

THE FAVELA SPACE AND ITS IMPACTS IN THE STRIVE AGAINST COVID-19: a discussion on the literary texts

O ESPAÇO DA FAVELA E SEUS IMPACTOS NO COMBATE À COVID-19: uma discussão à luz de textos literários

EL ESPACIO FAVELA Y SUS IMPACTOS EN LA LUCHA CONTRA COVID-19: una discusión a la luz de los textos literários

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ABSTRACT:

The objective of this work is to take literary representations of the shanty towns to discuss the way the unequal occupation of spaces impacts the contagion index of COVID-19, which in Brazil represents a higher mortality probability among the Afro-descendant population, which is mostly resident of degraded spaces in the city. To this end, spatial representations developed in the literary field work as a starting point for reflections on the center and periphery relationship and, consequently, for analyzing how the many discourses generated can make some places and, thus, their residents invisible.

KEYWORDS: Shanty town; Literature; COVID-19.

Introduction

In the current context, human beings are suddenly forced to adapt their lifestyles to deal with a pandemic caused by the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus. Some of the necessary changes involve social distance, increased personal hygiene care and the use of accessories, such as protective masks. These measures are configured as challenges, especially for third world countries, where the majority of the population lives in places with poor hygiene conditions, in addition to the difficulty of accessing information.

With regard to the Brazilian context, the lack of serious public policies aimed at compensating for inequalities resulting from a historical process of expropriation negatively reflects on several aspects of many people lives, with emphasis on the disproportion with regard to spatial occupation, whether in the quantitative or qualitative aspect.

Given this panorama and based on literary representations of Brazilian shanty towns, the objective of this paper is to discuss the way the unequal occupation of spaces

impacts on the contagion index, what means in the Brazilian context a higher probability of mortality among the Afro-descendant population, most of them resident of degraded spaces in the city. Therefore, the spatial representations elaborated in the literary field will serve as a starting point to think about how the center and periphery relationship can discursively reinforce the invisibility of such spaces.

In the conception presented here, the invisibility of poverty has harmful effects, such as the absence or unsatisfactory presence of the State in the slums and other informal settlements in the city, especially with regard to public policies implementation that guarantees life quality improvement to the residents of these spaces. In the current situation, in which the mortality rate due to COVID-19 grows at an accelerated rate, it is necessary to intensify the discussion about the slums erasure from the imaginary of non-resident people or, even, the permitted visibility regimes to such spaces, which are mostly filtered by the eyes of those who have the power to give visibility. As a result, the population mental images of the slums appear in line with what is for Debord (1997) another facet of the society of the spectacle.

Brazilian slums spatiality and the movements of territorialization and deterritorialization of its residents

It is important to note that a representative part of the people who used to live in slums is now on the streets. Since 2014, recent data show that the number of homeless people has increased. These invisible subjects, victims of a perverse economic system, remain excluded, even, from the surveys carried out by the main institute responsible for providing statistical data in the country, IBGE (Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics).

The most recent data were analyzed in a work developed by Marco Antonio Carvalho Natalino in 2016 through IPEA (Institute of Applied Economic Research). According to Natalino (2015), the research was based on information from the Unified Social Assistance System Census, which consulted 1,924 municipalities regarding the number of homeless people. With these data, the researcher applied a specific methodology and estimated that 101,854 people across the country lived on the streets in 2015 (NATALINO, 2016).

Since their emergence, the shanty towns were created under the sign of uncertainty and instability, which made Carolina Maria de Jesus (1960), a black writer and resident of a slum, designate this space as an eviction room:

[...] when they started to demolish the single-story houses to construct the buildings, we, the poor, who lived in collective housing, were evicted and stayed under the bridges. That's why I call the favela an eviction room of a city. We, the poor, are the old trifles (JESUS, 1960, p. 195).

