold a privileged position of control and power; in the second Confraria, the profession is again deemed demoniac: "Pensa mesmo que vamos enterrar o demônio na casa de Deus?" (819-837); and in the third one, where artists belong, Marta tries to compare the real-like paintings to the real-like performance of an actor, showing they are all artists, without success:

> MARTA: E por que não podem estar os atores?
>
> PÁROCO: Você já sabe.
>
> MARTA: (Com temor astucioso) Aquela figura não é a do demônio? Chego a ter medo... de tão perfeita!
>
> MINISTRO: Nossos pintores são os melhores da Província! (48)

In sum, just as Antigone's battle to give proper burial to her brother is against the law, Marta's effort to make her son recognized by the authorities can be considered a gesture that goes against the law as well. Because the authorities in Marta's context are mingled with the Christian institution, seeking the church to bury a person who supposedly had a demoniac profession is absolutely outside the legal – and sacred – realms. But where else would José be buried if in that period there were no public cemeteries and all of those that existed were located inside the Confrarias' domains (qtd, in Oliveira 2003 179)? Nelli's assertion that the "disappeared" were denied a "legal entity" well suits José's situation here, for whom,

after death, a legal status – a proper place to be buried – will be denied, through a purposeful erasure from public memory of any possible threat to the current institution in power. But what kind of threat did José represent?

In the playtext, José is introduced and represented always through Marta's recollections. In the beginning, the woman is concerned about her son who is not interested in helping his father (Sebastião) work the land. Sebastião, however, is empathetic and understands the fact José wants somethings else for his life. In these initial conversations, José reveals that he "gostaria de descobrir um meio de abrir as portas [das casas nas cidades], ver como [as pessoas] vivem, o que pensam, o que têm e o que gostariam de ter" (31), because "o mundo não é sòmente nós" (31). At the same time, he already suggests what kind of work he expects to have and shows that his curiosity and questioning quality on other people's lives is also directed towards himself: "Ser com perfeição o que a gente não é… e é, ao mesmo tempo. Para mim, a senhora é mãe, mas para meu pai, não é. Para a senhora e êle, sou filho… mas para mim mesmo, quem sou?" (31). José's next appearance in the playtext will happen only after the reader finds out about Sebastião's death, which was caused by the State and Church's will to take his land, where gold was discovered. Not willing to lose the land in which he lived and that gave him the means to survive, Sebastião rebels against those who wanted his property, ripping off their hands. When caught, before dying, he tells Marta "procure José. Há outras mãos que precisam ser cortadas. Não se esqueça disso" (42). This request, added to the motive of Sebastião's death, will influence Marta, and consequently José, regarding the social orientation of their actions. About this social concern regarding José's performances, Oliveira (2003) affirms that:

> Na peça, a arte de representar tem uma *função social*: em primeira instância está desvinculada daqueles que ocupam o poder na sociedade, sendo exercida por segmentos que representam as "camadas populares" da colônia mineira. Ao lado disso, é utilizada como um importante canal de expressão para falar ao público sobre seus problemas, sobre a realidade política, social e cultural de Vila Rica, que, em 1789, vivia sob as amarras da organização colonial. (192)

The first of José's performances brings about "Catão" and "Marco-Bruto." "Catão" begins his lines saying that "Não há sangue que o farte, não há crime/ Que o detenha: seu carro de triunfo" (44), which, according to Oliveira, is a reference not only to the authorities of the character's immediate context, but also to Jorge Andrade's, in 1969 (198). "Catão" also questions "Bruto:" "Inda ousais defender a liberdade?;" "Inda ousais preferir a morte honrada/ Ao jugo, à escravidão?" (44). "Bruto's" reply incites resistance and an implied "yes" to the questions posed: "Poucos somos; mas livres, mas ousados./ No furor da peleja, quantas vêzes/ Um só braço bastou a decidi-la?" (44). Besides, he makes clear his willingness to use force: "Não aguardemos que o inimigo ousado/ Venha em nossas muralhas atacar-nos;/ Vamos nós mesmo, nós, o ferro em punho" (44). In spite of the allusions to the power abuse committed by the State and the Church, and the call for resistance, it is not clear if the message has reached those to whom it was aimed, and José himself questions that, after Marta tells him she watched his work:

> José: Tenho impressão que ninguém compreendeu nada.
>
> Marta: Aquela gente não podia, mesmo. Estão com César! Afinal, quem vai ao teatro? (51)

While José seems to questions his audience's comprehension skills, Marta questions what type of audience that is, and if he is aiming his criticism towards the right people. Right after in this dialogue, Marta tells her son about the things she saw and heard while she looked for him, and confesses: "compreendi que vivera trancada no sítio, mais do que no convento" (51). This "confession" can be understood as an apology to José, for before she did not understand why he wanted to leave for the city, or why he felt "locked" in their property. At the same time she admits she was wrong, however, she criticizes José for "not leaving the stage, or yourself:" "Sua indignação termina com os papéis que representa. Que importa saber de quem descende, se não enxerga nem os que vivem à sua volta?" (51). Marta's harsh words are a necessary criticism to her son, who seems to have forgotten why his profession is important and the cause of his father's death. Defensively, he replies "a senhora tem me censurado como se eu fôsse o culpado!" (52), as she advises "ainda não é. Mas poderá ser. Um homem não morre inùtilmente. São os outros que tornam a morte inútil, não a usando para nada" (52). Here, Marta recovers a central

motif in resignifications of *Antigone*, that of *silence*, and suggests that those who know about the injustices but prefer to remain silent are just as guilty as those who commit such injustices.

The second reference to José's performance is a piece of a monologue, "O casamento de Fígaro" by Beaumarchais. According to Oliveira "n*o Monólogo de Beaumarchais,* José representa uma personagem que sofre as desilusões, as angústias de não ser livre para criar sua arte e para utilizá-la em favor da *conscientização* do público, *agente* responsável pela transformação política" (200):

> Dizem-me que se estabeleceu em Madri um sistema de liberdade a respeito da venda das produções, o qual chega a estender-se até as da imprensa; e que, uma vez que eu não fale em meus escritos nem da autoridade, nem do culto, nem da política, nem da moral, nem das pessoas em evidência, nem das corporações influentes, nem da Ópera, nem dos outros espetáculos, nem de pessoas que tenham por onde se lhes pegue, posso imprimir livremente tudo, sob a inspeção de dois ou três censores (54)

Of course, Oliveira also suggests that the choice of this excerpt from Beaumarchais aims at denouncing the censorship occurring during the 1960s in the military regime, which is difficult to deny, for the text is very explicit about it, despite the different place and time. Concomitantly, the monologue fits perfectly in the plot of *As Confrarias*, where the questioning of authority, church, politics, and moral is not only not well-received but also silenced and punished – for Marta's case is an exception and José's death the rule.

The third and last metatextual reference made by José is from *Cartas Chilenas*, which were thirteen letters written by Tomás Antônio Gonzaga in the second half of the eighteenth century, reporting "os desmandos, os atos corruptos, o nepotismo, o abuso do poder, a falta de conhecimento dos cidadãos e tantos outros erros administrativos, jurídicos e morais do governador [Dom Luís da Cunha Pacheco Menezes]"[21] (portal educação). Towards the end of the excerpt, again, the actor makes explicit his disbelief in the authority's ability to make a good government

[21] https://www.portaleducacao.com.br/conteudo/artigos/educacao/analise-literaria-da-obra-cartas-chilena/13751

for himself and his likes: “E que queres, amigo, que suceda?/ Esperavas, acaso, um bom govêrno/ Do nosso Fanfarrão?” 61).

As Oliveira argues, it is undeniable that these metatextual references brought about by José have a “social function” and, in addition to the political content of his performances, towards the end of the playtext it becomes evident that José and Marta had been rebelling outside the stage as well. Throughout the playtext, there are hints that meetings have been taking place where “versos de um tal Virgílio” were discussed: “A liberdade, pôsto que tardia!” (38). This verse is a reference to the “Inconfidência Mineira” and confirms Marta and José’s involvement in social movements that rebelled against the colonial institutions in power, another reason why their presence represented a threat to the *status quo*. Interestingly, while the Inconfidência is generally remembered as a movement propelled by the rich people, discontent with the colonial power abuse, *As Confrarias* represents the event from the perspective of the lower classes or, as Oliveira states, “resgatando a ‘história dos vencidos’” (182).

