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HÁ MESMO JUSTIÇA EM CRIMES DE SANGUE?

Como o feminicídio atravessou o oceano: significados e eras entre "Oréstia" de Ésquilo e "O Truque Da Garrafa de Vidro" de Nalo Hopkinson

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Abstract: "The Oresteia" is a historical landmark in the fine arts, such as theatre and literature, due to its aesthetic and political elements that continue to impact contemporary life, particularly in the realm of family-related crimes. Therefore, it is relevant to analyze the permanence of that phenomenon with a critical lens. Since their relevance today is as a kind of representation of social antagonism, which continues, it results in demands for typing as a specific crime: femicide. Considering that, we contextualize these themes in the Feminist Literary tradition to comprehend how a Black female Caribbean experience can complicate the discussion about gendered and racialized violence. Contrasting the Greek classic with a contemporary short story entitled "The Glass Bottle Trick" by Nalo Hopkinson through a Black female feminist perspective, it is possible to observe some intertextual elements that connect the "social curses" experienced by Clytemnestra, and likewise the Heroine Beatrice. In both of these texts, the presence of Erinyes (The Furies) influences the discussion about retributive justice and countercolonial conscience.
Keywords: The Oresteia; retributive justice; The Glass Bottle Trick; Black poiesis; Caribbean Literature.

Há *mesmo* justiça em crimes de sangue? Como o feminicídio atravessou o oceano: significados e eras entre "Oréstia" de Ésquilo e "O Truque Da Garrafa de Vidro" de Nalo Hopkinson

Resumo: "Oréstia" é um marco histórico nas Artes Cênicas e Literárias, devido a fatores estéticos e políticos que ressoam na contemporaneidade, como os crimes contra mulheres cometidos por seus familiares. Portanto, é relevante analisar criticamente a sua atualidade como representação de um antagonismo social, cuja continuidade resultou na demanda por tipificação como crime específico: o feminicídio. Tendo isso em consideração, contextualizamos o tema na tradição literária feminista, para então compreender de que maneira uma experiência negra e caribenha pode complexificar a discussão sobre violência genderizada atravessada pelo racismo. Ao contrastar o clássico grego com um conto contemporâneo de ficção científica caribenha de Nalo Hopkinson, chamado "O Truque da Garrafa de Vidro", a partir de uma perspectiva feminista e negra, notamos a presença de uma série de elementos intertextuais que conectam as "maldições sociais" de Clitemnestra à heroína caribenha Beatrice. Em ambos os textos é a presença das Erínias (Fúrias) que movimenta a discussão pertinente sobre justiça retributiva e consciência contracolonial.
Palavras-chave: Oréstia; justiça retributiva; O Truque da Garrafa de Vidro; poética negra; literatura caribenha.

> " *It was a strong effort of the spirit of good, but it was ineffectual.* Destiny was too potent, and her immutable laws had decreed my utter and terrible destruction."
> (Shelley, 2009, p. 44, emphasis added)

1. The Relevance of Aeschylus's Tragedy in the Feminist Literary Tradition of Science Fiction

The subtitle of the first science fiction novel, "Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus," by Mary Shelley (2009 [1818]), evokes Greek culture by foregrounding an intertext while simultaneously providing a key to interpretation that links the scientist Victor Frankenstein to the Titan Prometheus—the one who violated divine law by stealing fire and giving it to humankind, and who was severely punished for this act, as recounted in "Prometheus Bound" (Aeschylus, 2005). But what, after all, would a Prometheus of modernity do to defy divine law? What themes unravel from the use of this classical text in a society and an era entirely different from its original context?

Alluding to nineteenth-century English society's fear of the scientific and technological advances brought about by the Industrial Revolution, the unity of the novel's plot arises from an act that challenges the immutable law of the one who grants the "spark of life,"[1] when Frankenstein chooses to "play God" and breathes life into a heap of inanimate flesh by means of a "chemical instrument" (Shelley, 2009, p. 72). It is also worth noting that the scientist destroys the female version of the Creature to whom he had "given life," under the pretext of protecting humankind, since he feared the catastrophic effects that might result from allowing such "monsters" to reproduce.

In Shelley's appropriation of Aeschylus's drama, we must also take into account the context of early nineteenth-century England, which was marked by imperialism, that is, by contact with territories, cultures, and subjectivities different from those known to the Victorians—and the consequent anxieties it produced. In its artistic expression, this anxiety outlined the centrality of the monster figure and of well-defined social dichotomies such as "civilized" / "barbarian," "man" / "woman," and subject / object (Wester; Reyes, 2021), as well as the ways in which each was treated. Portrayed as the Creature, this social pariah personifies every political minority, since its dehumanized condition and the violent treatment it endures represent the social situation and challenges experienced by those deprived of power and the right to citizenship.

