

Pro-slavery newspapers, the right to time, and precarious intelligibilities: reflections based on a sensitive corpus

Jornais escravocratas, direito ao tempo e inteligibilidades precárias: reflexões a partir de um corpus sensível

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ABSTRACT

We discuss intersections between the right to time and precarious intelligibilities based on news from 19th-century newspapers. Thinking about journalism from the perspective of precarious intelligibilities means recognizing dynamics that reinforce strategies of dehumanization and processes of precariousness, such as those seen in the racism present in 19th-century newspapers in Minas Gerais, which are treated in this article as a sensitive corpus. Journalistic narratives as precarious intelligibilities that promote precariousness, consequently, run counter to struggles for the right to time, in the broad sense of reparations for historical injustices and the construction of futures free from dehumanizing hierarchies.

Keywords: Journalism, enslavement, sensitive corpus, precarious intelligibilities, right to time.

RESUMO

O texto discute interseções entre direito ao tempo e inteligibilidades precárias a partir de notícias de jornais mineiros do século XIX. Pensar o jornalismo pela perspectiva das inteligibilidades precárias significa nele reconhecer dinâmicas de reforço de diversas estratégias de desumanização e de processos de precarização, como os verificados no racismo presente em jornais escravagistas mineiros do século XIX, tratados neste artigo

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como *corpus* sensível. Narrativas jornalísticas como inteligibilidades precárias que promovem precarizações, consequentemente, estão na contramão de lutas pelo direito ao tempo, no sentido amplo de reparações de injustiças históricas e de construção de futuros livres de hierarquizações desumanizadoras.

Palavras-chave: Jornalismo, escravização, *corpus* sensível, inteligibilidades precárias, direito ao tempo.

1. INTRODUCTION

ON DECEMBER 9, 1880, the conservative newspaper *O Arauto de Minas* published a harsh critique of what it called “abolitionist propaganda.” Although it asserted that there was no one in Brazil “who would advocate for the cause of slavery,” the newspaper called upon “every patriotic Brazilian” to resist the emancipation movement, exposing “false philanthropists.” To this end, in that same issue, it reprinted an article from *Fluminense*, in which a kind of unified voice in defense of “general freedom” is again acknowledged, but emphasizing that it should occur slowly, gradually, and without posing risks to agriculture: “If we weigh the benefits that may accrue to the slaves against the harm that may result for Brazil, we will see that the imbalance is great, and the conflagration inevitable” (*O Arauto de Minas*, 1880, n.p.).

In this sense, the text calls for what it terms a “harmonious” solution, stating that since the Free Womb Law (dubbed the “divinely inspired law”) and “efforts” toward manumissions, “the overseers’ whip has almost disappeared, and in the domestic home the slave walks without the fear and dread of times past” (*O Arauto de Minas*, 1880, n.p.).

However, reproductions of this same sheet (Figure 1) contradict the supposedly peaceful atmosphere, as there are numerous notices of escaped enslaved people, revealing not only the cruelty and strategies of the slave-owning system but also, as an unintended consequence of these narratives, an entire network of resistance carried out by enslaved Black people. Resistance that took the form of reports of abuse to the authorities, the practice of *capoeira*, music, and also suicide, which was not limited to escaping the physical and psychological pain caused by the horror of forced labor and physical punishment, but consisted of elaborate forms of returning to one’s ancestral roots, as documented by Marialva Barbosa (2016).

Figure 1

Excerpts on slavery

TENTATIVA DE SUICÍDIO — Hontem o preto por nome Bento, escravo octogenario, que por ordem de sua senhora tinha de ser levado para ser vendido em um comboi que por aqui passou em direcção a Matta, tentou pôr termo ao longo captiveiro, que ora se ia agravar, fazendo alguns ferimentos no pescoço.
A autoridade tomou conhecimento do facto e procede à averiguações.

March 19, 1877

Fugiu a mais de um anno da Fazenda da Gratidão, em Santo Antonio das Brotas, Municipio de S. Fidelis, o escravo Faustino, crioulo, fulo, alto, sem barba, olhos e pés grandes, bons dentes, com signal de ferida no rosto e em um dos pés, de 28 annos de idade presumivel, pertencente a Camillo Teixeira do Nascimento, residente na Fregueza da Madre de Deus, Municipio do Turvo, Provincia de Minas.
Quem o mesmo apprehender ou der noticia certa ao dito seu Sr. ou na referida Fazenda será bem gratificado.