Finally, in his last speech, as José speaks, some people from his audience begin to leave, so that the actor slowly starts to lose control, mixing up the lines and the reality and becoming even more incomprehensible. Noticing this, Marta alerts him “esta linguagem êles não entendem, filho!,” “fale da derrama, não em direitos, José!,” “fale em Barbacena, não em César!” (66). In spite of his mother’s attempt, José is not able to go back to his character, and the following direction informs:

> (*José sai correndo pela platéia, seguro por Quitéria. Marta corre, parando em primeiro plano, hirta, transpassada de dor, enquanto ouvimos o tiro e o grito de Quitéria. Marta passa os olhos pelo público, com expressão impenetrável, ouvindo a fala do Definitório, como se esta viesse da platéia. No centro do palco, os definidores estão reunidos em bloco.)* (66)

Thus José is killed, and notwithstanding the fact his performance was not the best it could be, only his effort and willingness to promote social change, his existence and resistance, is enough for the authorities to take away his life. In spite of her son’s impossibility of accomplishing his work, or rather, due to the authorities making him unable to do so, Marta takes on his task.

Looking more closely into the character of Marta, how does she face the authorities in her context? And how do the authorities treat her back when faced? What type of disobedience does Marta commit besides that of trying to bury her son in a place that, supposedly, he does not belong to, and how this disobedience is received by the authorities (which, in this case, we must remember, is the Church - or the Confrarias)?

First thing one notices in Marta's dialogues is that she knows very well the context in which she lives in and uses this knowledge in her favor throughout the playtext. Besides, there is something in her that causes strangeness towards the churchmen, as the direction will inform from the very first time she appears on stage: Qualquer coisa na expressão de Marta faz com que os irmãos recuem com certo receio (28). This "strangeness" she also knows exists and uses in her favor throughout. One thing that should be noted from the beginning as well is that the directions often tell how Marta is intelligent about her moves, for example, when she has to answer what her son worked with, because she knows that after she answers they are never going to bury him there (the quote related to their reply has already been shown in this chapter), we read the following:

> Marta: (COMEÇANDO O JOGO) Primeiro trabalhou numa nau dos quintos. (*Sondando*) Nos carregamentos de ouro que nos tiram e nos empobrecem.
>
> Provedor: Mais um pouco e teremos que suar ouro!
>
> Marta: (SORRI, ACENTUANDO O JOGO) O povo está suando há muito tempo. José correu mundo… e acabou descobrindo o que havia dentro das casas: gente suando dízimos… em triste estado: procurando com esperança de encontrar, encontrando com a certeza de não usar. Foi assim que se preparou para o trabalho. (34)

In a way, thus, she deals with the conversations she has with the churchmen as if they were "games," and she knows how to play these games. When she says that she does not belong to any of the Confrarias, all the men become almost horrified with the idea: "how?!," but she continues:

> Marta: Não. (*Expressão impenetrável*) Mas creio em Cristo.
>
> Provedor: Como pode crer, se não pertence ao corpo da Santa Madre Igreja?
>
> Secretário: (*Desconfiado*) Por que justamente no cemitério de nossa confraria?
>
> Marta: (*Enigmática*) Por causa de Santa Quitéria. Não é a padroeira desta igreja? Diz a lenda que, martirizada, carregou a própria cabeça decepada. Meu filho era a minha cabeça… e não o estou carregando?
>
> Ministro: Acho humanamente impossível, inacreditável, que alguém não pertença às irmandades devocionais! (29)

Marta has a very good answer to the question, an answer that tests how much the churchmen care about the history attached to the existence of their church, however, as the dialogue shows, they don't even listen to her, for they are too worried about the fact that she does not belong to any of the Confrarias. In fact, their worry is closely related to the fact that it means she does not pay *dízimos*, as the conversations they were having before Marta arrives show, one of their biggest worries is about money and gold, not how much someone actually believes in their god or not. From the beginning, then, we see in *As Confrarias* a sharp criticism to the importance given to capital, by the Church, compared to their empathy towards people and their suffering. It must not be overlooked, of course, that a mother has just appeared in their church telling that her son has died and she looks for a place to bury him, and all they care about is that she does not belong to any of the Confrarias. This is the "game" Marta is playing, that of making very explicit the incongruities performed by the authorities of the time. At last, before leaving the first Confraria, Marta compares the members of that place to "tyrants," a word we can relate both to Creon and to the people involved with the brazilian coup in the 1960s:

> Marta: (*Diante da imagem*) Meu filho vai ter paz. O seu também. Vamos! Nesta noite escura, nossos passos vão soar como gemidos de agonia e de parto. (*Volta-se, odienta*) Uma confraria cativa em gargalheiras de sangue, de crença, de interêsses, de leis, torna-se covil de tiranos. Não seria aqui que deixaria o corpo do meu filho. Os

> que estão aqui, para que servem? Para o respeito só de vocês. Nada mais! (35-36)

In the second Confraria, it becomes more evident that Marta is not merely looking for a place to bury her son, that her objective is something else. In this church, which belongs to the black men, the discussion witnessed before Marta arrives is related to the color of the skin and how that affects their position in the society. When the woman resumes her game, after they ask her why she has gone to another Confraria before and why they have not accepted her son's body, she is fast in making the racial issue explicit: Desconfiaram que meu filho era negro (39). Right after, Marta also tells that she would be proud to let her son there, which surprised the men, for why would anyone be proud to let her son be buried among black people?

> Ministro: Do orgulho?
>
> Marta: (*ACENTUA O JOGO*) Vocês ergueram palácios, igrejas, casas, teatros! Calçaram ruas, rasgaram montanhas, construíram o poder da Província. Sem as mãos de vocês, Deus não poderia ser glorificado. (*Jogando com a fatuidade dêles*) E ninguém glorifica como vocês. Que companhia melhor poderia ter meu filho? Vocês são a verdadeira nobreza, não os irmãos do Carmo com seus títulos. É aqui que deve estar a religião.
>
> [...]
>
> Ministro: (*Fátuo*) Receberemos o corpo de seu filho. O irmão síndico pergunta e o irmão juiz anota. (39)

Again, Marta demonstrates how well she knows her society and the people who live in it. It is very easy to convince those black men to bury her son, but she seems to be only testing their limits, just the way she did in the previous Confraria. For her son was an actor, she knows they are not going to bury him there once that is known, thus her dialogues from this point on have a double duty of telling the reader her past, what has happened both to her son and husband, and showing the churchmen who she is. In the following lines the men describe her as if she was not seeing them while she is telling her story "Ela parece que não enxerga a gente!" (42),

"Parece que os olhos não enxergam" (43), so that she is called crazy by them "Esta mulher está louca!" (43), until finally she tells that her son was an actor, completely ruining any possibility of convincing those men:

> Juiz: Apenas um ator!
>
> Ministro: Então, foi por isso que o Carmo não quis enterrar?
>
> Provedor: Pensou que enterraríamos porque somos negros?
>
> Marta: Não pensei que enterrassem.
>
> Irmãos: (*Entreolham-se, confusos*)
>
> Marta: Tinha certeza disto.
>
> Ministro: (*De repente, compreendendo*) Você não queria mesmo! Agora eu vejo! Quem é você? Que quer de nós?
>
> Marta: A única diferença entre vocês e o Carmo é a côr da pele. Escondem-se atrás dela, e só sabem se lamentar. O que geram seus pais é produto de venda, compra ou troca. Mas não fazem nada para acabar com isso. (*Aponta*) Escravizam também por êste ouro! São tão odientos quanto os brancos! (44-45)

Thus, one more time, we see Marta criticizing the importance given to capital rather than the well-being of the people who are suffering because of how this capital is managed within the society, independent of the skin color of the ones involved. Of course, Marta is not simply putting all white and black men as equally wrong, but these black men, in the church, that is, holding a position of power in that society, act just like the white men do in those same positions.

Marta's third stop is at Irmandade de São José. Here the dialogues that happen before Marta arrives show that the church's Father main interest is to turn that confraria into the most important of the region, besides his "thirst for treasures" (46), as the playtext itself states. This issue is addressed as soon as the mother arrives, for she leaves a sack of powdered gold on the table saying that is related to the "dízimos" due to the period her son would have had to pay.