1 *Hybris*, or excess, is the state of being at odds with *logos* (reason); that is, it is an action contrary to what constitutes the measure of virtue and excellence, driven by the force of passion.

Unlike the *human* scientist, the Creature displays morally elevated values such as kindness and empathy (even toward nonhuman animals[2]) and, on the other hand, is equally human[3] in his pursuit of justice and deep desire for revenge. This undeniable condition of ostracism faced by the Creature, and the fact that Mary Shelley was the daughter of the feminist philosopher Mary Wollstonecraft and had studied her works, highlights the perpetuity of the struggle for women's rights at the discursive level and the questioning of women's roles during the Victorian Era. Indeed, the literal death of the female companion of the same species as the Creature—who was mercilessly killed by Frankenstein—, testifies to the impossibility of full citizenship for the "monsters." In addition, I observe that the narrative depth of the female character is so reduced that the work exposes the normalization of femicide[4]—the murder of a woman for no reason other than being woman—within both the Victorian and the Hellenic societies. It seemingly points to a sort of socially constructed and reiterated "fate" which still haunts women to this day.

Thus, a brief reading of Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus reveals a work saturated with elements of horror and fantasy, which underscores the enduring resonance of human passions, the thirst for power, and the pursuit of justice—all recurring themes in Hellenic drama. The allusion to the classical text through metaphor enables the discussion of unresolved social issues as well as the addition of new concerns and anxieties of the Victorian Era, perceptible through the author's social position. Thus, we find a hybrid tradition that has inspired a number of contemporary feminist science fiction authors[5], such as the Jamaican-born writer Nalo Hopkinson, who has lived in Canada and, more recently, in the United States. Her short story "The Glass Bottle Trick" presents both a crime of blood committed against two women and the potential vengeance of the Furies. In this sense, a comparison with Aeschylus's Oresteia takes an irresistible analytical path, examining the prevalence of femicide as a crime of blood and exploring how this intertext, transposed to the other side of the Atlantic, takes on new contours and reconfigures the theme through elements of the classical structure.

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2 Given that modernity constitutes a fundamental marker of the human/animal divide, characterized by "animalization," the use of the term "nonhuman animals" reflects a preference for regarding *Homo sapiens* as a part of nature, that is, an animal among others, while emphasizing difference between species as part of a supremacist, and by extension, imperialist, racist, and sexist ideology. Aware that "human" is a social category falsely equated with the taxonomic category *Homo sapiens*, as observed in the work "Racism as a Zoological Witchcraft: A Guide to Getting Out" by philosopher Aph Ko (2019), I employ quotation marks to emphasize this distinction.

3 Grounded in Ko and Ko (2017), I deliberately highlight the term *human* in order to denaturalize the correlation between that which is 'human' and the political identity of the *white* subject. At the core of narratives such as *Frankenstein, The Oresteia,* and *The Glass Bottle Trick* lies the split between the human and the nonhuman, viewed from a European perspective that defines everything which is not both white and European as nonhuman.

4 There is a historical distinction between the concepts of femicide and feminicide, which I shall address subsequently. Both refer to violence against women, but the former designates the act in general, whereas the latter refers to a crime, as legally typified in contemporary contexts.

5 Not only Aeschylus but also Sophocles addressed the plight of women in Greek society, and their texts remain fertile ground for debates on the historical continuity of what is now characterized as sexism, as well as its sociopolitical consequences. Feminist science fiction frequently engages with the idea of endurance in a distant future, which suggests the expansion of this tradition that I have briefly outlined here. This fact is observable in the works of authors such as Joanna Russ, Octavia Butler, Ursula Le Guin, among others. Examples by these and other writers can be found in "Sisters of the Revolution: A Feminist Speculative Fiction Anthology" (VanderMeer; VanderMeer, 2023).

2 The Literary Representation of Crimes of Blood in the Past and the Present

According to Aristotle (2008), tragedy[6] is the emulation of elevated actions (*mímesis*), expressed in elevated language, which through compassion (*eleos*) and fear (*phobos*) leads the audience to the purification (*katharsis*) of the passions. Thus, through the appreciation of elevated works, the individual would be emptied of emotions and become less susceptible to vile actions. It is not by chance that we find in tragedy a prevalence of destructive and painful actions, along with laments, wounds, and deaths experienced by well-defined characters.

Aristotle's definition of 'elevated art' has persisted throughout literary history, permeating modern narrative (prose) with numerous elements and concerns inherited from drama, and this is the reason behind the parallels found between the structure of "Eumenides" and "The Glass Bottle Trick," beginning with the plot (*mythos*).

The crimes of blood portrayed in the "Oresteia" trilogy—composed of "Agamemnon," "The Libation Bearers," and "The Eumenides" (Aeschylus, 2000)—comprise a succession of murders widely known as "the curse of the Atreidae," a cycle of vengeance serving both as justice and a severance from the past. Followed by multiple episodes of adultery, sacrificial murders, and suicides, all suffered and committed by the descendants of Zeus and Pluto, the play "Eumenides" constitutes the outcome of the curse and represents the invention of justice and law, as it is in that work that a tribunal is institutionalized to judge crimes committed within the family on the basis of public discourse (Nascimento, 2017).

