



IN MEMORIAM ANA MARIA MONTEIRO FERREIRA

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This text was inspired by a lecture I gave at Universidade Aberta, at the Conference entitled "Afrocentricity and Women Studies: In Memory of Ana Maria Monteiro Ferreira", and I thank Profs. Teresa Joaquim, Cristina Pereira Vieira and Rosana Albuquerque - who are the Coordinators of the Master's course on "Women's Studies - Gender, Citizenship and Development" - for their kind invitation, which gave me the opportunity to publicly pay homage to a very dear friend.

I enjoyed to participate – although at a distance due to the pandemic – twenty-five years later at the celebration of a quarter of a century of the launch of the Master's course, which was then called "Mestrado de Estudos sobre as Mulheres", that – with the crucial help of Prof. M. Beatriz Rocha Trindade – I fought so hard to create in 1995 and which was the first to ever be taught at a Portuguese university.

It was a pleasure to see a room full of people participating in a session in memory of Ana Maria Monteiro Ferreira (1949-2018), who was one of the first who obtained a Master's Degree in Women Studies in Portugal.

I was asked to talk about Ana's university career and professional development in the United States but, before that, I had to tell something about her, for, besides having been my student and having supervised her thesis and been a member and arguer in her PhD jury at Temple University in the United States – together with Prof. Asante, who also participated in the conference - she became one of my best friends and I miss her very much.



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In the Master's course, as was typical of her, she distinguished herself right at the first seminar session and, when it ended, we started one of our everlasting conversations, as we would do for the following twenty years.

If I wanted to characterize Ana Maria Monteiro Ferreira, I would say that she was always ready to courageously lift her voice against any acts of injustice and in defense of sub-represented and underprivileged groups, like women and African-Americans.

Therefore, in all her works, she demonstrated an amazing descriptive capacity to celebrate diversity and was always appealing for racial justice and gender equality and one of her major concerns was the marginalization, mistreatment, and suppression of women's rights, a theme that, at the time, was not so popular as it is nowadays. She wrote about those who suffered injustice and were defeated and wronged and she was always attentive to what was fundamental and an enemy of lies and indifference.

But, although she had an acute sense of criticism, she knew how to connect the wisdom of the heart with the life of the mind.

In the US, she devoted herself mainly to Afrocentricity but, before being an Africologist, she was a Feminist, who published and gave conferences in the area of women's studies throughout Europe and the world.



Ana Monteiro-Ferreira was an Assistant Professor of Africology and African American Studies at Eastern Michigan University and her academic career in the US can be considered a success.



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Figure 1- A view of Eastern Michigan University

When she invited me to give a talk at Eastern Michigan University I could see how happy and appreciated she was, both by her colleagues and students, in that wonderful atmosphere of the Great Lakes.

But, before talking about her accomplishments in America, I cannot but mention that, at Universidade Aberta, she was a lecturer at the Department of Human and Social Sciences, after having worked very hard as my Adjunct Secretary at the Institute for Distance Teaching, of which I was the Director, at the time, and she was also writing her doctoral thesis with great commitment.

But she left, and went to the US, because she was denied a duly justified extension of the deadline to deliver her PhD dissertation. This happened, in spite of the fact that, being her supervisor - although I was then at another University – I had, in due time, sent an official report justifying the delay and therefore asking for a prolongation of the time limit but it was denied because one of her colleagues hid my dispatch and declared at the Scientific Committee that there was no justification...

Having found out what had happened, instead of being taken aback and given up, she fought the injustice that had been done to her in another way and settled on a plan of action to migrate to US. And, as a consequence, she had a very successful academic career that she might not have had if she had stayed in Portugal.

Thus, having had the honor of being the recipient of a DAAD scholarship in 2000 and of a Temple University Future Faculty Fellowship between 2007 and 2010, she was granted a Master's degree and then a brilliant PhD on African American Studies from Temple University, in Philadelphia, and then was nominated Professor, at Eastern Michigan University, where besides teaching, she fought very hard to create an Africology and African American Studies Department, which was a success.