As already mentioned, the third confraria belongs to the artists, which does not include the actors. Marta has tried to convince them by comparing the actor's performance with the real-like sculptures and paintings they produce, to no success. While she tries to convince the churchmen, the story also tells some of the discussions she had with her son, who was worried about the status of actors and of his own race in their society "para todos, ator não passa de mulato" (49), as this quote demonstrates. José looks white, but he is not sure if that is just appearance, and as people interpelate him about his color he begins to worry about this issue, wanting to know who are his mother's parents, which she does not know. Marta and José's conversations sometimes become warmer, such as this one, after José states he is "revolted:" "For the others, or just for yourself?" (49) replies Marta. These discussions happen throughout the playtext and strengthen the characters' developments towards their defiance of the status quo. In terms of form, these conversations may remind one of the conversations taken between Antigone and Ismene, that is, within the family, but in content they differ greatly, for Antigone denies Ismene a place in her plans because her sister does not dive in at once, and Marta, on the other hand, always develops and helps her son develop towards a common end, where both would have had a place.

In this confraria, the suspicion that Marta and her son were part of a bigger plan against the state becomes more evident and one of the churchmen tries eagerly to get to know names of other people involved. The narrative at this point makes a double reference, both to the *Inconfidência Mineira* and to the Dictatorship that continued to get harsher at the period the playtext was written, both moments in which groups gather to try and combat the institution in power and when groups such as these were constantly being pursued. As the churchman trials to find out names become more and more obvious, Marta lets him know she knows what he is trying to do, and leaves their confraria blaming them of being responsible for her son's death as well.

In the fourth and last confraria, the main question is "how has your son died?" and they continue to ask for names. Finally, she tells that her son died "yesterday" (65), during a meeting in which he got lost in his role and mixed up characters and his reality, even while Marta tried to make him remember concrete events that would help people understand his message "fale da derrama, não em direitos, José!." The

directions of the playtext inform that “José sai correndo pela platéia, seguro por Quitéria. Marta corre, parando em primeiro plano, transpassada de dor, enquanto ouvimos o tiro e o grito de Quitéria” (66). Thus José dies and a long line starts to be spoken by one of the churchmen, replying to Marta’s request to bury her son, that is interrupted by Marta herself screaming “por quem meu filho morreu? Por vocês? Malditos hipócritas!” (67). She continues to blame them for her son’s death until she finally states:

> Ninguém amou o filho mais que eu. Não posso fazer mais nada por êle. O corpo ficará no adro, esperando a resposta do Provincial… ou até que o enterrem. Só sei lutar pelos vivos. Os mortos pertencem a vocês!” (67-68)

There is a brief direction telling that the scene changes, the church leaves and a little mount of earth is seen, where José lies buried.

> Marta: (*Carinhosa*) Viu como consegui? Plantei você dentro dêles! Juntaram todas as confrarias para trazer você. Pelo mêdo, eu sei. [...] Sabe por que o deixei naquele adro? Por que usei seu corpo? De repente, compreendi que quanto mais plena de sentido, quanto mais ligada a uma existência humana fôr a vida, tão menos terrível é a morte. E por que… se eu o enterrasse com as minhas mãos, esqueceriam que você viveu... e por que morreu. (68)

Different from many other Antigones, Marta has a happy ending. After a long line, part of which is quoted above, a man arrives and asks if that is the place where the man “who could not be buried” (68) was buried, because he wants to pray before he leaves for his trip. Marta, however, does not let him pray, she sits over her son affirming that “no prayer serves” (69) and says “sente-se também e converse. Conte-me sua estória. É uma boa oração” (69). The man finds the woman “funny” and they begin a conversation, he comes from the place where she lived with her husband, he reminds her of her husband in many ways, which may be why she decides to leave with him, followed by some people who decided to follow that strange woman as she passed by the confrarias, announcing:

> Marta: Venha! Há pessoas que me esperam… em tôda parte. (*Passa o braço no ombro de Martiniano*) No trecho de estrada em que caminharmos juntos, contarei a você – e a quem quiser ouvir – a verdadeira estória de meu filho. Eu também gosto de plantar…! (70)

So the playtext ends, with Marta leaving to share and spread her son's story and their critical view of the society in which they live. Unlike Antigone, Marta has her life spared by the authorities, and is allowed to continue, signaling that hope is still alive and present for those oppressed by authoritative regimes. In her path, lay the bodies of both her son and husband, representing the lives of those who question the status quo or simply are in the way of the State's interests.

3 WIDOWS

This play is set in the fictional peasant city of Camacho where, in the first of the twenty-seven scenes, a new Captain is introduced to the population. Soon it is revealed that the men of the city have been "arrested" and/or "disappeared," so that the population is composed almost entirely by women. The history of Camacho is a dispute between the narratives of the peasant women – with Sofia Fuentes as a main character – and the narratives of the authorities – the Captain, Lieutenant, Kastoria Family – who talk about the struggles of the past eight years with different highlights. The new Captain, aiming for the future, does not show any interest in the past, indeed asking the women to forget it, in order to make the wounds heal, and to embrace the democracy and technology he is offering. The lieutenant, who was present in the past struggles, argues that "it's taken us eight years to restore order" (15), and is not hesitant to use violence to maintain this supposed "order." From the women, the most striking *testemunho* is that of Teresa Salas, wife (or widow) of the former mayor ("elected when we last had an election" (50), who was arrested eight years ago, "trying to reclaim the land" (50).

Sofia Fuentes, tired and old, waits for her men (father, husband, and two sons) by the river. For months she has been sitting there, "like a river rock," calling attention from the women and from authorities, being addressed by many as "crazy" for doing this. When, in scene six, the first body appears in the river, Sofia's first

reaction is “I knew it,” while the others can only remark how disfigured “it” is: “it hasn’t got a face.” Eager to bury her “father,” Sofia goes after the new Captain for permission, as the women would not let her bury the body without it. In the meanwhile, the Lieutenant arrives, fakes a “legal identification process” and takes the body away (later the reader finds he burns it). The story vanishes with the body.

Another body appears in the river, only this time Sofia will not let authorities take “it” (her husband) and is willing to give her life to guarantee this. When the Captain and Lieutenant are alone, after leaving Sofia with the body, they demonstrate how threatened they feel by the situation, suggesting that Sofia’s demand is powerful and meaningful. At last, the Captain resorts to violence, arresting Sofia’s grandson Alexis (because “suspected subversives will be interrogated according to official procedures”) and offering him in exchange for the body, which will be buried with the identity of “Theo Sanjines,” another disappeared man, whose widow is not willing to cause as much “trouble” as Sofia.

Finally, after this scene, every woman decides to claim the identity of the buried body as theirs. Fearful and not knowing what to do, the Captain decides to give a speech, in the end of which he gives one of the disappeared man (Alonso, Sofia’s son) back, saying: “you see, whoever is dumping dead bodies in the river can only give you dead bodies. I can give you living men” (57). His bribe is not efficient, though. Sofia goes back to the river, slowly followed by the other women, each with a chair they use to start a fire to warm themselves. In the end, when the Captain arrests Sofia and Alexis, threatening to hurt and kill the boy in front of his grandmother in case she does not cooperate, the Captain asks her to make the women leave the river. Firm in her position, Sofia does not change her mind, which results in her and Alexis’ death. By the river, where the play ends, another body appears in the stream and, as the women enter the water to carry it out, “the soldiers draw their rifle bolts, assume positions,” while the captain commands: “I want the riverbank cleared.”

After Sofia discovers the first body – her father’s – was burnt, in scene nine, she goes back home and has a discussion with the women of her family. This scene is very tense because some of the women involved are extremely angry for different reasons. While Sofia cannot forgive them for letting the Lieutenant take *her father* away, Alexandra is furious against Sofia for taking Alexis (her son) to the encounter

with the new Captain, for Alexandra still believes that keeping her son away from authorities' sight will protect him. I argue that Sofia's claiming of the body as her father's is a strategy of resistance; however, her resistance is complicated by the fact that not all women understand or are willing to repeat her actions. For more than half of the playtext (the women only begin claiming the body as theirs in the third/last act), Sofia not only has to do what she believes is the right thing with little support, she also needs to defend herself from accusations from other women, while trying to convince them that she is doing something important and necessary. When thinking about Sofia's resistance, then, one must remember that from one side, the Lieutenant's, she listens to "fuck off you old bitch," and from another her daughter yells at her "YOU CRAZY OLD WITCH […], YOU GIVE THEM OUR NAMES, YOU CALL ATTENTION, YOU'LL KILL THEM ALL" (31). It is in the middle of this turmoil that Sofia makes the most incisive criticism about capitalist relations in the play:

> I thought you were Emiliano's daughter but you understand nothing, none of you, I come back and you're going to market, my father's body, he built this house, black smoke and ash and you're going to market, you'll sell the living, you'll sell the dead, nothing is horrible enough to stop your selling, and your pounding, any of you, any of you in this whole valley, you bitches, you whores, you sell the lives and the memories of your men […], the sun and the moon and the wind should stop till you bury the dead […] (30)