In "Agamemnon" (Aeschylus, 2000), the title character is murdered by his "wife," Clytemnestra, as punishment for the sacrifice of their daughter Iphigenia, carried out before the Trojan War. Subsequently, Clytemnestra orders her daughter Electra to pour libations at her father's tomb alongside the Choephoroi (Aeschylus, 2000). There she meets her brother Orestes, who has returned from exile, and together they plan the murder of their mother and her lover, Aegisthus—a plot that culminates in an ambush carried out by the siblings. As soon as Orestes kills Clytemnestra and Aegisthus, he is attacked by the Erinyes (also called the Furies and, by the end of the story, the Eumenides). In turn, "Eumenides" (Aeschylus, 2000), depicts Orestes' persecution by the Furies and his appeal to Apollo to end their relentless pursuit. As the Furies are older even than the Titans, Apollo is unable to intervene directly, but instructs Orestes to seek out Athena, the goddess of justice, accompanied by Hermes, so that she may preside over his trial.

"The Glass Bottle Trick" (Hopkinson, 2023 [2014]) by the Canadian author of Jamaican origin Nalo Hopkinson, originally published in Fantasy Magazine[7], tells the story of Beatrice, a

6 Tragedy stands in relation to the short story as the epic does to the novel. In this sense, the comparison between "Eumenides" and "The Glass Bottle Trick" also aims to observe how a condensed form presents and discusses the complexity of the theme within its own time.

7 Available at: https://www.fantasy-magazine.com/fm/fiction/the-glass-bottle-trick/ . Access on: Jun. 22, 2025.

young mixed-race woman eager to tell her husband, Samuel—an older Black man—about her pregnancy. Over the course of the narrative, Beatrice discovers that her husband murdered his two previous wives, both of whom shared with her not only physical similarities but were also pregnant.

Worse yet, both in the plays (the sacrifice of Iphigenia and the murder of Clytemnestra) and in the short story (the murder of Samuel's two wives), we observe that crimes against women are perpetrated by men within their own families. I refer to this imitation of "unfortunate" human actions and events across time as "femicide," in order to avoid anachronism. The word "femicide" carries a purely descriptive meaning: it designates homicide in any circumstance in which the victim is a woman. Although the concept of feminicide—a legally typified crime in Brasil under Law No. 13.104/15 (Hubinger, 2019)—applies to the latter text, as it concerns a murder committed against a woman[8] by a family member. For the purposes of establishing a more suitable parallel with the ancient play, I will employ terms that fit both contexts: femicide, matricide (the killing of one's mother), uxoricide (the killing of one's wife), and filicide (the killing of one's offspring).

Another point of contact between the ancient and modern texts lies in the impact of recognition (*anagnórisis*). Near the end of "The Libation Bearers" (Aeschylus, 2000) and "The Glass Bottle Trick" (Hopkinson, 2023), Clytemnestra and Beatrice shift from ignorance to an awareness of their vulnerability in relation to the men who, within a patriarchal society, should have protected them from harm—their son and their husband, respectively. The truth of their situations entails recognizing that the relentlessness of fate manifests in their imminent danger of death, simply because they have acted "excessively," driven by their human emotions (vengeance and curiosity, respectively).

3 Is There *Truly* Justice in Crimes of Blood Against Women?

Intertextual readings of "The Glass Bottle Trick" (Hopkinson, 2023) often draw upon elements from the fairy tales "Fitcher's Bird" by the Brothers Grimm and "Bluebeard" by Charles Perrault, such that the 'objects of imitation' are transposed primarily through the characters (Samuel resembles Bluebeard, and Beatrice mirrors the sorcerer's third bride), navigating through the plot (centered on the transition from ignorance to the bride's recognition of her vulnerability before her husband), and its purposes (a warning about predatory male behavior in patriarchal society). However, given the comparative focus of this study, it is essential to examine more closely the sequence of actions culminating in the murders of women by Samuel—possibly avenged by the Furies—in light of concepts drawn from Aristotle's Poetics (2020) and from feminist theoretical perspectives.

8 The articles consider the equivalence of sex and gender in determining the victim of feminicide—a discussion relevant to various fields within the Humanities, but which shall not be addressed in this work, given that the analysis does not problematize the roots of the sex–gender issue, but rather its consequences.