Before that, she had a Post-Graduation on "Women, Migration, Subjectivity and Deconstruction" from International Women's University-IFU, at the University of Hanover, in Germany. Due to her scholarly achievements, she was a Fellow of



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"Molefi Kete Asante Institute for Afrocentric Studies", an invited member of "Golden Key International Honour Society", and a member of professional and academic organizations, such as the National Council of Black Studies.

In Portugal, she was a much-appreciated researcher at the Research Center for Communication and Culture at the Portuguese Catholic University and a member of the "Portuguese Association for Women Studies" (APEM), having served as a member of its Board between 1999 and 2004. Between 2007 and 2010, she was also elected Vice-President and Faculty Liaison of the Graduate Students Organization at Temple University, in Philadelphia. Besides that, she was referee of the *Journal of Multicultural Discourses* and of the *Journal of Black Studies* since 2009.

Her primary research interests were focused on African and African American Studies, Black Women and Women Studies, while intersecting and expanding into the fields of Culture, Literature, and Critical Theory.

Along her career, she was fighting for a new epistemological framework that would enable a more "human humanity", as she said, and against the persistent problem of Colorism, as is evident in many of her works, which were published in Portugal, Brazil, and the USA.

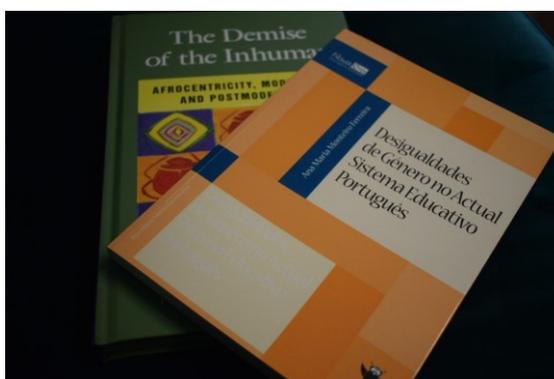


Figure 2- *Desigualdades de Género no Actual Sistema Educativo Português : Sua Influência no Mercado de Emprego*, Coimbra : Quarteto, 2002

Both her academic career and all her publications deserve to be mentioned and demonstrate how solid her knowledge was and the justice of her convictions, thus constituting an innovating epistemological model that clearly justifies the homage we paid her. And I sincerely hope that that conference will not be just a simple circumstance ceremony and that it will provide to us all a moment to reflect on the excellence of her academic work.



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Figure 3- Receiving a prize for her publication

With that intention I include some references to Ana Maria's publications. She published a vast collection of research works on different subjects and although most people don't know, because she used a pseudonym, she was also richly inspired in poetry, to which she devoted herself in her rare leisure hours.

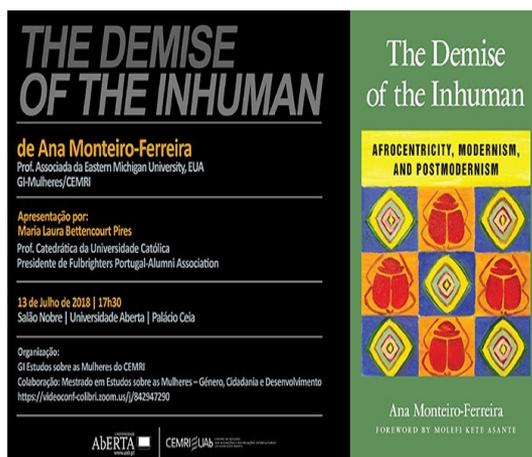


Figure 4- Launch session of her book, *The Demise of the Inhuman-Afrocentricity, Modernism and Postmodernism* (SUNY, 2014), which was distinguished in 2015 as "The Best Scholarly Book" by Diop Diopian Institute for Scholarly Advancement



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Her vast literary production about such themes as sociology, politics, law, education and ethnography developed along the years, till the publication of her masterpiece *The Demise of the Inhuman*, where she talks about her wish to end inhumanity, which is implicit in the ideas of racism and hate.

Besides her teaching and research in history, African and African-American literature and culture, with a strong emphasis on the discussion of epistemological, theoretical, philosophical and cultural issues of contemporary societies, she published many works, which were published in Portugal, Brazil and in the United States, of which I highlight the following:

Books:

- ❖ *The Demise of the Inhuman: Afrocentricity, Modernism, and Postmodernism*. Albany: SUNY Press, 2014
- ❖ *Igualdade de Oportunidades*. Lisboa: Universidade Aberta, 2002.
- ❖ *Desigualdades de Género no Actual Sistema Educativo Português - Sua Influência no Mercado de Emprego*. Coimbra: Quarteto, 2001.

