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Gender Performativities in Democracy Under Threat

Maria Manuel Baptista &
Alexandre Rodolfo Alves de Almeida (Eds.)



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Supporting Organizations



Organising Institutions



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PREAMBLE

GENDER AND DEMOCRACY UNDER THREAT IN PANDEMIC TIMES¹

| 9

Over the course of 2020, coronavirus infection, or COVID-19, took hundreds of thousands of lives, infected millions of people, brought down the global economy and cast a dark shadow over our future. No country was spared. No population group remains unharmed. No one is immune to its impacts (UN, 2020, p.5)

Seventy-five years after the last world war, the world is once more in a global battle. This time, all of humanity is on the same side against a microscopic enemy that has brought us to our knees, causing the deepest global recession in almost a century and driving about 70-100 million people into extreme poverty. (UN, 2020, p.12)

On April 1st, 2020, António Guterres, Secretary-General to the United Nations, stated that the crisis of the new coronavirus is the greatest challenge facing humanity since World War II, both because of the threat to human lives and the consequences for the world economy (Guterres, 2020). The virus, of unknown origin, appeared among humans in November 2019, in a popular market in the Wuhan province of China. Since then, the escalation of the contagion curve and the number of lives lost has been massively reported on by the international press and has seriously worried national governments and international agencies. Discourse expressed by these agencies in their diagnoses, reports or documents proposing coordinated actions, has endeavored to construe the problem as a global crisis of planetary proportions, capable of permanently changing our way of life as we know it and having an even more devastating impact on those populations who are already living in a situation of greater vulnerability, such as women, children, and populations living in the poorest areas of the world or in areas affected by the countless wars currently underway (UN, 2020). Responses to a crisis of such magnitude, according to these agencies, can only be effective if they are concerted, collective, and inclusive. “We are all in this together”, says a UN report published in September 2020.

Against the flow of collective and global efforts, some dissonant voices and policies are making themselves heard, as is the case with Donald Trump’s repeated accusations against China – that China had first created the virus in a laboratory and then concealed crucial information that could have prevented the pandemic, with complicity of the WHO (Antena 1, 2020). Trump’s accusations went along with a disjointed and ineffective policy to confront the pandemic, such as that of his Brazilian counterpart, Jair Bolsonaro, who insists on the use of chloroquine in the treatment of the disease (BBC News, 2020), which has been rebutted se-

¹ Part of this text was originally published in the third volume of the collection *Género e Performance - Textos Essenciais* (2020), which gathers works translated into Portuguese for the first time by the Gender and Performance Research Group (GECE) / Study Center in Culture and Leisure (NECO), from the Center for Languages, Literatures, and Cultures of the University of Aveiro, organized by Maria Manuel Baptista and Fernanda de Castro.



veral times by international experts. Meanwhile, in Belarus, President Alexander Lukashenko downplayed the severity of Covid-19 by prescribing vodka as a treatment (Reuters, 2020).

As of September 2020, the pandemic has already and very clearly become not only a global public health problem, but also an economic disaster of considerable magnitude. The question arises as to how to balance world economy and contagion curve; the latter constitutes yet another pressure point for public health systems – in countries where there is a public health system. Remote work comes into play as a viable or even highly desirable alternative for some, while for others it is ineffective and anxiogenic. The use of masks and other personal protective equipment seems to have become consensual in some countries, while in others there is still little adherence. Young people seem to form the group that is most resistant to the use of Personal Protective Equipment, as is evident in news reports from school entrances at the beginning of the 2020/2021 academic year in Europe. It is interesting to consider that it is also young people that are the most fervent defenders of a new environmental awareness, necessary for effective changes to be undertaken, in order to guarantee some kind of future for the planet. Or at least a future in which humanity is included.

Another side effect of the pandemic has been an increase in violence against women. From domestic violence to the increased risk of contagion among professionals who work in hospitals, health centers or as domestic workers, women have been experiencing the effects of the pandemic with increased pressure on their bodies, a situation that worsens when intersectional factors are considered – factors such as class and race, war situations, or precarious women’s rights in their socio-cultural contexts.

These initial and scattered notes, overviewing media highlights and a few reference documents from international agencies such as the UN, offer a starting point for us to think about some of the issues regarding the current dominant rhetoric, that of a necessary re-foundation of the world based on a supposed “new normal”, which will dictate the rules for labor, social, and affective relations in a post-Covid-19 planet. The first of these questions could be: when does post-Covid-19 start? Does it mean the world after the end of the pandemic, with the expected discovery of an effective vaccine or cure, or does it mean the world we already live in, a world in which the Covid-19 pandemic caused and causes the daily sensation of living a sort of everyday apocalypse with no end date? In fact, are there any differences between the two possibilities?

A second problem is what place will we (humans) occupy in the (post)pandemic world. And if, when dealing with this problem, we reflect upon this era that has been called Anthropocene, an era in which human presence will have left indelible marks on the planet, we are called to consider that the (post)pandemic world is part of it.

The health crisis brought about by the pandemic adds to the environmental crisis, which has been reported and debated by national governments, international organizations, and the media for decades. In September 2020, images of a 315 billion ton iceberg breaking off from Antarctica became emblematic in newspapers and television news, reminding us, once again, that global warming remains a pressing and unresolved issue that indiscriminately affects us all. The “pandemic apocalypse” does not supersede previous crises. It juxtaposes them: sometimes described as their paroxysm; sometimes as the tipping point from which we shall seek and (for the most optimistic) find new ways of living on the planet and establishing relationships between humans and the other inhabitants of the earth.

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Part of the problem is the issue of emigration, which is closely related to the environmental crisis and the crisis of work precarization and global unemployment. According to the UN, in 2019, the number of migrants worldwide reached around 272 million, 51 million more than in 2010 and 14 million more than in 2017. With this growth, international migrants already make up 3.5 percent of the global population. 48% of them are women (UN, 2020). According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees – UNHCR – at the end of 2018 the number of forcibly displaced persons reached a record 70 million – of which 26 million were refugees and 3.5 million were asylum seekers (UNHCR, 2019).

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognizes the contribution of migration to sustainable development for the first time. 11 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) contain goals and indicators relevant to migration or mobility. The basic principle of the Agenda is “leave no one behind” – including migrants. The SDGs’ central reference to migration can be found in goal 10.7: to facilitate orderly, safe, regular, and responsible migration and mobility for people, including via the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies. Other targets directly related to migration mention trafficking, remittances and international student mobility, among other issues. Furthermore, migration is indirectly relevant to many other transversal objectives (BCSD, 2015).

Despite the commitments made in the 2016 Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, international consultation on this issue does not appear more promising than similar initiatives regarding the environmental crisis. This was demonstrated, for example, by the EU’s difficulty in resolving the episode of the Moria refugee camp on the Greek island of Lesbos. In September 2020, months of tension and attacks by anti-immigrant groups culminated in a fire that destroyed the camp where some 20,000 people lived in conditions that the international press reported as sub-human.

All of these questions seem to point towards the need for a complex critical reflection, capable of integrating different epistemological starting points and action strategies at a time when the so-called advanced capitalism multiplies the ways of establishing inequality while old problems are still to be overcome. Thus, if a post-humanity paradigm does emerge, we will continue to face issues of precarious work and human trafficking, for example. The coronavirus pandemic has aggravated the already evident problem of the collapse of public health systems or their absence at a time of global health crisis. It also came to make the precariousness of work and the disposability of human lives in the process of production and reproduction of capital even clearer. All of this comes at a time when the rise of far-right movements is felt all over the world, often employing a discourse of democratic freedoms against those same freedoms.

The following texts, in Portuguese and English, represent papers given during the 7th International Congress on Cultural Studies, which took place on October 21st, 22nd and 23rd, 2020, organized by the Gender and Performance Research Group (GECE) / Study Center in Culture and Leisure (NECO), at the Center for Language Literature and Cultures of the University of Aveiro (CLLC/UA) and the International Network for Cultural Studies (RIEC). The event was financed by the Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT). The preparations began two years in advance, before we had ever imagined living in a pandemic, and this 7th International Conference in Cultural Studies was a completely online event for the first time.



The theme of Democracy under Threat in conjunction with gender issues was chosen well before we had ever heard of the Covid-19 pandemic. But, as it happens, it became even more pertinent as the pandemic has been exacerbating a threat to democratic political systems everywhere. In fact, for us, this will be a hot topic of investigation in the near future: how did democracy and democratic systems around the world become even more fragile and under more powerful attacks since the Covid-19 world pandemic?

The freedom required to think about gender issues, not from an essentialist or strictly biological point of view, but to consider them as the result of diverse cultural performances, is, on the contrary, deeply connected with the possibility of living in democratic regimes.

Thus, a setback in democracy and in the greater value of freedom it seeks to defend (individual and collective), has almost immediately constituted an attack on the possibilities of diverse gender experiences. What was already felt before the pandemic has become even more critical as we witness increasingly violent attacks on women, homosexuals, transsexuals, etc., in practice and in political speeches, which worsen when different variables such as race, precarious economic and social conditions, age, and immigration add marginality to marginality.

Indeed, only freedom, defended by democratic systems, however imperfect it may still be, can be the field from which all human beings can be fulfilled and express themselves more fully, tolerantly and happily in each dimension. An attack on democracy brings with it an attack on the plurality and freedom of different gender expressions, different bodies, different ways of living and of expressing one's sexuality. That is why we chose this theme as central to our 7th International Congress on Cultural Studies.

The expression 'gender ideology' has been used to underline the political and even 'effabulatory' character of the cultural construction of gender. That is to say, in the speeches of those who use this expression, it refers to a kind of distortion that culture (political, partial, historical and contingent) would make on the givens of nature/biological sex (eternal, immutable and even sacred determinations). Such a conception effectively signals a representation of the world that seeks security and epistemological certainty in a set of truths, obviously ideological (as what is human that is not ideological?), that allow the establishment of an ontological, social, political, and cultural framework that excludes the diversity, creativity, and unpredictability of human behavior, but also, for that very reason, their freedom. The price to pay is the exclusion of a good part of human beings (many and increasingly more) from the possibility of a dignified, happy, safe and free life. Ultimately, as Judith Butler puts it, of 'a life worth living'.

Considering the question, 'who is afraid of gender ideology?' we answer: those who anxiously experience the possibilities opened up by the various gender performativities, understanding, from the inside out, how much bodies in their creative and expressive freedom can challenge processes of political and cultural naturalization which are becoming increasingly fragile with regard to gender.

In any case, anti-gender movements are not all the same and have different articulations depending on the geographical, historical, cultural and political context. In general, they express themselves, first and foremost, through a conservative moral discourse that largely coincides (or even originates, in some cases) with certain religious discourses. Religious discourse, precisely because it originates on a metaphysical plane, from which it develops a certain mo-



rality shaped in values considered eternal and immutable, is very predisposed to be seized (and to seize) the anti-gender ideology and all anxiogenic dimensions associated with it.

But so can political discourse, when ultraconservative and fascist, by defending the need for a predictable, stable world, 'like the old days', led by a chief/god who guarantees the stability of the 'usual' norms and behaviors, seizing the intense anxiety regarding the unknown and the unpredictability of contemporary culture, reworking it and returning it in the form of authoritarianism and populism, in order to satisfy its own political and economic interests.

Anti-gender groups, in different doses and with contextually different expressions and communicative strategies, have articulated (and have been articulated by) these two dimensions: religious and political, at their worst, since we are talking about fascist practices, whether they decline from authoritarian populism or religious fanaticism. Most of the time, this is all dangerously amalgamated, with the result that politically fascist and religiously fanatic groups become violently anti-gender. And that is why these anti-gender groups, now internationally organized and powerfully funded, with a very well-orchestrated communication policy, with an image that is even 'young' and 'cool', are effectively a threat to democratic political regimes.

In short, the fear of bodily, sexual and political freedom and creativity is indicative of several ghosts within our culture, which find less anxiogenic responses in morally conservative discourses and practices, articulated with a framework of neoliberal values of advanced capitalism. In some areas of the globe, this is taken to the deepest part of each one of us through a hyper-conservative and alienating religious discourse, if not through the regiment of consciences by fascist political and partisan organizations.

In organizing this Congress, arranging thematic roundtable discussions was one of our greatest challenges. Our commitment was to respect a multiplicity of voices and thus we actively sought individuals who represented different points of view. We come from the University, but our policy is to value and respect all forms of knowledge production, as academic knowledge is just one of many, and we attempted to demonstrate this through the various invitations issued to take part in the plenary sessions.

The Conference had six plenary sessions addressing a variety of themes: *Feminisms in academia and activism: possible meeting points?*, with Cassandra Muniz and Leopoldina Fe-kayamãle; *Queer Cyberactivisms: contexts and strategies of resistance*, with Deicilene Gomes and Dimitra Vulcana; *Political poetics: resistance and insurrection*, with Lila Fadista, João Caçador (from Fado Bicha) and Yara Monteiro; *Education, youth and political activisms*, with Rita Paulos, Sara Wagner York and Vinícius de Silva; *Gender and guarantee of rights in democracy under threat*, with Ana Gomes and José Soeiro; and *Political repression and resistance: women fighting for democracy*, with Laurinda Gouveia and Márcia Tiburi, all available online on RIEC's YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/riectv>).

The parallel sessions hosted 50 presentations, including seven performances. With Cultural Studies as an anchoring point, research over 80 authors sets out from diverse epistemological fields such as arts, sociology, anthropology, history, gender studies, communication, literature, leisure, architecture and psychology, among others, from an interdisciplinary perspective so dear to Cultural Studies.

By publishing these proceedings in open access, it is our intention that part of the experience lived during those days reaches even more people. Thus, our aim is to prompt the



building of bridges for reflection and debate on the gender issues and the challenges we face in times of democracy under threat.

Aveiro, October 2020

Larissa Latif

Maria Manuel Baptista

Alexandre Rodolfo Alves de Almeida

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TRAVESTI: THE MANY WORLDS THAT SURROUND US¹

Sara Wagner York²

Mature women, how old are they?

| 15

In the country that kills the most trans and *travesti*³ people and whose life expectancy, according to the National Association of *Travestis* and Transsexuals, is estimated to be around 35 years of age (see ANTRA, 2017 - 2020), approaching half a century of life makes a big difference. Now, if the country that kills the most trans people in the world is also the country that consumes the most trans pornography, something is very wrong! There is a fetish in all actions, inclusive or exclusive; thus bringing up aspects that dialogue with the everyday life of some women who have reached seniority complicates a text that is sometimes woven from a perspective focused on the object or the objectified being. Nowadays, my seniority as a teacher and literacy teacher has a closer dialogue with my passion for being or being generationally launched into the category of grandmother, *travesti*-grandmother. I am another kind of “grandmotherly”, if that can be considered a criterion for anything. But, I realize that having been raised by a grandmother, my most prolific feelings and bond of love are reinforced by practices of wisdom and less haste. As stated by Alda Britto da Motta:

The current increasing longevity gives rise to less “natural” substitutions, which is very noticeable within the family: individuals remain much longer in their generational roles (Motta, 2010)

On the other hand, being a *travesti* and having to deal with the imminence of death, there is a certain urgency in committing to actions, whether for the utopian encounter with repose, or in resisting neglect.

I am a grandmother, father, and *travesti* - generational roles that merge only in text. In everyday life, being a father means choosing spaces to show affection to my son, within the constant tension of having to avoid transphobic public aggressions or “turning a blind eye” when entering the bathroom. The watchful eyes of the compulsory heterocynormative society still continue to establish control, but here, on paper, these three can soar freely – the

¹ Paper presented during the 7th International Congress on Cultural Studies: Gender Performativities in Democracy Under Threat.

² **Sara Wagner York** or Sara Wagner Pimenta Gonçalves Júnior (she uses a double name as a political strategy, reiterating the use of a social name by trans and *travesti* people) is a hairdresser, trans/*travesti* woman, father, grandmother and elementary school English teacher and theater instructor. She has a degree in English Language and Literature from Universidade Estácio de Sá/UNESA, where she was awarded with the ALUMNI Medal and Pedagogy from the State University of Rio de Janeiro/UERJ. She has also worked at Sahir House, United Kingdom, in actions to welcome refugees from the Middle East and Africa. She is a member of the GENI research group led by Prof. Dr. Fernando Pocahy and was a CNPq fellow, during her master's degree at PROPED/UERJ. E-mail: sarayork.london@yahoo.co.uk; URL: <http://lattes.cnpq.br/9084306265158131> | <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4397-891X>.

³ Author's note about her usage of the terms trans and *travesti*: “1) *Travesti* is a trans gender identity with regional and contextual particularities throughout Brazil and Latin America; and 2) Trans people can be understood as an umbrella term that includes *travesti*, trans, gender fluid and diverse gender, as mentioned by TGEU-Europe.” For more information, visit <https://antrabrasil.files.wordpress.com/2019/11/murders-and-violence-against-travestis-and-trans-people-in-brazil-2018.pdf>

father, the grandmother and the *travesti*. Dreams and hopes that envision days like those of one of the grandmas who dreamed of growing old in good health and with a full house.

During the pandemic, in the bitter 2020, the year I worked more than ever before, only the mind has remained full; the pockets remain empty and the heart, insistent in hope, fills up every day with the enormous loss of so many friends who said goodbye in the face of the masculinity of COVID-19, the virus that brought its “own pedagogy”, as Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2020) would say. Masculinity of the virus? Yes. According to the masculinist, irresponsible, political liar, fascist, and toxic president, for men with an “athlete’s profile, it would be nothing more than a little cold”. The little cold that, in six months, would bring about the demise of 150 thousand people in our country! They were not “athletes”; they were people who were unable to keep fighting the virus and had no government support.

A feeling began to take root in my chest and kept growing. I don’t know if it was a mixture of pride in being alive or more of an admiration for a body capable of emitting so many signs in the face of fear... a combination of multiple feelings.

Fear, which has left me frozen so many times, would also guarantee that I would feel able to speak, denounce and problematize various trans issues in innumerable video presentations, in live streams, via social networks, the live broadcasts. Writing becomes a nodal point, because I will write/talk about transgenderism, punctuating the intersectionality of the voices, perspectives, echoes and experiences we have been discussing alongside a series of other convergences that this word triggers. But it is impossible to start my writing on *trans/travestis* without talking about a (de)construction prompted by the subjects’ primary foundations. Things such as a name, so common and inherent to nouns, so queried and disputed when its owner does not, according to some viewpoints, possess the legitimacy to have it. For *travestis*, the process of becoming, of becoming human and a citizen, begins before the name; it begins with making themselves minimally legitimate to access the world in a dignified manner.

So, facing three teachers – and they are three huge, gigantic teachers: time, life and dreams, I want to remind you that 15 years ago, I was homeless, smoked crack, and used to lie on the ground or on a bench with my legs crossed, looking at the people passing by on the street, and wondering: “what do these people want to do with their lives? There’s nothing more to do!” I was facing my first monster: time. To dismiss it would be like weaving with Nietzsche’s unwary atheism, which is in me, that denies what I most believe.

Facing time, I had my lessons, the lessons of other moments of a possible life, a possible world, of that ancestry, looking at other subjects and what matters to those who, if they have nothing, have everything! From a space of certainties, my house would become the space of suspicion, of astonishment, of admiration, of curiosity, of doubt, a greater space desiring *hopedren*. Hopes and children!

If “you can’t judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree”, the adjustments produced by time brought me other perceptions, as through the power of life, we expand our grammar. A grammar of fish, that also serves other animals, a non-ableist grammar; that is, that one may understand ways of doing and being of legitimate subjects with their “perfect” and “capable” bodies. The pandemic led me to panic and to read other grammars of my own. It normalized me, which is the way people get involved in a grammar, a norm, an order we are taught to read. When we veer away from this grammar, the reference is completely lost. And what I mean here is the whole itinerary that some bodies will have between the action and



the perception of the action. What happens and what is registered as fact, the distance between life and dreams.

Dreams make me think of how an imbalance, at a certain time in my life, made me lose track of my way.

Going back to the relationship of time that has been marked on this grandmother, father and *travesti*, with social movements, it is known that they are responsible for the emergence of the subject in mainstream media and in some previously timid and isolated demands. We know these social movements will gain strength, especially LGBTI movements, and in Brazil, from the 1970s onwards, the stories are tied with the forty years of HIV and of an insistent daily survival. So much information and the pandemic!

I made treaties with myself that only came to about because I was homeless. But I was also a makeup artist for many years in the center of London, in Soho. I was Elza Soares's hairdresser when she won the award of BBC London's "Singer of the Millenium". So, I come to Academia with a previous history, I come to Academia thinking about how much I had to fight to make myself audible, understandable, intelligible, well read, well equipped to make myself understood.

When I was 21, my son was removed from my life; his mother took him away in shame of me, just because I was a *travesti*. His mother married an evangelical man, a follower of the Judeo-Christian worldview, within a theological perspective that self-represents as "God's Assembly". Such a worldview circulates a discourse in which sex/gender is binary. This discourse supports the political fiction that legitimizes the bourgeois nuclear family as a paradigm, that is, cisheteronormativity (Vergueiro, 2018). Thus, the story of a happy cisheterosexual couple and their cisheteronormatized family was told, and the icing on the cake: a Christian family!

The people who raised and encultured my son, took away my right to be part of his life (to be able to care, feel, exist and raise). For my son, almost 5 years old at the time, and for many people, my presence was removed from this story, from my son's story. Fifteen years had passed and I, already in London, after having a place, a whole life, no longer on the street, not even searching for this son, I gave up looking for him. This will only make sense for those who can read parental grammar, who can read the grammar of what it is to have a child and the pain that prevents a child from recognizing their father, because this father is not dressed up in the apparel some say and believe reveals the human behind the being. To kill a living child for fifteen years is to make a pain that's lighter than the agonistic pain of never having any answers, of constantly thinking "where can he be?" There are things you cannot not want. These are two completely different things: having a child and losing them and having a child one cannot have.

Everything is production: *production of productions*, actions and passions; *productions of records*, distributions and markings; *productions of consumptions*, voluptuousness, anguishes and pains. everything is production in such a way that records are immediately consumed, consummated, and consumption is directly reproduced. Such is the first meaning of the process: inserting registration and consumption into production itself, turning them into productions of a same process. (Deleuze & Guattari, 2010, p. 14)

Life, our second master, immersed in production. Therefore, these are the greatneses that will enable us to see the possibilities of an ancestry that is brought by, mentioned by,



and that dialogues with so many other parts of the woman that I comprise, but also instigates looking at so many others to come, thrown into the abyssality of what will come.

Fifteen years went by in the blink of an eye; after fifteen years looking for a son, this son of mine found me. On social networks, specifically on Facebook, he sends me a message saying: "Please call Brazil on the number XXX". Me, a famous hairdresser in England, feeling English, SARA WAGNER YORK: why would I be calling Brazil? What relative do I have there? I have no one in that place! I didn't associate the name to the person! I let it go ... In short:

I am a *travesti* woman who had a child at sixteen. We were always together and lived close to one another. One day, when my son was four, five years old, his mother disappeared, taking him along. They left me with an empty hole of loss and a pain that never went away. Far away from my son, and not knowing his whereabouts, I got lost in solitude, in drugs, and on the streets. As days went by, after about ten, twelve years of his absence and a lot of pain, I managed to get off the streets and get my life together. I moved to a city abroad and there I became a well-known hairdresser. I became a Brazilian hairdresser in London and there, I always told my story. One day I got a message on Facebook telling me to call a number in Brazil. Fifteen years later, with a stable life and already recovered from the pain, I called the number in that message. On the other end of the line, a man with a soft, sweet voice says: 'Hello, who is this?' I replied: 'I'm Sara Wagner York, from London'. On the other side, the man says: 'blessings, father, how I miss you!' It was my son who was also looking for me. Now, a 25-year-old man. Me, a father (who is a woman and trans), currently with a four-year-old grandson (who I'm teaching to call me grandma). My son and my grandson became my family, we are very happy! Then I learned that the mother, who took him away from me, had married and, out of shame (it was like that at the time!), moved away without disclosing her whereabouts and registered him under another man's name. To find my son after fifteen years of pain due to his absence is the greatest love story I have ever lived. I returned to Brazil and now I work as a teacher in a municipal school system; I try to change sad stories like mine and I keep dreaming with each new day...