In "The Libation Bearers" and "Eumenides," the six Furies embody an ancestral, elemental force of retribution driven by wrath. In "The Glass Bottle Trick," by contrast, the two Furies are portrayed with apparent hesitation, a nuance that reflects the unresolved colonial history intertwined with the mythological tradition of the Caribbean cultural substratum, as they appear in the form of the ambivalent *duppie* ghosts. Although this ancestral presence evokes the weight of tradition, it is noteworthy that action in the name of "honor's purification" falls to the men (Orestes and Samuel), while women are left with nothing but anger, which makes way for the later (in relation to this past) definition of hysteria (from the Greek *hystéra*, meaning womb, and, by extension, a pathology associated with the female sex).

Thus, in "Eumenides," there is the ghostly and rancorous presence of Clytemnestra, who denounces her condition as a woman whose lack of power transcends the human condition:

> [...]
> In the depths of Hell I am accused
> of a monstrous crime — and as if that were not enough,
> after my death at my son's hand
> (cruel fate!) none of the gods has stirred in wrath
> to take his mother's side.
> [...]
> Arise, goddesses of the infernal deep!
> In a dream I call upon you — I, Clytemnestra!
> (Ésquilo, 2000, p. 151)

Although the entire curse of the descendants of Atreus can be traced back to the original crime of Tantalus, Clytemnestra's words seek to achieve vengeance for the sacrifice of her daughter Iphigenia as well as for her own murder, an act imposed as a morally inverted instrument, since it is precisely the imbalance of power that determines their fate. The very invocation of the Furies reveals the specter's disbelief in political resolution or in Apollonian justice. Much like the victims of filicide and matricide, the Furies are outcasts of the divine world:

> "[...] also known among the Greeks by the propitiatory names Eumenides ('the Kindly Ones') and Semnai ('the Venerable Ones'). [...] they appear as winged women, sometimes surrounded by serpents and bearing whips and torches in their hands. The Furies rank among the oldest of the Greek deities, and, like the Moirai (v.), they surpass the authority of the gods of later generations; even Zeus (v.) himself bowed before them. Originally, their number was undefined, and they appeared only collectively; later, this number was fixed at three, and their names were Alecto, Megaera, and Tisiphone. The Furies protected the order, both natural and social, of the world, preventing or punishing transgressions and crimes (especially among blood relatives) capable of endangering this order, as well as hubris (Hybris, v.), which drives mortals to forget the limits of their human condition. [...]. In their quest to punish crimes of blood, the Furies drove the guilty to madness through unbearable ordeals. They were responsible for the misfortunes that befell Agamemnon's (v.) family as a result of the sacrifice of Iphigenia at Aulis by instigating Clytemnestra (v.) to murder her husband, punishing her through the hand of Orestes (v.), then pursuing him for the killing of his mother. [...] Later, particularly in Roman conceptions, the influence of the Furies extended to the underworld, where they appeared as punitive deities among the souls of the dead. In other respects, the Romans

> assimilated their Furies to the Greek Erinyes, even adopting their myths (Kury, 2009, pp. 208–209).

Thus, opposing sides seek justice and purification, and become aligned in this pursuit: Clytemnestra appeals to the Furies, willing to avenge the woman, as they deemed matricide an unredeemable crime (Ésquilo, 2000), whereas Apollo defends Orestes, assigning greater weight to mariticide—the killing of the husband by the "wife," Clytemnestra—thus absolving the young man for the murder of his mother and, consequently, vindicating the father for the sacrifice of his sister. Although the moral question surrounding the gravity of each crime may be a matter for deep reflection, the notion of law as the supremacy of reason, from a social perspective, may reveal that the daughter's sacrifice and the mother's murder lowers both to the rank of disposable subjects in a society where women could not participate equally in the life of the polis. If even the most "unbiased" gods feel no empathy for the murdered mother, would a mortal jury, one that venerates those very gods, be moved to compassion?

On this particular point, Plato and Aristotle converge in their theorization of a supposed biological, moral, and political inferiority of women—a view that reflects the conceptual framework and practices of that society, whose legacy extends into the present. If Beatrice, a young housewife, were to report her husband's crimes, would she be guaranteed justice? And considering the contemporary reality of the mass incarceration of Black women, if she, being alone at home, were to kill her husband in self-defense, would the interpretation of the act truly be that no crime had been committed? Would she be entitled to a full and qualified defense, as was Orestes? Would she be deemed worthy of the jury's empathy? From Clytemnestra's experience, the answer to all these questions would most likely be negative, for both texts reveal that the central issue lies not so much in the crime of blood itself, but in who commits it and against whom it is committed.

In that society—at least until the cautious resolution Eumenides—for women, justice and vengeance were synonymous, and any crime against the *guénos*, that is, against someone within one's own kinship group, had to be avenged by the *guenos* itself. The premise, in such cases, was that if crimes against one's own blood were carried out, the killer would incur the divine wrath (Nascimento, 2017) of the Furies—which, notably, did not befall Clytemnestra. As for her, even the goddess of justice, herself a woman, declares Orestes innocent through her "vote of Minerva." If injustice arises there from this *social* imbalance of power, from the greater value placed upon the life of a leader (Agamemnon) in contrast to that of his daughter (Iphigenia) and wife, whose lives together are worth less than his, then the passage from darkness into light in the Athenian Areopagus court symbolizes not merely the transition from the old law, defended by the Erinyes out of sheer attachment to the act itself, to the opportunity for the defendant's rhetorical (rational) defense, or from private (vengeful) to democratic justice, but rather the human and divine perpetuation of the dichotomies that distinguish men from women and define customs, values, and the very path of justice.