Making her best impression of Antigone when discussing with Ismene, Sofia does not spare criticisms to the apathetic behavior of all the women towards their disappeared men, continuing their lives as if the present had nothing to do with the past, as if they were not living under a state of exception. Important to note, Sofia decides to mark the verb "sell," highlighting that the women have preferred to spend their time pounding grain, to sell in the market, rather than trying to make justice to the lives and memories of the men, in that specific moment, by defending Sofia's *father's* body from the Lieutenant. In a way, Sofia's remark resounds that of Thoreau, who asserts:

> Practically speaking, the opponents to a reform in Massachusetts are not a hundred thousand politicians at the South, but a hundred thousand merchants and farmers here, who are more interested in commerce and agriculture than they are in humanity, and are not

> prepared to do justice to the slave and to Mexico, *cost what it may*. [italics are mine] (114-115)

Even if their contexts are different, and the women are not "merchants" or "farmers" but peasants selling their pounded grain, the selling continues with slavery and war for Thoreau, and the selling continues without a body or the recognition of a missing body for Sofia. As this is not a central theme of the playtext, the reader will not find harsh comments related to capitalism throughout the text, but the fact that it appears in such a central scene, in the middle of possibly the biggest line Sofia has, which reminds one of a monologue, is meaningful. Sofia's denunciation on the "selling" of "lives" and "memories" is significant because it traces a parallel between fiction and the real life "selling" that has happened during the dictatorships and continues to take place in Latin American countries.

It is paramount that we pay attention to the relationship the women have among themselves, because it is from their sense of community, in the end, that strength will come from. As mentioned previously, Sofia has to endure rude comments not only from authorities but from her own daughter as well, which turns her resistance into an even more complex process. But why is Alexandra so mad at her mother? Mainly, it is because she believes that Sofia is putting her grandchildren in unnecessary danger when she takes them to see the authorities, or better, for the authorities to see them. Indeed, from the first scene Alexandra's preoccupation about hiding Alexis from the new Captain is present: "I don't want him to see what you look like. I'm a smart woman" (4), but as the text itself will suggest, it is not possible to simply hide oneself forever, even if you try to run away, as Alexis does when the Captain arrives in the river where he and Sofia are. In scene four, when the women have just arrived from the new Captain's speech, while most of them are discussing what he said, Alexandra is only worried about the whereabouts of her son, who has not come back yet. Alexandra is one of the characters that best portrays the state of exception in which the women are currently living. Her preoccupation with the new Captain knowing what her son looks like and her accusing Sofia for telling them (the authorities) their names would already be proof enough that Alexandra knows who is responsible for the disappearance of the men, but she even affirms such: "don't you understand old woman they've got our men…" (31). It is astounding how much Alexandra fears the "government" and molds her life in surrender to such an

atmosphere of oppression. It would be unfair, however, to simply accuse her of not doing anything, as she has already been through[22] a process of resistance that has led four men from her family to disappear, not counting the others who were friends and people she knew from her daily life. It is from the strength of this memory and the love she feels for her son (and her family) that her reaction is born. Understandably, she tries to guarantee her safety by not being in the way of those she knows are not afraid to kill her and her like, living the paradox of being punished by the same institution that was supposed to offer her protection. This also points to one of the reasons why she is not interested in discussing the Captain's speech with the other women, as the authorities could, just as they have already done, simply kill them without being accounted for that, independent of the words used, the promises made, or the women's abiding by his rules. This fear Alexandra represents, which confirms the state of exception in which they are living, has been/is shared by numerous people in real life (consider how the indigenous people's existence continue to be threatened by governments up to the present), not only in contexts of dictatorships, and is a prevailing obstacle to be overcome when a coalitional resistance is being set up.

"Don't you understand old woman they've got our men…." Undoubtedly, Sofia understands. For eight years she also has kept herself silent, but right now she has decided to do something. Sofia again recovers one of the ideas presented by Thoreau, but she is careful while putting it into practice: "Unjust laws exist: shall we be content to obey them, or shall we endeavor to amend them, and obey them until we have succeeded, or shall we transgress them at once?" (119). Despite the fact she does not want to obey the laws of the unjust "governors," Sofia knows, just like her daughter, that disobedience/resistance may be punished with death. Her resistance is, thus, carefully measured. Best proof of this is, clearly, her waiting. Even though Sofia knows, just like everybody else, that there are bodies missing, she cannot do anything because the ones supposed to help her are the ones responsible for those absences. Once an actual body appears, however, even after eight years, Sofia is the most eager to take advantage of the undeniable materiality of that body to make her claim: my father. At the same time, despite her efforts, Sofia has just

[22] It is not clear if the women participated actively in the process of resistance that has happened, but it is possible to assume that at least they participated by being there.

found out that her opportunity has been burnt out and, most significant, that none of the women is ready to see that opportunity as such, since they let the Lieutenant take the body:

> SOFIA [to Fidelia, her granddaughter]. I entrusted you with the body of my father. And you let those godless men take my father's body and they burned it, like trash, and you let them do that.
> ALEXANDRA. Don't talk to my daughter like…
> SOFIA. She should have died before she let them take his body away! Forgive! I don't forgive any of you for that. […] (30)

This is when Sofia begins the page-long monologue in which she criticizes the "selling." A mixture of anger and unburdening, Sofia is furious at the women who have not grabbed the chance she had been waiting for for more than a month by the river and for eight years of her life. That was the chance to "transgress at once," though at a propitious time. At once, she exposes the pain of having re-lost her father, while she tries to reignite in the women an energy to restart their resistance. Sofia does not try to convince the women *in opinion*, however, as she knows that *in opinion* nobody wants the situation to be the way it is, and it does not seem possible for Sofia to change her daughter's mind, for instance, with argumentation. As Alexandra's reaction to the Captain's speech suggests, she can only think about the safety of her son, and everything that threatens such supposed safety is undesirable – which includes Sofia's resistance. In order to make Alexandra, and the others, understand how important that moment is, Sofia chooses to appeal to a commonplace among all of them: the painful memory of their men. Thus, towards the end of her monologue, the Old Woman begins to pour out the names of the disappeared men aloud, repeating them over and over. The text seems to confirm that Sofia's tactic did work, as the following events suggest:

> THE WOMEN (*as* SOFIA *lists the names*) – Not the names, stop, not the names they'll hear you, they'll hear, no names, no more, no more, not one more name, they can hear, they can hear don't say the names, don't say it don't say it, don't say… (30)

Right after, Alexandra calls Alexis, Fidelia, and Yanina to take the grain to the market, in what looks like a tentative escape. As Fidelia is picking one of the sacks, however, "the seam gives and the grain spills all over the stage." All the women instantly go down on their hands and knees to gather the grain. Everyone works in

silence. Even Sofia, who at first is just watching, joins in after some time. At the time that one of the women begins to sob, Sofia pauses her work and "stands slowly, painfully." After putting her hand in the head of the woman, making her crying soften, Sofia leaves and the scene ends. The significance of this moment does not seem to be explicable with words. Literally speaking, one is able to see how the women are ready to go down on their knees and help themselves whenever needed, even if one minute ago they were having a serious discussion. There is something in this apparently simple gesture, though, that changes the relationship among the women, specially between Sofia and Alexandra, as the following scenes will reveal.

Scene ten is a short descriptive one in which "we see SOFIA sitting, wet, holding a different body": a second body appears. The following scene has two moments: first, there is the confrontation between Sofia and the authorities, concerning the identity of the body and its destination; second, there is a glimpse of the relationship between the authority figures – the Captain and Lieutenant. I will focus on the first part.

When the Lieutenant arrives, he notices that there is someone with the body already and ordains "nobody move, nobody move! Get away from that." As he approaches, Alexandra and the Captain arrive as well. In the previous discussion, Sofia argues that Fidelia "should have died before she let them take his body away," and now the reader is about to see how Sofia herself is willing to behave when the authorities try to take *her husband's* body away. The Lieutenant is fast in showing his stance:

> LIEUTENANT. Get away from that you old cunt.
> […]
> LIEUTENANT. I said get away from that you disgusting old cunt.
> *He takes his gun out of his holster*.
> CAPTAIN. Lieutenant. Lieutenant. Put that away.
> *The* LIEUTENANT *doesn't seem to hear the* CAPTAIN*. He cocks the gun.* ALEXANDRA *steps in between the* LIEUTENANT *and* SOFIA*. Other* WOMEN *enter, stand at a distance watching.*
> YANINA. Don't shoot her, don't.
> ALEXANDRA. She's just an old woman, there are witnesses, don't…
> CAPTAIN. Lieutenant, put the gun down and get back in the jeep.