December 9, 1880

Suicidio.—O Sr. Tenente Delegado de Policia no dia 13 do corrente foi a Fazenda do Sr. José Francisco de Mendonça proceder á auto de corpo de delicto no cadaver de um escravo que suicidou-se, enforcando-se em uma árvore.
O Sr. Mendonça é um verdadeiro paee amigo para seus escravos, attribuindo-se o acto de desespero do infeliz suicida á exaltação produzida por desavenças entre parceiros.
Nesta cidade tambem ha poucos dias tentou suicidar-se um ex-empregado da Padaria S. Joannense por motivos que ignoramos.
Esquecidos de Deus e não tendo em conta o papel ridiculo que desempenham os suicidas na ultima scena da vida humana, julgam-se talvez heroes, quando não passam de covardes e homens sem fé: covardes porque buscam fugir aos onus do trabalho honrado imposto a todo o homem de brio; homens sem fé, porque não esperam do céu o conforto e animação nos transe afflictivos.

May 21, 1881

ESCRAVO FUGIDO
Fugio da cidade do Pomba, ha pouco mais de 2 mezes, o escravo Calisto, de idade de 30 annos, tendo os seguintes signaes: pardo, alto, magro, pouca barba no labio superior e no queixo, parece que tem um signal no labio superior e uma cicatriz nas costas de um ferida que teve ha muitos annos. Perturbase facilmente quando tem medo. Fugio para os lados do arraial da Lage, Quem á levar á caza do Sr. Antonio Francisco de Arango na cidade do Pomba receber a gratificação de duzentos mil reis.

Typ. do Arauto de Minas

February 19, 1888

Note. Collage created using excerpts from the newspaper *O Arauto de Minas* (1877–[1888]) extracted from the National Library Foundation's Digital Newspaper Archive.

Far from being an isolated example, *O Arauto de Minas* illustrates how various Brazilian newspapers throughout the 19th century also facilitated blatant processes of dehumanization and exoticization of non-white knowledge, corporealities, and forms of subjectivity. As Achille Mbembe (2018) points out, the experiences of slavery generated material expropriation and ontological impoverishment, transforming Blackness into a kind of phantasmagoria and impossible otherness. In this organized plundering of women and men transformed into object-men, commodity-men, and currency-men, journalistic practices



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also bore effective responsibility and contributed (albeit in a non-homogeneous manner) to the success of the slave-owning system in Brazil (Jácome, 2021).

According to Ribeiro (2000), “a newspaper page is a vivid reflection of the contradictions of social reality as captured in a single day” (p. 42). Thus, in addition to listing events considered important from the perspective of public debate and claiming the role of a modern agora, newspapers also provide a calendarized experience of time, unidirectional and irreversible, “expressed by succession, by replacement, by a direction whose horizon is the future” (Martins, 2021, pp. 15–16). An experience of time that is modern, therefore, compartmentalizing human existence into present, past, and future, and upon which rest the equally modern notions of reason and progress (Jácome, 2023; Martins, 2021). Progress, incidentally, is advocated by the Minas Gerais newspaper *O Leopoldinense* in its edition of April 24, 1881, in a front-page article titled “Emancipation and plantation,” which takes a critical stance regarding the possibility of the immediate liberation of enslaved people due to the lack of “slave arms” for the coffee plantations that the initiative would entail:

And this, to free thousands of slaves overnight, is a risky undertaking, all the more so if they do not first take steps to make them into men who can be useful to themselves, to their neighbors, and to the society in which they will play a role that may well be significant, given their numbers. (*O Leopoldinense*, 1881, p. 1)

In this passage, we observe the objectification of enslaved Black people through their reduction to the mere status of “arms,” whose humanity, indicated in the excerpt by the noun “men,” is contingent upon proof of their “usefulness” to society. We thus have two metonymic processes: that of treating enslaved people as “arms” and that of reducing the human condition to “men,” which are highly representative of the dynamics of dehumanization of what studies on colonialities—of knowledge, power, and, above all, of being—have termed the modernity/coloniality paradigm, whose constitutive principle is racism (Bernardino-Costa et al., 2018; Maldonado-Torres, 2018; Quijano, 2009), as well as the masculinist presupposition of man as the universal prototype—and, consequently, as the exclusive representative of the human species. *O Leopoldinense*, like *O Arauto de Minas*, would also reproduce the *Fluminense* note against the “abolitionist cause,” revealing the penetration of these ideas into the press in the province of Minas Gerais.