Had Clytemnestra accepted Iphigenia's death as a divinely ordained act, she would neither

have killed Agamemnon nor been killed herself. Is she, then, guilty of her own tragic fate? Is there any possible path through which she might not be held accountable? The fact remains that, after her son's broad and eloquent defense, neither Clytemnestra nor the Furies utter any further word—a silence that reinforces the underlying discourse permeating the play: the legitimacy, socially conferred upon men, to kill women. The certainty of impunity evolves into a subliminal encouragement of such acts.

In addition to this outcome, which restores patriarchal order, we can identify in the voice of the Coryphaeus a dichotomous discourse that associates Blackness with a curse[9]:

> "You shall know everything in brief,
> daughter of Zeus: we are the wretched offspring
> of the dark Night; in the depths of the earth,
> where we dwell, they call us the Curses."
> (Ésquilo, 2000, p. 166).

This semantic approximation among sadness, Blackness, depth, and curse has no major implications for the plot, yet it materializes as a kind of social guideline distinguishing the Dionysian from the Apollonian, which still reverberates across contemporary politics and the subjectivity of Black individuals, as we shall see further on.

Still within "Eumenides", there is a shift in setting and a discontinuity of action (the palace, the tomb, and Athens), a feature likewise observable in "The Glass Bottle Trick." While in the former the narrative sequence is linear, in the latter we are guided by the narrator's voice through fragmented time and space (the past is marked in the text in italics), allowing us to get to know Beatrice, the social forces in tension (represented by the hot weather, with a storm looming), her romantic relationships, academic interests, and activities prior to marriage—when she studied medicine—, her parents' relationship, and, finally, her courtship and marriage to Samuel.

While waiting for her husband to arrive in the backyard, the young woman saw a small bird threatened by a tiny snake, which ultimately stole one egg, then another, and then:

> [...] "Beatrice grabbed the stick and waved it near the branches, as close to the bird and the nest as she dared.
> — Leave them alone, you brute! Go away!
> The stick hit some branches. The two [blue glass] bottles in the tree fell to the ground and shattered with a crash. A hot breeze rose into the air. The snake slid away quickly, the two eggs swelling in its throat. The bird flew off, sobbing to itself." (Hopkinson, 2023, p. 112).

9 It is worth reiterating that the ancient Greeks had contact with African peoples including, notably, figures such as the mathematician Hypatia. In his work "The African Origin of Civilization: Myth or Reality (1974), extensively discussed the relationship between the Nubians and the Hellenes, including their cultural exchanges and the scientific and philosophical appropriations made by the latter at the expense of the former. This tendency toward differentiation, hierarchy, and domination within that society is observable even within the "Oresteia" itself. An example is the treatment of the war captive Cassandra, described as both "barbarian" and "masculinized" (rational). Thus, if such distinctions are so sharply drawn in literary representation, the presence of a racialized discourse in classical works should come as no surprise.

The somewhat dreamlike presence of the snake takes us back to "The Libation Bearers" and Clytemnestra's nightmare, in which she gives birth to a serpent—a vision that later proves to be a true omen: "I gave birth to this serpent, I nursed it myself!" [Orestes]" (Ésquilo, 2000, p. 135). This recognition through a sign constitutes textual evidence of what the open ending of the story may signify in "invisible ink"[10] (Morrison, 2019), a concept we will approach later.

As for the blue bottles, they are a part of Caribbean culture diegetically introduced by Samuel:

> "[...] if someone dies, you must place a bottle in a tree to hold the person's spirit; otherwise, they come back as a *duppy*, a ghost, to haunt you?" A blue bottle. To keep the *duppy* cool so he won't attack you, angry for being dead." (Hopkinson, 2023, p. 110).

While Samuel describes both himself and his belief in *duppies* in derogatory terms, he keeps a "stiff, pompous behavior" (p. 109), also characterized as proper, respectable, and hardworking. Being older than Beatrice, the widower kept his terrible past to himself while maintaining a "stable, solid, responsible" facade (p. 115). Such attributes, perceived by the character as rare among men in that context of limited opportunity, led Beatrice to believe that marrying Samuel would make both her mother and herself *very* happy. Marriage provided Beatrice with better material conditions, sparing her from waged labor and from being necessarily forced into reproductive (domestic) work, since Sammy had hired Gloria—an older woman, described as "molasses-colored" by the narrator—for that role.