The CAPTAIN *pushes* ALEXANDRA *aside and stands between the lieutenant and the old woman.*

I am giving you an order. Get back in the jeep.

The LIEUTENANT *hesitates, lowers his gun, turns and leaves.* (32-33)

Visibly, Sofia is interpellated by the Lieutenant, who threatens her for not leaving the body, and her daughter, trying to protect the mother, and the Captain, who defends her even though it is not apparent that she expresses any reaction to the threat. It is hard to think about Sofia's position in this dialogue, because she is just not there. One of the ways to do so may be that of conceptualizing Sofia's absence in terms of "agency," following Maria Lugones (2003), for whom the "lack of institutional backing disqualifies the resister from having agency" (201). In these terms, it makes sense that Sofia is not being heard at all, as *agency* would require institutional backing. For this same reason, *agency* cannot support her, nor any, oppressed resistance. Lugones proposes an "active subjectivity" to replace the modern understanding of "agency,"[23] arguing that "though resisters are not agents, they are active subjects" (211). Besides, she asserts that "the distinction between agency and active subjectivity permits one to capture these different logics and to evaluate and interpret as resistant activity that which otherwise appears as inactivity, disengagement, or nonsensical" (218). In the light of Lugones concept of *active subjectivity*, thus, one should always keep in mind that resistance might not be interpreted as such when it takes on other appearances.

From this perspective (that of being aware of "the distinction between agency and active subjectivity"), Sofia's portrayal can be read as a form of resistance, which for some is disguised as "inactivity" – not reacting when threatened by the Lieutenant – or a "nonsensical" action – wait for disappeared men by the river. It is following this same logic that one should interpret Sofia's conscious choice of ignoring the Captain to inform her daughter that the body she is holding is her husband's:

CAPTAIN. […] Mrs. Fuentes. Mrs. Fuentes. Get away from the body.

Where did you… Did you find it in the… Mrs. Fuentes?

[23] For more on "agency" in these terms see section titled *Agency*, chapter ten (*Tactical Strategies of the Streetwalker/Estrategias Tácticas de la Callejera*) in *Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes Theorizing Coalition against Multiple Oppressions* (2003).

> Mrs. Fuentes, will you put that down so we can take a look and see if…
> SOFIA (*not looking up*). Alexandra?
> ALEXANDRA. What, Sofia?
> SOFIA. Miguel.
> CAPTAIN. What did she…
> ALEXANDRA. She said… She thinks it's her husband. She thinks…
> SOFIA. Miguel. (33)

After being threatened with a gun, Sofia's first reaction is to tell her daughter how important that body is, to whom its identity belong, while ignoring everything else, even if that could mean losing her life. From her paused reply to the Captain ("she said…"), it seems that Alexandra is still interpreting herself the situation in which her mother has put themselves. Up to this point in the playtext, Alexandra's relationship with her mother has been turbulent, but it did not impede her of jumping in front of a gun that was pointed to her mother as soon as she saw it. When Sofia first speaks, calling for her, Alexandra's response sounds dry and impatient: "what, Sofia?;" however, after listening that Sofia did not give up her narrative, after seeing the reaction her narrative causes on the authorities, Alexandra gives in a little, she seems to reconsider the idea as she explains to the captain what Sofia means. Sofia's ignoring the Captain, conspicuously, will end as soon as he tries to interfere the destination of the body:

> CAPTAIN (*to* ALEXANDRA). Listen. We'll take the body and…
> SOFIA. NO.
> CAPTAIN. I will personally take responsibility for this body. There will be an official… We are as concerned about this as…
> SOFIA. You. Listen to me.
> You will have to kill me. Do you understand. You'll have to kill me first.
> CAPTAIN (*looks around him at the* WOMEN). I understand. Do you… Do you want help…
> SOFIA. No help.
> ALEXANDRA. We'll carry him. Sofia. Sofia, come.
> *The other* WOMEN *approach. Together they all pick up the body, heavy with river water. They carry it past the soldiers and out*. (33-34)

Thus, it becomes clear that Sofia is consciously ignoring the Captain, as long as he does not touch on issues that matter to her. At last, Sofia herself will declare

her willingness to die for that body, *her husband's*, in front of the women and the authorities, not only *in opinion* but in *practice*. It should be questioned, also, or at least brought to evidence, why the Captain "looks around him at the women" right after Sofia states her readiness to die for that body. It is not by chance that one of Alexandra's arguments in trying to convince the Lieutenant not to shoot is "there are witnesses," and it does not seem unreasonable to hint that the Captain looks around only to confirm that there are witnesses indeed, and that they are part of the reason why he does not simply kill Sofia right away. Finally, I would like to drag attention to Alexandra's stance, which insinuates that she has started to accept Sofia's narrative, mainly for calling the body "him."

The reaction from the authorities to the above mentioned event tells a lot about how legal procedures are everything but "legal" in dictatorship (like) contexts. Reality is molded according to the need of the ones in power, while the citizen, the peasant, has to watch her rights be thrown away by the ones who should be protecting them. The captain finds another widow, who is not willing to use the body against him, to bury the corpse with another identity, and to force Sophia accept this change they arrest her grandson, Alexis, and offer him in exchange for her cooperation. In the day of the funeral, Sophia brings the body and does not appear to be absolutely convinced that giving it in exchange for her grandson is a good idea. As she wonders, the captain "*goes to ALEXIS, grabs his arm. ALEXIS cries out.* Woman [he says], you haven't begun to see the trouble I can cause" (45). Everyone involved knows what is happening, the unjust use of authority and force, and even though the captain explains that "suspected subversives will be interrogated according to official procedures" (45), nowhere it is explained why the teenager is considered a subversive or what the official procedures are. These are just empty words that allow the authorities to carry on as they wish, molding the laws at their will.

This is the decisive episode regarding the women's resistance against the authorities who, undeniably, are not on their side. The next morning (scene seventeen) Sophia arrives at the grave with bread, other women arrive as time passes, each carrying bread they have made at night, for their respective relatives who now they claim the body belongs to:

> ROSA. My father. I baked all night. This is my father in this grave. I baked bread for his grave.

> TERESA. This is very confusing.
>
> AMANDA. Everyone baked. All night. The whole valley smelled of yeast rising.
>
> TERESA. So does everyone think…?
>
> KATHERINA. Maybe it isn't anyone's. Maybe everyone's wrong.
>
> MARILUZ. Maybe everyone's right.
>
> TERESA. Impossible. It can't belong to all of us. It's only one body.
>
> KATHERINA. Yes. And it's my son, Eduardo.
>
> TERESA. It's Antonio. It's my husband. He was that thin.
>
> ROSA. It's my father.
>
> MARILUZ. No, mine. Ernesto Torres. I'd stake my life on it. (48)

The taboo related to the naming is over. Now the women turn the taboo in their favor and affirm with certainty that the body belongs to their men. Also, they do know about the impossibility of the body belonging to all of the men they say it belongs to, but at the same time the women know that they cannot trust logic and laws to work in their favor, for logic and laws have been, can, and will be turned against themselves. Thus the question is "what are we going to do about it?" (48):

> SOFIA. You know what to do. You told me how to do it. Go get permission. And then bury your men.
>
> TERESA. But it's just this one poor…
>
> SOFIA. That's not our problem. You identify? Then you must bury. Ask permission. Let the captain figure it out. (48-49)

This is when all the women realize that their disobedience must be epistemic, that the rules of logic must be turned in their favor, and the ones responsible for the rules not applying should explain why it is so. As the third act begins, with all the women in the captain's office claiming the identity of the buried body, the captain finally lets out what he thinks about those people:

> CAPTAIN. You don't know you don't know that's the point, none of you knows. anything, you're all mentally underdeveloped emotionally overdeveloped superstitious mindless peasants and this… preposterous little scandal you've cooked up – you have no idea the trouble this is causing, you have no idea… what you're spoiling here with this demented, backwards… (51)

So now we have the captain turned against the wall accusing the women for "cooking up a scandal" which he qualifies as "preposterous." Literally, in this scene we see the authority, the ones responsible for the disappearance of the men, accusing the ones who look for an answer, for justice, as if they were the ones responsible for anything, as if they wanted to be in the situation they currently are. To whom the word "preposterous" applies better? But his words do not have the same effect anymore, as the response from Teresa Salas, the one to whom he talks, shows:

> TERESA (*pulling a locket from her blouse, moving with startling energy and abruptness to the CAPTAIN, speaking vehemently*). Backwards? Is it backwards to want to bury your dead? Don't you want your wife to do it for you? This is my husband who I lived with for thirty-two years - no, don't look away.
>
> *She tears the locket from her neck, slams it on the desk*.
>
> This is my husband I slept with every night for thirty-two years, what do you mean how do I know? What do you mean backwards? I know.
>
> CAPTAIN (*quietly, picking up the locket*). Enough, Mrs. Salas.
>
> TERESA. They shot my sixteen year old in the back of his head. I… saw… that. They… did… that.
>
> CAPTAIN (*still quiet*). I said that's enough.
>
> TERESA. If this is not my husband, then where is he? If this is not his body, then give him to me alive. If you won't do that, then let me bury him.