Therefore, in this article, drawing on examples from the newspapers *O Leopoldinense* and *O Arauto de Minas*, we seek to understand the intersections between the sensitive corpus, the right to time, and precarious

intelligibilities, in an attempt to outline understandings and possibilities for analyzing pro-slavery newspapers and narratives. This approach is justified by the need to consider contemporary forms of reparations policies and to demystify a heroic/noble and unblemished history of journalism, as well as to seek methodologies that do not inflict new analytical violence upon people already rendered vulnerable by these narratives.

While efforts to understand abolitionist newspaper networks and historicizing formulations regarding the Black press (Alma Preta, 2024; Cota, 2013; Pinto, 2010), it seems pertinent to us to consider how current forms of journalistic racism are also rooted in history, which must be studied, have their strategic dimensions understood, and thus be better combated.

2. RACISM, CIRCUITS OF AFFECTION, AND DYNAMICS OF DEHUMANIZATION

According to Sílvia Almeida (2019), racism is a systematic form of discrimination based on race and manifested through conscious or unconscious practices that result in disadvantages or privileges for people, depending on the racial group to which they belong. Race, in turn, is a historical and circumstantial term, whose meaning depends on the situations in which it is invoked and whose history is intertwined with the history of the political and economic constitution of contemporary societies (Almeida, 2019). What is fixed in the notion of race is, as highlighted by Almeida (2019) and Mbembe (2018, 2021), its relational and, therefore, dehumanizing character:

Viewed in depth, race is, moreover, a perverse complex that generates fears and torments, disturbances of thought and terror, but above all infinite suffering and, eventually, catastrophes. In its phantasmagorical dimension, it is a manifestation of phobic, obsessive, and at times hysterical neurosis. Moreover, it consists of that which finds solace in hatred, in wielding terror, in practicing alterocide, that is, in constituting the other not as one's equal, but as a truly threatening object from which one must protect oneself, which must be undone, or which one should simply destroy, given the impossibility of ensuring total control over it. (Mbembe, 2018, p. 27, emphasis in the original)

Alterocide is the term we can use to describe the process of symbolic violence and dehumanization perpetrated by the newspapers under analysis here, *O Arauto de Minas* and *O Leopoldinense*, against enslaved Black people in 19th-century Brazil. The first of these was founded in São João Del-Rey in 1877,



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and its primary mission was the “introduction of arms to aid in plantation,” describing itself as a “political, instructive, and news-oriented weekly publication”. Monarchist in nature, it circulated for 13 years before merging with Verdade Política to form A Renascença. The second, subtitled “Commercial, Agricultural, and News Paper dedicated to public and social causes,” was founded in early 1881 and was edited by F. Costa Sobrinho. Printed in its own press, its last entry in the National Library’s Newspaper Archive dates to 1896.

For these newspapers, the immediate liberation of enslaved people represented not only the abrupt loss of free labor for the coffee plantations, but also the possibility of having to share the city’s public space with such threatening existences, supposedly on equal terms. Racism, after all, also consists of the symbolic work of covering another person with an ontological veil that, by stripping them of the right to self-affirmation and self-determination, takes it upon itself to symbolically kill them (Mbembe, 2021).

There are various ways to approach the corpus with which we wish to engage in our scientific research, just as there are various methodological approaches we may choose. Our methodological approach in this text resonates with Patrick Charaudeau’s (2011) statement, “Tell me what your corpus is, and I will tell you what your problem is” (p. 1), which draws our attention to the relevance of the corpus in studies dedicated to languages, discourses, and narratives. Beyond establishing an immediate link between the issue addressed here and the corpus, we understand that it is necessary to move toward epistemological gestures that constitute social processes grounded in violence, whether physical and/or symbolic, such as racism.

The two newspapers we have critically examined are not isolated cases, nor were they chosen at random. They are part of a broader project¹ that brings together a collection of 19th-century newspapers available for consultation in the archives of the National Newspaper Library and the Minas Gerais Public Archives. In this expanded research, which focuses on what journalism in general has termed modernization, we found announcements of sales and escapes by enslaved people, treating them as objects and animals. Thus, a semantic galaxy emerged that seems compatible with publications in modern newspapers. Among the keywords used for the search, a glossary that allows us to trace the paths constituting the processes of humanization and dehumanization, are *slaves*, *Black people*, *manumissions*, *liberation*, *abolition*, *abolitionism*, *abolitionist campaigns*, and *legislation with references to racialization*, among others.