After the marriage, however, Samuel began to reveal an increasing severity whenever contradicted by his wife, to the point of creating an atmosphere of fear that silenced her and led her to abandon her own goals, tastes, and dreams. However, Samuel's "ill temper" was constantly offset by his refinement—a trait that shapes him less as a purely wicked man and more as a tormented being capable of committing grave mistakes. Thus, despite the dehumanizing effects of his repeated transgressions, the character embodies a place of ambivalence and reflection rather than of monstrosity, much like Orestes.

Particularly significant is the emphasis on grave error as part of the human condition in the construction of thie character, who inhabits a Caribbean country that, although no longer a colony, still endures the material and subjective consequences of the colonial pact. In this way, the compassion evoked as we observe Samuel's agonizing trajectory—his subjectivity crushed by coloniality and his relentless attempt to mimic the behavior, tastes, and aesthetics of the colonizer in a manner entirely contrary to the interests of his own social body—reveals that the true root of monstrosity and injustice lies in otherness and in the imbalance of power established by the racialist discourse already present in the self-deprecating voice of the Coryphaeus in "Eumenides." This

10 In her essay "Invisible Ink: Reading the Writing and Writing the Reading" (Morrison, 2019), the African American novelist and Nobel laureate Toni Morrison explains the importance of the reader's role as a co-author—one who fills textual gaps with what she named "*invisible ink*."

inescapable condition of dehumanization, which is also experienced by Frankenstein's Creature, can become so overwhelming and alienating that it drives the victim to reproduce violence deliriously, either against themselves or others. In this case, the murder of Sammy's subjectivity is a crime without a body or a clearly defined enemy.

Thus, we understand that, like the Coryphaeus who defines Blackness as a curse, Samuel also views himself as a beast, having internalized that ancient notion. As a means of escaping such suffering, he sought to marry women with "light skin" (sic)—that is, Black women[11] whose skin was less pigmented (mixed-race)—which he described as "beautiful." Moreover, convinced that Beatrice embodied the ideal of femininity closest to the norm he could ever attain, as he "would not dare to address a white woman," Samuel forbade his "beloved" from exposing herself to the sun (lest her skin grow darker) and kept the house intensely air-conditioned, yet another contrast to the Caribbean climate and a sign of his effort to conform to the Eurocentric *ethos* that equates whiteness with superiority.

Returning to the question of narrative sequence and unity, there is a fragmented structure in Hopkinson's story (2023) that appears heterogeneous to the reader, as it moves between realism and supernatural events. In the tragedies, however, the mythological presences are treated narratively in a less estranged manner, and their actions reinforce the coherence of the parts until the protagonist reaches recognition (*anagnorisis*) and catharsis is achieved.

After the incident with the broken bottles that releases two whirlwinds of dust, they enter through the window of the third room. Beatrice enters the house and notices that the central air-conditioning is no longer working. She looks for the unit in every room she has access to and, driven also by curiosity, opens the door to the third room. Of all the actions that brought unhappiness upon her, her one excess was, without a doubt, yielding to curiosity. When she opens the door, she sees:

> [...] "The corpses of two women [...] lying side by side on the twin beds. Mouths frozen wide open; bellies frozen and eviscerated. A thin, glimmering layer of ice crystals glazed their skin, which, like Beatrice's, was barely brown; yet they were washed in frigid blood coated with frost that had hardened into a ruby red [...]." (Hopkinson, 2021, p. 110).

The horrifying scene of preserved serial violence leads Beatrice to grasp the depth of Samuel's self-hatred and realize how this places her, as a pregnant woman, in grave danger. Drawing on a biblical reference, the character may be read as a symbolic restorer of colonial law and order with each act of aggression against his companions and offspring, whom he regarded as heirs to a curse—one that, in this case, is subjective, social, and political. This private situation metonymically represents

11 In line with writers Toni Cade (1970) and Grada Kilomba (2019), I choose to capitalize "Black" to distinguish their political identity of the term Black woman from the gendered grammatical form used in expressions such as "black population" or "black literature." This capitalization also underscores the self-definition of melanated womanhoods whose ancestry traces back to the African continent. I also consider the term Black to be a political identity derived from consciousness (Kilomba, 2019), rather than from the subordinating vocabulary of colonial discourse.

a *sine qua non* condition of the postcolonial context: the perverse (impersonal) colonial pact which still feeds upon him and every other Black man whose subjectivity is mutilated and materialized through their uxoricidal acts.

