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Poetry slam in Brazil: Decolonial and counter-hegemonic practices

Poetry slam, a spoken poetry competition, is characterized in Brazil as a cultural movement led by peripheral subjects who highlight the multiple forms of discrimination against silenced, marginalized, and invisible social groups. From this theme, the purpose of this work is to discuss the delegitimization of the literary quality of these productions that can be defined as “performed oral literature”, in the terms of Ruth Finnegan (2005). Such questioning of their aesthetic value indicates that it is not canonical poetry, possibly because it is linked to popular culture, in addition to not being concerned with the cultured norm of the language and prioritizing orality, so despised in a graphocentric society. However, as Rita T. Schmidt (2008) points out, there is a recent revolution in literary studies, which proposes a review of the criteria that determine whether a work belongs or not to literature. For this investigation, the selection and analysis of poems and respective performances by different poets in some Brazilian slam tournaments, recorded in videos and made available on various networks, is used as a basis. What can be observed in this research, still in progress, is that these poet – slammers propose a decolonial look (CASTRO – GÓMEZ; GROSFUGUEL, 2007; QUIJANO, 2000) at their histories by re – signifying them in their counter – narratives, seeking empowerment and emancipation through the spoken word, which is the reason why the content matters more than the form, while claiming (and affirming) the relevance and legitimacy of what they produce.