At a time very close to 1888, the official date of the enactment of the Golden Law and the official abolition of slavery, both *O Arauto* and *O Leopoldinense* openly opposed the immediate liberation of enslaved people and tentatively

¹ “Temporal policies in 19th-century newspapers from Minas Gerais,” funded by the general call for proposals from the Research Support Foundation of the State of Minas Gerais (Fapemig).

advocated for changes to this situation. We know, however, that the 1888 abolition was limited to the letter of the law; it was legal-political in nature and did not extend to the Brazilian social form, that is, to the way society is configured both internally and externally: “The idea of social form encompasses a vision of people’s interiority: how one can understand the other, how one can see the other. You relate to the other based on your fantasies, your desires, and your affections” (Sodré, 2019, p. 879).

According to Sodré (2019), segregationist racism was abolished in 1888, but not the racism of domination. Not only did the signs of slavery and inequality continue to exist in a striking manner, as Marialva Barbosa (2016) points out, but they have also been adapting to the nuances of capitalism, including platformization (see algorithmic racism), and confining Black people to precarious jobs, maids’ rooms, prisons, slums, and stereotypes, even with the help of journalism and journalists (Gonzalez, 2020; Moraes, 2019; Sodré, 2019). A symbolic work of confinement that was already evident in the pages of *O Arauto de Minas* and *O Leopoldinense*.

We thus see an attempt by these two periodicals to control power structures, the exploitation of labor, and the social place that Black people were expected to occupy. But it is also an instance of temporal control, an attempt to thwart other projects for the country and to hierarchically control individuals and their roles. In 1884, for example, the province of Ceará, in a pioneering move and as a result of the efforts and pressure from abolitionist societies, Black people, and raftsmen, became the first place in the empire to abolish slavery. *O Arauto de Minas* protested as follows:

If slavery is an institution recognized by civil law, it must be respected until it is effectively abolished. Consequently, all violence committed against this property by abolitionist associations in Ceará and other places, which are removing slaves from their masters’ domains and, without the masters’ consent, manumitting them for ridiculous prices, constitutes a true offense punishable under our criminal laws. *Advising, as these fanatics do*, that a slave whose manumission is refused for any trivial amount should murder his master is a dangerous doctrine and the product of minds inflamed and blinded by fanaticism. (*O Arauto de Minas*, 1884, n.p., emphasis added)

It should be noted that, in the excerpt above, one can discern a strong defense of the legal framework of slavery, condemning any efforts to the contrary and labeling those who seek change as “exalted,” “fanatics,” and “obliterated.” In this sense, there is a strong cynicism on the part of the newspaper’s agenda, insofar



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as it supposedly advocates for liberation but discourages any strategy to achieve it. It is in this way that the corpus and the problem are correlated beyond the selection, collection, and analysis of the material.

The problem is constructed from and through a set of perspectives through which we seek to understand the social dynamics of violence. In our case, we are interested in research findings that reveal tensions between precarious intelligibilities and the right to time, not merely for the purpose of analyzing 19th-century newspaper materials from a discursive or narrative perspective. Our aim is to understand the ambiguities, fissures, and imperfections that materialize in language, taken here in a broad sense, in its journalistic aspects, as one of the modes of representing sociopolitical contexts that include or exclude subjects and that can be cruel in revealing signs of humanization and dehumanization indicative of which bodies may or may not occupy certain territories. These representations are invariably linked to social imaginaries and their socio-discursive versions, which account for how subjects and power structures apprehend the world (Gonzalez, 2020; Pessoa, 2018).

Adopting this epistemological approach means recognizing societies as circuits of affection (Safatle, 2015; Sodré, 2019), which implies that certain forms of life are valued at the expense of other people's lives and materialized in a set of discursive and narrative productions, such as journalistic ones (Pessoa, 2024). The specific affections that underpin forms of life are systematically repeated throughout the calendar's timeline, encompassing the present, past, and future, as if crystallized in times that transcend linearity and remain active. There are, however, other logics, such as the dimension of spiral time (Martins, 2022), in which we can infer the intertwining of the same webs of meaning, time, ancestry, and death as perennial and transformative: "Birth, maturation, and death thus become natural contingencies within the mutational and regenerative dynamics of all vital and existential cycles. In the spirals of time, everything goes and everything returns" (Martins, 2022, p. 84).