I had waited for fifteen years. And I was waiting once more for this son to arrive from Goiânia and I see him getting off the plane at Galeão airport. Minutes later, he comes to give me this embrace, which is an embrace of fifteen years of absence and separation. And when he sees me, he hugs me and I feel my heart beat with my son's ... The third master: the dream!

And at that moment, when the world stopped, a citizen passed by me and said: 'look at what the "faggots" are doing to the world!'

This breaking evidence of the interpellation suffered by some of us throws me towards the data that my grandmotherliness insists on not wanting to remember:

We are talking about a 40% increase in deaths of trans and *travesti* people in the same period. If in 2017 we had 118 deaths, in 2018 we had 113, in 2019 we had 86, in 2020 that number has risen to 129 dead. Trans bodies, *travestis*... this is a lot of pain and we are working, because not even in this suspension of ourselves during the pandemic, can we stop because we are hungry. Some were not hungry, beyond the margin of privilege, however, we need to think about intersectionality, the grammar of ableism by Anahi Guedes Mello (2019); we bring cisgenerativity of Viviane Vergueiro (2018) into this mix, thinking about all these specificities, in life and exclusion. If you have the time, in this agonistic, consider that among the



innumerable stories, of so many stories of death, only one *travesti* is mentioned, but so many have died...

And, during this period, a lot of pain, a lot of pleas, and I had to resort once again to that laugh that *travesti* have, that laugh that faggots and homeless people never stopped having, the laugh of a story of overcoming tomorrow. In this story, in short, two things brought me back to life during the pandemic: remembering that my last hug, unfortunately, was not my son's or my grandson's, but of a landmark of hope that Brazil had and still has, called Dilma Rousseff, at UERJ's inaugural class in 2020. The last person I hugged was the president and I thought: "this is not by chance! We are not in just another place". And then I took a better look, I adjusted my lenses and went to do the sums - not of deaths, but of life. I added up that from 2019 to August 2020, 573 people had rectified their civil records, with their genders and their new names. And that brought me hope, "we are awesome", "we are Brazilian". I think this is all very fresh in my mind... I would like to make a point, now that I have breathed! Because I no longer believe in educational fictions, I no longer believe in the education of a non-existent subject, an absent subject. Because what we talk about the most is that we are subjects who understand who we are and where we are, so I think a lot of this study of absence/presence, synchronous/asynchronous, public/private, collective/individual, as established by a natural order of the sex and gender system (Rubin, 2017), body, nature and culture and all this burden we are charged with. I think we are thinking about a lot more than about the power of what is said, but the power of how it is said and with whom it is said. So, these things, I have the impression that the stranger the subject in the classroom, the greater the immersion or the fruits of the discussion; I realize this with my body, when I place myself as a *travesti* in education and of education, because what makes me think I am good is not the planned Higher Education class I deliver, but my 6th years sitting in a circle telling stories along with me, in an English class, for example, where I teach both English and Portuguese. So, it is not a matter of taking things to the field of the domain of other subjects, but an invitation that we have, insistently, made of the *travesti* intersectionality. From what we're saying here, today, every time someone says: 'look, this happened and Sara said...', it means we are bringing into the life of a *travesti*, as we bring citationality, Plato's hiterability, Nietzsche. We have not learned to do this with our people. However, we must learn.

This is our great complexity, bringing so many subjects that are producing so many meanings to a life that is so short. Bringing so much in such a short time, without becoming the subject who says 'we are all the same'. Because 'all the same' is absurd simplification and essentialism, it is a matter of trying to streamline speech and we no longer have the time to speak! It is like a ticking clock, with my hearing already adjusted to hear only what is in the script and what is programmed.

And all of this has made me think a lot, especially of how I want my grandson to see me. At the end of this live/text/speech, I even want everyone to send a 'kiss to Nicolas', because Grandma Sara no longer tells the story of the *travesti*, she tells the story of the teacher who has a grandson and this grandson has so much beauty to see beyond the *travesti*'s speech, that he brought this academy to so many other places. I keep thinking...

Regarding the prejudices in force at school, it is very important to express that until we change the representations or images these schools have, we will continue to celebrate the same story. In this sense, it is necessary to examine, and carefully, black bodies in Brazil, black



bodies in the USA, *travesti* bodies inside the classroom and, at the same time, to examine these subjects who do not call themselves hegemonic, but hegemonically occupy spaces of power – white men. The white man, that subject who doesn't name himself. He names everyone but himself! And when we try to make any subversive movement by bringing up the speech, not just of Otávio Bochner, but also of bell hooks, who have been teaching us how to transgress, the use of these other modes of subversion and our contemporaries, such as Elisa Emília, who tells her son's story in an intersex body, none of this even has a place in the curriculum. How many classrooms have the *spacetime* to talk about non-hegemonic realities? I reviewed Elisa Emília's book, titled Jacob(y), and even though I don't like to cry, I began to shed tears right from the cover, and only managed to dry them on the last page. Elisa tells the story of her son and the State that urges her to abort because the baby is intersex. She nurtures him, with much love, until he is two years old, when he dies. Within this perspective, of including purposefully invisible realities, Viviane Vergueiro shows how cisgenerity, hand in hand with capitalism and colonialism, has a way of legitimizing itself within a structure that denies humanity to other subjects who do not subject to imposed norms and are not limited to stereotypes. If this representation does not appear, with much force, with much color, with much sincerity, in conversation circles, in the classroom, we will be fomenting violence. It is worth mentioning that the silencing about the existence of several people who do not fit the imposed standard, contributes towards the aggression directed at them. We need to think of a classroom that is really for everyone, instead of opening space solely for the representation of what is already hegemonic, and thus collaborate for it to remain synonymous with "normality". As George Orwell said in 1984: 'The mass maintains the brand, the brand maintains the media and the media controls the mass', so the mass that feeds the media already has its representation. Only what is not part of our representation will become prejudice. That is, when you say the teacher is a *travesti* and there are so many other mental representations we trigger, what is being said is the following: "my niece, my son, or my grandson, they can be *travesti*, they can be whoever they want, because I found people like them, bodies like theirs, represented in other instances of society possible for any child".

Enough with only existing in prostitution, in disease, in abjection, in oblivion: enough. Look how beautiful! I feel honored, as I felt very powerful on the day that, despite doing make-up for great international stars, in the salon I had, in the center of London, the center of the world, I took a photo with Jaqueline Moll talking about Paulo Freire. So, today, my great muses, the ones that make me tremble with desire, are these thinking people who, along with me, fight for an Education based on *travesti*, trans or queer theory, but always a decolonial theory, because these are the people who tell the stories in which we fit, more than the usual group. People who make me feel like waking up, calling my grandson and saying: "Turn on your computer and see with whom Grandma is going to talk today, thinking about talking to you!"

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WHAT IS AT STAKE WITH BELL HOOKS' FEMINIST MASCULINITIES?¹

Vinícius Rodrigues Costa da Silva²

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to present, often through dialogues, some elements bell hooks' critique of patriarchal masculinities and her proposal towards a feminist masculinity. This is an introductory article that does not intend to exhaust the discussions, only to present some research reflections. In order to do so, it seeks to realize a reading of the actual *hooksian* purposes in the alleged relationship between feminist theory and feminist masculinities. Here, there is a hypothesis that the conception of hooks promotes a dislocation in the production of meaning processes inherent to patriarchal masculinities.

KEYWORDS:

bell hooks; feminist masculinities; patriarchy; feminist theory; production of meaning.

Introduction

I tell myself stories, write poems, record my dreams. In my journal I write – I belong in this place of words. This is my home. This dark, bone black inner cave where I am making a world for myself.
– bell hooks (1996a, p. 183)

The epigraph above captures the purest essence of the intellectual production of bell hooks and her ability to unite both theory and practice in the formulation of a revolutionary theory. For me, talking about bell hooks is always a challenge. Born Gloria Jean Watkins³ in 1952, bell hooks has become one of the most important black feminist intellectuals in the world.

Throughout her extensive work, hooks is engaged in presenting and proposing alternatives to many issues from different methods and analysis categories, trying always to draw our attention to the importance of critical thinking. Part of her concern with it comes at the very first moment of her career as a researcher, but it also emerges from many of her expe-

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³ In *Talking Back*, hooks describes the process of choosing her pseudonym: "I chose the name bell hooks because it was a family name, because it had a strong sound. Throughout childhood, this name was used to speak to the memory of a strong woman, a woman who spoke her mind. Then in the segregated world of our black community – a strong woman was someone able to make her own way in this world, a woman who possessed traits often associated only with men – she would kill for family and honor – she would do whatever was necessary to survive – she would be true to her word. Claiming this name was a way to link my voice to an ancestral legacy of woman speaking – of woman power." (1989, p. 270)

periences as a black girl who lived in the southern United States and attended segregated schools. In a second moment, as a student and university professor – when she was given opportunities to theorize black feminism, the ethics of love and so many other subjects that pervade her ideas.

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At my point of view, what makes hooks an important author is precisely her multiple capacity for analysis and linguistic accessibility. By saying this, I do not propose a reduction of the complexity of her work to the categories of analysis chosen or to the issues analyzed, but recognize that, in doing so, hooks inaugurates the own thought and, therefore, an unique theory. It is important to emphasize this because the Brazilian academy, above all, promotes a systematic erasure of black feminist epistemologies. Among all possible justifications for this, the racist and sexist structure of western universities and hooks' non-academic language is one of them. This assumption, however, is not found when we analyze the theoretical accuracy and critical importance of her work.

I first came to bell hooks' thought in 2017, through the Black Collective *Negro Afronta* (CoNAfro), by reading the essay "Living by Love" (hooks, 1993). At that moment – and until today – hooks writing not only allowed me to glimpse other forms of epistemological production, but also showed me paths to other political possibilities, new tomorrows. I would say that bell hooks is a *philosopher of tomorrow*, because, in a certain way, her intellectual contribution, based on the criticism of the present time, announces a time that was not yet envisioned.

In this sense, one of the biggest issues for hooks is precisely the matter of feminist masculinities and the "imperialist white supremacist capitalist patriarchy" (hooks, 2000, p. 46) which are also the main themes of this article. For her, there can be no change without feminism; because of that, she urges to "reclaim feminism for men, showing why feminist thinking and practice are the only way we can truly address the crisis of masculinity today" (hooks, 2004a, p. xvii).

Having said that, this article is organized to exemplify, at first, the bell hooks' critique of the so-called patriarchal masculinities and, after that, it seeks to systematize its proposal of feminist masculinities. At various moments, I will have dialogues with other authors to elucidate the hook proposals.

In her work, hooks theorize masculinities twice – in *The Will to Change: Men, Masculinity, and Love* (2004a) and *We Real Cool: Black Men and Masculinity* (2004b), having already written about it in other books as well, such as *Talking Back: Thinking Feminist, Thinking Black* (1989), *Yearning: Race, Gender, and Cultural Politics* (1990), *Black Looks: Race and Representation* (1992), *Outlaw Culture: Resisting Representations* (1994), *Reel to Real: Race, Sex and Class at the Movies* (1996b), and *Salvation: Black People and Love* (2001); in this sense, masculinities are a notorious issue for hooks.

With this, it is intended to raise a central hypothesis for hooks (2004a): the production of meaning, which organizes the hegemonic masculinities' standards and their crossing by the imperialist white supremacist capitalist patriarchy that inform the processes of subjection. It is known that the processes of meaning production are fundamental to the constitution of subjectivities, from the perspective of representation and, therefore, are important in the exercise of comprehension proposed by hooks at various moments of her work (hooks, 1990, 1992, 2004b).



The bell hooks' critique of patriarchal masculinities

In a patriarchal culture, in which boys are educated to become men who do not cry, who can't show their feelings, who do not love, being a man, according to hooks, is to avoid "any concern with love" (hooks, 2001, p. 129). In this context, the masculinities yielded are the acceptable, hegemonic, and patriarchal.

In this sense, anthropologist Miriam Grossi states that the construction of the models of hegemonic masculinities in our culture is also based on the production of the "topness"⁴ [to be a *top* person] in a two-way sense: both sexuality and aggressiveness. From this perspective, to be a man in Western societies is to act with violence. To be a man is, using the Achille Mbembe's (2016) concept, to cultivate a "relation without desire"⁵ [*relation sans désir*] with people around us. It is necessary, then, that man must be strong, a provider, "top" and, above all, emotionally distant from himself and other people. Grossi states:

One of the principal definitions of masculinity in Western culture for gender is that the masculine is [top]. To be [a top], in the common sense of gender, means to be sexually active, which for many means to penetrate the body of the other. (...) But for the constitution of the hegemonic model of masculinity in our culture, [being a top person] is not only about sexuality; it is also perceived positively as aggressiveness. In the constitution of gender identity in childhood, we observe how the masculine is constituted by the hyperactivity of boys, which is then confused with aggressiveness. (Grossi, 1995, p. 6)

The socio-political configuration of imperialist patriarchy (hooks, 1981) then emerges as the root of our problem. According to hooks, "patriarchy is a political-social system that insists that males are inherently dominant" (2004a, p. 18). Because of this ideological construction of patriarchal masculinities, it is naturalized in the social imaginary that "rage was not an appropriate feminine feeling" (2004a, p. 19), for example, illustrating the rites of passage, of which Grossi mentions.⁶

However, the statement above (hooks, 2004a, p. 19) seems to be applicable only to the experience of white women, since black women are submitted to a series of controlling images (Collins, 2000) that build stereotypes for them as if they were, by nature, angry and emasculating.⁷ Understanding patriarchy as a system of domination, there must be an ideological

⁴ In Portuguese, Grossi uses the term "atividade" to designate a group of practices and behaviors that constitute «being a man», in the double sense pointed out in the quotation. When translating the term, however, it loses its meaning and requires an adaptation to preserve, or at least try to preserve, the meaning given by the author. In this sense, the noun "topness" is used to characterize a person who is both sexually and aggressively active, as Grossi suggests.

⁵ Mbembe, in *Politiques de l'inimitié* (2016), discusses the "relationship with no desire" as one of the characteristics of *societies of enmity*, which are constituted from colonial, imperialist, patriarchal and sexist bases. In the context of the construction of new masculinities, it is necessary to have recourse to what Mbembe calls of "relationship of care" [*la relation soignant-soigné*] (in the same sense as Butler and Levinas' ethical responsibility), that is, the nourishment of a relationship of vital interdependence and responsibility for the life of others. In societies of enmity, relationships of care have been replaced by relationships with no desire, which tangibly affects the action of the state's necropolitical apparatus.

⁶ In the case of black men, "The patriarchal organization of society expects males to marry and function as the breadwinner and head of household. Many black males are in a position to play this role." (Lemelle, 2010, p. 20).

⁷ This is something that will not be explored in this article, but that deserves special attention. I recommend the discussion of Bueno, 2020 (in Portuguese) and Collins, 1990 (in English).



framework that organizes these power relations. In this sense, Patricia Hill Collins' contribution is important, because from the concept of controlling images, according to Winnie Bueno, an important intellectual and researcher of Collins' thought,

Controlling images are part of a generalized ideology of domination, which operates from an authoritarian logic of power that nominates, characterizes, and manipulates meanings about the lives of black women who are dissonant from what they enunciate about themselves. (Bueno, 2020, p. 79)

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Addressing the experience of black women, Bueno points out that control images operate in such a way as to naturalize situations of violence against the bodies of people of color. In this sense, it is important to highlight that although gender is a power relation, a mechanism of subjection, and a category of social organization, it does not operate in its own terms. There is an intersectional dynamic that articulates the dimensions of the *matrix of domination* (Collins, 1990; Bueno, 2020).⁸

In the case of black men, the controlling images act in the construction of stereotypes and contexts that animalize them, thereby building the notion that black men are, by nature, sexually active and that they have bigger penises. However, it must be emphasized that images of control do not always play a negative role in the social imaginary. Controlling images, as Collins observes, can also be beneficial, especially for white men. The heart of the concept is the understanding that these images serve to maintain power relations, and gender is one of them.

For hooks (2004a), the term "patriarchal masculinity" is unbelievably valuable from a theoretical-analytical point of view since it allows us to take a more detailed and accurate approach to the issue.

Undoubtedly, one of the first revolutionary acts of visionary feminist must be to restore maleness and masculinity as an ethical biological category divorced from the dominator model. This is why the term patriarchal masculinity is so important, for it identifies male difference as being always and only about the superior rights of males to dominate, be their subordinates females or any group deemed weaker, by any means necessary. (hooks, 2004a, p. 114).

In "Reconstructing Black Masculinity", hooks (1992) analyzes well the factors that contribute to the patriarchal constructions of the controlling images of black masculinity and black men, considering the role of the media in the construction of social imaginaries. In the case of black men, an issue that is deeply discussed by her in *We Real Cool* (2004b), the processes of building oneself and the other are different. First and foremost, because the notion that black men are sexual machines, strong men, providers, those who beat white men in

⁸ Collins and Bueno distinguish controlling images from stereotype and representation. The controlling images structure the ideological dimension of the matrix of domination, while the stereotyping is a visual representation that, according to Stuart Hall, "reduces, essentializes, naturalizes and fixes 'difference'. (...) in other words, is part of the maintenance of social and symbolic order. It sets up a symbolic frontier between the 'normal' and the 'deviant' the 'normal' and the 'pathological' the 'acceptable' and the 'unacceptable' what 'belongs' and what does not or is 'Other' between 'insiders' and 'outsiders'" (1997, p. 258).



terms of sexual performance is built – this specific construction animalizes and dehumanizes black men.⁹

According to hooks, although there is no monolithic model of masculinity, the patriarchal one is the most prized, but not the only one. And although many black men have transgressed and lived alternative lifestyles, the dominant culture was still responsible for producing patriarchal and hegemonic models of masculinity – which reproduce “stereotypical, fantastical representations of black masculinity [in the dominant culture].” (hooks, 1992, p. 89). Yet hooks highlights the possibility of building new masculinities:

Collectively we can break the life-threatening choke-hold patriarchal masculinity imposes on black men and create life sustaining visions of a reconstructed black masculinity that can provide black men ways to save their lives and the lives of their brothers and sisters in struggle. (p. 113)

In this sense, the main criticism of the imperialist patriarchy (hooks, 1981) is evidenced: the representations of black men that are built by white supremacy organize the dynamics of black patriarchal masculinities and naturalizes the animalization and emasculation of these bodies. “Contemporary black men have been shaped by these representations”, states hooks (1992, p. 89).

To dislocate the patriarchal meanings associated with contemporary masculinities, hooks calls on feminist politics and feminist masculinities as a collective way out to reconstruct black masculinity, as suggested by the name of one of the most important essays in *Black Looks* (hooks, 1992).

Dislocating meanings, proposing feminist masculinities

According to hooks (2004a, p. 118), “men need feminist thinking”. Historically, patriarchal masculinities, based on relationships of domination and violence, have kept men away from feminist thought (hooks, 2004a). Feminist thought, for bell hooks, is one of the most important means of movements for social transformation and justice (hooks, 2000).

Defined as “a struggle to end sexist oppression” (hooks, 1984, p. 24), feminism would be the only way to construct new models of masculinities. Given that gender is a category of organization and social hierarchization, patriarchal masculinities are defined as power relations at this moment (Vigoya, 2018). Therefore, feminism operates in such a way as to eradicate these power dynamics and ensure a new social paradigm based on political solidarity (hooks, 1984).

Having said that, it is important to state that ideology (described here as “controlling images”) is a crucial factor in the process of naturalization of patriarchal masculine perfor-

⁹ In this sense, Collins (2004, p. 151) states: “In the context of the new racism in which miseducation and unemployment have marginalized and impoverished increasing numbers of young Black men, aggression and claiming the prizes of urban warfare gain in importance. Being tough and having street smarts is an important component of Black masculinity. When joined to understandings of booty as sexuality, especially raw, uncivilized sexuality, women’s sexuality becomes the actual spoils of war. In this context, sexual prowess grows in importance as a marker of Black masculinity. For far too many Black men, all that seems to be left to them is access to the booty, and they can become depressed or dangerous if that access is denied. In this scenario, Black women become reduced to sexual spoils of war, with Black men defining masculinity in terms of their prowess in conquering the booty.”



mativities and, for bell hooks, “it is necessarily a struggle to eradicate the ideology of domination that permeates Western culture on various levels” (hooks, 1984, p. 24). In this context, as Hall (1985) suggests, the ideology informs the representations, which are the engine for the perpetuation of patriarchal norms. It is a representational system that builds the models of what it is to be a man. In this regard, from a dialogue with Althusser, Hall understands ideology as systems of representation, from which individuals are interpellated and become subjects.

The designation of ideologies as “systems of representation” acknowledges their essentially discursive and semiotic character. Systems of representation are the systems of meaning through which we represent the world to ourselves and one another. It acknowledges that ideological knowledge is the result of specific practices—the practices involved in the production of meaning. (Hall, 1985, p. 103)

The understanding of Althusser’s interpellation is important for hooksian formulation, as I propose, because patriarchal masculinities interpellate individuals as subjects from patriarchal norms. In a similar way that Althusser (Hall, 1985) understood that individuals only become subjects when mediated by an ideology, and that this ideology only exists for these subjects, we emphasize that the processes of subjection are also mediated by an ideology, but that this ideology acts directly on the functioning of systems of representation. We argue then that contemporary processes of subjection in industrialized and western societies only become possible based on regimes of representation.

It is with this basic understanding that feminist masculinities¹⁰ emerge as a project of reconstruction of masculine ontologies, starting from the perspective of the production of meaning through language and discourse. The concept of “feminist masculinity”, however, does not arise in bell hooks’ thought. In 1989, Peter F. Murphy was already discussing feminist masculinities, based on some authors’ works on gender and sexuality, so that this debate proposed to rethink the masculine experience. Murphy, in this sense, recognizes the various problems that this discussion can bring, but stresses its importance as an important tool for thinking about new models of masculinity.¹¹ The bell hooks proposal moves in this same direction in order to provide the necessary tools for the construction of new models of masculinity.

In this way, Louise Bordeaux Silverstein (2016) states: “the construct of feminist masculinities refers to versions of masculinities that do not generate gender role strain for men

¹⁰ One criticism that has been raised by some black intellectuals and assessed by me, from the thought of hooks, is that the category “feminist masculinities” displaces only gender relations but does not promote an overcoming of the sex/gender system. Following this argument, we would then need to abolish the hegemonic gender markers. Abolishing hegemonic gender markers necessarily implies shifting the role of gender in the organizational structures of power and social relations. In other words, it means in the elimination of gender as a formative category of the embodiment of Western societies and regulator of performativities and social relations. This critique, however, is not within the scope of this article, but will probably be the subject of analysis in my future research.