The slums, part of what Haesbaert (2007) calls exclusion clusters, remain the space in which the political and economic instability causes the most devastating impacts. In a scenario of an increasing impoverishment of salaried individuals, many people find it difficult to honor financial commitments. Sometimes, this situation affects the maintenance of their own homes, compelling them to experience a process of extreme deterritorialization, what reaches the economic-political and symbolic-cultural dimensions (HAESBAERT, 2014, p. 313).

Those who manage to maintain their homes live in precarious places such as shanty towns in which spatial configuration is peculiar and greatly affects the possibilities of contagion by the new coronavirus. It is usually described as “the area of irregularly built dwellings, with no streets or urban plan” (ZALUAR; ALVITO, 2003, p. 17) and called by IBGE a subnormal agglomerate. In fact, it is a term that has been criticized by several researchers. According to Carvalho (2017, p. 11), there is an ideological positioning in the researches carried out by this institute, as well as an attempt to “reduce subjectivity regarding such a complex and controversial topic.” The theme is usually approached from the criterion of illegality of possession. However, as these spaces are heterogeneous, it would be necessary to carry out “an interdisciplinary work involving lawyers, urban planners, geographers, sociologists and other professionals” (GONDIM, p. 56). In addition, the term subnormal agglomerate is discriminatory and contrasts to what is implied as normal. It also presupposes the existence of preconceived and valued concepts in order to promote the segregation of its residents with the further reinforcement of the negative imaginary in relation to that space.

Moreover, Silva (2014, p. 35) emphasizes that “precarious or irregular housing is close to what would be normal” since 30% of the Brazilian population resides in these spaces. In his study, Marques (2007) observes that it would then be more appropriate to exchange the nomenclature adopted by IBGE for “precarious settlements” or even for the alternative term “informal settlements” (SILVA, 2014, p. 34) preferred by the United Nations (UN).

The use of certain terminologies, such as the one adopted by IBGE, contributes to reinforce a negative perspective built since the appearance of the slums, which imprinted on its resident the stigma of being lazy and marginalized. This idea of favela eclipsed the

real need of these people who are mostly deprived of basic resources that guarantee human dignity. In *Quarto de Despejo*, Carolina Maria de Jesus (1960) reports the consequences of living with material deprivation that puts lives in the slums at constant risk:

[...] The garbagemen had thrown some meat in the trash. And he chose some pieces. He said to me: Take it, Carolina. You can eat it. He gave me some pieces. In order not to hurt him I accepted them. I tried to convince him not to eat that meat, but the hard bread gnawed by the rats. He told me he would not. He hadn't eaten in two days. He lit the fire and roasted the meat. The hunger was such that he could not let the meat roast. He heated it up and ate it. In order not to witness that picture, I left thinking: I will pretend I didn't witness this scene. This cannot be real in a fertile country like mine. I revolted against the Social Service that was created to readjust the misfits, but it is not aware of the unfortunate existence of the marginals. I sold the irons at Zinho and went back to the favela, the backyard of São Paulo. The other day they found the little black boy dead. [...] He didn't carry documents with himself. He was buried like any John Doe. Nobody tried to know his name. Marginal people have no name [...]. Every four years, we change politicians and they do not solve hunger, which has its matrix in the favelas [...] (JESUS, 1960, p. 40).

The experience that Carolina Maria de Jesus had in the 1960s is current and reaches greater proportions in a period in which Brazil is guided by neoliberalism. At the end of 2019, the IBGE News Agency reported that 13.5 million people were living in extreme poverty. These numbers are even worse in the current context of fighting a pandemic, with the low circulation of people and the consequent impossibility for many of them working in the informal market. Furthermore, the ongoing federal government position of neglecting the economically weaker triggers initiatives of dismissal and cuts in wages.