Reflecting on humanization and dehumanization means bringing to light perspectives that understand racism—which is structural in Brazil because it is the norm in our society, not a social aberration (Almeida, 2019)—and all the perversities that have been woven into and permeated society over time and that must be constantly questioned: "the logic of race in the modern world cuts across the social and economic structure, operates as a movement of the same order, and undergoes constant metamorphoses" (Mbembe, 2018, p. 37). As we examine what we consider a *sensitive corpus* (Pessoa, 2015, 2018), or "a set of research materials, such as our corpus," which is capable of "evoke diverse feelings depending on the subjects that compose it, social fragility or vulnerability,

the difficulty in obtaining data, ethical dilemmas, and institutional reactions that may arise, among other factors” (Pessoa, 2015, p. 28), we understand that we embrace what this set of materials reveals to us about singular forms of life.

If the political and collective affects that circulated around them signaled a curtailment of humanization for certain bodies, it is time to explore other movements. Those who speak of the collapse of societies governed by exclusionary logics through the reconfiguration of unprecedented affections (Safatle, 2015), without, however, denying the previous ones, which still find an echo in certain political and social sectors. Revisiting them in research is to enable the emergence of other ways of understanding a state of affairs that no longer befits us, but which insists on haunting us.

In *O Leopoldinense*, for example, there are 172 mentions of the term “slave” in the National Library. In them, we learn of the escape of João², a “creole” of about 25 years of age, skilled in his work and a good carrier. We also encounter the figure of Candido Simplicio Novaes³, who arrived in Leopoldina with 80 enslaved people (“of both sexes, fine specimens, sold at prices very favorable to the buyer”), whose names and stories we may never know. In issue 35 of 1881, an announcement is made of Adão’s escape; he reappears in issue 38 as the protagonist of a horse theft (to make his escape?!), only to be mentioned no further by the newspaper (had he managed to escape for good? Had he been recaptured?).

Beyond the outrage these archives may provoke in us, what other gestures of reparation are feasible? Would it be possible to restore the honor of these people turned into commodities? How might we undertake an analytical gesture that goes beyond the reproduction of the slave-owning narrative? In what way do these examples call on us to reflect on the kind of knowledge also produced by journalism?

3. PRECARIOUS INTELLIGIBILITIES

The proposition that journalism generally tends to construct narratives under the aegis of precarious intelligibilities stands in contrast to the defense of journalism as a form of knowledge production, whether based on the singularity of the “facts” narrated (Genro Filho, 1987), or by considering the limited nature of the knowledge produced by journalism, a limitation that must extend to ethical considerations not always observed in journalistic practices (Meditich, 1998).

It is not, therefore, a matter of, based on the multitude of concepts regarding what “knowledge” means, comparing the knowledge constructed by journalism with various scientific bodies of knowledge, but rather to consider the ideological, religious, economic, political, cultural, behavioral, and other intersections,

² Available at: <https://memoria.bn.gov.br/DocReader/docreader.aspx?bib=706957&pesq=escravo&pagfis=12>. Access on: Aug. 2, 2024.

³ Available at: <https://memoria.bn.gov.br/DocReader/docreader.aspx?bib=706957&pesq=escravo&pagfis=27>. Access on: Aug. 2, 2024.



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amalgamated into specific editorial lines and productive logics, which cause journalistic narratives to offer, more than partial views of events, people, and institutions, precarious notions about their ways of being and existing in the world (Carvalho, 2023).

By precarious intelligibilities, we mean journalistic strategies that produce and/or reinforce various prejudices and stereotypes, such as those that underpin strategies of dehumanization, including racism, misogyny, ableism, LGBTQIAPN+phobia, xenophobia, ageism, fatphobia, and so many others. Therefore, we start from the hypothesis that journalism does not produce, “in its own way,” notions capable, for example, of elucidating the historicity of racism in Brazilian society with its specificities, from the Portuguese capture of the first Africans trafficked on slave ships and subjected to systems of enslavement to the racist dynamics that still structure the ways in which Brazilian society produces and reproduces, in the present day, the genocide of Black people, the devaluation of their labor, and precarious conditions in educational and health services, etc.