¹¹ According to him, “feminism, too, must engage the question of the viability and problematics of a feminist masculinity. Men (especially white men) do have more than their fair share of power, at the expense of women. Yet there are some men who do not want that power, who do not know how to get rid of it, and who do not know what to do about it. The task for female and male feminists alike is to seriously analyze men’s lives in a sexually and politically oppressive society, understanding men’s roles as oppressors as well as victims.” (Murphy, 1989, p. 360). I also recommend seeing Murphy, 2004.



and that do support gender equality” (p. 145). Knowing that hooks is extremely critical to the notion of “gender equality”, which is the founder of liberal feminism, it is important to point out that Silverstein declares that: “Gender equality requires that behavior be degenerated because gender differences inevitably lead to hierarchy, which has always led to male dominance” (p. 145).

To some extent, the feminist proposal of new masculinities is guided by a resignification of gender reality. It is about the constitution of new power relations that do not lead us to the structures of domination (capitalism, patriarchy, imperialism, racism, sexism, etc.) that already guide modern societies.

When hooks (2004a, 2004b) recognizes the role and influence of the mass media in the construction of patriarchal masculinities, she necessarily draws attention to the fact that masculinity, as a mechanism of subjection, integrates systems of representation. The ideology, present in this article as “controlling images”, is fundamental in this process. The repetition constitutes the norm, as Butler (1988) suggests. And the norm must be transformed.

In *Salvation*, hooks argues that representations are central to the construction of black subjects, drawing attention to the fact that “the vast majority of the images of black people we see in the mass media simply confirm and reinforce racist, sexist, and classist stereotypes” (2001, p. 49). In a similar way, in *Black Looks*, she states that “from slavery on, white supremacists have recognized that control over images is central to the maintenance of any system of racial domination” (1992, p. 2).

To this end, being guided by feminist politics, feminist masculinities propose a shift in the processes of production of meaning so that “being a man” no longer means “being violent and dominating”. It is also an ontological reconstruction, where maleness becomes “a state of being rather than [a] performance” (hooks, 2004a, p. 114). In this sense, I demand the category representation as necessary for the understanding of feminist masculinities at this moment.

It is fundamental, in this first moment, to understand the operation of feminist masculinities as systems of representation so that we can investigate the mechanisms of subjection that they mobilize (something that will not be explored here). The systems of representation (Hall, 1997) give meaning to the world, and what is at stake in the thought of hooks is precisely the production of new systems of meaning for the construction of a new world.

Changing representations of black men must be a collective task. Black people committed to renewed black liberation struggle, the de-colonization of black minds, are fully aware that we must oppose male domination and work to eradicate sexism. (hooks, 1992, p. 113)

In this process, feminist politics, which at a certain point are guided by the ethics of love (hooks, 2000), are fundamental for the eradication of this system as we know it. It is a collective process, permeated by ideology and processes of representation, which needs to be executed in a daily basis. As hooks likes to say, “this is the heart of the matter” (hooks, 2001). At the end of the day, the feminist masculinities proposal

can only emerge in a context where renewed black liberation struggle has a feminist component, where the eradication of sexism is seen as essential to our struggle, to our efforts to build a beloved community, a space of harmony and connection where black women and



men can face each other not as enemies but as comrades, our hearts rejoicing in a communion that is about shared struggle and mutual victory. (hooks, 1994, p. 230)

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ART AND POLITICAL INSTABILITY - THE SEARCH FOR IDENTITY IN THE PERFORMATIVE ART OF ANA MENDIETA AND COCO FUSCO¹

Anna Clara Petracca²

| 31

ABSTRACT

In parallel to the second wave of feminism, which developed from the second half of the 20th century, there were demonstrations against oppressive regimes, in addition to the sexual revolution. The artistic performance was increasingly related to issues of political identity, gender and social, for its experimental character and power, generating more visceral catharsis, through the permission of direct encounters with society. Thus, feminist art and artistic performance intersected, approximating the relationship between work and artist, considering their subjectivities (in identity and politics) within language, as well as elements and characteristics of performance. As follows, this article seeks to present a study of reflection on the search for identity in a context of political instability through performative art. For this, a brief theoretical-historical review is made of the themes that structure the discussion: feminist activism, political and gender identity and its relations with creation and performance, and the use of the body itself as a means of artistic expression (body art). In addition to the theoretical revision, an analysis is elaborated on the artistic creation of Ana Mendieta (1948-1985), Cuban artist, refugee in the United States during the regime of Fidel Castro, and Coco Fusco (1960-), a Cuban-American artist, who had her mother exiled from Cuba during the Revolution. From the aspects analyzed in this research, it is possible to understand a little more of the search for identity through performative art in a context of political instability, using as a method the theoretical revision and analysis of artistic works, making room for future discussions on the subject.

KEY-WORDS:

Performance art; Politics; Feminism; Ana Mendieta; Coco Fusco.

There is no original past that must be redeemed: there is emptiness, orphanhood, the land without the baptism of beginnings, the time that observes us from within the earth. There is above all the search for origin. - Ana Mendieta

Freedom is conditional in various contexts and many governments limit the different ways in which we can protest. - Coco Fusco

The search for one's own identity is something inherent to the human being, when there is a confrontation with its own existence. But what are the peculiarities of this search in a context of female artists who experience political instability? To this end, I propose in this text a brief reflection on this condition of specific artistic creation, through the analysis of some works made by two artists relevant to the theme: Ana Mendieta, a Cuban artist who, in 1961, took refuge in the United States of America, due to the political context of their home country, and the involvement of their family in politics. The artist died in 1985 in New York City, in an alleged accident shortly after an argument with her husband, minimalist sculptor Carl Andre. Besides Mendieta, I also consider it relevant to analyze some of the works

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made by Coco Fusco, an interdisciplinary Cuban-American artist who had her mother exiled from Cuba during the Revolution. Both artists have their works related to issues of gender and identity. I maintain that the condition of being a female artist, added to the political context in which she is inserted, has a direct influence on both the artistic process and the result of her works, as well as can be considered a valid form of self-discovery and identity expression, individual and collective.

32 | For this, I divide the research into two parts: in the first, I begin a historical contextualization of feminism and comment on some important aspects for the good understanding of the text that follows. I also make a relationship between the development of second-wave feminism, and the rise of performance art and body art, factors that intersect historically. In a second moment, I comment on four artistic works: *Untitled - Glass on Body Imprints* (1972), by Ana Mendieta, and her series *Siluetas* (1973-80), as well as *El Evento Suspendido* (2000) and *El Último Deseo/The Last Wish* (1997), both works by Coco Fusco. I chose the works that most fit the theme of this research, in relation to the theme and year of production (I opted for works that had a close year of production, within the context of each artist, as well as themes that directly related to the purpose of the research).

The feminist movement, for didactic purposes, is divided into three waves: the first, in the eighteenth century, in the context of the French revolution, gained strength in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and was marked by suffragism with the search of women for the right to vote. The second wave, which developed in the middle of the 20th century, broadened the debate to various topics, such as sexuality, the labor market, motherhood, among others. Moreover, the second wave is marked by the slogan *personal is political*, calling attention to the individual issues to be seen as part of a whole, recognizing that what occurs in the private sphere affects the public sphere and vice versa. A practical example is the discussion on the importance and value of the burden of domestic work assigned to women. In this case, domestic tasks should be valued and considered work, and divided equally. Otherwise, women would be burdened with the weight of domestic work added to the labor market they were entering. The third wave, which occurred in the 1990s, is marked by the appropriation of queer issues and LGBT movements by feminism. For this research, I see a greater focus on the second wave of feminism, due to the main questions raised by the movement, which will be clearer below.

In 1949, Simone de Beauvoir published *The Second Sex*, putting on the agenda questions about female sexual freedom and autonomy over their bodies. It is also when its maxim is widely discussed *one is not born a woman, but becomes one*, reflecting on the performativity of gender present in society. Beauvoir expounds, from a historical, social and cultural analysis, male oppression on the feminine and the development of a notion that the feminine is the *other*, inferior to the masculine norm. Thus, the feminine loses its identity from the moment it is limited to the masculine opposition. Thus, it can be said that the author proposes an emancipation of the feminine in front of the masculine, from the attribution of the protagonism to the women and detachment of this *other* place. In this same line of reasoning, Laura Mulvey in *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema* (1975) points out that:

The paradox of phallocentrism in all its manifestations is that it depends on the image of the castrated woman to give order and meaning to its world. An idea of woman stands as lynch pin to the system: it is her lack that produces the phallus as a symbolic presence. (Mulvey, 1975, p. 14)



Thus, Beauvoir points out that the feminine is conditioned to the existence of the masculine, being placed as *another*, and Mulvey reiterates this thought when she talks about the paradox of phallogentrism and the castrated female. Starting from the idea that the image of the feminine is guided by the absence of the masculine, more precisely of the phallus, it is in the presence and position of *creator* that the feminine can resume its space, claiming a better representation, through an active position and not passive.

Art as a tool of gender resignification

In the 1960s, Performance Art developed as an interdisciplinary art, combining theater, music, dance, video, poetry and often political activism. Thus, a discussion began, both in feminism and in the artistic sphere, about the domination of men in relation to women. It was in the 1970s that feminist art and artistic performance intersected, bringing the relationship between artist and work closer together. An example is the propagation of body art, in which the artist's own body is used as a tool of artistic manifestation, resulting in an immediate and cathartic message, linking the artist's personal space and transferring to a collective. Thus, artists began to distort their own body image, through external materials and often with natural elements. The researcher Alessandra Rufino in her publication *The Art of Beth Moysés: Performance and Feminist Activism*, points out that began «a production of art openly feminist and that is made by means of struggle, militancy and social change, mainly through the language of performance» (Rufino, 2019, p. 16).

Ana Mendieta (1948-1985) greatly explored body art and performance, being recognized for her earth-body works. In her works, the artist used her own body as a means of expression, using natural/organic elements such as blood, soil, wood and fire. During the regime of Fidel Castro in Cuba in 1961, she was sent to the United States, and in 1966 she began studying arts at the University of Iowa. In 1973, she began the *Siluetas Series* (1973-80), a series of works in which she explored the relationship between nature and the female body, reflecting on issues of identity, loss, search and exile. As Leonilia Magalhães and Priscila Leal state, «in other words, performative art was used as a laboratory to deconstruct hegemonic identities and create political consciousness.» (Magalhães; Leal, 2016, p. 104)

From the meeting of performative art with feminist activism, women artists obtained a new space to claim their rights and re-signify their existences, fighting against a imposed patriarchal cultural pattern. In political contexts of instability, this manifestation becomes even more pertinent, since its rights are threatened in more than one sphere, raising questions that go beyond gender issues, but also identities in a broader sense, and still communicating with the so-called feminine reality.

Regarding the influence of the political context on art, Suely Rolnik in *Geopolitics of Pimping*, says that:

[...] With different strategies, from the most pamphleteering and distant from art to the most strikingly aesthetic, such movement of the air of time has as one of its main origins the malaise of the politics that governs the processes of subjectivation - especially the place of the other and the destiny of the force of creation - proper of the financial capitalism that settled on the planet from the end 1970s. (Rolnik, 2006, p.1)



Thus, art emerges as a manifestation of this crossing in individual and collective bodies, personal and political, being directly linked to the external and internal condition of an individual and in the form that it produces art. In the case of women, there is the fragility of the identity and personal question itself while, before women, being human, and then as female, considering the meaning of the female individual problematic and fragile, because it arises from the opposition or denial of the male, which is structurally nourished by more social power. Performance, being an essentially corporeal art, presents itself as a pertinent tool of expression and interaction of wills and desires.

Rolnik, on the influence of capital and, more specifically, neoliberalism on contemporary society and its influences on our human existence, proposes that:

[...] the Western idea of promised paradise corresponds to a refusal of life in its immanent nature of continuous impulse of creation and differentiation. In its earthly version, capital has replaced God as guarantor of the promise, and the virtue that makes us deserve it has become consumption: this is the fundamental myth of advanced capitalism. Faced with all this, it is at least mistaken to consider that we lack myths in contemporaneity: it is precisely through our belief in this religious myth of neoliberalism, that the image worlds that such a regime produces become concrete reality in our own existences. (Rolnik, 2006, p.5)

American theatre and performance theorist Marvin Carlson, in his book *Performance: A Critical Introduction* reports that there was a change in artistic performance in the course of the 1970s, by moving away from aesthetic-formal issues, having a more social character. Thus, it designates the emergence of two types of performance, generally speaking: identity performance and cultural performance.

The first is characterized by the construction or exploration of the identity of an individual, considered by many performance theme theorists in general. Here, we highlight the performances performed by women, by pioneering and even by the degree of elaboration. Cultural performance, on the other hand, emerges as an extension of identity performance, from the moment when performance is considered as a mode of cultural action, a performance of resistance, questioning the imposed social model of existence and individual and collective expression. Feminist performances assume an important role here, due to the great critical character present in the works.

In the text *Reinstating Corporeality, Feminism and Body Politics*, written by Amelia Jones and published in *The Feminism and Visual Culture Reader* (2003) it is possible to understand how the female body is subjective and subject to variables such as culture and group/social situation:

[...] the objection is raised that what the female body is varies according to culture, century and social group. It is a social, historical and ideological construct. [...] Biology is always subordinated and mediated by culture, and the ways in which women experience their own bodies is, to a large extent, a product of political and social processes. [...] the body is a product defined by social stories, social relationships and speeches, which also identify its main characteristics (ignoring others), which authorize and prohibit its behavior. (Jones, 2003, p.114, 115)

From the moment when the experience of being a woman is understood as a product of political and social processes, it is logical to consider the impact of the political situation

of a place and think about how it affects an artist, creator of meaning, and at the same time, women in their personal, social and political lives.

A good example of such analysis is Ana Mendieta, who was exiled from Cuba in 1960, at the age of twelve, during CIA's Operation *Peter Pan*, much for the involvement of her family, who had fought for Cuban independence and participated directly in the 1959 Revolution. However, her family differed politically from the leader of the Revolution, Fidel Castro, and decided to send Ana and her sister, Raquelín, to the United States. The cultural difference, in addition to the way in which Latin women were already seen in the mid-20th century in the United States, influenced their artistic development and identity. Mendieta, who arrived in the country without even knowing English, was seen from the stereotype of the Latin woman: aggressive and sensual. However, it was in New York that Ana Mendieta, in the 1970s, approached avant-garde art and feminist activism, crossing both themes in her artistic production.

That's how the artist found in art a way to rescue, build and express her artistic, social and cultural identity, as a Latin woman and artist, perceiving there a space of exploration and maintenance of its roots. Mendieta also builds a deep relationship between her body and nature, becoming well known for her earth-body works. Here, I highlight the *Silueta* Series, in which the artist explored the various possibilities within this same theme:

My exploration through my art of the relationship between myself and nature has been a clear result of my having been torn from my homeland during my adolescence. The making of my *Silueta* in nature keeps (makes) the transition between my homeland and my new home. It is a way of reclaiming my roots and becoming one with nature. Although the culture in which I live is part of me, my roots and cultural identity are a result of my Cuban heritage. (as quoted in - see footnote)³

This series of works, which contemplated the positioning of the artist's own body in various situations in nature (in rocks, water, soil, sand, grass, etc.), is dated from 1973 and followed for some years. It was on a visit to Mexico that the artist began the sequence of works that would represent Mendieta as part of the environment, of a whole, as one who creates roots, having a clear connection with her visit to a Latin culture, resorting to her origin. If it were not for the feeling of displacement greatly provoked by her exile at the age of 12, very likely the artist would explore her identity in another way, because in the case of Ana Mendieta, one of the themes that motivate her works is mainly the issue of the construction of the identity of the Latin woman, with the crossing of the stereotyped vision of this same woman. Another recurring element in Mendieta's works is blood, which can be related to motherhood, the womb, making a symbolic reference to creation, to mother nature:

I feel taken by the feeling of having been torn from the womb (nature). Art is the way in which I reestablish my links with the universe. It is a return to maternal origin. (Mendieta *apud* Barreras, 1987, p.31)

³ My transcription and translation of the excerpt of the film about Ana Mendieta's life and work: *Fuego de Tierra*, directed by Kate Horsfield and Nereida Garcia-Ferraz. The film won the award for best documentary at the National Latino Film and Video Festival in 1988.



In *Untitled - Glass on Body Imprints* (1972), the artist compresses her body against glass plates, as if she wishes to adapt to a pattern not necessarily visible or clear, but felt bodily. Making a reference not only to the significant feminine in society, but also to the immigrant Latin woman, who lived - in the period of production of the works - and still lives a fragility in her existence constantly threatened by her social and cultural identity.

36 | Reflecting further on the representation of women in Mendieta's work, we can relate to a phrase by Judith Butler, in which

gender is not always constituted coherently or consistently in different historical contexts, and because gender intersects with racial, class, ethnic, sexual, and regional modalities of discursively constituted identities. (Butler, 2011, p.04).

Thus, Ana Mendieta re-signifies not only the feminine in general, but addresses the specific question of the Latin immigrant woman, questioning her own individual and, at the same time, collective identity.

In 1978, the artist joined the Art Gallery A.I.R. (Artists in Residence Gallery), the first gallery, in the United States, focused only on female artists, and opening for experimental work - including performances. In 1980, Mendieta curated an exhibition called *Dialectics of Isolation*: an exhibition of third-world women artists in the United States. The artist's statement in the introduction of the exhibition catalog further clarifies her artistic, social and political vision, and summarizes the possible and relevant crossings to be related:

The white population of the United States, diverse, but of basic European stock, exterminated the indigenous civilization and put aside the Black as well as the other non-white cultures to create a homogenous maledominated culture above the internal divergency. Do we exist?...To question our cultures is to question our own existence, our human reality. To confront this fact means to acquire an awareness of ourselves. This in turn becomes a search, a questioning of who we are and how we will realize ourselves. During the mid to late sixties as women in the United States politicized themselves and came together in the Feminist Movement with the purpose to end the domination and exploitation by the white male culture, they failed to remember us. American Feminism as it stands is basically a white middle class movement. As non-white women our struggles are two-fold. This exhibition points not necessarily to the injustice or incapacity of a society that has not been willing to include us, but more towards a personal will to continue being "other." (Mendieta, 1980, p.1)

Ana Mendieta had a short and tragic ending: near the age of 37, during an argument with her then-husband Carl Andre, an already renowned minimalist sculptor, Mendieta fell from the thirty-fourth floor of her New York apartment. However, there were no eyewitnesses to the incident. Some neighbors said they heard a violent altercation just before the artist fell out the window. The case was brought to court, assuming that Carl Andre could have murdered Mendieta, but the artist was acquitted of the guilt, for there was no concrete evidence. At the time, many artists worked in defense of the sculptor, without any proof. Some demonstrations occurred after his death, and the phrase *Where Is Ana Mendieta?* had repercussions after a symposium of the same name took place at New York University in 2010 and, in 2014, a feminist group manifesting itself with the sayings amid a retrospective of Carl Andre, depositing animal blood and offal and also including the phrase *we wish Ana Mendieta were still alive*.



Another artist, also interdisciplinary, that contemplates themes very similar to that of Ana Mendieta, is Coco Fusco. Cuban-American, born in 1960 in New York, had her mother exiled from Cuba during the Revolution. The Last Wish (*El Ultimo Deseo*) is a 1997 performance about the repatriation and death of Cuban exiles. It was based on the desire of her grandmother to return to Cuba to be buried, a wish that can be expanded and re-signified to a collective desire, being the reality of many exiles. The artist lay motionless on the floor throughout the performance, with candles and flowers around her, representing a traditional Catholic wake.

In *El Evento Suspendido* (2000) Coco Fusco symbolically explores the presence and absence. Unlike *El Ultimo Deseo*, the artist is buried (on Cuban soil, outside the art gallery) vertically up to half of her body, while writing, for three hours, the same letter repeatedly, leaving copies for viewers who wanted to read it, originally written in Spanish:

My dears, I am writing this letter to tell you that I am alive. For many years I feared that if I told the truth, you would suffer at the hands of those who buried another woman in my name. I can't stand not being able to say that I exist. Not a day has gone by without me dreaming about you. Fortunately, I can say that I have recovered from the ordeal that resulted in my departure. I will send more news soon. With love, C. (Fusco, 2000, n.p.)

Coco Fusco's most recent publications address Cuban performance art, and how the post-revolution political situation influenced and still influences Cuban artists. Although culture was a useful means of projecting government image, Cuban artists and intellectuals were treated as suspects during the takeover. The artist was banned from entering Cuba during 2018 and 2019, viewing this as a means of protest.

Thus, considering the works commented and the theoretical discussion presented, it is possible to notice how the artistic creative production intersects with the resignification and maintenance of a personal identity, and can also often be collective. In a society that experiences some kind of political instability, affecting the existence of each individual in a unique way, but reverberating in some standardized way in the collective, it becomes essential a means of resistance that puts the affected element not only as a protagonist, but also as a creator of meaning. Coco Fusco and Ana Mendieta are just two examples of how this crossing between individual and collective bodies, social and political, can occur. The story that is lived by all usually has many points of view, however it is often narrated only by those who have some privilege of power, holding some means of communication. In this process, the performing art manifests itself breaking, little by little, this barrier of privileges, giving place and voice to those and those who before did not have this condition.

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TEARING BODIES: WOMAN AND FICTION IN THE WORK OF MARIA LYSIA CORRÊA DE ARAÚJO¹

Heleniara Amorim Moura²

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ABSTRACT

The research referenced in this article was built from the organization of the Maria Lysia Corrêa de Araújo's Collection, set present in the Acervos Teatrais da Universidade Federal de São João del-Rei (Theatrical Collections of the Federal University of São João del-Rei), donated by the writer's family in 2012. The ordering and analysis took place between 2012 and 2015 in doctoral studies at the Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais (Federal University of Minas Gerais), and were completed in research projects of the Instituto Federal de Minas Gerais (Federal Institute of Minas Gerais) - Campus Ouro Branco between the years 2018 and 2019. Minas Gerais' artist Maria Lysia Corrêa de Araújo (1921-2012) produced a diverse literature, presenting a set of literary composition in various genres such as theater criticism, chronicle, romance and short story. In addition, as an actress, she was present in expressive montages from the 1960s, not only at EAD (School of Dramatic Art of São Paulo), but also in important theater groups such as Arena, Oficina, Cia Maria-Della Costa, Cia. Tônia-Autran, among others. She worked with directors such as José Celso Martinez, Augusto Boal, Alfredo Mesquita, in addition to staging plays of deep ideological content in an era of silencing and coercion of civil rights in Brazil. Thus, this article brings a later look to a research of almost a decade on the life and work of Maria Lysia Corrêa de Araújo, with new demarcations on the gender issue and a cut, albeit late, of the artistic material of this woman who crossed decades in the performing and literary arts, in a deeply sexist, misogynistic and repressive country. The gender issue in the writer's work often appears in a kind of inadequacy of female bodies to a conservative, patriarchal and repressive world: women in solitude, or in suffocating relationships, characters lost in a fictional and theatrical universe of isolation, violence and incomprehension in which the characters' physical bodies begin to disintegrate towards nonexistence. In these "written bodies", alluding to the term of Michel Foucault, artistic and literary images condense the cultural, social and historical aspects demarcated in female identities that express, in an overwhelming language, defined limit experiences in the presence of these bodies in the world. Women in the writer's fictional universe, both in their narratives and in their plays, express experiences outlined in bodies and voices that resist the diversity of their records in literary and social discourse, in a political moment when the bodies of artists were torn apart not only for the physical repression in the dictatorial period, but also for the censorship of their works. In this context of violence implanted by the military dictatorship in Brazil, the work of the writer reflects a literature of unrest and incomprehension in the language of fantastic realism, one of the few possible narrative forms to support the historical weight of that time. On stage, Maria Lysia Corrêa de Araújo conceived a dramatic literature based on the Teatro do Absurdo (Theater of the Absurd), brought to Brazil in the estate of foreign artists, condensed in images of death and loneliness. Thus, the writer, enmeshed in fantastic literature and the theater of the non-sense, brought to the writing scene, female characters that incorporated the destruction of the body and the existential emptiness. By also lending her physical body as a woman to highly significant shows in that historical context, Maria Lysia joins the group of artists who resisted her time, denouncing not only anti-democratic issues but also the prejudices of gender demarcation arising from that society. In his work, subjectivities appear as the main focus and human relationships become a substance for the composition of a singular writing based on images of these "written bo-

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dies”, analyzed in their identity, in which differences are problematized and relationships of oppression denounced.