Once the captain recognizes he does not have the reason to continue he says "enough," but Teresa does not agree with him, that's not enough, she continues. If,

indeed, what the captain stated about the peasants is true, he should be able to explain and sort out their torment, but he can't, that's why he says "enough," he lost in the argumentation game.

It is towards the end of this chapter, in a dialogue between the captain and the lieutenant, that one of the most striking statements of the playtext is made, both because of its content and because it comes from the lieutenant:

> CAPTAIN. I'll tell you something. There's a part of me that would love to shoot one or two of those women. There's a part of me that would love to shoot you.
>
> But any thug can use a gun. They can make trouble and you can make threats, but we have to move ahead, and we'll drag the rest of you kicking and screaming into the twentieth century.
>
> LIEUTENANT. The twentieth century? We're already there.
>
> CAPTAIN. Not in this country we're not.
>
> LIEUTENANT. On the contrary. What would the twentieth century be without countries like ours? (54)

This idea expressed by the lieutenant exemplifies what Anibal Quijano (2007) calls "Eurocentered capitalist colonial/modern world power" (171) and what Walter Mignolo (2007) reinforces, quoting Enrique Dussel, "modernity is, in fact, a *European phenomenon but one constituted in a dialectical relation with a non-European alterity*" (453). With simpler words, the lieutenant shows awareness about a very complex system which Camacho belongs to, which Camacho is, in fact, an essential part of. The captain, on the other hand, does not realize the importance that place holds in relation to the development he supposedly wishes to bring there, that the "development," the "future," the "technology" he believes are needed there only exist because Camacho exists as a polar opposite. Following this line of thought, the captain personifies the role Quijano attributes to Europe in this "colonial/modern world power" very accurately. The captain seems to feel like he is doing a favor to all those people, careless about the possibility that those people might not wish to receive any his "favors," such as being dragged and kicked "screaming into the twentieth century" . Using different words, Quijano affirms the very same: "Europe

thought of itself as the mirror of the future of all the other societies and cultures" (176), so it becomes undeniable that the forces of coloniality of power are at work in Camacho. These forces, as will be discussed in the conclusion, substantiate one of the main disparities when a comparison between Sofia and Antigone is to be drawn, for Sofia, if we consider the arguments from Quijano, is not a "Subject," that is, she is constantly treated as being inferior by the authorities who address her, which does not seem to be the case when Antigone comes to mind.

The solution found by the captain to convince the women that their strategy is not worthwhile is to give one man back, which comes to be Alonso, Sofia's son. Many women become happy with this but Sofia cannot see her son's "soul" in that body: "It's not him," "It's his body but it's not him" (59), and by the end of this scene she returns to the river, carrying a chair that belonged to Emiliano, the last of her men missing, saying:

> They send me back my men. The first two by the river, the third by the road. All dead. Now I go back to the river. To wait for the last (61)

At the river, Teresa also arrives carrying a chair "I came to wait too." As it is night and cold, they set the chairs on fire to warm themselves, and when Sofia comments that is not enough wood, Teresa replies "Not yet. There'll be others." The news about their doing spread, first we see how the Kastoria, a rich family that seems to be the actual owners of the region, react to it, and soon the captain and the lieutenant have to do something, for their authority is questioned due to the women's waiting. "Arrest the old Fuentes woman," says the captain to the lieutenant "and pick up her grandson while you're at it," he continues. In this same scene, there is another dialogue that shows how the lieutenant is cognizant of the current situation in Camacho, while the captain looks quite the opposite:

> CAPTAIN. What do they want? I gave them back a… I showed them. How to get some of their men back, but they… it's like they're in love with death, begging me to pull the trigger.
>
> LIEUTENANT. They want all their men back. Not just one. Not just some. All.
>
> CAPTAIN. All? That's impossible.

> LIEUTENANT. Impossible.
>
> No more
>
> CAPTAIN. What?
>
> LIEUTENANT. No more. That's all they'll say. (65-66)

First, we see the captain treating the women as actual Antigones, begging to be killed, because they do not accept his bribe in exchange for their silence. The lieutenant, however, listens to the women, which the captain does not seem to be able to, and understands that they are not willing to stop until all the men have returned, dead or alive, even if this request, as the captain suggests, is "impossible." Here we see one of the strongest connections between the playtext and the dictatorships that took place in Latin America, as Moira Fradinger tells "the expression 'no more' reads 'never again in Spanish [...] The 'never again,' as we all know, refers to real-life human rights reports that resulted from investigations of crimes against humanity committed by South American dictatorships" (76).

Finally, the playtext begins its conclusion, first by showing how the women are different in comparison to how they were in the beginning of the playtext. The character that best portrays this change is Alexandra, Sofia's daughter who, as I have shown in the beginning of this chapter, fought fiercely against her mother due to her "calling attention" and 'giving them names". The following quote exemplifies well this change:

> ALEXANDRA. When they took Emiliano away I thought if I kept quiet and still they won't hurt him and he'll come back, someday, safe. They made me dance their steps every day ever since. Quiet and still, we all thought that, but there's always someone else they can take. I want my boy safe, but… We have to say and end to this. Finally, finally an end. They have to give us what's ours. Living, dead, give us the men back, and if the men are murdered then give us their murderers. It's justice. (69)

Even if her son has been captured again, Alexandra cannot continue blaming Sofia for that, because the ones responsible are the authorities and not her mother who is trying to achieve justice. Also, it becomes evident and undeniable that the

strategy through which the authorities have attained the end of the war was violence and the way through which they try to continue “in order” is by the fear aroused from that violence. Nowhere in the playtext the word “dictatorship” can be found but, at the same time, not one time the authorities are referred to as “governors” or “government,” because they are there to exert authority and guarantee that the people are not going to rebel again.

The second to last scene shows Sofia and the captain in a cell, reminding the reader of a torture scene such as the ones that happened during the Latin American dictatorships. The violence here is, first, psychological, for soon Alexis comes in as a way to try and convince Sofia to ask the women to stop what they are doing. The captain threatens to hurt the boy, but Sofia does not give in, instead she asks for a moment to say “good-bye,” which is followed by a line where the captain grants Sofia responsibility for the death he is about to cause. By the end of the scene the directions inform: “first one gunshot, then another” (73).

At last, the open-ended closure takes place in the riverbank, where it all started. The captain asks the women to go home, and as the soldiers start to move towards them to clear the riverbank, the water starts to sound again, another body appears and the women take it out, advancing towards to soldiers with the body, rocking it “like a newborn child.”

My discussion has focused on how resistance arises among the women. In order to do so, it is more fruitful to think about Sofia’s disobedience not as a single and lone act, but as an iteration in the colonial history of resistance/disobedience, in which we will also find Thoreau’s essay on *Civil Disobedience*. While making significant connections between *Civil Disobedience* and Sofia’s protagonism, however, one cannot forget Sofia’s specific context of state of exception, where disobedience for the sake of disobedience will be punished with death, as the Lieutenant’s behavior demonstrates. Sofia’s lashing out at the authorities is careful, well planned and, as the analysis has been trying to show, is affecting both the women and the authorities. Slowly, the detachment of the Old Woman from reality will become feasible, and the crazy old lady does not seem as “crazy” as before, or “crazy” itself does not mean the same as before. This apparent “detachment,” when looked from another perspective, becomes something else, as Lugones again suggests:

> the oppressed may be able to engage in some acts that could be described as successful acts of agency, but most of their acting will fail in this regard because oppression is encompassing and affects the meaning of activities as apparently uncomplicated as eating a meal or going to bed at night.

Or waiting by the river. To translate Sofia's resistance, thus, means to think about it in terms of an *active subjectivity* that is in a process of de-linking, or *epistemic disobedience*.