Promoting precarious intelligibilities also means that journalism is, almost always, inattentive to the bodies, times, and places referred to in its narratives, which, as a consequence of the aforementioned prejudiced and stereotypical frameworks, tend to silence precisely the voices of dehumanized people in news reports.

Silencing leads to forgetting, as Marialva Barbosa (2016) notes in her research on orality, reading, and writing among enslaved people in the 19th century, when examining newspapers that, despite positions initially favorable to the end of slavery, did not include the viewpoints of enslaved people. Consequently:

Although many media outlets, especially after 1880, proclaimed their support for the “emancipatory” cause, the dominant discourses emphasized the struggle of those with a voice and a face—abolitionist politicians and journalists—and erased the everyday images of enslaved people in the streets, squares, fields, and forests. There is a deliberate erasure of their images in these newspapers and magazines. (Barbosa, 2016, p. 112)

In order to understand the forms of resistance employed by enslaved people, including through communicational strategies, Marialva Barbosa (2016) points out that, methodologically, it is necessary to look beyond the apparent surface of what 19th-century newspapers report. In other research contexts investigating different social phenomena, the perception of the production of precarious intelligibilities requires the same care, as silencing and erasure occur through diverse discursive and narrative strategies, sometimes subtle in their methods.

But it is also necessary to start from the premise that precarious intelligibilities produce precariousness, precisely through stereotypical and prejudiced approaches. If the very dynamics of precarious intelligibilities constitute in themselves symbolic violence perpetrated by a particular journalistic narrative, strategies of dehumanization can also induce physical violence, such as that already normalized in Brazilian society against Black people.

From a historical perspective, the precarious intelligibilities associated with racism produced by journalism date back to the 19th century, as Fabiana Moraes (2024) demonstrates when analyzing journalistic works by Marilene Felinto published in the *Folha de S.Paulo* newspaper and the racist reactions against the journalist and writer:

At a time when few people had a space within the media to speak out about democracy and race, Marilene Felinto was also repeatedly subjected to various forms of discrimination—based on race, gender, and sexuality. (Moraes, 2024, p. 13)

Having been featured twice in *Folha* at different times, Marilene Felinto's writings, as analyzed by Fabiana Moraes, reveal the strategies by which journalism produces precarious forms of visibility, as well as the resulting precariousness that stems from them. If, in the 19th century, newspapers that claimed to be abolitionist silenced and promoted the erasure of enslaved Black people through their narratives, in the 21st century, *Folha de S.Paulo*—a newspaper representative of a journalistic model established primarily from the mid-20th century onward—silences and undermines the voice and work of Marilene Felinto by reinforcing racism, compounded by gender-based dehumanization.

Thus, dehumanizing logics persist, now anchored in models of journalism that proclaim themselves “modern,” “impartial,” “nonpartisan,” “objective,” etc., which, by employing tactics such as “promoting debate,” reinforce racist views (Moraes, 2024).

4. THE RIGHT TO TIME

An important point to highlight in the narratives of pro-slavery newspapers concerns the denial of the possibility that certain people, cultures, and forms of knowledge might be narrated from their own perspectives. If there is a genuine relationship between time and narrative, we must consider the former not merely as a physical quantity, but as a fundamental political dimension without which the latter cannot materialize. It is in this sense that we understand time as a very poorly distributed right, insofar as we must, in engagement with this



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sensitive corpus and recognizing its precarious intelligibilities, ask ourselves: Who has the right to memory? Who has the right to be forgotten? Who can narrate others and themselves?

When it comes to newspapers and journalism, speaking of the right to time is equivalent to speaking of the right to space as well, particularly the right to enjoy a modern public space, which is consequently divided into various social spheres (industrial, scientific, religious, police, etc.), within which the press and journalism claim the role of mediation par excellence (Thompson, 2009)⁴. Hence the caption on the front page of the Minas Gerais newspaper *O Leopoldinense*, prominently displayed just below the paper's title: "Commercial, agricultural, and news paper dedicated to the public social cause." It is in this sense that we stated, in the introduction to this work, that journalism functions as a kind of modern agora, with its respective acts of inclusion and exclusion, corresponding to the modern dynamics of humanization and dehumanization within the racist machinery.