Keywords:

Maria Lysia Corrêa de Araújo; Written bodies; Theater; Literature; Woman.

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Brazilian artist Maria Lysia Corrêa de Araújo staged (to be a theatrical metaphor) a very attractive existence. Lúcia Machado de Almeida called her “master of magical realism” and two of her published books bring aspects of this literary universe, present both in the selection of short stories *Em silêncio* (In Silence) and in the soap opera *Um tempo* (A time). The writer also published six children’s books: *O círculo* (The circle), *Os passáros que gostavam de poesia* (The birds who liked poetry), *O bairro feliz* (Happy neighborhood), *Aprendiz de barroco* (Baroque apprentice), *Acorda, Luís!* (Wake up, Luís!) and *O carneirinho diferente* (The different lamb). In addition to having published countless short stories and chronicles in newspapers and magazines in the country between the years 1950 to 1980. During a period of her life, she was a talented actress, awarded at EAD (School of Dramatic Art of São Paulo), she drew the attention of playwright Eugène Ionesco visiting Brazil. He worked in theater groups in major cities in the country such as Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo and Belo Horizonte. Lysia de Araújo, as she was known in the theatrical environment, lived in several addresses, in different cities, met many people from the artistic and cultural environment, enchanted and was enchanted in the world of art. Based on the documentary material present in her intellectual collection, we sought to reconstruct the artistic environments (theatrical and literary) that surrounded her intellectual life, in an attempt to apprehend the cultural thought of times and places the artist went through. The plurality that surrounds her life, whether as an actress, writer or critic, has led us to the comparison of texts, varied times and spaces, trying to compose, through these fragmentary plays, approximations and distances related to her subjectivity. In this sense, some biographical points are fundamental to understand how her personality as an artist is formed.

It was in the city of Belo Horizonte in the 1940s that the writer had the ideal home within a family of intellectuals. Orphans at a young age, Maria Lysia and her brothers were reunited by their older sister Zilah de Araújo in the capital of Minas Gerais, where they lived with limited resources. The motto “We have no inheritances, we only have heads”³ was present repeatedly in the family context, according to the testimony of Laís de Araújo, sister of the artist and an important poet from Minas Gerais. Although there was a complicated political and economic situation and the cost of living in the capital of Minas Gerais was high, modernity and investment in culture, health and education were hallmarks of the decade. The creation of new teaching centers such as the Instituto de Educação (Institute of Education), Colégio Santa Maria (Saint Mary’s School), Ginásio São José (Saint Joseph Gymnasium), the Escola Técnica Federal (Federal Technical School), the Universidade de Minas Gerais (University of Minas Gerais), among others, led to the formation of the Corrêa de Araújo brothers. All of them took higher education courses, except Maria Lysia, whose soul was too free for

³ The facts were narrated in a statement made by the poet Laís Araújo at the UFMG Faculty of Letters in 1997. The full text can be found at: Maciel, 2002, p. 27-33.



academic cloister and methodism. Without inheritance, but privileged in their heads, they started their careers through public tenders that were fundamental to stabilize the lives of young students in the family.

If academic training was an uncertainty in Maria Lysia's life, her professional activities as a civil servant were constant. In Brazil, many writers have pursued their literary careers concurrently with public work. Few writers can live exclusively on literature in our country. The stability and mobility of this career allowed Maria Lysia to enjoy a certain freedom in relation to her destiny and her choices. The institution of marriage was still a requirement for women and there is, in this sense, a bold decision: the artist will live alone, in one of the largest cities in the country at the time, to attend theater. In a way, financial freedom allowed her independence to live her career in theatrical art. The actress gave life to important characters of Brazilian and foreign dramaturgy, I seek here, just to go through some of these works, especially in points that touch the theme of this article: the female body and its constitution in some of the shows in which the artist was on the scene. Euripides' editing of *Medeia* was the actress's first work in 1955 under the direction of João Ceschiatti, still in Belo Horizonte. In the typescript of the play that contains the lines of the character interpreted by Lysia de Araújo, the words spoken that night still resonate in the ink of time: "Annihilation... What music in this word - annihilation! Annihilating the past, it is not possible, as for its fruits in the present..."⁴ According to Brian Gordon Lutalo Kibuuka:

Euripides' play *Medeia*, staged at the beginning of the Peloponnesian War in 431 BC, refreshes *Medeia*'s myth in terms of its time. At the heart of the plot of the Euripidian tragedy, *Medeia*, a foreigner woman, abandoned by her husband, works through constant dialogue with women and men. She murders, kills enemies and her own children and runs away with the help of a king and a god. Euripides' *Medeia*, rooted in a polis that is about to exile it, participates in erosion oikos, acts: tragedy is done by its actions. In the praxis of the drama, alongside the typical appeal to hobbies, the immoderate character of a protagonist of a tragedy, gender regimes, perspectives of *philia* and enmity, concepts of religion, justice and revenge are at work (Kibuuka, 2018, p. 57).

Medeia's action through her body (and in other bodies like her children's) brings interesting aspects of a feminine reading that denies what is imposed on her: the passivity of acceptance gives way to the tearing of the submissive maternal myth, within a mythical space in which she murders and honors her dead and, in revenge, takes their bodies away from her husband's presence. However, the character's relationship with the bodies is extremely close, she gathers them together with her body, prepares them for funeral rituals. From the fruits of her own body, *Medeia* is a paradoxical bearer of love and death. In the women's choir, the character finds sometimes complacency, sometimes contradiction. In dealing, however, Brian clarifies that, "with the female characters, she acts according to the expected gender regime: she and her interlocutors act as women among themselves - not in language, but in the theme of mutual defense" (Kibuuka, 2018, p 75).

The work made Lysia de Araújo look for training in theater at the aforementioned School of Dramatic Art of São Paulo. In 1960, her work as an actress was consolidated in the play in

⁴ Typescript of the part that fell to the actress in the presentation of the play, p. 14 (handwritten numbering). Source: Maria Lysia Corrêa de Araújo Collection.



an act *As cadeiras* (The chairs) by Eugène Ionesco, under the direction of Alfredo Mesquita. According to researcher Célia Berretini, one of the hallmarks of the formation of the São Paulo dramaturgy school in the period will be the assembly of modern works and authors, “with its claims and achievements, among which language occupies a relevant place” (Berretini, 1980, p. 57). Some of the speeches pronounced by the Old Woman in *The Chairs*, a character lived by Lysia de Araújo in the referred montage, accentuate the work of the playwright who not only parodied old sayings, but subverted them until it reached the absurd. Thus, «phrases like ‘My children, distrust each other’ were pronounced by the character, parodying the evangelical precept of reciprocal love, with the superposition of ‘Distrust’ to ‘Amai’ (to love)» (Berretini, 1980, p. 57). In performative language, the character gives voice to a female body marked by the passage of time and maturity. Body that is presented by and as language, in the articulation of word games that reveal what the character neglects or suffers in the play with his companion. Body exposed to the farcical exhibition, occupying its place intensely in the empty scenery of the play, composed by a visual background of doors and windows; in the main part of the scene, only two chairs. The centrality of Ionesco’s play lies in these two bodies: an elderly couple waiting for a speaker who will transmit a message entrusted by the old man to humanity. With the arrival of the interlocutor, after a long dialogue between the couple and the reception of invisible guests, materialized in chairs that start to occupy the stage, the couple throws themselves into the sea, definitively silencing the bodies, since there was a speaker who would transmit so important message. The ending reduces waiting to silence, as the speaker is unable to speak even by gestures and the message is lost as the bodies of the characters were lost.

The importance of the works of the “Theater of the Absurd” in Maria Lysia’s literary production is significant since she later writes, for the exam of the last year of EAD, the play in an act “*Quem Garante?*”⁵ (Who guarantees?), which was taken to the scene in 1961, under the general direction of Alfredo Mesquita. The author herself will call her play “*ionescada em um ato*”⁶ and the text impresses by the total appreciation of the word that supplants scenarios and costumes and destitutes the stage of objects and the actor’s physical body. Composed of three voices, it also has a vigorous musical background composed by Johann Sebastian Bach’s “*Tocatta and Fugue in D minor*”. The gloomy entrance of the music frames the entrance of a dialogue between the three voices, two of them, lost in an unknown dimension, do not know where they came from, what they came from, whether they are living or dead beings. One of them is lost in negatives: nothing, no, bad weather, nobody. The other voice, just asks, also asks about time, love, about another voice that will come. In the end, in the existential cold of loneliness, the characters cry out to the third voice to warm them up and she, a female voice, then covers them with love, which is not enough and soon ends. In the urge for more love, in the desire of the voices that start to despair, the play ends in questioning and finishes in the existential void.

Lysia de Araújo’s last performance at the theater was the historical production of *Pequenos Burgueses* (Little Bourgeois) by Maximo Gorki, directed by José Celso Martinez, with Fernando Peixoto as assistant director. The play was on display in the mid-1960s in São Paulo,

⁵ It was represented by colleagues from EAD at that time. There is a copy (typed) in the Maria Lysia Corrêa de Araújo Collection at UFSJ.

⁶ In a newspaper clipping present in its collection, without indication of source or date. Source: Maria Lysia Corrêa de Araújo Collection.

and obtained, in 1967, a new montage presented in Rio de Janeiro, where the actress took up residence at the time. For José Celso Martinez Corrêa, *Pequenos Burgueses* “was a very sad piece, with a lot of emotion, a lot of suffering: the petty bourgeoisie suffering without knowing what to do...” (Corrêa, 1998, p. 41). The director gave a new scenic direction and “over time, the show became more radical, it was done a thousand times, absorbing a thousand influences and transforming” (Corrêa, 1998, p. 41). According to Martinez, it was Eugênio Kusnet who “started to give tools for the actor to discover and analyze the theater, to teach the actor to research in life, to research in the street” (Corrêa, 1998, p. 42). The character lived by Lysia de Araújo, *Stepanida*, was defined by Martinez as a being completely alien to everything that goes on in the play, a servile body that carries the weight of domestic work within a bourgeois family. These groups are still active until the mid-1970s, but after Institutional Act No. 5, these actors, directors and playwrights suffer from repression and exile⁷. Thus, the actor’s body is removed from the scene, not even his voices can be heard anymore, the bodies were reprimanded, subjected to the conditions of “docile bodies”, understood by Michel Foucault within a “mechanics of power”, which according to the theorist, “Defines how one can have dominion over the bodies of others, not simply so that they do what they want, but to operate as they wish, with techniques according to the speed and efficiency that is determined” (Foucault, 2013b, p.133). Bodies that, if not disciplined, became vulnerable to other bodies, «object-bodies”⁸, defined by weapons and rifles manipulated in clandestine barracks, where they formulated tortures and punishments for the rebellious bodies of artists. Around 1970, Lysia de Araújo returns to Belo Horizonte. In an interview with the IBL newspaper, the artist made reminiscences about that period: “Theater... (...) The struggle is great, our culture is still quite deficient in this field, assembling, studying, rehearsing a play are undertakings that require time and courage (...) I completely abandoned the theater and just want to dedicate myself to literature”⁹.

It is interesting to note that despite the intense intellectual activity, the author has remained unpublished in a book for more than two decades. The edition of *Em silêncio* (In silence) by José Olympio, a collection of short stories already published in newspapers and magazines in the 1960s, would only happen in 1978, through an agreement with INL - Instituto Nacional do Livro (National Book Institute), after several awards. Second place in the Fernando Chinaglia Award, in 1976, was not enough for an immediate publication of her novel *Um tempo*, which also waited nine years, until Editora Nova Fronteira revealed the text to the editorial market in 1985. The context is related directly to the obstacles faced by writers in literary circles. When Maria Lysia Corrêa de Araújo started publishing in the 1950s in magazines and newspapers, there was a gradual change, but an important one for the visibility of these women of letters. As researcher Constância Lima Duarte points out, after the 1930s, “the newsrooms of major newspapers begin to accept women’s publications without

⁷ According to Jacó Guinsburg and Rosângela Patriota, the Arena, in 1971, after the intensification of its work on the outskirts of São Paulo, with the theater-newspaper, and with the creation of Núcleo 2, dismantled with the prison and the later exile of the playwright and director Augusto Boal. Oficina, meanwhile, suspended its activities in 1974, after a police invasion that resulted in the arrest of some of its members and the departure of director José Celso Martinez Corrêa to Europe” (Guinsburg; Patriota.2012, p. 162).

⁸ Allusion to Michel Foucault’s concept of body-object. See: Foucault, 2013, p. 147.

⁹ Typed document of one of the writer’s resumes for newspapers and magazines. It has no date or destination indication.



major difficulties, and practically all of our writers begin their literary career in this way” (Duarte, 1999, p. 430).

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In this context, Maria Lysia has a unique ability in the art of narration and, without a doubt, chronicles and short stories are important genres within her literature. The writer is inserted in a moment of repression of freedom of expression, however, she does not fail to compose in her literature a possibility of writing the non-sayable, translating, in these written bodies¹⁰, narrative knowledge that condenses the cultural, social and historical aspects that surround the constitution of subjectivity. According to Judith Revel, the process of subjectification thought by Michel Foucault is constituted through two positions, in principle antagonistic, however, supplementary. The first analysis of the subjectivity aspect turns to the modes of objectification that transform human beings, more specifically, the way in which social and political institutions model subjects through practices, often manipulative. This radical criticism of the subject as an absolutely free conscience, however, opens up in another analysis of how these same individuals also start to relate to themselves, when they allow themselves to “constitute themselves as subjects of their own existence” (Revel, 2005, p. 82).

And the artist’s existence now becomes the body of writing. And what form of writing? The artist was frequently inserted by the critic in the aesthetics of the so-called fantastic realism and her production is inserted in the Brazilian context of a troubled post-modernity of the 50s, 60s and 70s of the 20th century, a moment that brings to the country a production close to the contemporary Hispanic-American literature, writings surrounded by authoritarian and violent governments. At a time when, according to Silviano Santiago, the “artist’s body was torn apart by repression and censorship” (Santiago, 1988, p.25), Maria Lysia Corrêa de Araújo published in the newspapers stories such as “Os olhos incólumes” (The unscathed eyes), in which there was the figure of an unconformed woman, torn violently by a conformist crowd. The brutal state implanted by the military dictatorships in Brazil and Latin America brought out a literature of unrest and incomprehension. In circumventing censorship through fragmentary plots and improbable elements, Silviano Santiago points out that:

There was a first and camouflaged response from literature to the impositions of censorship and reproof made by the military regime: the prose of fantastic intrigue and dreamlike style in which the intricate game of metaphors and symbols conveyed a radical critique of the power structures in Brazil, both the structure dictatorial centered in Brasilia as the microstructures that reproduced in daily life the authoritarianism of the central model (Santiago, 1988, p. 37).

Thus, the writer’s tales, woven into the unlikely universe of fantastic realism, lead to a sharp pessimism that is present above all in the constitution of characters subjected to emptiness, an immaterial and intangible fictional space that is present in the verses of Fernando Pessoa used by Maria Lysia as an epigraph to the anthology of short stories “In silence: Great are the deserts/and everything is desert”. The book of short stories “In silence”, published

¹⁰ Allusion to Michel Foucault’s concept in “The writing of the self”. See Foucault, 2012.



in 1978, had great repercussion in newspapers in the country¹¹ in the two years following its publication. It is interesting to notice that in the narratives of *In silence*, there is a language that privileges the subjective and the psychological. As José Alcides Pinto points out, everything in the author's language "is interiorization and subjectivity. The external landscape enters the narrative only as a background, just as it happens with modern painting, without the painter sometimes realizing it" (Pinto, 1982). Through an upside-down realism, female identities, in their stories, express, in a poignant and overwhelming language, extreme experiences lived by their bodies. José Afrânio Moreira Duarte points out that *sui generis* characters such as a glass woman, an octopus that speaks, a lobster that inverts roles and devours instead of being eaten "are aspects of fantasy that the author was able to give a verisimilitude character, because in reality, reality is portrayed in tones of bitter irony" (Duarte, 1978). For the critic, "loneliness, incommunicability, desolation, frustration, all this appears as a convincing background" (Duarte, 1978).

The aforementioned tale *Mulher de Vidro* (Glass Woman) was previously published in 1964 in the newspapers *Estado de Minas* and *O Estado de São Paulo* and has as its main character a being of unique existence: a woman whose body is composed of the fragile materiality of glass. Between reverie and reality, the story tells of the desire to transform from one material to another: from glass to meat. In an unusual game, the character imagines suicide by the window. However, an accident frees her from the fragility of the blades. The outcome is surprising due to the normality it establishes when the character understands the real materiality of his body, the substance of the flesh "it was real, very real and then a terrible, desperate cry began to cry" (Araújo, 1978, p. 48). Through the violence of the period, the transition from absurd to real reflects in the character the true fear of the artist's existence. The characters appear as a configuration of female bodies subjected to interior collapses arising from situations of various oppression, which go through the non-acceptance of the body itself. Now *Mulher ao mar* (Woman to the Sea), another story in the book that also deals with the relationship of oppression, drew the attention of the writer Elza Beatriz Araújo, who in one of her letters realizes "the subtle placement of the creatures loving solitude (the female mainly), almost always more asphyxiated than embraced by males capable of degenerating into black octopus, which should be a multi-radiated star in the sea of love"¹². The male figure in his repressive aspect also appears in the short story *Insônia* (Insomnia) in which the character, a married woman, has serious problems with sleep, as her husband appears in association with real and imaginary objects that frighten her: "She no longer knows if it is a husband, someone, a stranger, something, a wardrobe, a pachyderm, husband, husband" (Araújo, 1978, p. 89). Marriage, analyzed by Simone de Beauvoir in "The second sex", appears to society as the destination traditionally proposed to women. At the time, most women were married, "or were, or were [preparing] to be, or [suffered] not to be (Beauvoir, 2016, p.185). Trapped in a relationship that causes repulsion, the character in the story feels the situation in her body: "As always, suffocation. And it will be like that, nothing will change, the head and arms drooping in total dismay. But tomorrow, who knows, will you have cou-

¹¹ Among the main publications: *Jornal de S. Catarina* in Blumenau/SC, *União de Joao Pessoa* PB, *Jornal do Brasil*, *O Dia*, *O Globo* in Rio de Janeiro, *Metro News* in São Paulo, *Voice of Paraná de Curitiba*/PR, *Lux Jornal*, *Estado de Minas*, in Belo Horizonte, *Sunday of the people of Fortaleza*/CE, among other clippings present in the writer's collection.

¹² Letter from Elza Beatriz Araújo, Belo Horizonte, 01.13.1979. Source: Maria Lysia Corrêa de Araújo Collection.



rage? Tomorrow, tomorrow, tomorrow” (Araújo, 1978, p. 91) The only imagined escape is a matter of the desire never realized, since the marriage seems to present itself to the character as “her livelihood and the only social justification of her existence» (Beavouir, 2016, p.187).

46 | During the course of the 1980s, many of the writer’s unpublished tales were published in the Suplementos Literários (Literary Supplements) of the newspapers O Estado de São Paulo and Estado de Minas. Interestingly, the texts of that time condense a work even closer to the surrealist tendencies of art, mixed with the same tragic and painful universe that mark Maria Lysia’s tales. There is the exploration of the unusual in texts such as “A ventania” (The gale), published in O Estado de São Paulo on June 19, 1965, in which a violent gust disintegrates walls, windows and doors. The main character is a woman also consumed by the wind and who faces the emptying of her being. The free indirect speech projects the action for an improbable future time: “It was necessary, urgent, urgent to put a whereabouts in that maels-trom, but how, how?” (Araújo, 1965). The outcome represents the disheartening impossibility of existence: “It was a good feeling, sure to be alone for its total collapse. It was then that everything stopped. And everything disappeared and everything was diluted” (Araújo, 1965).

The tale “Os quatro lagartos brancos” (The four white lizards) has two different versions, one in the 1960s, another in the late 1980s. Through an unusual action, four reptiles visit a female character’s cold room, promising to bring death as a gift. Frightened and at the same time fascinated by death, the woman starts to imbue herself with courage to receive the terrifying offer. However, when opening the package brought by the animals, nothing is inside and the character is filled with fury. “Did you wait so long, all in a sick obsession and now for nothing? She needed the package, she needed that gift, she needed death. The more she screamed, the greater the confusion in the room” (Araújo, 1987). In the first version, published on February 13, 1960, the end of the story is quite different from the one that will be published in 1987. The first ending ended in a confused dialogue, as if the room was inside a hospital and a medical conversation ended the daydreaming of the character. The other outcome, in addition to accentuating the conciseness of the tale, again brought out the key-note of desolation, abandonment and emptiness of the characters: “She started to cry softly, it was like a child when he starts sleeping, sly, sad. I was helpless, helpless. Suddenly I fell into a vacuum” (Araújo, 1987). In a universe that devours female bodies and deprives them of materiality, the writer’s literature reveals the paradoxes of a “utopian body” described by Michel Foucault (2013a), as visible and invisible, who in their experience with death, lives their contingency of inaccessibility and interdiction. Body marked by experiences contrary to the utopian construction of the body itself: either by the visibility of the mirror, by the finitude of death or by the proximity of bodies in love. A body that, for the French theorist, “in its materiality, in its flesh, would be like the product of its own ghosts” (Foucault, 2013a, p.14). The last short story in the book *In silence* by Maria Lysia is entitled “Do processo inexorável” (Of the inexorable process) brings as a character a woman, in front of the mirror to observe her face, “aware of reality”, uneasy by an inexplicable and tragic event: “one million was the exact number of deaths” (Araújo, 1978, p 102). In a reality so close to 2020, in which the world is approaching brutal numbers of deaths by COVID19, the writer’s literature anticipated the future. At the end of the story, the last revelation: a dead woman’s body, “all pierced with broken glass” (Araújo, 1978, p 103), torn in its carnality, deprived of all utopia, a body that is not seen or recognized for the other bodies, which are intoxicated with life,



they forget that they are subject to the inexorable processing of death. In this sense, the author's fiction leads us to reflect on the words of Oscar Wilde in *The Decay of Lying*: "life imitates art much more than art imitates life" (Wilde, s.d., p. 20).

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A STUDY ON THE WOMEN'S WRITING CLUB¹ THROUGH PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION²

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Luís Paulo De Carvalho Piassi⁴

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ABSTRACT

Writing is not dissociated from the experience and conditions under which it was produced, nor even from the subject's experience and recognition in the society. In canonical Brazilian literature, this subject often has a profile: male, white, heterosexual, middle-class. Facing a secular tradition that sustains that women do not write, but are only written, literature becomes a privileged space of expression. From then on, it is necessary to question where are the women writers whose narratives are not recognized by literature and how they articulate themselves to affirm their space as writers. This research proposes a case study of the Women's Writing Club - a collective focused on the production of literary texts and discussion of the difficulties in the formal space of literature - in the city of São Paulo. The objective is to analyze the importance of a space that articulates women writers and proposes resistance to the hegemonic discourses of literature. The intended aim is to understand how this space allows literary production to be led by agents hitherto neglected. The research is part of a Master's thesis in Cultural Studies - still in progress - and combines two methodologies: participant observation and conversation circles with group members. The relationships between gender, literature and experience are thematic axes addressed. The analysis will be based on Cultural Studies, Gender and Discourse Analysis theorists.