4 CONCLUSION

4.1 WHY ARE MARTA AND SOFIA SEEN AS ANTIGONES?

As mentioned in the previous chapters, Antigone is not explicitly mentioned in the playtexts. This reference has been made by readers, critics, and researchers, who have looked at these women and remembered Sophocles' character. But why?

First of all, they are women, and more specifically, women who, courageously, go against laws present in their authoritative contexts which did not allow them to continue with their lives as they have the right to. However, whereas Antigone stands against an actual law, a decree, Marta from *As Confrarias* and Sofia from *Widows* would be better described as going against the *status quo*, for even though they also disrespect laws, their disobediences have a broader impact in their societies. Antigone, in fact, appears to take a more individualistic stance. The strongest evidence regarding this point is the way through which other people are invited or rejected to participate in Marta and Sofia's deeds.

Marta, to start with, begins her journey after she and her husband lose their land to the State and Church and her husband is killed for protesting. This event is the springboard that propels her doings but, differently from Antigone, she understands this as a social problem, one that does not relate only to her and her family. As the playtext hints, Marta and her son José are part of a group of people who have been meeting in order to free the people from, for example, the unfair money they had to pay to Churches – the confrarias. Besides, Marta also sharply

criticizes the Churches themselves, not due to their existence, but for the corruption taking place in those institutions, which could be on the people's side but ended up being another means of oppression. When the playtext ends, Marta is followed by a group of people who have watched her doings and she invites them to continue their journey with her, for she herself sees her task as a social one, one that should involve all the people in need who do not have the necessary support from the authorities.

As for Sofia, *Widows*' playtext references a war that ended eight years before which resulted in all the men being arrested and/or killed. This war has to do with the land stolen from the local people, land that is paramount to their survival, for they are peasants who live off of their work on it. This is the atmosphere under which all the women live and talking about the men seems to have become a taboo among them. Sofia's role in her context is that of not allowing the women nor the authorities to forget about what happened, that is, hers is a social task that involves everyone in that context.

Regarding Antigone, while she invites her sister to join her at the beginning of the playtext, once Ismene refuses, Antigone sees her as another enemy. In addition, there is no other person from the city involved in her plans, and it does not seem as if Antigone is acting for a social good, instead, her deeds do give the impression of a personal act, at most one that involves her family, but her reactions towards Ismene tell the reader that the familiar bond does not matter so much. It does not mean, as the chapters have shown, that Marta and Sofia do not meet resistance from their families as well, however, they do not turn their back for good. The playtexts seem to suggest that not all people will react the same way to authoritative regimes, and that fights may occur within the same resistant group, which should not turn resisters oblivious to the fact that they are on the same side.

In addition to being women who go against a law – or the *status quo* –, the reason behind their actions is also related to why Marta and Sofia can be seen as Antigones: all of them want to bury their dead. The way they accomplish their tasks differs, but in all three situations there is a body kept outside the realm of intelligibility whose family members are fighting to be recognized. Antigone has religious reasons to defy the decree, for respecting sacred laws, according to her, is more important

than respecting laws invented by a human. As for the other two, probably because of their contexts, the reasons appear to be more political rather than religious.

In *As Confrarias*, Marta is explicit about it, as she herself states “um homem não morre inutilmente. São os outros que tornam a morte inútil, não a usando para nada” (52). Here she is talking to her son about the death of his father, but after her son dies Marta takes on the task to not let him have a “useless death.” She politicizes his death, she turns him into a subject about which people talk, and finally she obliges those who wanted to keep him outside the realm of intelligibility because of who he was – an actor – to bury him. As the playtext makes evident, her main objective while passing by the confrarias is not to bury him, but to make him known, and to make known the wrongdoings that take place within those institutions. In a way, then, as Anatol Rosenfeld has stated, Marta is “invertendo a atitude de Antígone” (110), but this “inversion” does not last forever, for in the end, after Marta has accomplished her task, José is buried.

In *Widows*, Sofia begins in a different position because she does not have the bodies yet. She is waiting by the river, being called “crazy” for this, and being criticized for “calling attention.” Once she finds a body, however, she eagerly fights to have that body recognized as one of her disappeared men. This process can also be called political for she knows that the responsible ones for the disappearance of her men are the authorities, and once the recognition she is fighting for happens she will fight to make them pay for what they did. As the captain will assert at some point, it is as if she is begging to be killed, demanding the ones who killed her men to punish the ones who killed her men.

These are the main reasons why Marta and Sofia remember Antigone. In fact, this is a summary of who Antigone is: a woman who goes against the State because of a familiar body that is kept outside the realm of intelligibility. But Antigone does not suffice as a reference to tell who Marta and Sofia are, probably because of their specific contexts. The following paragraphs will focus on some of the more relevant differences between these characters, paying closer attention to Marta and Sofia.

4.2 WHY ARE MARTA AND SOFIA NOT MERE ANTIGONES?

One of the main differences between them is their relation to the authorities. Antigone, one must remember, is the niece of the tyrant, while Marta and Sofia have no parental relation to the authorities in their contexts. What it implies is that Antigone is a part of the ruling class and the other two are part of the ruled classes. Moreover, it must not be forgotten, Marta and Sofia are under processes of colonization and racialization that, from the colonizer's perspective, allow the authority – the colonizer – to do whatever is necessary to take those helpless souls out of their backward and underdeveloped positions, which might include arresting, torturing and killing. As a consequence, Marta and Sofia have way less room for protesting without at once putting their lives at great risk. This fact, one may suggest, is closely related to what was stated in a previous paragraph, for once your life is at great danger you probably would not refuse the help of those around you in resisting an authoritative regime, mainly from a family member. Besides, once you believe your resistance involves the well-being of the society as a whole, there is no point in rejecting people who suffer the same/similar oppressions to participate too.

Even though Marta and Sofia's efforts to attain social welfare are equally powerful, the contexts in which they live, despite the many similarities, demand their actions to be different. As already stated, *As Confrarias* was written during the 1960s, while the dictatorship was taking place in Brazil, but Marta lives in the end of the eighteenth century, when colonization has not yet given place to coloniality, when democracy is not yet a must, when the Church is possibly the strongest institution at work. The violence committed by the State – meaning the governor and the Crown – is not at the core of the playtext (the Church is) and the fact that Marta finishes victoriously might even give the impression that those times were not that bad. However, there is one event, besides that of José's murder, that portrays how violent the State may become once a "peasant" gets in their way, an event that links Marta, Sofia, and many other lives that have gone through colonization: Sebastião's death.

One day, Sebastião - Marta's husband - comes back from the city complaining about the "tenths" he had to pay, which took most of the amount he sowed. Besides, he tells Marta that they are going to lose their land because gold was discovered in it, and none of this gold would belong to them: "Disseram que o subsolo pertence ao

Estado e à Igreja, que precisam pagar o quinto devido ao rei" (41). The authorities also have their own authorities and the ones in the lower positions of the hierarchy are the ones who suffer the most. Sebastião is not willing to give his land for free and decides to resist, cutting the hands of the first miners who arrive. He is caught and hanged, not without first telling Marta "há outras mãos que precisam ser cortadas" (42). This event tells how violent the State and Church can become once someone interferes in their interests and, not least, how "land" is a central cause of conflicts between authorities and the people during colonial times.

Marta, however, does not have to endure such violence herself. In fact, it seems that the authorities which she faces are more scared of her than the opposite, as the analysis has pointed out. The woman imposes herself, playing her "games" with strong conviction and being very aggressive in her argumentation. Overall, this may be the impression because the narrative accompanies her only when she talks to the churchmen, who are not the most willing to apply physical violence, at least as far as the playtext represents them. Even so, Sebastião and José's deaths portray the authoritative stance authorities will take whenever their interests are at stake.

The story is very different when it comes to *Widows*. From the first speech of the new captain the women are told that they will be "forgiven" for what they have done once they "forget the past," that "democracy and technology will be brought to bear on [their] backwardness" (9). In other words, the women are being asked to forget their relatives, to forget that their land has been stolen and to forget that the authorities are responsible for everything. The women are being asked to take responsibility for the war and consequently for the deaths of their loved ones, which happened because of it. In sum, the captain's speech depicts the women as guilty for all the atrocious events and the authorities as benevolent souls who are willing to "forgive" and bring "the future" to those poor people who have been living in the past, despite their disobedience. This is the rhetoric of modernity, as Mignolo asserts: "The rhetoric of modernity works through the imposition of 'salvation', whether as Christianity, civilization, modernization and development after WWII or market democracy after the fall of the Soviet Union" (463). This rhetoric accompanies the narrative throughout and the analysis suggests that the captain is not aware of it, for he does believe what he is doing is right, that he is bringing this "salvation" to those peasants not because of specific interests, economical ones for instance, but

because they need it. The concrete consequences that arise from this perverse belief, justified by colonization and racialization, is what differentiates most of Marta's and Sofia's stories.