As a research carried out by the Observatório de Favelas points out, the pertinent issues to the studied space must involve a profile survey that considers the socio-political, socio-economic, socio-urban and socio-cultural aspects, as the slum is a place where the State it is not very active (SILVA et al, 2009). It is necessary that more consistent public policies are implemented in order to minimize the difficulties and the suffering of families living in favelas in relation to the implantation of hydraulic, sewage and electric networks in the houses, the garbage collection, the public lighting, the regularization of the land tenure, public security, the generation of jobs, the guarantee of quality education for children and young people, as well as access to health and technology.

The permanent lack of assistance on the part of the State today results in a great difficulty for the residents of these places to adequately prevent themselves from the infection caused by the new coronavirus. The non-planning of the constructions and the

dispute for the spatial occupation reflects the labyrinthine configuration, formed by alleyways which makes social isolation extremely difficult. In the text *Estética das Favelas*, Paola Berenstein Jacques (2001, online) recalls that such clusters of houses function more as a shelter, highlighting the differences between this term and its correlate, dwelling:

The first objective of the builder who is almost always the resident himself with the help of friends and neighbors (principle of the collective effort) is to take shelter for oneself and one's family. This first shelter is almost always precarious, but it already forms the basis for future evolution. As soon as the resident finds or buys suitable materials, he or she replaces the old ones and begins to increase the shack. There is never a pre-established project for the construction of a shack. The materials found form the basis of the construction that will depend on chance and the need to find new materials or the ability to buy them. The shack is constantly evolving, until it becomes a masonry house, nevertheless the construction never ends, and the houses are constantly under construction. Even less formally fragmented than the wooden shacks, the new masonry houses continue to be fragmentary because they are transformed in a continuous way. (JACQUES, 2001).

The slum, as the space of the fragmentary, is always in a process of change and the ground destined for houses construction can always vary with the frequent changes in its structure, which makes the space of the private spread over what could be considered the public space and, thus, favelas acquire a labyrinthine aspect, with very narrow passageways instead of streets.

Experiencing a pandemic in these places becomes an even greater challenge, as it is difficult to maintain the distance determined by the World Health Organization when walking around the public space of a shanty town. In addition, many residentes do not have financial conditions to acquire basic hygiene products, such as soap and alcohol gel. Moreover, many of these houses do not have a hydraulic network, a fact that is added to the usual shortage of water in peripheral neighborhoods.

The spaces occupied by people living in extreme poverty are characterized by Haesbaert (2004, p. 314) as clusters of exclusion, that is, "human huddles, unstable, insecure and generally unpredictable in their dynamics of exclusion." The access to the territory by these people is precarious. Usually located in rugged locations, these spaces were the possibilities of refuge that many had in the past and, over time, went through a process of reframing - a strategy that promoted an identity relationship between the place and those who inhabit it. In the poem *Favelário Nacional*, Andrade (2015) represents the relationship of the favela dwellers with the ground in which they took root and

experienced a process of territorialization that made them generate processes of identification with community life and the favela space:

They took me from my hill
got me out of my room
got me out of my air
they put me in this room
multiplied by a thousand
rooms of similar houses.
They made all this to me
for my sake. And my darling
stayed there on the burnt floor
where I had the feeling
to live as I wanted
where I wanted,
not where they want me to live
upset and owing
installment plus installment
from the house I didn't buy
but they bought for me.
I stand, sad and upset,
Desfavelado¹. (ANDRADE, 2015, p.)

Interventions in the slum spaces, as pointed out by Jacques (2001), must respect the idiosyncrasies of people who have memories of pain and whose identities were created in those spaces. In this context, social movements, within their means, end up assuming the role of implementing measures aimed at improving life in these spaces, under the principle of respecting this population.

Taking into account the little attention the State directs to problems of such an immediate nature and the lack of commitment to the most impoverished population, the alternative for slum communities is to unite themselves in favor of self-organization. At this juncture, solidarity networks are created as an alternative way to meet basic needs, which resolution should be the responsibility of the government.