KEYWORDS:

literature; gender; experience; Women's Writing Club.

Introduction

In 1928, the writer Virginia Woolf published "Room of One's Own", proposing a reflection on women's literary production: how did the oppression of patriarchy contribute to the subduing of the expression of the female authors' thoughts? Already at the beginning of the 20th century, the lack of acknowledgment towards women's writing was the theme of Woolf's speech, a renowned writer and author of several books. A room of one's own, besides an own room and financial independence, constituted, in her vision, the intellectual freedom that women would need to create and write. Considering the current scenario, more than nine decades later, is it possible to say that the perspectives are better for women writers? And which women can occupy this space of recognition, whether or not through the formal publishing market?

In Brazil, the historical invisibility and silencing of women in literature span centuries. According to Rita Terezinha Schmidt (2000), when literature was constituted as a sign of value and a repository of identity for a culture, it was to be a space that symbolized autonomy, co-

¹ The original name in Portuguese is Clube da Escrita para Mulheres.

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hesion and unity. In this way, the determinations that would produce the official corpus of literature - the literary canon - were born. Even today the canon, although influenced by multiculturalism, forms its rather restricted lists with a majority of male and white authors, almost always with the same profile, whose recognition undergoes a feedback loop.

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If national memory is the most finished form of collective memory, according to Maurice Halbwachs, and if the literary canon is the authorized narrative of this memory, it can be said that the rescue of 19th-century female authorship brings to the surface, explosively, what the memory repressed, i. e., other narratives of the nation that not only make the internal frontiers of the imagined community visible but also reframe the question of identity at the interstices of social differences of gender, class and race, thus reconceptualizing the nation as a heterogeneous, more concrete and realistic space, crossed by tensions and differences. (Schmidt, 2000, p. 89, our translation)

Tradition, being understood as a system of selection that allows one to judge what is worthy of being transmitted, is therefore made both oblivion and memory (Birules, 2011). Outside the traditional system, women, faced with literature constructed by hegemonic male subjectivity, have been sidelined to the margins - and when they are included they fill a short-term presence. Not only in literature but in other means of producing meaning and knowledge, “women’s works are accepted as ‘supplements’ to a previous order of representation and not as contributions capable of structuring the scene or even changing it” (Collin, 2006, p. 189, our translation).

To support this analysis of the Brazilian scenario, I start from the data collected⁵ by Regina Dalcastagnè about the profile of the Brazilian writer. The research, conducted by her research group at the *Universidade de Brasília* (University of Brasilia, UnB), included all the novels published by the three main Brazilian publishers in about 5 decades (between 1965 and 2014) and brought relevant information on who writes, from the authors’ data, and who is written, from the study of characters. The data regarding authorship will be highlighted here, more specifically the ones concerning gender and race. In 50 years, 74% of the authors published were men. Even more discrepant is the racial homogeneity: about 97% of these authors are white. This being said, one can see that a privileged group has the leading role and the main voice within Brazilian authorship. There is also a silencing of women’s voices in the publishing market - especially black women’s voices. It is necessary to add that it is also the white male authors who win the most literary awards⁶, being, therefore, the focus of greater prestige.

The Brazilian women writing

If female authors who produce literature in Brazil are distant from the big publishing market and if their works do not gain prestige in the spaces of recognition, it is important to question in which spaces these women produce narratives and how they articulate them-

⁵ Dalcastagnè published in 2005 the article “The character of the contemporary Brazilian novel: 1990-2004”, a study about the Brazilian writer profile and who he writes about. In this research, I chose to include the most recent data, between 2005 and 2014, and the previous data, 1965-1990, both published exclusively in a 2018 report by Cult Magazine. Available at: <https://revistacult.uol.com.br/home/quem-e-e-sobre-o-que-escreve-o-autor-brasileiro>. Access on: 02 Mar. 2020.

⁶ On this subject, see: Zilberman, R. The contemporary Brazilian novel according to the literary awards (2010-2014).



selves. Much is said about literature as a solitary work, however, facing the dominant logics of literature is not only done individually. The articulation happens through social movements, associations, collectives - namely groups whose members have the same purposes. Considering that the subject is constituted by the experience (Scott, 1998) and belongs to a social and cultural whole, according to the various social groups in which it participates, women's writing aligns with movements dedicated to breaking down barriers and amplifying the listening of their voices. For Gloria Anzaldúa, "even if we are hungry, we are not poor in experiences" (Anzaldúa, 2000, p. 235).

Regarding the fact that the publications of large publishing houses do not reflect the diversity of literature produced by women, it is important to discuss the tensions resulting from this scenario. In other words, how do women who do not have this space of visibility formally ensured by publishers articulate themselves to express themselves in an artistic and literary way? The answers are the most diverse: self-publication or independent publications, whether in fanzines, magazines or books; women-headed soirees; poetry battles, called Slams, with specific aspects for women, such as the *Slam das Minas* (Girls' Slam); and the *Leia Mulheres* (Read Woman) movement (inspired by the American Read Woman movement), which debates the issue of gender disparity in literature in several autonomous editions, held in 25 states throughout the country. Given the various forms of expression found in São Paulo, this project focuses on the literary collective Clube da Escrita para Mulheres (Women's Writing Club), which brings together women in periodic meetings and writing activities for at least 5 years.

The narratives of the women participating in these movements and initiatives can be considered responsive discourses from the "periphery" to the "center", producer of meaning, from their own experiences. Here we observe the principles of the gynocentric critique pointed by Showalter (1994), who situates writers concerning the variables of literary culture, such as modes of production and distribution, relationships between authors and the public, as well as the differences between elite art and popular art and racial implications within the genre itself.

The Women's Writing Club was founded by the writer Jarid Arraes in October 2015 and has the purpose to stimulate the literary production made by women and be a place to discuss the difficulties faced in the formal space of literature. Thus, in addition to enabling creative and collective practice, the meetings also welcome political confrontation and engagement in the debate about the visibility of women's literary production. In this space, women who write or would like to start writing meet to practice writing exercises and exchange support.

In 2017, the Women's Writing Club became a collective that, in addition to the periodic and free writing meetings, has the intent of organizing literary events and workshops, regarding themes such as self-publishing, being a strengthening network for independent female writers. In the Women's Writing Club Facebook page⁷, where the meeting schedule is made public, the collective's Permanent Declaration of Principles is accessible, in which the principles of intersectional feminism and, therefore, anti-racist principles, as well as the defense of sexual and gender plurality, are stressed. The Declaration also presents the purpose to "go beyond literary production, reinforcing the commitment to building more diverse litera-

⁷ https://www.facebook.com/pg/clubedaescritaparamulheres/about/?ref=page_internal. Access on 02 Mar. 2020.



ture that faces the dominant logic of the publishing market and seeks to create new paths and perspectives”.

In this study, which is part of my Master’s dissertation in Cultural Studies - still in progress -, we seek to evaluate this space as a territory that presents itself as a response and confrontation to the silencing of women and occupation of literary spaces. The aim is to understand the importance of a writing space exclusively focused on women, carrying out a case study about the experience of the Women’s Writing Club. To do so, it is necessary to know what conditions demand the creation of a writing space exclusively for women; understand who the participating women are, what their motivations and paths are, and how participation in the group influences their experience as a writer. Also, the research aims to identify what are the particularities found in a writing club exclusively attended by women in order to analyze the organization of the collective.

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Methodological choice

As a qualitative research method, two methodologies will be combined: a) participant observation and b) mediated conversation circles. According to the precepts of Mónico et al. (2017), as a participant-observer, the researcher is included as a member of the researched group, which is informed about the research. Participation is active and has a double purpose: to engage in the activities provided and observe the activities, with explicit attention and open-angle lens of information (Mónico et al., 2017, p. 729).

During this research, for one year, the researcher took part in all the Women’s Writing Club activities and roles in direct, frequent and prolonged contact at ordinary and extraordinary meetings. As a participating observer, there is a continuum between participation and observation, i.e., there is a double experiment of being an insider (social actor) and outsider (spectator) of a given situation. In the same way, not only the observations were recorded, but the experiences themselves during the activities, as long as they were related to the objective of the research.

By collecting data and starting from the concrete reality of the participants, in their different dimensions and interactions, as well as “the real experiences, the interpretations given to these lives and experiences as they are lived and thought” (Brandão & Borges, 2007, p. 54), these practices are critically reflected, while still preserving the limits and objectives of academic research, in addition to seeking integration with various scientific fields.

The choice for this method was due to some factors: immersion in the progression of events; having more conditions to observe facts and behaviors *in loco*; obtaining a deeper and more genuine knowledge than could be observed from outside; perception of reality from the internal point of view of the researched environment, besides accompanying the group in all its formations and dynamics, analyzing its nuances and changes, as they occur.

During the participant observation, field notes were used, with objective data and perceptions regarding speech and behavior. Because the Club is an informal and welcoming environment, audio and image recording devices were not used during the meetings. Thus, two points are highlighted: the group establishes itself as a welcome to women who wish to express themselves through writing, creating an environment that stimulates freedom and creativity as much as possible. Many women report arriving at the club with creative blocks



and a feeling of insecurity. Participant observation is established as an alternative to pure observation (or non-participant observation), which could restrain behavior or artificialize it. Thus, contact through participant observation tends to be with spontaneous behaviors and speech, which could be altered or repressed in the presence of “strangers” or in a situation where participants feel merely “observed”.

Since the audience is fluctuating, as there is no obligation to participate or attendance control, to get to know the audience - and measure the fluctuation in participation - a questionnaire will also be applied during the second phase of the survey, with multiple-choice questions, containing questions about age, main occupation, region of living, self-classification of frequency, race and sexual orientation, in addition to the year in which participation began.

After the first year of observation, in March 2020, the Club suspended the meetings due to the Covid-19 pandemic, with no date scheduled for the return of its activities. Thus, the second methodology proposed - the conversation circles - could not yet be applied. The objective of these rounds will be to collect data and clarify aspects gathered during the participation, focusing on some issues that proved to be more constructive to the aim of the research. The study will highlight the categories that emerge from the discourse of their narratives and the choice, repetition or rejection by certain themes during the data collection. In this way, besides the participants' answers, it will be evaluated the way the group behaves during the process, through the Discourse Analysis (Maingueneau, 2004).

Some initial (in)conclusions

The Women's Writing Club presents itself as a space open to all women and aims to go beyond literary production, reinforcing the commitment to building more diverse literature that faces dominant logic and strengthens new paths and perspectives. However, during the participant observation, it was possible to notice that the Club is not an internally homogeneous space: there are white, black women, with diverse sexual orientations, native or not from São Paulo, living in different areas of the city, with various writing paths. At the same time, in an initial reading, it is possible to say that in the participating group there are points in common and even class-based attendance, as most of the women present have already entered or completed a college course, are working, have access to technologies and regularly consume literature, just to use some observation data during the participants' presentations.

There are also no transgender or indigenous women. Is literature still seen as a condition of privileged women, even in democratic writing spaces? Are there other singularities that bring the participants closer together and drive away other subordinated women? Moreover, for these women members, even if domestication does not seem to be imposed, can socialization among women for a collective writing practice be a relevant mechanism to propose the confrontation to this logic of self-exclusion in literature? Could the Club be considered some form of a “roof all yours”, a safe place that ensures women's autonomy in their literary practices, as Woolf (1991) advocated?

In the face-to-face meetings, it is common to hear advice not to shelve or discard their writings. The reason behind it is that, although the motivations for participating in the group are diverse, most women who seek the Club report being extremely self-critical with their



production, avoiding exposing what they write to others. The meaning of the literary text, in this context, is established “in a flow in which traditions are followed, broken or reconquered, and the forms of interpretation and appropriation of what is said remain open” (Dalcastagné, 2012, p. 17). It was observed in the speeches that the works shelved or discarded before reaching an audience (self-silenced works) had a strong symbolic charge attached to them.

54 | Thus, during the monitoring of the group’s activities, it was possible to notice that by having an audience reading aloud and by receiving almost immediate feedback of the works produced, the writers developed greater self-confidence to call themselves writers and take on their writing - even in other environments outside of there. Those who participate in mixed clubs (not exclusive to women) report that in the Women’s Writing Club they have more security to present their texts since this space presents itself as welcoming. However, it is important to stress that the publishing market functions as a great validator of the (good) Brazilian literature and most of the participating women still do not integrate this space, so remains valid to question to what extent the group’s endorsement becomes sufficient for women to consider themselves and be considered writers and, what are the paths sought for these women to legitimize themselves or achieve this kind of recognition. These are some points yet to be investigated during the research.

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THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JESUS QUEEN OF HEAVEN: A STUDY ON THE THEATRICAL EVENT AND TRAVESTI¹ GENDER REPRESENTATION ON BRAZILIAN STAGES²

Amanda C. Figueredo³

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ABSTRACT

This research is part of a larger set of studies (including an ongoing master's thesis) that revolves around the theatrical reception of the play *The Gospel According To Jesus Queen Of Heaven* when it was staged in an event promoted by the Federal University of Santa Catarina in 2018. In this paper some of the perceptions on the play will be reported and analyzed after my own subjective experience of watching the production - which led the transvesti actress, Renata Carvalho, to play the character of Jesus as the daughter of God. In this analysis I emphasize the value of the theatrical event produced by the play, as theorized by Jorge Dubatti, considering the encounter of the poetic bodies with those who watch them, from the *mise-em-scène* to the audience, both on themselves and by their relations. However I also show the event to the extent of its ability to break with the normal state of things and widen the horizon with new possibilities for public policies, as understood by Alain Badiou. Both of these understandings of events have stricken me as I watched the play and only through this I could notice the reality of being a cisgender woman and how I perceive society in a cisgender way, a way that is by definition fixed and excludent, and confront this with the issues raised by the *Travesti Gospel*, such as the absence of trans bodies on Brazilian stages and the need for representation of these bodies in all cultural environments. The goal here is to draw parallels between the event and trans power when they represent themselves in theater, because representativity is, according to MONART (Portuguese acronym for National Movement of Trans Artists) is the act of being present. Through the creation of conditions for this presence, these bodies will be able to be seen without being violated in their right to come and go as they please, taking their rightful place of citizenship and recognition of their identities in Brazil.

Keywords:

Theater play; Reception; Event; Trans Representation.

*And you may think because I'm Jesus we should meet in a church.
But I tell you so many churches hate me.
— Queen Jesus*

I start by trafficking this quote of the play *THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JESUS QUEEN OF HEAVEN* as it is spoken by the character Queen Jesus and I convert it in epigraph because as a cisgender researcher, before any interpretation I may have of the play as it was staged in Brazil since 2016, I need to remember that the academic field, not unlike Christian church

¹ Travesti is a gender identity particular to south America.

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ches, was and still is traditionally hateful and exclusionary towards dissident bodies, like travestis. As the theatrical phenomenon studied here is a document of that culture and, therefore, of this knowledge, it is necessary to warn that it is not enough to only let it enter the spaces of power, such as the university. There is a need to combine into the academic institutions the travesti and transgender peoples, to integrate the subjects and their cultural productions and through which new possibilities of experiencing gender performances are built.

I may have rushed it. It is likely that the opening statement will also be part of the conclusions, but the structure allows, as well as it allows me to reveal my true intention: to vent about what I learn with *THE GOSPEL* written by Scottish playwright Jo Clifford. I only learn, however, because at the moment of the play I started to actively observe what was happening in front of me. By reading the scenes, I allowed myself to be read. In interrogating the staging, I interrogated myself – something discussed by Flávio Desgranges (2017), professor and theatrical reception researcher. I build my research in the border's encounters. I share here the movements between the first perceptions of an attentive and open theater spectator and the later analyzes of a restless researcher who sees the studied phenomenon growing in size and depth. Not by chance. This was the first play I saw starring a travesti woman.

This woman, Renata Carvalho - actress with years of experience in Brazilian theater - plays the protagonist who, in a pulsating monologue talks with the public, sheds light on the stage to the question: what if Jesus returned today as a travesti?

From 2018, the year I watched it for the first time⁴ *THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JESUS*, till this year of 2020, many paradigm breaks in terms of ethical, aesthetic and art critic happened. To understand the reasons that made me change the way I saw the play, I looked for answers on the studying of the event as understood by both the Argentine theater and professor Jorge Dubatti, as well as the French philosopher Alain Badiou, mixing their perspectives. After starting the debate, I follow, as a consequence, to the investigation on the place of travesti representation in the production of this event.

As a researcher I try to act as a Rhapsode, inspired by the classical Greek literature character. The Rhapsode appears since Plato's *The Republic*, more recently he was rescued by the philosopher and art critic Walter Benjamin (1987) in his essays on European theater, especially German theater. Benjamin realizes that Rhapsode, also known as *The Sage*, was abandoned on classicist stages because he was a narrator who mixed the literary, epic, lyrical and dramatic genres. Fundamentally its rhapsodic formula of storytelling was based on a cut-and-paste of languages. Jean-Pierre Sarrazac (2017), French theater theorist, reinforces the idea that nowadays the rhapsodic style is being brought back to life, since it symptomatically weaves or composes by decomposition.

I'm interested in this aspect that Sarrazac calls the drive, it is interesting to me for containing the will and the effort to sew stories together from multiple threads that are everywhere. To see and tell like a Rhapsode makes me run from the linear, causal and hegemonic way of understanding the world. Therefore, I have here considerations in an attempt to sew thoughts that assist in the debate on the role of theatrical art in times of democratic rupture, especially in the Brazilian context.

⁴ The play was presented in October 2018 during the Third Art Week at the Federal University of Santa Catarina (UFSC), in Florianópolis, Brazil.



What happened?

Three days. One, two, three days. Only three days had passed from the election of the current President of the Republic Jair Messias Bolsonaro when I watched the play *THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JESUS QUEEN OF HEAVEN*. It is important to highlight the contradiction or the opposite of a coincidence. Bolsonaro, a far-right politician, elected with the support of the Christian community in Brazil, fabricated a campaign of moralistic guidelines in which he used as a justification and appeal a supposed need to wage war against “gender ideology” – fallacious and mounted concept to combat the progressive struggle of feminist origin that aims at the fair sharing of rights between genders, as shown by sociology and law researchers Richard Miskolci e Maximiliano Campana (2017). In October of 2018, the same month of the election and the play, Bolsonaro signs the document “Catholic Vote Brazil” as one of the last acts of his campaign. By signing the document, Bolsonaro committed to defend marriage along the lines of the Catholic religion and to confront the so called “gender ideology”, as stated by the Dossier (Benevides & Nogueira, 2020) from the National Association of Travestis and Transsexuals.

In this context *THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JESUS QUEEN OF HEAVEN* had its poetic image of a travesti as the daughter of god arbitrarily captured. Used as a «proof» of gender ideology and accused of being a perverse appropriation of the Holy Bible, the play has been boycotted and defamed several times in order to condition the staging and the artists involved in the production to the danger of religious fanaticism while they were trying to stay in circuit at theater festivals across the country. One of the most troubled episodes of this trajectory occurred in 2018 during the Garanhuns Winter Festival in the state of Pernambuco (FIG) when the diocese of Garanhuns and the city hall threatened to deny the festival the public venues it needed to happen if they didn’t cancel the production of the play starring Renata Carvalho. The play was dismissed and then reinserted in the play after the determination of the state Court of Justice. After more protests from the Christian community, a writ of mandamus was requested by the Order of Evangelical Pastors of Garanhuns and signed by a judge of the region. As an outcome *THE GOSPEL* had its official performance prohibited by the Military Police, but due to the will and support of the public of the festival, Renata performed in another venue with almost no infrastructure: unveiling the reality of the persecution of trans existences fostered by society and released upon trans bodies by the State.

The explicit contradiction of the three days between a country exalted by an electoral period with an atypical level of animosity and the success of a project of exclusion and violence against political minorities being crashed into the nurturing theatrical experience that radicalizes the democratization of different human corporealities and subjectivities in collective spaces. All of this made my experience as a spectator have many layers of meaning, but before them, an inexpressible commotion.

According to Dubatti (2016), before being communicable, theater is the art of the event and it only exists because it contains the ephemerality of the auratic (unique) encounter in time and space of bodies that are present. For this reason, it is impossible for me to try to describe here what happened there, at that time, in that place, where we were⁵. Being in front of Renata’s pulsating and alive body, listening to the precious words she shared in order

⁵ In the original text of the play: “This is the time. This is the place. This is where we meet each other.”



to praise and celebrate trans lives and revealing the light that they are and project in the places they enter made the hope on the potential of the arts for construction of a truly fair democracy in Brazil reawake within. This hope was contained in the capacity of that theatrical spectacle to put me in contact with the common by making me feel part of something, part of a generous human conscience that is beyond social and cultural oppression.

60 | Badiou (2013) believes that the event also revolves around the act of living and through living it brings about a new possibility that breaks by itself with the previous condition of thought subjection to dominant power. And it is political when it opens up to other political perspectives that are beyond imposed control. This expansion of the imaginary was conceived in the sharing of trans poetics on the stage of a Brazilian public university. It led me to put an end to a certain paralysis that came from the fear of the Bolsonaro presidency, the representativity made a political event appear before my eyes. And it was unforgettable.

Trans representativity

*She was beautiful,
this person born male,
wearing a women's dress and with jasmine in her hair.
Guiding us here.
She was one of us.
And this is how it all began.
A group of us, meeting as friends,
because we wanted to change the world.
— Queen Jesus*

Queen Jesus has been showing her desire to change the world since her UK debut in 2009 at a church in Glasgow where she was played by Jo Clifford herself. The content of the staged play uses metaphorical language to renew the most famous passages of the biblical text in order to include the transgender community as well as the black, homosexual, bisexual, prostitutes, and other historically marginalized minorities in the realm of love proposed in Christian Jewish tradition by the son of God. Changing this son's gender in a symbolic operation typical of the arts field was enough to prove that from Europe to South America the suggestion of a humanized look at these people is not made without protest. From Glasgow to Garanhuns the Queen of Heaven tends to be harassed by the cisgender, patriarchal and colonizing ideology that refuses to accept and incorporate differences in society without a way of experiencing/expressing race, sexuality, geography, religion or gender has to impose itself on others.

To the extent that the play with travesti representation breaks cisgender expectations and puts Renata Carvalho on the stage in the role so tirelessly repeated by Jesus for the culture that holds the norm, she calls the audience to exercise a new perception of the experience of the theater. Questions that did not come to mind before start to become evident: why had I never seen a trans woman on stage? Why am I surprised that a trans woman is representing Jesus if theater is an art that encourages symbolic play? Why does Jesus always



have to be a white bearded cis man? Why is the content of the play repressed by Christian society even before they watch the play? Does the image of Jesus belong to anyone, any institution or state? Why is the inclusion of trans people in art spaces intolerable for Catholic and evangelical groups, especially in Brazil?

For Jota Mombaça (2016), a non-binary black queer Brazilian visual artist, it is necessary to name the norm, which means that in order to understand how the structures that maintain the power where violence is unfairly distributed, we need first name the agents that hold the pillars of this architecture.