As the house grows warmer, the *duppies* awaken. A mist split in two, each part settling over one of the women, and then "each misty column had a face, distorted with fury" (Hopkinson, 2023, p. 122). As they drink the blood of their own bodies, the ghosts become solid. It should be noted that those figures were not a source of comfort for Beatrice, unlike Clytemnestra, who herself invoked her avengers as a last resort. An interesting meaning lies in this difference: while the Furies of Antiquity pursued crimes of bloodshed, the *duppy* brides appear as ambiguous figures. We may consider that Clytemnestra deliberately summoned them, whereas Beatrice, through a Freudian slip, *unconsciously* released them from the bottle and, *consciously*—out of curiosity—freed them from their stasis. Despite this distinction regarding their presence, the anger in their gaze toward the young woman ascertained neither that they would avenge her nor that they would ensure her well-being.

However, we should be wary of Beatrice's discomfort before the mythological figures, since they represent the return of the repressed past—frozen in time—from which she has been estranged, and is demonized by the dominant culture that victimizes every character in the story. The thawing alludes to the inevitability of confronting trauma, while also suggesting the relentlessness of fate in the form of retribution.

Moreover, the increasingly tangible presence of the Furies precedes Samuel's long-awaited arrival. And, in the denouement, the narrative voice asks: "When they had fed, would they come to save her—or to avenge themselves upon her, the usurper, as they had upon Samuel?" (Hopkinson, 2023, p. 123). Unlike "Eumenides," which culminates in a closed and unfavorable outcome for women, "The Glass Bottle Trick" offers a series of favorable hints that shift the discussion of tragedy into the present, demanding from the reader a stance of co-authorship written "in invisible ink" (Morrison, 2019).

An open ending—like any complex story—is always an invitation to investigate the elements that lie above, beneath, and beyond the lines (the text written in "invisible ink"), guiding us not only to interpret but also to actively participate, to contribute. From this perspective, being an analyst means, in a sense, striving to become the "reader for whom the text was written." To Morrison (2019), the fact that the text itself does not change, while readers' perceptions and possible interpretations do, through social transformations, renders the text "alive" as it enables shifts of focus toward "new" themes or the recognition of both written and invisible elements. The author also cautions that narrators may manipulate the reader by defining a sense of truth; however, works that do not specify the social position of the narrative voice, for instance, relinquish a degree of authorial control and thereby compel us to imagine, infer, imply, and destabilize the text (Morrison, 2019). With this intent, we examine the story's ending and present a reading of what has been written in "invisible ink."

Well, just as the tale begins with a snake devouring two eggs, Samuel takes on the role of the serpent when he prevents the birth of the children and of the viper (the husband himself), as the murderer who trapped the spirits in bottles. In this case, we find an analogous condition between the corpses with eviscerated bellies and the shattered bottles following the swallowed eggs. And what about the third part?

While in "Eumenides" the number of Furies composing the chorus is six, in a Christian context half that number symbolizes the harmony of the Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; therefore, it is usual for them to appear in literature as Alecto, Megaera, and Tisiphone. Unlike the *duppies*, Beatrice managed to recognize the danger before becoming a victim of murder. Whether for disobeying her husband's orders or because she was pregnant, her condition as a woman was inescapable, just as the house in which she lived.

Thus, the key to the fate of the third part can be inferred from the title: "The Glass Bottle Trick." At a certain point, the main narrative pauses and focuses on a scientific experiment in which creating a vacuum inside the container with the use of a candle allows a whole egg to be drawn through the narrow neck of a bottle. The trick, in this case, is metaphorically the violence that forces Beatrice to shrink until she fits into that space. But how is the egg removed? By breaking the bottle. Before going upstairs, Beatrice had been preparing a boiled egg, which she still held in her hand when she opened the refrigerator door. The egg fell, but did not shatter. If we connect all the evidence presented above, we can infer that the serpent was banished and that Beatrice, untainted by the act of mariticide, was able to continue with her pregnancy. Escaping Samuel, however, as the bottle experiment suggests, requires that he be "shattered." In this sense, the decision not to explicitly depict a grotesque ending may reflect Nalo Hopkinson's political commitment, but also serve as a means of prompting us to imagine—to write in invisible ink—that instead of submitting to the masculine privilege of impunity in cases of blood crimes against women, Beatrice is avenged and protected by the Kindly Ones. The justice, or injustice, of their actions depends on the frame of reference adopted; yet, when carried out by supernatural beings, it surpasses the limited scope of the rational world.

We would like to reiterate that in both "Eumenides" and "The Glass Bottle Trick," vengeance is likely to occur because the Furies, more than mere avengers, are agents of justice for those who do not benefit from formal equality within a society indebted to the selectively democratic Athenian model that excluded women, foreigners, and enslaved people from political decision-making and social life. Thus, through their actions, Clytemnestra and the *duppies* have denounced across the ages that justice wields formal equality as a means of exerting greater power against the most dispossessed. In this case, Iphigenia, Clytemnestra, and the nameless ghosts do not call for justice solely for the blood crime; rather, they reveal that the crime itself is preceded by social norms that must be reconsidered if full social justice is to be achieved.