In this moment, complicated by several factors aroused throughout the Brazilian people historical process of constitution, the inhabitants of the slums, once again ignored especially by the federal government - a fact attested in many of the speeches given by the President of the Republic - need reinvent themselves and strengthen the feeling of community resilience, explained by Oliveira and Morais (2018) as the ability to collectively face adversity, which happens through self-organization oriented towards changing habits to face the pandemic or to attract material and professional resources from external agents.

¹ A person who is not a slum dweller anymore.

The solidarity networks that emerged in the communities become a palliative survival strategy that eases, however does not solve the precarious situation in which people live. At the moment, these networks are being implemented through joint efforts to collect food and hygiene products, and to circulate information through community radio stations or sound cars. In fact, mediation between the slums dwellers and the State is carried out through some of these representatives so that certain minimum rights are guaranteed, such as water supply.

The lack of a water network in some of the houses in Brazilian slums goes against the United Nations resolution which since 2010 established the access to water and basic sanitation as basic rights. In view of the numerous problems faced in the favela area, we question how the government, especially in the federal sphere, has acted to combat the pandemic in order to preserve lives in these communities.

The necropolitics x solidarity in times of pandemic

In the current context, in which the point of agreement between most people from all over the world is that solidarity should be practiced and that the State should act more emphatically in tackling the pandemic, the Brazilian president contradicts these expectations. His government is aimed at strengthening the free market – what was announced in the speeches preceding the elections and also in those given after he took office – and has as a proposal the implementation of a minimum state in which supposedly people would be able to self-manage themselves with little interference of the State, as if they were all starting from similar life stories and, therefore, capable of improving their own economic condition from the entrepreneurial attitude, with no government incentives:

This future I am talking about and believe goes through a government that creates conditions for everyone to grow. This means that the federal government will take a step back, reducing its structure and bureaucracy, cutting waste and privileges so that people can take many steps forward. Our government will break paradigms. We will trust people. We will streamline red tape, simplify and allow the citizen, the entrepreneur to have more freedom to create and build their future. Let's untie Brazil. This will not be a government that responds only to immediate needs. The reforms we propose will be aimed to create a new future for Brazilians. And when I say that, I speak with one hand turned to the rubber tapper in the heart of the Amazon jungle and the other to the entrepreneur sweating to create and develop his company. There are no Brazilians from the South or the North. We are all one country. We are all one nation. A democratic nation (BOLSONARO, 2018, online).

The idea of the minimal state has been reaffirmed in a government elected with the slogan “Brazil above everything, God above everyone,” in which there is an encouragement to gun possession under the pretext of self-protection. In addition, in November 2019, the president sent a project to the Chamber of Deputies with a proposal to amend the Article 292 of Law Decree 3,689 from October 3, 1941 of the Military Criminal Procedure Code to institute the exclusion of illegality, with the purpose of exempting military personnel from punishment in police operations, a proposal rejected by the Chamber of Deputies.

There is a strict relationship between gun ownership and violence. In the last few years, violence in the slums has been widely portrayed in songs, in literature and in audiovisual productions. However, a parody elaborated by students from Rio de Janeiro based on the poem Canto do Sabiá written by Gonçalves Dias realistically exposes the uncertainties experienced in that space in relation to the continuity of life.

My land is Penha
And the fear lives here
Every day some News come
That one more disappeared

Our houses are pierced
By the bullets that hit
Hearts full of fear
From the policeman who suddenly appears

I used to daydream going out at night
But I can't do this anymore
There is a risk of dying
And can't go back to my dad and mom

My land has horrors
I can't find anywhere else
The lack of security is so great
That I can hardly relax

'Don't allow me, God, to die'
Before I leave this place
Take me to a quiet place
Where the thrush-song fills the air (MINHA TERRA É A PENHA, 2017, online).