Thus, the situation in which the women from *Widows* see themselves is very complicated. Resistance has a way of being seen as disobedience and disobedience is met, most often than not, with violence. This violence is justified because the peasants, from the authorities perspective, live in the past and do not know about the future, a future that the authorities are, even if with the use of force, doing the favor of bringing forth. What becomes noticeable here is the question of "totality" (Mignolo): there is only one possible future and this future is that of Europe. Nowhere in the playtext the captain sits down to listen to what the women have to say. The only moment when he sits down with the women in front of him telling him what goes through their minds he does not actually listen, as the episode of all the widows claiming the identity of the body, when Teresa Salas talks about her husband's disappearance and son's murder, prove it.

This explanation - of the differences between Marta's and Sofia's contexts - is important because Marta, differently from Sofia, does not die. This fact might give the impression that Marta does something the other does not, that her actions are more efficient and better planned than the ones taken by Sofia, which is completely misleading. It is due to this possible misconception that Lugones' debunking of agency as a category to the resisting subjects becomes not only important but necessary. As Lugones asserts, resistance does not happen in a vacuum, it takes place in a tense meeting of oppressing and resisting, so that one's success regarding a resistant act must not be praised as an individual accomplishment, but as a result from this encounter between oppression and resistance. The implications of this regarding the reaction from the authorities to the recognition of the bodies in both playtexts are extremely different, for Marta wants to set an example while Sofia wants the responsible ones to be punished. Summing up, the authorities in Sofia's context have a lot more to lose, or to pay for, once the bodies are recognized, so that their oppression towards the women's resistance will be more violent. Furthermore, because in both *As confrarias* and *Widows* the oppressing side is aligned with the institutions in power, the resisting side cannot count on these institutions, which during dictatorial regimes may be the only ones at work, to back up their resistance.

Before moving on, it is important to clarify the claim I have made about Antigone not being sufficient to characterize women resisting authoritarian regimes in Latin America. “Antigone,” in this claim, refers to the character herself rather than the playtext as a whole, meaning that Antigone’s actions do not suffice to represent Marta and/or Sofia, for the reasons already presented. As a playtext, however, *Antigone* is surely a great model to think about authoritative regimes in Latin America, but one of the main reasons for this is not the character of Antigone, but that of Polynices, whose right to share the throne with his brother was denied, just as his right to have the funeral rites performed after his death due to Creon’s authoritative decree. This decree, I have argued, has kept him outside the realm of intelligibility, so that he has become an awfully great analogy to think about all the bodies that also have been violently denied intelligibility due to authoritative regimes in Latin American dictatorships.

Lugones theorization, as already mentioned, also tries to list possible strategies that resisting subjects could take on to face oppression, enacting what she calls “active subjectivities.” But how does the concept of “active subjectivity” relate to Marta and Sofia? That is, what are the ways through which these women find room to denounce the authoritative regimes under which they live? What are the strategies they find to externalize their discontent with the injustices performed by the authorities?

First of all, it is pertinent to remember that in both contexts physical violence has been tried as a means to resist. Both of these events have taken place before the present of the narratives and are only recollected by the characters. In *As confrarias*, this is represented by Sebastião and his lonesome fight to protect his land; In *Widows*, there are mentions to an actual war that happened due to land that was stolen from the peasants. In both cases, as it has been already stated, the resisters did not end up victorious: Sebastião is brutally killed, and all the men from *Widows* have disappeared, being either arrested or killed. This may lead us to the conclusion that a straight up fight against authoritative regimes might not be the best option as a resistant strategy, but the open-ended closure in *Widows*, after Sofia is killed, also makes one doubt that a less violent resistance could be any more efficient. Of course, there is no such thing as a perfect recipe for resistance, everything depends on context.

4.3 ACTIVE SUBJECTIVITIES AT WORK

Sofia's first tactic of resistance is to stand by the river, waiting. One could argue that this would not be translated as a resistant act, but the playtext provides plenty of evidence of this act as resistance. "You've turned everything upside down" (4) says Alexandra - Sofia's daughter - because of her waiting. People think she has gone crazy, her grandson even asks her "grandma…? Are you crazy?" to whom she responds "yes." This answer in the very beginning of the playtext does not reveal too much, but as the story goes on the reader will be compelled to see any type of resistance against authorities such as the ones they are facing as "craziness." Also in the beginning of the story, the new captain arrives at the riverbank where Sofia waits and tries to have a conversation with her, a conversation that will be soon fully informed by the rhetoric of modernity, although Sofia shows very little sign of being interested in it. This scene is really powerful because all the women have just left the riverbank to go see the new captain, Sofia is the only one not interested and ends up being the first one to meet him. They have a tense dialogue, one in which Sofia imposes herself, as the captain's description of her in the next scene will reveal: "I met an old woman. Tough old bitch. By the river" (7). Her waiting, thus, should be understood as a strategic act of resistance.

After the river brings the first body, Sofia goes to the captain to ask for permission to bury it. Again the playtext shows evidence of how Sofia, through what seems like a harmless action, is performing her resistant strategy. First, by not paying attention to the captain's discourse, who is trying to convince her that either that body does not belong to her father or that "terrorists have business to settle among themselves…" (25) - in other words, that the authorities are not responsible for the body's death in case it is her father. Interestingly, the captain seems to be bothered by the way she does not let him finish his sentences before replying, even asserting "stop interrupting me" (25), which is a subtle indication of how Sofia is actively disturbing their reality. Fed up of that situation, the captain tells the lieutenant, after Sofia leaves his office, that he is just going to give her the body: "quickest way to get rid of her" (26), but the lieutenant objects "and what do we do after the funeral? [...] When she wants to know: who killed him." Sofia's seemingly nonsensical act of

claiming the identity of a disfigured body is, in fact, an astute strategic act of resistance, a means she finds to perform an active subjectivity in order to face the authorities.

These are just two other examples in addition to those already mentioned in the analytical chapter about *Widows*. Throughout the playtext Sofia displays her knowledge concerning her reality carefully walking on the thin line that differentiates looking like a “tough old bitch” or a “crazy grandmother.” Aware of her possibilities and impossibilities, caring and loving towards her family and friends but also angry and furious towards these same people whenever she finds it necessary. Her powerful performance reaches/touches/moves/disturbs her context, which includes the authorities, the women, and even the meaning of words (such as “crazy”). The old lady by the river reminds everyone in the village about a concrete reality of oppression that has been present for centuries and that will never cease unless they stand up and continue performing acts of resistance.

Regarding Marta, it is difficult to draw a similar analysis concerning her active subjectivity, mainly due to her resistance being way more straightforward than that enacted by Sofia, so that one does not need to look at details to notice how Marta is resisting, for her resistance is very explicit. Ironically, this difference portrays one of the main similarities between both characters, that is, they are well-informed about the contexts in which they live. Just like Sofia, Marta also knows the limits imposed on her by her reality and if her actions might look like agency sometimes it is due to a conscious choice based on her knowledge, it is strategic. Likewise, Marta’s resistance impacts the lives of everyone in her context, disturbing and making evident the corruption and misconduct taking place within the Confrarias, not allowing the memory of her son to be erased, which implies keeping alive the memory of all the people who were also kept outside the realm of intelligibility by the institutions in power, and by gathering a group of people who, at the end of the story, will join her in her resistant activity.

It is somewhat amazing to see how a playtext written more than two thousand years ago has been kept alive in so many contexts, for so many reasons and still carrying such a powerful message. In Latin America, *Antigone*’s status as a Greek classic has often been used by artists living under authoritative regimes as a disguise with which they could make criticisms without suffering harsh consequences. This

was the case in many dictatorships. Yet more fascinating, perhaps, is the fact that *Antigone* does not even need to be mentioned in order to be remembered, as the two playtexts analyzed in this thesis have demonstrated. Ariel Dorfman's *Widows* and Jorge Andrade's *As Confrarias* latin americanize the myth of *Antigone* portraying local issues that range from the abuse of power committed by authoritative regimes to a wide variety of problems related to colonization and colonialism. The playtexts allow the reader to observe how resistant subjectivities can be enacted in such contexts and are examples of how powerful literature can be as a means to make sense of not only the past but also the present. At last, these iterations of *Antigone* also makes us question: how much has the western civilization actually developed when issues portrayed two thousand and five hundred years ago still seem so current?

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