4 More Important Than the Right to Kill Is the Right to Live

After all, the ancient divine Law declared that, once blood was spilled upon the earth, it called for more blood. From this perspective, the Atreus became ensnared in a cycle of adultery, murder, and suicide that persisted until the establishment of Athena's tribunal in "Eumenides." Orestes' trial before the Athenian court raised profound questions about the nature of justice and the relationship between personal vengeance and institutionalized justice (Nascimento, 2017). How does this relate to femicide and the problem of impunity? Is institutionalized justice capable of addressing violence against women?

Whereas in Aeschylus's Oresteia trilogy (2000), more specifically, the tribunal repeatedly reinforces women's place as one of naturalized subordination within that society, Nalo Hopkinson's contemporary short story provides intertextual evidence that it is both possible and just for the third bride—the cleverest one, considering the intertext with the work of the Grimm Brothers—to have received the Furies' help in setting fire to the house where she had been imprisoned. Undoubtedly, a comparative study of these works makes clear that authorship, time, and place are decisive factors, for they are part of the process of literary composition and the discursive intention of each work.

The examination of the literary representation of violence and vengeance carried out by women across the ages makes it evident that social and political roles have changed, but not nearly enough. Moreover, when we intersect the social markers of racial (Black) and gender (woman) difference in the real world, the disparity in femicide rates shows the pressing need to focus on structural change concerning race, gender, and other markers in the process of building a more equitable society[12]. Equal punishment, as well as departing from equal assumptions without resorting to the concept of equity is a sure path to false symmetry and the endless perpetuation of the problem. Thus, there is no justice in blood crimes, and this debate cannot truly be complete if social dynamics are forsaken.

In fact, this comparative reading of the representation of femicide in "Eumenides" and "The Glass Bottle Trick" does not exhaust the central issue of blood crimes in the past and their persistence in the present but refines our understanding of the counter-discursive voice in feminist science fiction since modern times and deepens our awareness of the political impact of hierarchized social differentiation. If there is one idea that prevails at the end of this process, it is the reminder that, in an unequal world, we must never confuse the reaction of the oppressed with the violence of the oppressor. Mindful of this maxim by Malcolm X, as a feminist literary critic, I emphasize the two aspects of this aphorism.

12 The Dossiê da Agência Patrícia Galvão compiles alarming statistics on violence committed against Black women in Brazil, drawn from the Violence Map (2015): they are twice as likely to be murdered as white women and account for 58.86% of women who fall victims of domestic violence. Between 2003 and 2013, the total number of homicides of white women fell by 9.8%, whereas the homicides of Black women increased by 54.2%. Available at: https://dossies.agenciapatriciagalvao.org.br/feminicidio/biblioteca/mulheres-negras-e-violencia-no-brasil/ . Access on: Jun. 23, 2025.

The first is that disregarding the difference in power between Agamemnon and Clytemnestra establishes a false premise that runs through Aeschylus's trilogy and ultimately motivates Sammy's uxoricidal act in "The Glass Bottle Trick." Reaction is not analogous to the act of wielding power or striking first. The second is that there is no sense in claiming the right to kill or the legality of murder, already so deeply embedded in state violence and capitalist practices.

Instead, through our comparative reading of the literary representation of femicide in ancient Greece and contemporary Jamaica, we seek to identify how misogyny persists and becomes more complex through colonization, reinventing itself in its postcolonial context. At this point, while the discourse in "The Oresteia" naturalizes blood crimes against women and the pact between the "Sun God" and the "Goddess of Justice" with impunity, "The Glass Bottle Trick" challenges identities, presenting a "social monster" while carefully showing that it is not Blackness what makes him a "beast," but rather his own poor choices (Wester; Reyes, 2019).

Hopkinson stands out as an exceptional fiction writer, crafting a story of oppression that engages with themes such as colorism, sexism, and patriarchy without demonizing men or absolving them of the consequences of their unbalanced choices. This ambiguity serves both as a means of representing the individuality of the Black subject and as an indictment of the effects of racism on subjectivity. The author also delivers an open ending that provokes our social imagination and compels us to question the very notion of verisimilitude and the desire for justice within a misogynistic, racist, and classist society in which Beatrice has no safe choice ahead of her.

Thus, this non-exhaustive exercise in reading the persistence of femicide across time and space highlights the of resisting death-dealing policies. At the state level, as highlighted by the Femicide Dossier (2023), public investment is needed to effect rights, intervene and eradicate discriminatory practices in courts and juries, and to confront society's tolerance of femicide. It is also essential to consider the role of literature, particularly feminist-oriented speculative fiction, as a form of intervention in reality through questioning and proposition. In this regard, I underscore the crucial role of authors such as Mary Shelley, Nalo Hopkinson, and many others who, through aesthetic means, use speculation to confront reality, leading their audiences toward their own capacity for agency, intervention through "invisible ink," and the potential transposition of fiction into the very reality that gives rise to the diegesis.

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