The people living in shanty towns is marked by double violence, both from the drug trafficking and the police. In spite of that, today they have to live with presidential initiatives that further intensify police intransigence in these spaces. Although the exclusion of illegality has not been instituted, the presidential speech is strong enough to be influential. Furthermore, it is aligned with what Wacquant (1999) calls a neoliberal

penalty, which presents itself in a paradoxical way: "it intends to remedy with a policeable and penitentiary 'more State' the economic and social 'least State' that is the cause of the widespread escalation of objective and subjective insecurity."

The current negligence policy in relation to poverty has police repression as a supposed solution to the exercise of social security control, which has the ideology of the total market as a backdrop, a copy of the North American model (WACQUANT, 1999). However, the neoliberal penalty becomes

[...] more seductive and more disastrous when applied in countries at the same time affected by strong inequalities in conditions and opportunities in life and devoid of democratic tradition and institutions capable of cushioning the shocks caused by the mutation of work and the individual at the threshold of the new century (WACQUANT, 1999).

Such a policy, with highly neoliberal traits in relation to the market, with the maintenance of class order based on a discourse ruled by meritocracy, finds in police repression the mechanism for maintaining the status quo. The use of violence, torture and execution, with the subsequent disappearance of bodies, is a practice in peripheral neighborhoods in Brazil, which places the country among the most violent in the world (GOUSSINSKY, 2018).

Such data are even more aggravated in times of social isolation in which police operations continue to be held, such as the one that victimized a 14-year-old boy in May 2020 in Rio de Janeiro. The attitudes on the part of this government must then be combated, as it is a proposal to annihilate part of the impoverished population in Brazil, which can be configured as an ethnic and racial genocide.

In addition, the disregard of the pandemic attested in several of the president's speeches and positions reiterates the lethal dimension of his governmental attitudes, which Mbembe (2016) calls necropolitics. The concept was created from the Foucauldian perspective of biopower and also applies in the author's words, to "the various ways in which in our contemporary world firearms are implanted in the interest of maximum destruction of people and creation of 'worlds of death'" (MBEMBE, 2016, p. 146).

In the hands of the federal government, the pandemic has been used as yet another weapon in order to maintain the "world of death," a sovereign power exercise that determines which bodies can be discarded (MEMBE, 2016). On March 27, 2020, in an interview Bolsonaro expressed that he disregarded the results of the pandemic: "Will some people die? Yes, they will, I'm sorry. This is life" (BOLSONARO, 2020, online).

Although experiencing a chaotic moment, reason why a state of world emergency was declared since January 30, 2020 by the World Health Organization, and since February 3, 2020 in Brazil with the ordinance 188, the proposal for the consolidation of a minimal state remains present in the president's speeches. In his March 23, 2020 pronouncement, he stated:

Does the concern have to exist? Yes, it does. And the first person to worry about it is you, who has the father, the grandfather, the great-grandfather at home. You don't have to wait for the government to do anything. The government is doing something, but it cannot do everything that some people think the State should do. A government in which the State does everything is a dictatorship such as Venezuela, Cuba, North Korea (BOLSONARO, 2020, online).

Thus, Brazilian people are faced with such a President of the Republic's position who appears publicly without face mask opposing to what the World Health Organization recommends, and going against the guidelines of his former minister of justice exonerated in the midst of the pandemic for not maintaining alignment with his strategies of indifference to human life, what we have witnessed is the exercise of a necropolitics directed at the social actors who bring together the greatest weaknesses: social vulnerability and groups considered at risk by the health system.

His insistence on encouraging the returning of non-essential activities and his excessive preoccupation with the economy in this atypical moment place this president in the list of the worst managers Brazil has already had, as portrayed by the Datafolha survey (2019) at the beginning of his mandate.

In an article published on April 13, 2020 in *Correio Brasiliense* with the headline "Coronavirus is more lethal for black and brown patients," Máira Nunes and Maria Eduarda Cradim (2020) present information from the Ministry of Health regarding COVID-19 as more lethal among black populations, since the favela becomes "the conducive environment for the rapid proliferation of the virus, aggravated in areas with greater circulation of people in reduced spaces."