Chapters in Books:

- "The Transformative Power of the Afrocentric Paradigm" in Boaventura de Sousa Santos & Teresa Cunha (eds.), *International Colloquium Epistemologies of the South: South-South, South-North and North-South Global Learning*, Coimbra: CES/Universidade de Coimbra, vol. 4, 2015, pp. 315-322.
- "Afrocentricidade e Educação. Na senda do progresso: Brasil e EUA". Tradução de Asante, M. K. "Afrocentricity and Education: Setting the Stage for Progress in Brazil and the United States" in B. Carvalho, R. Nogueira e R. Sales (Orgs.). *Relações Étnico-Raciais e Educação: Contextos, Práticas e Pesquisas*. Rio de Janeiro: Edur/UFRRJ and NAU, 2014, pp. 23-33.
- "Public Intellectuals for a More Human Humanity: The Afrocentric Idea" in H. G. Silva, M. Laura Pires & I. E. Vieira (Eds.), *Intellectual Topographies and the Making of Citizenship*. Lisboa: Universidade Católica Portuguesa, 2011, pp. 147-157.
- "O Voo Silencioso" in C. Edfelt & A. G. Couto (Eds.), *Mulheres que Escrevem/ Mulheres que Lêem*. Lisboa: 101 Noites, 2008, pp. 117-144.
- "Gisela Bock" in T. Joaquim et al. (Eds.), *Variações Sobre Sexo e Género*. Lisboa: Livros Horizonte, 2008, pp. 72-101.
- "Joan Scott" in T. Joaquim et al. (Eds.), *Variações Sobre Sexo e Género*. Lisboa: Livros Horizonte, 2008, pp. 49-77.



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- "Desigualdades de Género no Actual Sistema Educativo Português: Uma Síntese" in T. Joaquim e A. G. Couto (Eds.), *Novos Olhares: Passado e Presente nos Estudos Sobre as Mulheres em Portugal*. Oeiras: Celta, 2003, pp. 97-109.

Articles in peer-reviewed magazines:

- ✓ "Mulheres negras, políticas de género e problemas identitários", *Gaudium Sciendi*, Nº 12, 2017, pp. 165-176.
- ✓ "Teachings of Wisdom", *Gaudium Sciendi*, Nº 11, Janeiro 2017, pp. 17-37.
- ✓ "European Self-Centeredness: The Drama of African and Other Migrants", *Gaudium Sciendi*, Nº 10, Janeiro 2016, pp. 17-31.
- ✓ "The Fallacy of Colorism", *Gaudium Sciendi*, Nº 9, Dezembro 2015, pp. 56-71
- ✓ "Da Ontologia à Antropologia de Maat: A Dimensão Metafísica e Ética da Alma", *Gaudium Sciendi*, No 6, Junho 2014, pp. 174-184.
- ✓ "Art and Ideology", *Gaudium Sciendi*, Nº 2, Julho 2012, pp. 92-101.
- ✓ "The United States of Africa and the Marxist Model". *Africological Perspectives*, Volume 7, Number 1 (November/ December), 2011, pp. 119-129.
- ✓ "Afrocentricity and the Western Paradigm", *Journal of Black Studies*. 40(2), 2009, pp. 327-336.
- ✓ "The Power of Nommo. The Case of African Literature in Portuguese Language", *Journal of Multicultural Discourses*. 4 (3), 2009, pp. 331-344.

Poetry:

- ✓ "Winter", *Gaudium Sciendi*, Nº 7, Janeiro 2015, pp. 243-245.
- ✓ *Winged Horses*, *Gaudium Sciendi*, Nº 7, Janeiro 2015, pp. 245-246.

Knowing that she would agree, I conclude my text with a quotation by Martin Luther King, who Ana Maria admired so much, and who said:

Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that. (Letter from Birmingham Jail, 1963).



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Figure 5 – Funeral service at Eastern Michigan University