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Naming the norm is the first step towards a disobedient gender and anti-colonial redistribution of violence, because the norm is what is not named, not categorized, and that is its privilege. Non-categorization is what guarantees privileged (normative) positions their principle of non-questioning, that is: their ontological comfort, their ability to perceive themselves as norms and the world as a mirror. In opposition to this, "the other" - diagram of images of otherness that shape the margins of the identity projects of the "normal subjects" - is hyper categorized, unceasingly translated by the analytics of power and raciality, simultaneously invisible as a subject and exposed as an object. To name the norm is to return this interpellation and to force the normal to confront itself, expose the regimes that support it, mess up the logic of its privilege, intensify its crises and dismantle its dominant and controlling ontology. (Mombaça, 2016, p. 11)

When I see Renata Carvalho at the theater, I find the norm strange. I am surprised at the fact that I never noticed the absence of trans and travestis as protagonists or even in supporting roles on the stage. As a cis woman, I was used to the predominant cisgender performance, used to not seeing the precarious disposition of trans people in art spaces. This lack of vision permeates a fundamental violence that makes the oppressor and/or privileged person free from the commitment to work for social reorganization, to fight inequalities. Travesti researcher and performer Dodi Leal (2018) demonstrates that the strangeness that cisgenerity shows when faced with a non-cisgender body, that is, a transgender body, refers to the epic feature of theater, theorized in the 20th century by Bertold Brecht. The German playwright and director considered this resource capable of leading the working class to understand the dominant bourgeois machinery; in our day to day, on and off the stage, the strangeness about gender disobedience, as in the epic theater, reveals the machinery of an equally dominating CIStem.

Inevitably I wonder if it were the actress playing the Queen of Heaven a cis woman instead of a travesti, would I leave the theater with a feeling of discomfort? Would I question my aesthetic and sociocultural modus operandi? Would I understand the size of the gap and the loss experienced daily by the lack of these bodies that build another subjectivity in the public environment and debate? It is undeniable that it would be another reality, insufficient to awaken in me alerts and hope. On this point, I remember Walter Benjamin (1987) in his warning about the role of the historian, about being they being responsible for harvesting hope from the voices of the past, knowing that even the dead are insecure in the hands of the enemy. Please excuse me to say that if this is the historian's job, that of a travesti must be to stay ALIVE, her LIVE voice being able to hope for the present.



To be fair and to carve paths that give these lively and organized voices the opportunity to express themselves, I transcribe here part of the Manifest Trans Representativity, Now! written by MONART (National Movement of Trans Artists) in 2018 and released on their social networks. It's their turn and this is how I say goodbye.

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Say Yes to Trans Talent!

We Trans artists (Travestis, Trans women and men and non-binary Trans people), organized, we come through this manifest to seek representativity and job opportunities through the redistribution of artistic production on TV, theater and cinema.

Brazil is the country that kills the most Travestis and Transsexuals in the world. Our second cause of death is suicide. The average life of a Trans person is only 35 years. Most of us are expelled from home very early, sometimes as young as 12 or 14 years old. More than 90% of our population is in prostitution, as the job market does not accept us. We are deprived of family, education, work, housing, health and affection. [...]

In a society based on bodies and their corporealities, the trans body is abject, excluded and marginalized.

We fight for the humanization of our bodies, our identities, and for the naturalization of our presence in the most diverse spaces of society.

For decades, we were publicly censored by the State in operations such as «Tarantula» and «Gay Hunting Command», which harassed, arrested, tortured, beat and murdered travestis, who could not even walk on the streets; imprisoned, they were forced to mutilate themselves to be released. It was forbidden to mention the word Travesti in any media.

[...]

Why don't they call Trans artists to play a Trans character? Why not invite Trans artists to write/produce/work/collaborate/participate in this history/story, production, groups and artistic collectives/Sets/dressing rooms/studios?

First, because the trans body is systematically stigmatized, hyper-sexualized, caricatured, fetishized, zootified, dehumanized and laughed on. We need to talk about how we are portrayed by the mainstream media, collectives and artistic groups; in cinema, on YouTube channels, which, in the great majority, treats us in a prejudiced/transphobic/erroneous/caricatural/sexualized/fetishized way, which often only reinforces more stereotypes contributing even more to the exclusion of our Trans bodies.

Second, they don't believe in our potential and our techniques as artists. Even though most Trans characters are full of skills and talent, we Trans artists never have enough talent to play them, we are not "Trans enough". Yes, several Trans artists have already lost roles of Trans characters to a cis actor/actress. For believing that we are not able to humanize that history/story/character, leaving to us only small participations and characters.

Third, playing a Trans character often boosts the cis actor/actress career leading to nominations and awards.

Fourth, many artists believe that just talking/mentioning/dealing with the theme strengthens our Trans population, but visibility does not take us out of marginality. We need financial redistribution, we need jobs; otherwise, our places/spaces in artistic processes of speech will continue to be taken away from us, thus contributing to our marginalization.

Fifth, many artists/collectives/groups/media were not aware of this theme, they were even unaware of these realities, because there was no talk about it. The cisgender artists of 2018 need to rethink their artistic work.

REPRESENTATIVITY is the act of us being PRESENT.

There is no half representativity.



Whether we do have, or we do not.

We need to be seen or seen, recognized through concrete references, the presence of our bodies, which carry our stories.

For the majority of the young or “closeted” Trans population, films and television are the first, if not the only time, that they see themselves represented.

Do white and cisgender people know what it is to grow up and spend a lifetime without understanding who you are or what is happening to you due to the lack of models or references that give meaning to your lives and experiences?

And artistic freedom? What about the actor not having sex?

We Trans artists would like to know this artistic freedom up close ...

On the day when it is no longer necessary to separate or differentiate cis artists from Trans artists, the day we go to the theater, the cinema or even turn on the television and see Trans artists playing cis characters naturally, on that day we can talk about artistic freedom and say that an actor has no sex.

At the moment, we are trying to have the right to enter, be, belong and remain in art and in the art market, being recognized for the works that we create and receiving financially for them, as there is no use to recognition without financial redistribution.

Doesn't exclusion hurt artistic freedom too?

We Trans artists understand artistic freedom as an expression without restrictions, without barriers and without borders. We also understand art as a liberating, questioning instrument, a symbol of struggle and resistance.

And what is the artist for, if not to reflect, question and talk about his time?

[...]

THE OPPORTUNITIES.

[...]

We are tired of serving only as exotic experiments for theater, cinema, television and academic works.

We want and need opportunities, jobs.

We invite cisgender people to look at our work closely. Without cisgender people as our allies, we are unable to access art spaces, as these spaces were structured so that we would not be in them. We artists can question opinions, change this structural transphobic view, open hearts and minds. We need empathy.

[...]

We will resist and fight!

Together we are much stronger.

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INSURGENT POETICS AND MICROPOLITICS IN THE BRAZILIAN AMAZON: THE ABERRANT SCENE OF THEMÔNIAS DRAGS¹

Larissa Latif²

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ABSTRACT

This communication addresses issues related to body technologies and performative poetics as a form of resistance and reinvention of the body in the face of the binary rule of the genre, focusing on a group of performers from the city of Belém do Pará, who call themselves Themed drags. The aberrant performativity and the occupation of public space by these artists is analyzed in the light of Butler's gender performative theory, Deleuze-Guattarian difference philosophy and critical studies of post-humanity by Haraway and Braidotti. The study reveals a capacity for collective organization, albeit informal, for which the establishment of networks of cooperation and solidarity are fundamental, as well as the mastery of the use of digital tools as part of the processes of artistic and subjective creation. These two aspects are articulated in the production of a network supported by an artistic and political action.

KEYWORDS:

Performativity, micropolitics, post-humanities, Themed drags, Amazon

The performance of drag queens has long proved to be very fruitful for the analysis of the tensions between gender normativity and resistance in societies. We believe, following the philosophers Judith Butler and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (2007), that gender issues and their disciplines are fundamental for the understanding of contemporary societies (Butler, 2006). In the wake of Haraway (2009) and Shapiro (2015), we believe that we cannot understand the construction of gender in contemporary cultures without paying attention to the presence of technologies in the construction of bodies and, therefore, in the development of subjectivities.

In this work on the Themed drags from Belém do Pará we focus on the disputes and negotiations that cross their subjective construction processes, the clashes between the instances of power and desire and the ways in which these instances bring about the ways of creating themonian bodies either as production of deviations (desire) or as reproduction of normativities (power).

We started from the debate between Foucault and Deleuze around the concepts of *dispositif* and *assemblage* to find our own definition of this relational body that we will call **THEMED BODY**. We propose a relational analysis that integrates various components of different natures. In short, a *dispositif* is a complex network of relationships between "discourses and institutions, architectural structures and scientific statements, measured regulatory and administrative decisions, as well as philosophical, moral and philanthropic proportions (...) the spoken as well as the unspoken" (Foucault, 1980, p. 194), more than a certain form of rela-

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tionship between heterogeneous elements, a *dispositif* establishes the very nexus of this relationship, which means that they are not only normalizing apparatus, but constituents of the norm, that is, they are not the result of a power relationship, but power establishers who operate in a diffuse and multifaceted, modifiable and transferable way, that is, they occupy positions that can be alternated within the arrangement, producing new distributions. Foucault also points out that such a relationship of forces is strategic and that it supports and is supported by types of knowledge (Foucault, 1980).

Thanks to the relational, strategic, multifaceted and mobile nature of the *dispositif*, they spread across different social levels, achieving a high degree of subtlety and adaptability. Hence the frequent naturalization of norms, hierarchies and dissymmetry of power found throughout the history of societies. But, although it has a strategic normative function, the *dispositif* is not immune to the random and the unexpected, which, in fact, often affects different parts of it. Thus, despite making certain paths more likely than others in the social process, the effects of the *dispositif* are not decisive or directly imposed (Foucault, 2008).

What we call here the THEMED BODY *dispositif* is a set of agencies within which rules, hierarchies, imaginary and desires of a group of people working in the Belém do Pará drag scene are in dispute and negotiation. THEMED BODY refers to not only to the way of dressing of this drags, but to the whole process by which they are constituted as themed drags, including the normative instances. It is not a body object, but a relationship, a dispute for spaces, ways of being, affectivity.

Considering the Deleuze-Guattarian contributions and the post-human theories, the body cannot be seen as a complete individual unit in itself or even as an autonomous unit that enters into relationship with others. The body is a relational continuity that never ceases to be produced throughout the entire process of creating the subject, that is, throughout the entire time interval during which a given arrangement of matter is recognized and recognized as a subject in particular (Braidotti, 2020). This has implications for the ways in which we think of the bodies we call our own and what we understand as our individualities. It also has implications for what we understand as individual freedoms, justice and the set of guidelines and flags that social movements tend to group under the vast umbrella of social rights or human rights.

Theorists such as Rosi Braidotti and Donna Haraway has, from different starting points and with its own unfolding each, called attention to the need for an expansion of our view on the components of this relational continuum. Haraway, already in the 1980s, pointed out that we are part of an integrated circuit, Braidotti shows how post-human subjectivity displaces individualism and anthropocentrism. Both of these authors affirm that it is necessary to find other points of view in order to achieve effective changes in the concreteness of social relations, that is, to displace the axes of agency, or even, to unbalance the positions of power at stake in the production of bodies and subjectivities.

Stolen from the techno-military imagination, Haraway's Cyborg rises up against the mythology of the separation between human beings and nature, dragging on the path the construction of the dialectical subject that presupposes an object, na 'other' that must be contained, controlled, disciplined. Haraway shows how this subject, the western man, is mythologically constituted against nature and how this separation between man and nature



is founded, throughout the scientific discourse of the 20th century on the body, feminine and instinctive, opposed to the spirit, masculine and rational (Haraway, 2009).

Cyborg time is the time in which we live, in which borders are blurred in technique, science and the globalization of production and consumption, a transformative political action will seek other epistemologies, abandon universalizing figurations and adopt “contradictory and partial constructions permanently open from the personal and collective selves” (Haraway, 2009, p. 52).

Haraway proposes that we perceive the current stage of capitalism as an information technology of domination, in which “the networks of connection between people on the planet become, in an unprecedented way, multiple, pregnant and complex (...) what is at stake, in the connection “western, it is the end of man” (2009, p. 58), and, continues: “It is no accident that, in our time, “woman “disintegrates into“ women” (2009, p. 58). We move “from the old and comfortable hierarchical dominations to the new and frightening networks. (...) We are in the midst of change: from an industrial, organic society, to a polymorphic, informational system” (2009, p. 59).

In view of this, Haraway advocates «a policy rooted in the demands for fundamental changes in class, race and gender relations». (2009, p. 60), since there are no longer essential properties, but only “design, boundary restrictions, flow rates, systems logic, costs to reduce restrictions” (2009, p. 61) and any object or person can be addressed in terms of disassembly and reassembly; there is no “natural” architecture that determines how a system should be planned (2009, p. 61). The cyborg emerges when the boundaries between the animal and the human are blurred, followed by the dissolution of the margins between organic and inorganic in a communicational torrent. Everything is expressed as informational data, of which the ultimate metaphors are the genetic code and the immune system.

Rosi Braidotti also moves away from humanist and neo-humanist notions, in favor of a zoe-centered perspective, which the author argues is effective in thinking and changing the contemporary world, composing a framework for analysis capable of thinking about the forms of inhumanity and inhumanity of the anthropocene (Braidotti, 2020). For Braidotti, the task of post-human criticism is to invert individualism “in favor of complex singularities” and “anthropocentrism, in favor of multiplicities of flows and non-human groupings” (Braidotti, 2020, p.48).

In modern thought, points out Braidotti, the association of the female image with technology took the form of disruptive machines and, as much as the association of women with nature, it was one of the figurations of another dangerous that was necessary to contain and control, but at the same time, to serve the ideals of development and progress. Both figures of the inhuman, the female-nature and the female-machine are generalized objectifications characteristics of industrial capitalism.

In the work of authors such as Angela Davis (2016), Gayatri Spivak (1988) and Maria Lugones (2018), among many others, it is clear that the racialization of non-white bodies, as much as generification, is the foundation of this separation between the subject universal male white and nature. Indeed, the dispositif of coloniality articulates itself on the triple axis of generification, racialization and class differentiation of subaltern human groups in the name of the validity and functioning of an economic and political system of global exploitation of nature, in a word, of capitalism and its corollary, the colonial / modern world-system.



Therefore, the bankruptcy, or at least, the destabilization of the modern universal subject must be accompanied by the destabilization of the traditional classificatory orders of modernity.

68 | However, advanced capitalism, accompanied by the digital technological revolution, brings a radical change in the ways of building the human and the inhuman. The interpenetration between meat and technology reaches levels never achieved, which leads to a dose of undifferentiation never reached, “a grouping of circuits and return systems” (Braidotti, 2020, p.16). In this configuration, that we can approximate to the ideas of integrated circuit, in which the assemblies take place within an informatics of domination, the human organism must be understood as a part of a network of interactions in flow, a complex singularity, “a corporated entity affective and intelligent that captures processes and transforms energies and forces” (p.47). This post-human subject no longer defines the world from itself but perceives itself as part of a continuum in which the nature-culture relationship is restructured in terms of manifestations of the life force itself, or zoe.

When we approach the body not only as a relational instance, but as an informational flow, we understand that individual physicality does not end in itself, that is, the body is more than each individual body and more than the organic dimension that is usually associated with each individual body. Autonomous individuals are fictional beings produced by the body dispositif. With these statements, we do not want to refer to any transcendent or exclusively discursive projection. We do speak of couplings and connections between organic matter (human bodies and other animals, plants) and non-organic matter (electronic components, light beam emissions, microplastics) organized in a continuum or integrated circuit in which the modes of organization are standardized, producing hierarchically according to the logic of advanced capitalism. The fictional beings we speak of are endowed, on the one hand, with materiality and the fictional dimension resides in the idea that they are individuals endowed with a unique essence and circumscribed to the limits of what they recognize as their own body.

To expose the performative nature of the gender, Judith Butler analyzes the cultural phenomenon of the drag queen who, in her hyperfeminine performance (Butler, 2006), exposes gender as a cultural code based on imitation and repetition, with no initial or essential truth. The parody of drag performance takes gender performance norms to the extreme, thus allowing the recognition of imitation on the basis of any structure or identity and the absence of any authentic source. In this way, drag exposes social coercion on the basis of the performative nature of identity, which opens the way for the illusion of essential gender identity to be broken (Butler, 2006).

As in New York and other cities in the world (Lingel, 2017), the drag scene in Brazil has come closer to the radicalization of the queering of traditional notions of masculinity and femininity, surpassing the classic performance of the hyperfeminine diva and approaching strategies of queer performance. It is in this context and at a time when social movements are fervently debating the issue of places of speech that the first drag queens anatomically belonging to the female sex appear, at the same time that the advancement of gender theories and the maturation of LGBTQ+ movements openly question cisgenerativity as a universal parameter and claim the recognition of transgenerativity as a way of experiencing and perfor-



ming non-normative or aberrant femininities and masculinities, as well as non-binarity and sexual dissidence.

A set of questions about the relationship between the body and technologies can be based on this situation. We can reflect from Eve Shapiro's statements that "social and individual changes occur as a result of relationships and interactions between corporate identities, social scripts, technologies and social paradigms". (Shapiro, 2015, p. 227).

The author points out that biomedical and information technologies works to create common sense and, within this, gender specificity according to female/male binary standards. Such technologies are configured within pre-existing gender standards socially. Nevertheless, Shapiro notes that the use of new technologies has been employed both to reinforce and to resist and recreate gender patterns:

Marginalized individuals use forums and online communities to discover and refine identities and to rewrite body patterns. New biomedical technologies, likewise, reconfigure bodies in normative or non-normative standards. Steroids and plastic surgeries can be used to build hypermasculine men and hyperfeminine women, but they can also be used to manifest gendered bodies outside the standards of male men and female women (Shapiro, 2015, p. 228).

In her conclusions about how technologies reconfigure bodies and identities, Shapiro is close to the reflections advanced by Donna Haraway (2009) and Braidotti (2020), when they affirm that technologies interfere in the most intimate aspects of bodies and consciences, and do so in relation gender social standards and norms. If it is a fact that people have used technologies to redefine identities and bodies in a more complex way, challenging the gender norm, this, however, she observes, does not point to a limitless utopia:

technology has the potential both to make new gender identities possible and to reinforce oppressive identities. Despite the fact that technology is changing who we are as gendered individuals, the way that gender is changing is complex and variable (Shapiro, 2015, p. 230).

At all times people produce the genre practices with the available technologies, continues Shapiro (idem, ibidem). As the mutual construction of gender and technology changes over time, the criteria for defining how appropriate or inappropriate are the gendered bodies also changes within the power struggles, being, finally, "constructed and defined by the individual, whose gendered body will be developed or limited by available technologies" (Shapiro, 2015, p.232).

The verification of the presence of technologies in such a level of intimacy in the production of bodies and in the development of subjectivities leads us to think about how this relationship has been lived by people who, through their artistic and social performances, question the norm of gender, asking which identities are acceptable or unacceptable, which of them are rendered invisible or purposely ignored, which body codes are valid and which are invalid. Raising these questions seems to be a way to understand what transforming powers drag performance is still capable of liberating in the current context.

Although they have been significantly present in the art scene of the city of Belém at least since the 1980s, drag queens hardly achieved recognition as artists outside the LGBTQ + circuit and rarely acted outside of nightclubs or bars aimed at this audience. The panorama



begins to change from 2014 (Bentes, 2019), (Corrêa, 2019) with the entry of a group of performers that questions the traditional hyperparody of heteronormative femininity. According to Bentes, they form “a cultural group based in Belém do Pará, which gathers references in the club kids, in the comedy drags, in the bangs, in the aesthetics of the grotesque and, even, in the RuPaul program (Bentes, 2020, p.45). For the same author, dressing up and make up is one of the keys of the process of inventing themselves, this group, the Themed drags. The act of placing on the body a set of objects from different origins and natures, producing a change both in the sense of these objects and in the body itself makes dressing up associated with a political action of insurrection and resistance.

Dressing up, in portuguese “montaçãõ” can also be read as the fusion of the words “montagem” (assemblage) and action, the action of dressing and dressing for an action. Speakin in the political debate of reinforcing the social existence of those bodies, the action of being on the streets, of allowing their existence (Bentes, 2020, p. 52).

The elements that make up the dressing up action are of a great variety. From exaggerated hairpieces and makeup made with unusual materials to urban garbage and cigarette bags used by Sarita Themônia, medicine boxes, shoe scraps, computer parts, everything can be attracted by a themed body. For Bentes, dressing up acrion comes close to masking, as it can be defined as “a process or method of bodily alteration, which may have aesthetic functions, but, far beyond that, searches for a new state and a new intensity of perception” (Bentes, 2020, p.53).

The alteration of the body and its psychophysical state would not be complete if the dressing up action was not part of a broader process of producing aberrant bodies that assumes the collective and technological dimension of life. So it is that when they call themselves themed, these artists claim for themselves a place of visibility for their non-normative bodies, assuming themselves as bodies that do not fit in and do not seek to fit in but live the disengagement as an opening to other possibilities.

Fundamental to this experience is its community and collective character. The themed drags build megazords, creatures inspired by Japanese pop culture. A megazord is a hybrid being that acquires superpowers by connecting bodies to other bodies. For the themed drags of Belém do Pará, the megazord names its constant state of collective and mutual attention in frequent situations of risk and exposure of their bodies to violence. It is a way of referring to the installed mutual assistance network that can be used in various situations, from the imminence of an attack to the need for some emotional or financial support.

Part of the community character of the experience of themed drags is the informal organization in “haus”, or families, in which a drag, often, but not necessarily, older, welcomes a set of younger drags in a common house. The internal structure of these relationships has yet to be studied in more depth, but it is possible to say that it is a fundamental part of the ways of organizing the themed drags of Belém.

A THEMED BODY is a collective body that is constituted by a network of relationships and assemblages of componentes from different natures and connected to each other in a network of affections and aesthetic and political propositions, contesting hegemony, challenging the normative intelligibilities of gender, race and class.

Such collective bodies make extensive use of digital technologies not only as a means of dissemination, but as ways of self-reflexivity about their artistic / subjective creation and



connection. The strong presence on social networks and the constant interaction in groups on these same networks is an inseparable component of the creation and creation of the megazord (s). They are ways of being connected, of thinking and acting collectively. THEMED BODY acts on the streets and in digital networks simultaneously, without breaking the body-machine-space continuum. This situation needs to be analyzed in more depth in studies that question the ways in which the strangeness or queerization of these bodies has achieved greater or lesser freedom, to what extent they have been capable of deterritorialization, the extent to which the collective flight lines develop unexpected trajectories, the extent they challenge or balance themselves closer to the establishment of common sense.

If the THEMED BODY is a dispute experienced in a post-individual and post-universal body, a body that is at the same time situated and collective, which is understood within the scope of a relationship that creates and endures other states, it is urgent to find their insurrection powers within the integrated circuit.