In this way, the pages of *O Arauto de Minas* and *O Leopoldinense* constitute a symbolic space in which narrative devices are symptomatic of the ways in which the authors of these journalistic narratives experienced time. From them emerges, for example, an excessive concern for the future of a nation, Brazil, under threat of failing to materialize according to the expectations of the newspaper and the agricultural sector in the event of the immediate liberation of enslaved people in the country: "The error of admitting, in a noble, fertile, and gigantic country such as ours, the servile element, cannot be rectified by prompt abolition" (*O Leopoldinense*, 1881).

O Leopoldinense's desire, after all, was for the disappearance of slavery from the national territory to occur thanks to the Free Womb Law, enacted ten years earlier, which declared the daughters and sons of enslaved women free: "Until 1871, Brazil had the institution of slavery, from then on, things began to improve, and within a few years, without disturbances, without bloodshed, there will be no more slaves" (*O Leopoldinense*, 1881). We note here the evident condition of lives worth killing (Mombaça, 2021) among enslaved people in Brazilian territories: certainly the *blood* referred to in the passage is not that of the women and men enslaved, but of their *fellow citizens*, considering that the same issue of *O Leopoldinense* announces, on page four, the escape of a slave not identified by name, but by the open wound on his ankle, and the reward for whoever apprehends him. Who, therefore, has the right to public space and to the future?

Drawing on decolonial perspectives, Maria da Glória Oliveira (2022), when reflecting on the challenges of historical reparations as a component of

⁴ The rise of social media, however, has called into question the role of primary mediator claimed by journalism, as it has enabled the circulation and consumption of information outside of media channels now considered traditional (such as print newspapers, radio, and television) and, as a result, still lacking regulation. This new informational context and the resulting lack of regulation have intensified the circulation and consumption of fake news and the political-institutional (re)organization of the far-right around the world.

the right to time and on the recognition of people dehumanized throughout history, proposes the “politicization of time”:

In this sense, coloniality as the latent logic (and here it is important not to confuse latency with presence) that shapes the conditions of our present should function as an operative category for the politicization of the time that, rather than confining us to a world of “retroactive reparations,” might perhaps allow us to make the leap, in the terms of Frantz Fanon (2008, p. 189), toward the invention of other futures. (Oliveira, 2022, p. 74)

How to invent other futures that immediately establish policies of reparation, which are ultimately impossible for people who are already dead, also constitutes a challenge for journalistic practices, which, grounded in the logics of precarious intelligibilities, are also part of the equation that in modernity/coloniality has resulted in the precariousness of diverse people.

As we have seen, through racism in Brazilian journalistic practices, from the earliest days to the present, the logics of precarious intelligibilities have constituted strategies of dehumanization that deny the broad right to time, including the right to narrate oneself without the institutional limits of various journalistic media. How can we rethink these temporal policies? In what way would narrative reparation be possible? Is it feasible, and under what terms?

5. FINAL REMARKS

As we have indicated, in the pages of the newspapers *O Arauto de Minas* and *O Leopoldinense*, which we consider here as a relevant corpus based on the focus on the dynamics of racism that underpinned slavery, Black people are denied the right to time through at least two strategies. The first relates more directly to the journalistic logic of that era (which, however, persists to this day), which denied visibility to the narratives and discourses of enslaved people, even when topics of direct interest to them such as the end of slavery were addressed by the two newspapers. The second denial of the right to time refers to the control over enslaved bodies, through legal instruments and extreme violence, reducing them to the status of commodities and labor. Control expressed, moreover, in the contradiction between the apparent defense of the end of slavery and the firm conviction that such a process could not be abrupt, lest it cause harm to agriculture and threats of disorder.

Identifying the narrative and discursive fissures in pro-slavery newspapers, including in what defines them despite their supposed sympathies for the abolition



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of slavery, is a theoretical and methodological exercise that we believe is possible based on the notion that journalism offers us precarious intelligibilities, not forms of knowledge. If we understand that precarious intelligibilities are revealed through narratives that resort to stereotypes and prejudices to refer to people and institutions, we recognize processes of dehumanization that produce various forms of precariousness, such as the structural and structuring racism that has been a defining feature of Brazilian society since its inception, with economic, social, religious, political, behavioral, and other impacts that still need to be overcome.

Methodologically, the intersections between the sensitive corpus, the circuit of affections, the right to time, and precarious intelligibilities seemed to us powerful for perceiving the silences and omissions promoted by newspapers apparently favorable to the end of slavery. But also for readings beyond appearances, opening gaps that make it possible, here and there, to see the resistance of enslaved people revealed in the narrative and discursive strategies of the newspapers analyzed here.

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