It is necessary, therefore, to recognize the debt that the country has with the population of the favela, which has been abandoned by a cruel economic and political system aimed at maintaining a social class structure. The State has the responsibility for maintaining life, and the citizens have the duty to demand that the needs of the most economically vulnerable be supported through public policies aimed at generating jobs, improving income and accessing education and culture with quality.

In a poem, Carlos Drummond de Andrade (2015) mentions the fear some people have of the slums. However, contrary to what many might think, this fear is not about violence, but the guilt these people feel for “little or no brotherhood”:

[...] I'm afraid. I fear you, without knowing you,
I'm afraid just to feel you, stuck
favela, erysipelas, Saint Anthony's fire
in the flaxen thigh of Rio de Janeiro.
Fear: not of your blade nor your revolver
neither your trickery nor your look.
I'm afraid that you feel I am guilty
and we are indeed guilty of little or no fraternity (ANDRADE, 2015, p.).

By way of conclusion: Overcoming invisibility and spectacularization in the slums from a possible route to solidarity

Besides the lack of brotherhood of those who could use their voices to ensure greater visibility of the slum and its problems by demanding that the public authorities promote changes in this space, slums inhabitants undergo a process of invisibility. The invisibility of poverty presupposes that people do not look at the other in a situation of social vulnerability, nor at their space, what was recently recorded in the lyrics *Invisível*, by Russo Passapusso (2018):

You've already passed by me
And didn't even look at me
You think I don't attract attention (you think)
Your heart is mistaken
You think I don't attract attention
There's no color, there's no face, it started and won't stop
[...]
Invisible, invisible
Nobody finds you (PASSAPUSSO, 2018, p.)

In the contemporary context, visibility is related to consumption power. In this respect, the condition of the slum invisibility is analogous to the condition of its inhabitants, who, generally has low purchasing power and therefore are subjected to various processes of exclusion. The shanty towns, in its condition of exclusion cluster, become invisible and, consequently, does not find representation in the mental map of people who do not inhabit this space (BAUMAN, 2001).

Due to the fact that poverty goes through a constant process of invisibility, there is not, on the other hand, a serious debate in the social sphere, especially by those actors responsible for the creation of public policies, who do not mobilize efforts to solve the

many problems faced in the degraded spaces of the city. In the 1980s, Andrade (2015) poetized the slum space from the perspective of a lyrical self who is positioned outside the space he or she intended to represent and, therefore, ignores that territory belonging to an Other: “[...] I don't know how to climb your rat, snake and spliff paths, / your cliffs, Mamallapuram temples / overheaded in Rio de Janeiro [...]” (ANDRADE, 2015, p. 67).

The ignorance of these territories is the result of historical, economic and social mechanisms, but, above all, a political one, capable of generating, in contemporary times, unknown worlds coexisting within the limits of the same city.

More than three decades have passed since the publication of the poem by Carlos Drummond de Andrade (2015) and the lack of sensitivity and brotherhood towards those who are in a situation of economic fragility remains similar. Such invisibility ends up reflecting, in some way, the neglect with which the public authorities deal with such vulnerability.

The erasure of these clusters of excluded people from the mental representation of many people (including the poor themselves who are unable to see the other poor due to the process of violence and alienation they experience) occurs when the majority of the population ends up being swallowed by the spectacle and consumption society, encouraged by the capitalist system.

If, on the one hand, there is an invisibility of poverty, on the other, media often makes its spectacularization without ethical concern regarding the lives transformed into consumer goods. This is what happens with the exploitation of misery by television programs, for example, in which the intimacy of some families is exposed, giving them momentary visibility (or turning them into objects for entertainment). Such practice sometimes results in aid from companies, which take the opportunity to promote themselves with low-cost advertising which, in the end, does not solve the problem and, much less, allows for a serious debate that reverberates in reflections and, consequently, in the political stance of viewers.