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ANALYSIS OF GENDER CONCEPTIONS IN THE PHYSICS DEGREE COURSES IN CAMPOS DOS GOYTACAZES¹

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ABSTRACT

This work consists of an analysis of the representations and meanings associated with the concept of gender that prevail in future Physics teachers. In the poststructuralist scenario, the concept of gender is pluralized and this entire social dynamic exerts an influence among education professionals who work in primary and secondary schools. The debate on gender in school, legitimized by documents such as the Law of Directives and Bases of Education (LDB) and the National Curricular Parameters (PCN), becomes a transdisciplinary requirement. The research was carried out in the undergraduate courses in Natural Sciences with a degree in Physics (Instituto Federal Fluminense - IFF/Campos) and undergraduate degree in Physics (Universidade Estadual do Norte Fluminense Darcy Ribeiro - UENF). Both courses are offered by public educational institutions, located in the urban area of Campos dos Goytacazes, in Rio de Janeiro/Brazil. The municipality of Campos stands out for having the largest population in the state's countryside and for having three public universities. In addition, it has a predominantly conservative social profile, with a Christian base (Catholic and Evangelical) and low educational index, with less than 50% of the population having completed secondary school (data from the Anísio Teixeira Institute, 2018). Data collection was carried out by means of questionnaires, applied in agreement with the course coordinators and the interviewees. The results suggest a difference between IFF and UENF courses. In the former, there is greater resistance to the approach of the subject, which indicates a more conservative profile than that of UENF. In the context that the omission of educational institutions in relation to gender and minority issues is interpreted as complicity and a hidden form of prejudice, the results for both courses analysed corroborate with the perspective that degrees need to insert these discussions in an institutionalised way in their curriculum matrices. Furthermore, a large proportion of those interviewed did not know the meaning of the acronym LGBTQI+. Those who did, limited their understanding to the letters L and G (reference to lesbians and gays), ignoring the recognition of bisexuality and other gender identities represented by the letters BTQI+.

KEYWORDS:

Gender; Graduation; Physics; Teaching.

1. Introduction

Teacher training is a highly complex activity performed by universities. Within the university context, it is crossed by various silencing and invisibilization practices that affect various social groups. Such practices, even if not institutionalized in the official curricula,

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continue to manifest themselves through acts of curriculum and hidden curriculum, thus contributing to the construction of natural and unnatural places for certain subjects (Silva, 2019; Junqueira, 2012).

74 | Historically, formal learning spaces have been reproducing a set of values, beliefs and norms aligned with the male, white, heterosexual, bourgeois, physical and mentally normal profile (Silva, 2019). Not unrelated to the scenario exposed, the training of Physics teachers in Brazil stands out for the low representativeness of minority social groups, evidenced by the normative standard associated with the Brazilian community of physicists and physicists, reported by the study conducted by the Working Group on Gender Issues of the Brazilian Physical Society (Anteneodo et al. 2020).

Currently, the omission - on the part of educational institutions at different levels of formation - of the themes that intersect the social markers of race, gender, and sexuality has been pointed out as a hidden form of prejudice and complicity of educators. This framework relates with the reproduction of violence against subjects with characteristics and identities that differ from those of the regulatory standard of the social field (Louro, 2003).

Considering the abovementioned, related to the current Brazilian scenario of systematic dismantling of public policies in the area of education, culture, science and technology - which compromises the functioning of democratic institutions and reinforces the maintenance of invisibilization and silencing practices -, this article presents the objective of reallocating the debate on gender within the scope of undergraduate courses in Physics, offered by two public educational institutions located in Campos dos Goytacazes, in Rio de Janeiro/Brazil.

For this purpose, on the gender issue, the adopted theoretical framework dialogues with the poststructuralist perspective, in which the meaning of gender identity appears in detriment to the deterministic and purely biological conception. In the field of education, the work «Pedagogy of Autonomy», published by Paulo Freire in 1966, contributes to the inscription of a new way of educating - emancipatory education. In addition, the National Curricular Parameters (PCN) and the Law of Guidelines and Bases of Education (LDB) legitimize the debate in the classroom context.

1.1. Gender from a post-structural perspective

One of the main names in Gender Theories is Simone de Beauvoir. Author of the book «The Second Sex», published in 1949, she points out her proposal to deny biological determinism, accentuating the social character that surrounds the discussions about gender. Even today her thought is of extreme relevance, as she invites society to reflect on how power relations exert an influence on women's existence. In this given social context, the statement «one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman» (Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, 2011) positions the debate on the analysis of how society confers roles and functions to women, which therefore become determining factors of their gender.

With the emergence of poststructuralism (after the work of Simone de Beauvoir) - a stance that breaks with the idea that a sign (word) would have an invariable meaning - new meanings and interpretations are attributed to the concept of gender, now associated with the idea of fluidity, variability and indeterminacy, and which corroborates Judith Butler's



thought in «Gender Trouble», first published in 1990 (Butler, 1990; Eagleton, 2006). For Firmino and Porchat (2017), Judith's work reaches the essence of the meaning of gender, deconstructing male and female duality, starting from the concept of the essence of being and of constant mutability (Firmino & Porchat, 2017).

It is worth mentioning that the debate on gender and on the social relations that compose the theme does not intend to deny that gender is built on sexed bodies. It is thus intended to position the debate in the social field, for it is there that social relations, sometimes unequal, are built. This implies, therefore, the understanding of gender as the identity of the subjects, a perception that emerges to the detriment of the binary and excluding conception of masculine and feminine (Louro, 2016).

1.2. Gender and education: Paulo Freire and the Pedagogy of Autonomy

The processes of socialization - among which education belongs - are tools for passing on the framework of knowledge needed by the subjects (Gómez, 1998). Acknowledging this function, Paulo Freire believes in an education that invests in the educator/educator constructor/producer of his/her learning, invests in his/her own construction as subject as it invites him/her to act actively on knowledge, on the world and on him/herself (Silva, 2016). The notion of subject, to which Freire resorts, corroborates with Touraine (2006) and concerns the capacity of an individual to self-construct, that is, to be the author of his existence exercising reflexivity in his construction (Touraine, 2006).

In the post-modern context, the notion of solid, coherent and secure identity, often associated with the question of gender, is illusory (Hall, 1997). In this sense, contemporary societies are marked by the constant and intrinsic change in social dynamics. Analyzing this scenario by establishing relationships with teaching practice, the demand for what Paulo Freire in his Pedagogy of Autonomy calls «progressive educator» is notorious (Freire, 2015).

The progressive educator must be faithful to the notion of a conscious, critical subject who is self-constructive of his or her own identity(s). In this sense, Pedagogy of Autonomy brings gender discussions closer to the space of teacher training, as it challenges teachers to dialogue with the multiple identities expressed by their students.

2. Methodology

This work consists of an analysis of the gender conceptions that prevail in future Physics teachers, enrolled in the Physics Degree courses at the Universidade Estadual do Norte Fluminense Darcy Ribeiro (UENF) and at the Instituto Federal de Educação (IFF), both in the municipality of Campos dos Goytacazes. The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire, as it is comprehensive and capable of accessing several interviewees simultaneously. In constructing the questions, Lima and Silva (2011) made a significant contribution, with a view to conducting a survey focused on addressing issues of sexuality by teachers in non-biological areas (Lima & Silva, 2011).

For the collection of the data at UENF, a round table was held jointly with the Graduation Meeting in Physics. The purpose was to promote a debate on the concepts and representations of gender and sexuality from a poststructuralist perspective. The debate was conducted



by four speakers: a researcher and geography teacher, a social worker, a law graduate and a physics undergraduate student. The students were submitted to the questionnaire before and after the event. Data acquisition at IFF was done through an agreement between the course coordination, course teachers and interviewees. Some teachers allowed questionnaires to be answered by the students (4th, 5th and 6th terms) at the beginning of their classes.

76 | The questionnaires were composed of objective questions and open-ended questions. The objective questions were destined to characterize the sample space, with questions about the biological sex, age, and course time of the interviewees. The open-ended questions were made with the objective of evaluating the relationship of the interviewee with the questions related to the gender theme. For the analysis of the responses, categories (response patterns) were created in accordance with the Bardin Content Analysis Technique (Bardin, 2010).

3. Results and discussions

The first questions were designed to characterize the sample space. Among all the information obtained, the percentage of participation of male and female students (Table 1), the age range of the interviewees⁵ (Figure 1) and the period in which they are enrolled (Figure 2) should be highlighted.

Table 1

Profile of interviewee		
Sex	IFF (%)	UENF(%)
Male	47	70
Female	53	30

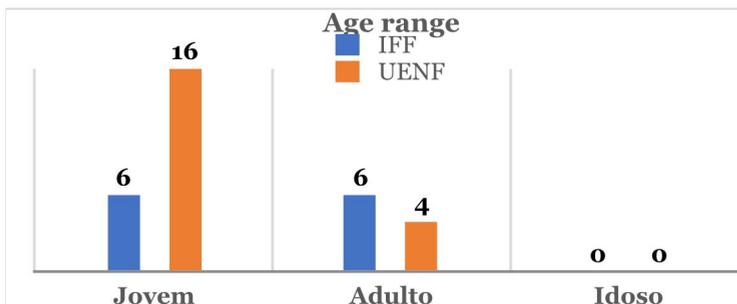


Figure 1. Age range of respondents

⁵The classifications of the age groups are in agreement with the Brazilian Institute of Statistical Geography (IBGE,2018).



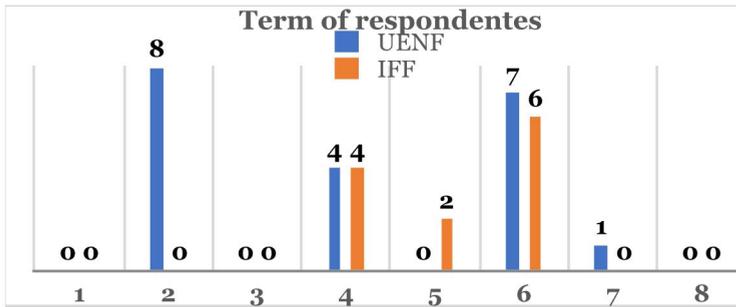


Figure 2. Term in which applicants were enrolled

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It is observed that, regarding the IFF, there is a greater participation of women in the course. These data were collected during routine activities, which can be admitted as indicative of the actual percentage of the course. At UENF, the data were compared with the number of enrolments, information provided by the course coordination, observing a similar percentage. Also concerning this university, the greater participation of young people in the course is highlighted.

Considering the methodology adopted for data collection, it is worth mentioning the fact that, at UENF, the Physics Degree Week - the place where data was collected - is more frequented by students of initial terms. At IFF, the course arises from the fourth term on, after the so-called Basic Area of Entry in Natural Sciences, which justifies the non-existence of students in previous terms.

3.1. On gender and its meanings

The distinction between the concepts of gender and biological sex was approached in two distinct ways. The interviewees were invited to write, in an open question, their gender and, later and in an objective way, to mark their biological sex. Afterwards, the person should inform if he/she thought both questions were redundant or not. Those who marked «no» as the answer recognized the distinction between the concepts. The results are represented in Figure 3.

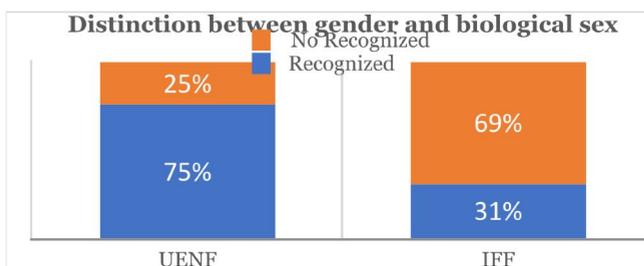


Figure 3. Distinction between gender and biological sex meanings

Based on Figure 3, the influence of biological determinism on the understanding of the gender of a subject is significant. At IFF, the high percentage of students who do not recognize the difference between meanings can be interpreted as evidence of the tangential approach



given to the subject, corroborating with the construction of meanings that do not address the issue from the perspective of diversity. Thinking gender, from the perspective of most interviewees, excludes «trans» identities and all those that are not defined in the binary logic of masculine and feminine. Louro (2016) also highlights that this differentiation serves as an argument to justify the social inequalities produced from differences based on biological sex (Louro, 2016).

The answers given to the open question, which questioned the interviewee's understanding of the meaning of gender, were categorized. These results appear in Table 2, which includes the relative frequency of occurrence of each response pattern.

In both scenarios, less than 50% of the answers were classified in category IV. This represents, in practice, that less than half of the respondents recognize the concept of gender from a subject identity perspective. Recognizing gender from an identity perspective implies emphasizing the dynamic, changeable and, consequently, social contributions. It means recognising the concept as a social construction, free from a priori established determinations.

Table 2

Response patterns - gender conception

Category	Answer Standard	Frequency (%)	
		UENF	IFF
I	No reply	10	23
II	Binarism (masc. and fem.)	25	16
III	Gender as sexuality	25	15
IV	Identity of a subject	40	46

In order to understand the acceptance of the gender debate in the school environment, respondents were asked in which learning spaces - with school, home and street options - the debate on gender and sexuality should be addressed. The answers to this question, Figure 4, were divided into two categories: those that recognise school as one of the spaces for learning to address gender and sexuality and those that do not.

The same theme was also addressed in another way. Students were asked to agree or disagree with the following statement in the questionnaire: «It is the responsibility of all teachers to work on gender and sexuality in the classroom, regardless of their subject». The answers, along with the arguments, were analyzed and categorized, as shown in Table 3.

In relation to the two institutions surveyed, diametrically opposed realities are observed. It is worth highlighting the fact that, at UENF, data collection was carried out in a thematic event in the form of a round table, which may have contributed to the selectivity of the respondents. This may have corroborated with the less conservative scenario expressed by the results of Figure 3 and Table 2.

The high percentage of interviewees who disagree with the statement (Table 3, category II - IFF) has a direct relationship with the persistent notion that the theme should be addressed by biology teachers, already identified in previous studies (Lima & Silva, 2011). Moreover, in this institute, students come into contact with the subjects of a pedagogical nature in the first terms of the undergraduate course in Natural Sciences. The choice for the area of training



- Degree in Physics, in this case - occurs at the end of this basic cycle⁶. This fact may represent the reduction of teaching activity to the mere reproduction of content, a practice that contrasts with the forecasts of the National Curricular Parameters and with the necessary knowledge for teaching practice, according to Freire (2004).

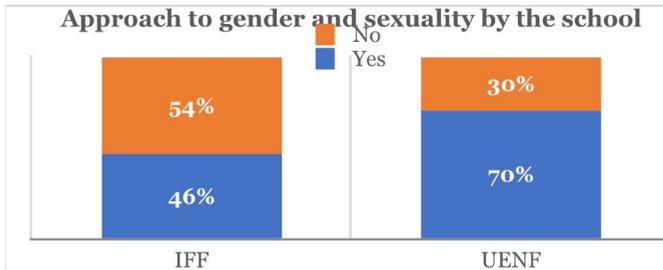


Figure 4. Percentage of interviewees who recognize the importance of the gender debate being provided by the school

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Table 3

Response patterns collected from the statement analysis

Category	Answer Standard	Frequency (%)	
		UENF	IFF
I	No reply	5	8
II	Disagree	25	61
III	Partially agree	10	8
IV	Agree	60	23

When asked about the recognition of the acronym and the meanings of the letters, the respondents, in the majority (about 55%), were not able to attribute the correct meaning to the letters Q, I and the + symbol. Together with those who did not even know the meaning of the «base abbreviation,» about 21%, 76% did not recognize the gender identities and sexualities represented in the abbreviation. These results are found in Figure 5.

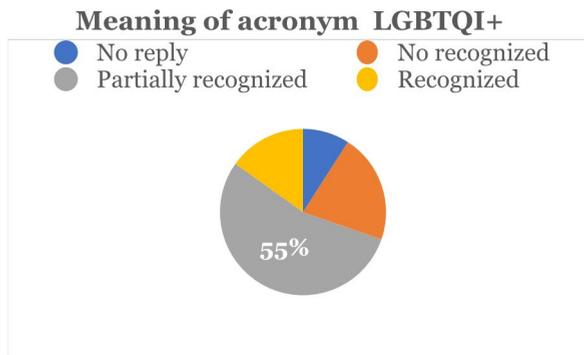


Figure 5. Recognition of the meaning of the acronym LGBTQI+. This is the result of both institutions, given the similarity between the response profiles.

⁶ Information obtained from the analysis of the curricular matrix of IFF's Degree in Nature Sciences. Available at <http://portal1.iff.edu.br/nossos-campi/campos-centro/cursos/licenciatura-1/ciencias-da-natureza/licenciatura-em-biologia-fisica-e-quimica>.



Weaving considerations

Justifying teaching as a broad profession, loaded with meanings and challenges, this work aimed to evaluate gender and sexuality conceptions in future Physics teachers from two public tertiary institutions located in the municipality of Campos dos Goytacazes, in the state of Rio de Janeiro/Brazil.

80 | The results reflect that this topic is still approached tangentially in the institutions under research. The curricular matrixes of the analyzed courses do not contemplate the discussion; and the surveys on the issue are left to the teachers who have affinity to the subject. An expressive part of the analyzed population does not recognize gender as a social construction, limiting its interpretations concerning the male and female dimension. This fact brings the notion of normativity closer to the school, which is exclusive and sufficient to remove all identities that do not align with the established standard.

The differences between the methodologies adopted in both institutions should be added to the analysis of the results. The less conservative profile associated with the UENF may be related to the performance of data collection during the round table. Moreover, atypically, during the period of collection of these results (October/2018), issues of gender and sexuality figured prominently in the national scenario, since false news had been widely disseminated in order to associate the educational content and public policies related to issues of gender and sexuality with the sexualization of children and adolescents.

In opposition to the efforts of social movements and a large part of civil society, Brazil is immersed in a context of serious systematic dismantling of public policies in the area of education, culture, science and technology. The effects of such policies are further reflected on social minority groups, especially the Brazilian black population. This fact, together with the violent history of racist reproduction and LBGQTIfobia, accentuates the importance of including social markers of race/ ethnicity and sexuality in future research.

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“THE ERASED GENDER”: THE EXCLUSION OF THE DEBATE ON FEMALE BODIES IN THE SCHOOL AND ITS CONSEQUENCES¹

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Viviane Bispo³

Yasmin Dias⁴

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ABSTRACT

The formation of being a woman in today's society is full of fears, insecurities and impositions, in parallel to this, more and more women are engaged and seeking to exercise sorority in order to make the formation of women lucid and free.

Based on the assumption that the Brazilian educational system is not an environment conducive to discussions about sexuality and self-knowledge, especially when it comes to the female gender, it was intended to identify how much this absence contributes for women to be unaware of their bodies and to that bad and repressive concepts were widely disseminated and accepted by society as a whole, given their lack of knowledge. In addition, the media influence on female bodies was analyzed in an attempt to whiten due to the beauty standards that lead white women with European features, with more than half of the Brazilian population being configured as black. It is notable that female invisibility affects several injustices that have become legitimized due to structural machismo, thus, the absence of rights affects the female class and is shown through the maintenance of unequal wages, violence against women, imposition of motherhood, sexual repression, etc. To this end, it was conducted through the dissemination of three questionnaires, through social media, a survey of data on topics related to self-esteem, sexual health and the relationship that these themes establish with the school environment. The present article describes a survey conducted among Brazilian women aged 13 to 61 years, of different races/skin color, with incomes ranging from none to more than 15 minimum wages and of different sexualities. After analyzing the responses, which totaled approximately 611, it was found that the demands related to the female gender such as low self-esteem, imposition of the media and sexuality are problems experienced on a large scale and that with the absence of school participation there is confirmation that despite having evolved a lot in different areas of science, issues related to women continue to be invisible.

KEYWORDS:

Women; Educational system; Bodies; Genre; Sexuality

At the beginning of the 19th century, the feminist struggle was started and the greatest objective of women was to obtain equal rights to those of men. Nevertheless, they believed that the reason for their supposed inferiority was their lack of access to education, after all, women were not allowed to read or write, their only learning being home care. Such women would be proud of the 21st century, where 73.5% of girls attend schools and attend classes. However, this academic world is a scenario that still needs to face several changes.

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With the demands of the capitalist world becoming more and more incisive, it is observed that there is an intense search for the training of technicians and, at the same time, the robotization of individuals occurs. In this way, it is clear that discussions about society are increasingly excluded from the school environment, antagonizing what this should in fact be: a democratic place for the construction of a more conscious citizen, without prejudice and capable of building a world best. As the patron of education Paulo Freire (1992) states,

In addition to being an act of knowledge, education is also a political act. That is why there is no neutral pedagogy. It is not enough to say that education is a political act, just as it is not enough to say that the political act is also educational. We must really assume the politics of education.⁵ (p. 25)

Therefore, the school must be an environment that also turns to latent issues such as social inequality, racial issues, sexuality and equality between men and women, after all, it is in this context that future citizens are, people who will be part of the next generations and that are directly linked to the perpetuation of culture. According to the Enlightenment philosopher Rousseau (1983), the human being is born good but is corrupted by society, this happens due to cultural construction that is based on violence and exclusion of minorities and is little or not even debated at the school. In this context, it can be seen that patriarchal supremacy will be overcome when the culture of machismo is not taught to children.

Attentive to this fact, the writer Chimamanda Adichie Ngozi (2015) draws attention,

Some people will say a woman is subordinate to men because it's our culture. But culture is constantly changing. I have beautiful twin nieces who are fifteen. If they had been born a hundred years ago, they would have been taken away and killed. Because a hundred years ago, Igbo culture considered the birth of twins to be an evil omen. Today that practice is unimaginable to all Igbo people. (p.47)

Analogous to this, it can be said that the formation of culture is changeable and that the fact that the Brazilian educational system is not conducive to discussions about sexuality and self-knowledge, especially when it comes to the female gender, opens doors for women to ignore their bodies and for misrepresented and repressive concepts to be widely disseminated and accepted by society as a whole, given their lack of knowledge.

However, it cannot be said that the oppressions of the school have the same configuration, after all, women are not all the same, they do not constitute a single class, it is important to highlight their subjectivities, because it is at this point that the most diverse types of oppression. In analogy, the author Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989) coined the term "intersectionality", which proposes an analysis about gender, race and income and, subsequently, the intercrossing of this information in order to understand to which oppressions women are conditioned.

⁵ Free translation of the author "Além de um ato de conhecimento, a educação é também um ato político. É por isso que não há pedagogia neutra. Não basta dizer que a educação é um ato político assim como não basta dizer que o ato político é também educativo. É preciso assumir realmente a politicidade da educação." (p. 25)



As previously mentioned, being a woman consists of several aspects, among them, the writer Grada Kilomba (2008) theorizes about the double alterity of black women caused due to their condition of gender and race. In his speech “*Ain’t I a woman?*” held at the Convention for the Rights of Women in Akron, Ohio, in the United States, Sojourner Truth (1797-1883) addresses how black women are not seen as belonging to the gender, not even by white and even black men, in his words:

That man over there says that women need to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into carriages, or over mud-puddles, or gives me any best place! And ain’t I a woman? Look at me! Look at my arm! I have ploughed and planted, and gathered into barns, and no man could head me! And ain’t I a woman? I could work as much and eat as much as a man - when I could get it - and bear the lash as well! And ain’t I a woman? (...) Then that little man in black there, he says women can’t have as much rights as men, ‘cause Christ wasn’t a woman! Where did your Christ come from? Where did your Christ come from? From God and a woman! Man had nothing to do with Him.

As the black abolitionist, Truth (1851) affirms, the condition of the black woman has always been of an unrecognized equality through slavery and the non-acceptance by men of the physical strength of the feminine. In parallel to this, black women are constantly the target of subordination in relation to the beautiful according to what society defines due to the historicity that was created about the European white. Instantly, there is the inferiority of these women in direct and indirect ways, in this way, the need for school participation in the construction of their lives is noticeable in order to produce a welcoming and, mainly, anti-racist environment.