By only exploring the first layers of poverty after their spectacularization, they end up awakening in the viewer, at first, a feeling of pity for such a situation and, later, of relief, for having that individual problem momentarily resolved. This practice is not only characteristic of television programs, but also of the public authorities, what ends up shifting the population's gaze towards the spectacle of misery and the entertainment that it can provide.

Other poverty representations are made from the reproduction of the slums image. The imagery built around this space fixed it as “the place of need, of lack, of the void to

be filled by humanitarian feelings, of the danger to be eradicated by the political strategies that made the shanty town a scapegoat for the city's problems" (ZALUAR, ALVITO, 2003, p. 17). In this context, the slum becomes a marginalized and threatening place, but it is also where one goes to exercise humanitarian sentiments, especially because in these spaces public policies are practically absent.

With the pandemic, the need to become supportive is presented as something more compelling. Society, then, is perceived as an organic system, in which the individual body, as Mbembe (2016) warned, also gains the prerogative of letting live or causing death.

More than ever, it's important to be supportive. This is the reflection that this text intended to develop, based on a dialogue with literature. Brotherhood and solidarity presuppose thinking and representing the slum space in a serious way. Artistic expressions, especially literary ones, in this sense, can bring more sensitivity to the discussions and provide a greater proximity - with the activation of empathy - of the anxieties experienced by the most vulnerable from an aesthetic experimentation.

As a conclusion, another excerpt from Andrade's poem (2015) invites us to reflect on the comfort position in which many people are placed. The lyrical self, frankly and openly, recognizes the difficulty of practicing the brotherhood exercise.

It costs to be fraternal,
it costs to abandon our privileges
and trace the plant
of fair equality.
We are unequal
and we want to be
always uneven.
And we want to be
good and benevolent
sparingly
sociologically
very well behaved.
But, favela², ciao,
cause our chat
is getting so distressing.
Do you see that I lost the tone and the empathy of the beginning?
(ANDRADE, 2015, p. 68).

The poem thus reveals the ethos of an important portion of the Brazilian population, which also manifests itself in the values of the country's maximum leader, the President of the Republic. The awareness of a possible brotherhood cannot be supplanted, as stated in the poem, by the need to be unequal in order to ensure the maintenance of the highly

² Slum or shanty town in Portuguese.

unfair and asymmetric stratification of the classes. Fellowship presupposes inclusion and, therefore, the reduction of these inequalities. Although it is costly as the poetic persona in Favelário Nacional recognizes, it is necessary to “abandon our privileges and trace the plan of a just equality.”

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RESUMO:

Objetiva-se discutir, a partir de representações literárias da favela, o modo como a ocupação desigual dos espaços impacta no índice de contágio da COVID-19, o que se traduz, no Brasil, em maior probabilidade de mortalidade entre a população afrodescendente, em sua maioria, residente de espaços degradados da cidade. Para tanto, as representações espaciais, elaboradas no campo literário, servem como ponto de partida para pensar a relação centro e periferia e, conseqüentemente, para analisar como os discursos gerados podem tornar alguns locais e seus moradores, invisíveis.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Favela; Literatura; COVID-19.

RESUMEN:

El objetivo es discutir, en base a representaciones literarias de la favela, la forma en que la ocupación desigual de espacios impacta el índice de contagio de COVID-19, que en Brasil se traduce en una mayor probabilidad de mortalidad entre la población afrodescendiente, en la mayoría, residente de espacios degradados en la ciudad. Con este fin, las representaciones espaciales, desarrolladas en el campo literario, sirven como punto de partida para pensar sobre la relación entre el centro y la periferia y, en consecuencia, para analizar cómo los discursos generados pueden hacer que algunos lugares y sus residentes sean invisibles.

PALABRAS-CLAVES: Chabolas; Literatura; COVID-19.