Another factor that also affects most women, especially black women - Between the 13.5 million people living in extreme poverty, 75% are black or mixed race (IBGE, synthesis of social indicators, 2019) - is social inequality and its cause is the low access to education: schools with precarious constructions, absence of laboratories, textbooks with outdated contents and that, many times, teachers are not even able to apply them all in class, due to the chaotic calendar that affects these children. In addition, the little time they find to dedicate to their studies, since, since an early age, one of their main concerns is subsistence, or even because of the culture that the child of the poor should not study, so the study becomes mere triviality, and the maintenance of social inequality becomes an endless cycle: the mother is unable to study and remains poor, and therefore, also for the next generations. This unfortunate reality will only be contained through public policies - initiated from the school - to mitigate these obstacles.

Adding another panorama, the sexual orientation of the individual can also be a challenge for school performance, because, for patriarchal society, binary union is the only plausible, since, in this, the man exercises the domain. In agreement with this, it can be said that the “being” man and the “being” woman are not limited only to biological issues, but rather, a cultural construction that limits women and expands the paths taken by men. This gender formation is debated by the philosopher and sociologist, Judith Butler, in the words of the author, «in this case, not biology, but culture becomes destiny» (Butler, 2003, p.26), in an analogous way, can - to affirm and realize that the construction of the feminine and the mas-



culine has culture as its base. In this case, women are always the target of silencing their biological issues such as menstruation and their sexuality, while men, as heterosexual and cis, are led to speak openly and comfortably about the subject. Based on this assumption, the school environment, which should be a place of wide discussion and welcoming to all, consecrates yet another place of silence.

86 | Through this theoretical bias and with the help of three questionnaires, this article seeks to analyze the absence of discussions on social issues (such as race, class and gender), sexuality and self-knowledge in schools. Make an analysis of how this context presents itself to men, white women, black women (black and brown), people from public and private schools, heterosexuals and LGBTQI +. Furthermore, to understand what causes these differences and the effects that this awful dynamic continues to perpetuate in society.

Such questionnaires were electronic (created through Google Forms) and disseminated through social networks (Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp and Twitter). The first questionnaire, whose theme was menstruation and self-esteem, received 306 responses. The second was based on sexuality and contraceptive methods, receiving 101 responses. The third, on the other hand, received 204 responses, the only one being aimed at male and female audiences, and its theme was: “The exclusion of the debate about female bodies in the school environment and its consequences” whose responses will be addressed and analyzed later.

The theorist Carol Hanisch (1969), affirmed “the staff is also political”. From this, it can be evidenced that, if several women are subjected to the same condition, this is therefore not a mere coincidence, but a well-designed oppression and its objective is the maintenance of female invisibility in all social sectors and therefore, the supremacy of man, attentive to this, the author Simone de Beauvoir (1949), wrote:

In *Hebdo-Latin* the other day, a student declared: “Every woman student who takes a position as a doctor or lawyer is stealing a place from us.” That student never questioned his rights over this world. Economic interests are not the only ones in play. One of the benefits that oppression secures for the oppressor is that the humblest among them feels superior: in the United States a “poor white” from the South can console himself for not being a “dirty nigger”; and more prosperous whites cleverly exploit this pride. Likewise, the most mediocre of males believes himself a demigod next to women. (p. 33)

Therefore, it can be said that the school, as a perpetuating environment of culture, is a mechanism used so that women do not reach men, as a kind of state society⁶ through the ages, where the man occupies the top of the pyramid, the woman white just below and black woman the base (Kilomba, 2012; Ribeiro, 2018). Nevertheless, according to the results found in questionnaire number 3 in the question “In Biology classes, did you consider the approach on female sexuality satisfactory (in fact, you were educated)?”, 36.8% of the people declared that they had not been educated, which confirms the theory that Brazilian education is very outdated about discussions about sexuality. Taking a gender view, it can be seen that 34.5% of white women declared to have been educated, while black women only 27.3%. Comparing the response of both, it can be seen that girls are mostly not educated and that black girls are even less educated. That while men declared 43.3%, this high percentage can be consi-

⁶ This type of organizational structure, typical of the feudal system during the Middle Ages, divided society into estates, in which the possibility of social mobility was practically nonexistent.



dered as a certain alienation of these and that the educational system for women must be thought by them, because, who better than them to clarify their own needs?

Everything that has been written by men about women should be viewed with suspicion, because they are both judge and party. (Poulain De La Barre, século XVII)

Nevertheless, in the second form, 87% of women reported not considering the approach within the educational environment about bodies and female sexuality satisfactory, 45% said they were unable to fully differentiate all internal and external organs of their genitals, as well as the «portions» «of the vulva, in the same line of reasoning, 53% of women stated that they already felt bad for thinking or talking about masturbation and 3% never spoke or thought about and in addition, 31.7% said they started using contraceptives without instruction . In addition, in the same form, 54.9% of people answered that in their schools there were no lectures/projects and the like in which the theme was the body or female sexuality.

However, some advances were also noticed, of the interviewees, 83.7% say they are not disgusted by their menstruation and 56.5%, no matter how much they have had, today they are not ashamed of being seen publicly with tampons, 31% say not being ashamed and 91.3% said they used contraceptives.

Another topic to be discussed is the lack of psychological support in schools, as well as the debate about issues of this nature (such as low esteem, depression, suicide, anxiety, among other problems) since, after the family, School environment is the main means of educating citizens, since it is the place where students spend a considerable time of their lives. In an antagonistic way, 49.5% of the interviewees stated that in their schools there were no lectures/projects and the like in which the theme was self-esteem/psychological issues, which is worrying in a scenario where 95.1% of women said they had experienced low self-esteem and that this, consequently, affected several areas of their lives in a negative way (81% stated that they were affected in more than one part). In addition, it was possible to show that even though the rates of low self-esteem were high, most students did not obtain psychological assistance (only 6.4% were monitored, while 6.3 were monitored by a professional from the external school community) , and in the previous questionnaire where the cut was only female, comment 3% of the interviewees said they had follow-up). This dynamic is also very complicated for LGBTQI + women, for example, 75% of homosexuals, pansexuals and bisexuals interviewed do not feel/felt welcomed by the school, this is because, referring to jurist Silvio Almeida (2018), from just as nationalism creates rules for individuals to belong to a given social formation, it also creates exclusion rules (based on race, sexuality and capital). In other words, it is part of the national project to produce and reproduce a discourse about the other, making the conquest and destruction of those who do not share an identity rationally and emotionally acceptable characterizing this lack of acceptance as symbolic violence⁷.

In the 19th century, theories aimed at whitening the population, such as social Darwinism, were widely disseminated in order to reduce the black population. Analogous to this, it is clear that the traits of this people continue to be subordinate to whites and, despite the time since the construction of the white beauty standard began, it can be said that these ou-

⁷ Concept developed by sociologist Pierre Bourdieu who speaks about violence that causes psychological damage and not physical damage.



trageous ideals are perpetuated through the media. , which continue, even if unconsciously promoting fine lines and light skin as an ideal of beauty. According to the philosopher Karl Marx (2007), ideology is always the imposed thought of the dominant class on top of the oppressed, in the author's words,

88 | They are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relationships [...] of each age. They are, therefore, [...] the expression of the relations that make a class the dominant class, they are the ideas of its domination.⁸(p. 47)

In this way, it can be said that the standards of beauty imposed by the media cause a series of problems for women who do not reproduce them. Under this perspective, according to the questionnaires, even with the historicity presented about black women, the percentage of this cut compared to the white group is almost equal, with 95.1% and 93%, respectively, who have or already have had low self-esteem. Furthermore, it is worth noting that many black women are unable to circumvent the paradigms imposed on them, being affected by the media by a percentage of 84.2%.

And finally, a question must be raised about the differences and similarities related to the discussion of women in public/private education. It is important to note that Brazilian public education is, in most cases, in its public schools (municipal and state) deficient, however, in the third questionnaire, information was collected that 50.6% had lectures/projects with the theme focused on women, while in private schools they had about 42.1%. Despite the difference in this regard, when it comes to the approach in biology classes on the same theme, the percentages are almost equal, with 38.6% (private) and 34.5% (public). With this last data, it can be said that both education systems are playing a role in promoting invisibility as far as issues of the female gender are concerned.

This whole scenario contributes to that misrepresented and repressive concepts continue to be widely disseminated and accepted by society as a whole, given their lack of knowledge, bell hooks (2018) even stated that this is because there is a construction of image negativism of the woman through the media and interested in maintaining patriarchy, after all, as the masses are more favorable to these means than to the writings, they are constantly bombarded with falsehoods, that is, the large crowd did not reject the message⁹, she did not hear the message and this deconstruction is important to society as a whole, after all, equality is thought for the community, feminism is a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation and oppression, not with men. After all, women can also be sexists, just as men are brought up in a system of oppression where sexism is propagated, so these are also vehicles for that, so it is always necessary to emphasize the school as a deconstructor of such paradigms.

The school, through what it teaches, fights against folklore, against all the traditional sedimentations of world conceptions, in order to spread a more modern conception, whose primitive and fundamental elements are given by learning the existence of natural laws as something objective and rebellious, which must be adapted to dominate them, as well as civil and state

⁸ Free Translation of the author "Não são nada mais do que a expressão ideal das relações materiais dominantes [...] de cada época. São, portanto, [...] a expressão das relações que fazem de uma classe a classe dominante, são as ideias de sua dominação." (p. 47)

⁹ Excerpt taken and adapted from the book *feminism is for everybody*, bell hooks (2000).



laws that are produced by human activity established by man and can be modified by him aiming at their collective development: civil and state law organizes men of the historically more adequate to the domination of the laws of nature, that is, it makes his work easier, which is the proper way in which man participates actively in the life of nature, aiming at transforming and socializing it more and more deeply and widely.¹⁰ (Antonio Gramsci, 1982, p. 130)

It is noteworthy that female invisibility affects several injustices that have become legitimized due to structural machismo, thus, the lack of rights affects the female class and is shown through the maintenance of unequal wages, violence against women, imposition of motherhood, sexual repression, etc. According to the writer bell hooks (2000),

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Most men find it difficult to be patriarchs. Most men are disturbed by hatred and fear of women, by male violence against women, even the men who perpetuate this violence. But they fear letting go of the benefits. They are not certain what will happen to the world they know most intimately if patriarchy changes. So they find it easier to passively support male domination even when they know in their minds and hearts that it is wrong. Again and again men tell me they have no idea what it is feminists want. I believe them. I believe in their capacity to change and grow. And I believe that if they knew more about feminism they would no longer fear it, for they would find in feminist movement the hope of their own release from the bondage of patriarchy. (p.12)

Given the above, it can be evidenced that the survey of the forms was undoubtedly important for the analysis of such problems presented: the absence of discussions on social issues such as race, class and gender, sexuality and self-knowledge in schools. In this way, an analysis was made of how this context presents itself to men, white women, black women (black and brown), people from public and private schools, heterosexuals and LGBTQI+. And in addition, understanding what causes these differences and the effects that this awful dynamic continues to perpetuate in society so that public policies are adopted aimed at including the "erased gender" in order to have their participation as equal not only in the Brazilian Federal Constitution, promulgated in 1988, in its article 5, but actually, in the heart of today's society. In short, the idea was confirmed that although we have evolved a lot in several areas of science, issues related to women continue to be invisible, in allusion to this, the words of the Soviet psychologist Vygotsky (1997):

We cannot dominate the truth about personality and personality itself, while humanity does not dominate the truth about society and society itself.¹¹ (p. 342)

¹⁰ Free translation of the author "A escola, mediante o que ensina, luta contra o folclore, contra todas as sedimentações tradicionais de concepções do mundo, a fim de difundir uma concepção mais moderna, cujos elementos primitivos e fundamentais são dados pela aprendizagem da existência de leis naturais como algo objetivo e rebelde, às quais é preciso adaptar-se para dominá-las, bem como de leis civis e estatais que são produzidas pela atividade humana estabelecida pelo homem e podem ser por ele modificadas visando seu desenvolvimento coletivo: a lei civil e estatal organiza os homens do modo historicamente mais adequado à dominação das leis da natureza, isto é, a torna mais fácil o seu trabalho, que é a forma própria através da qual o homem participa ativamente na vida da natureza, visando transformá-la e socializá-la cada vez mais profunda e extensamente." (Antonio Gramsci, 1982, p. 130)

¹¹ Free translation of the author "Nós não podemos dominar a verdade sobre a personalidade e a própria personalidade enquanto a humanidade não dominar a verdade sobre a sociedade e a própria sociedade." (Vygotsky, 1997, p.34)



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BANCA DA CIÊNCIA AND THE CROSSING OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY¹

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ABSTRACT

The investigation “Banca da Ciência and the crossing of cultural diversity” is the result of an extension project by the Federal Institute of Science and Technology of São Paulo (IFSP - Salto campus). This project is part of a broad action, entitled “Banca da Ciência at School”, which was born at the University of São Paulo - Brazil in 2009. The project is developed in a playful perspective in connection with artistic-cultural manifestations and social themes, for through non-formal interventions in a school setting. It is based on socio-cultural and playful proposals (games and games), involving low-cost materials and media products, such as films, series episodes, short films and documentaries. Visits to schools, events, projects and social programs take place, in addition to the application of workshops and recreational classes addressing issues such as gender, race and class. In this specific case, the Science Board associated with cultural diversity provided access and democratization on gender and identity issues based on cultural, historical and social differences for public school students, who were able to intend and question elements about machismo, inequalities and differences.

KEYWORDS:

Science board; cultural diversity; playfulness; non-formal education.

Introduction

This investigation reports a branch of a project called “Banca da Ciência at School”, which was born at the University of São Paulo - School of Arts, Sciences and Humanities - BRAZIL (USP - EACH - 2009), which is developed in a playful perspective of scientific teachings connected to artistic-cultural manifestations and social themes through non-formal mediations in a school environment and public places with a bench - mobile science, called “Science Bank”, attracting people’s attention to scientific possibilities. It is based on socio-cultural proposals, involving low-cost materials and media products based on cultural artifacts.

In the experience of “Banca da Ciência and the crossing of cultural diversity”, on the campus of the Federal Institute of Salto (IFSP), knowledge practices operate around race-gender-class intersectionality and identities based on cultural, historical and social differences. For this, we attend schools, events and or projects and social programs, with audiences from 11 to 17 years old, holding workshops, games, playful classes and games, addressing the theme of cultural diversity.

According to Ortiz (1999) with a universalist view, defining cultural diversity oscillates between integration, differences, homogenization and pluralities. There is a figure of delirium and incoherence, an ideological bipolarity, because it would be possible, on the one hand,

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to have «the whole», linked to totalitarianism, on the other, «differences», related to a democratic spirit.

In this way, the term diversity applies to social formations, indigenous, ethnic groups, past civilizations and nations. And, it also includes individuals, the feminine, homosexual, black movement, identity crisis, distinctions that qualify differences and are carriers of historical and symbolic meanings (Ortiz, 1999).

92 | Therefore, in this context, to conceptualize and operationalize the term cultural diversity for Science Banking, is to think broadly, looking at differences, inequalities and prejudices associated with culture and crossed by issues of race-gender - class intersectionality.

When considering a process of interdependence between class - race - gender, beginning in the late 1970s in critical and collective opposition to a purely white, middle class and heteronormative feminism, intersectionality emerges as a plural look at the diversity of identities with a focus in social inequality (Hirata, 2014).

Davis (2018, 2019) states that race, class and gender are categories that must be considered together, because, according to her, the class informs the race, race is the way the class is lived and gender informs class, producing relationships mutual and crusade.

In the practices of Science Banking we intend the themes: gender, violence, machismo, cultural differences, social inequality, identities and races.

When evaluating science, technology and education as drivers of a formative and social inclusion process that guides the teaching, research and extension actions of the Federal Institute, we consider that initiating adolescents and young students from the Institute itself, from the public network of the city of Salto and different people in the democratized scientific world, allows unstructured and questioning reflections of elements that make up the daily lives of these young people, in a way that popularizes access and understanding of science and technology through playful practices, in addition to often offering the knowledge outside school space and time.

Thus, the development of the project proposes different forms of interaction between knowledge and its application, based on issues of cultural diversity, mediated by games, games, exhibitions and playful classes, always aiming to attract the attention of the spectators in a natural way, so that consider the reflections and criticisms incurred in the presentation pleasurable, resulting in greater interest and diffusion of the issues addressed. The use of unstructured materials, media and artistic artifacts that stimulate play and new perspectives are considered strategies for problematizing themes and for an educational approach.

Thus, the objective of this project is to promote education and dissemination of the topic of cultural diversity and the interaction of campuses students with elementary and high school students from public schools, giving importance to the formative and identity process of these adolescents, as well as, promote spaces for the construction of thought and the creation of didactic materials and innovative approaches, collaborating with the possibilities of equality and equity with regard to gender, class and race diversity.

Methodology and implementation of the action

The project operates with fellows and volunteers selected through IFSP notices. There are weekly training meetings guided by the Physical Education teacher (project coordinator),



with text studies, videos, discussions and other supporting cultural artifacts, such as films, drawings, music, as well as the creation and adaptation of recreational activities.

At the meetings, a theme is proposed for further study and workshops are structured that can be applied in schools and social projects in the city. The project started at the Institute in Salto in February 2019, we were able to visit 3 state schools, a social project and receive two municipal schools on our campus. The service was for adolescents aged 11 to 17 years.

Thus, scholarship students guided by the project's teacher and collaborating teachers, as well as volunteers, are informed and trained to apply games and games that involve the theme of cultural diversity.

In this context, based on Cultural Studies, for this investigation the methodological strategy chosen was the report of experience with the participant observation technique, as records and group discussions were made before and after the interventions carried out in the period of approximately one year. In addition to systematic readings on this topic.

Theoretical foundation

The Banca da Ciência project arose from science teaching actions and expands its boundaries to other diverse themes and forms of knowledge, operating in a science fiction logic to an education context discussing science in a broad perspective, offering connections in a social and possible imaginable futures (Piassi, 2013, 2015). The term 'newsstand' is understood as a sociocultural space for the dissemination of knowledge, seeing "newsstands more than points of sale" (Piassi, et.al., 2018), but as exhibitions that allow free and democratic access to different knowledge.

The processes of innovation and renewal of knowledge are linked to the culture that is produced and represented around this production.

For Marcellino (2004, 2005, 2007) the educational process is based on the transmission of knowledge, and, in addition, it is the result of the recognition of the culture of the people. The educational action cannot be separated from the culture of the people, who often do not know it, because it is distant from it.

In this way, teaching and educating based on cultural diversity represents paths for a new educational process to materialize and to effect different ideas, knowledge and experiences. In this sense, the role of the school linked to culture, leisure and play is to form a set of actions that institute and strengthen the school space as a place of significant learning.

When looking at culture as a construction of meanings and as a form of political capital, we note that it becomes a force, a power, as the means of production, dissemination and distribution of information, transform all sectors of the global economy, marking the beginning of a true revolution in the ways of producing meanings (Giroux, 2001).

Ortiz (2004) states that "power" has been attributed, an ability to interfere with culture, that is, "to conceive the sphere of culture as a place of power means to say that society's production and reproduction necessarily pass through its understanding" (p. 126). For the author, this "power" would occur in the sense that the universe of culture came to be perceived and understood as a "crossroads of different intentions". It occupies a place of convergence, with different movements and rhythms between the economy, politics, social, personal relations and technology.



Thus, we consider the relevance of associating cultural practices with the production of diverse knowledge, linked to cultural diversity.

Diversity cuts across the issues of capitalism, socialism, colonialism and globalization. According to Ortiz (1999) diversity is not reduced and is not limited to something concrete, it needs a context, because its historical sense of differences resignifies its symbolic meaning, and in this perspective, power flows, with no pure domination.

94 | For Foucault (2003, p. 231), “in society there are thousands and thousands of power relations and, therefore, power relations, small confrontations, micro struggles”. The author points to movements that are integrated in a power network, which makes it move, move and be a strategic place for the production of subjects’ discourses, truths, devices, disciplines, knowledge and new powers.

Foucault (2003, p. 231), states:

what would be of state power, the one that imposes, for example, military service, if there were not, around each individual, a whole bundle of power relations that do you bind your parents, your boss, your teacher, the one who knows, the one who put this or that idea in your head?

The maintenance of power concerns not only its weight as a force, but the fact that it permeates, produces things, induces pleasures, forms knowledge and generates discourses. It is a prosperous network that runs through the entire social body beyond repression. And yet, Foucault (2015) questions the importance of being aware of the extent to which power is exercised, by what paths, alternatives and instances, which involve control, surveillance, prohibitions, and coercion, because:

Where there is power, it is exercised, [...] it is always exercised in a certain direction, with some on one side and others on the other; it is not known for sure who has it; but you know who doesn’t have it (Foucault, 2015, p. 145).

And how to resist those who have this power? It is necessary to understand that where there is power there are also resistances, and that identifying outbreaks, denouncing, publicly announcing are ways of fighting, aiming at the sources of training and information, therefore, pointing out who does and did what, designating the target, are priority ways of inverting power, is a step towards other struggles that make power move (Foucault, 2015).

In this context, the relations of power and knowledge operate in the field of leisure (Alves, 2017) and also operate in non-formal education projects, such as Banca da Ciência, which has a cultural text with pedagogical, political mechanisms and devices that are produced and printed true speeches, ways of being, teaching and living.

The Banca da Ciência project has a curriculum, a cultural composition that promotes knowledge, with the dissemination of meanings, representations and meanings for a given community and or group of subjects.

With regard to the curriculum, according to Silva (1999a, 1999b, 2000, 2013), in the context of social relations, the curriculum started to be widely seen in its relationship with culture, beyond the school and administrative scope. Thus, it is called as a cultural practice that produces and represents meanings about the world, and the things of the world, a pri-



vileged space that can generate contestation, conflicts and cultural negotiations, scenario of representations, diverse cultural contexts and, still, a “ field in which different cultural groups build their identities ”.

Based on Foucault (2015), we understand the school and non-school curriculum as another control device, operated by educational powers; a disciplinary mechanism that historically organized the contents and knowledge to be transmitted and that currently exercises this power and produces diverse knowledge related to ways of being in different practices, in addition to the formality of regular education (Alves, 2017).

In this context, projects, programs, school shift activities, take on themselves the elements of leisure and play and develop educational processes based on cultural practices (Alves, 2017, 2019a and b; Alves, Baptista & Isayama, 2017).

Non-formal or informal education is one that concerns the socialization of people. It is a process that collaborates in the development of habits, attitudes, behaviors, ways of thinking, and of expressing oneself using different languages, based on values and beliefs of groups that the subjects participate or belong to. Non-formal education guides subjects to become citizens of the world, in the world (Gohn, 2006).

According to Foucault (2014) power and knowledge are involved in human relationships, are committed and build relationships, these relationships were built under different types of knowledge, which were formed by processes and struggles, causing a game of knowledge and power that produces circular movements, linear and fluid.

In the specific sphere of leisure, it is important to note that currently its concept (considered operationally), undergoes changes along the economic, social, political and cultural changes; their experiences come together and often mix with work and other spheres of life and there is a range of diversity of cultural experiences in their manifestations (Alves, 2017, 2019a, 2019b).

That said, the Banca Ciência project and the crossing of cultural diversity is often a leisure experience for students who receive workshops, as it disseminates playful scientific practices through experiences that also include leisure (games, games, music , dynamic) in the counter-shift of classes of elementary and high school students from municipal and state schools. It is a project that consists of a curriculum that moves power and knowledge, and is a practice of resistance.

Alves (2017, 2019b) identifies the curricula associated with leisure as devices that operate with resistance, translate organization and at the same disorganization, are flexible, equipped with micro powers and operated for maintenance or for the movement of powers and the production of knowledge. The leisure curriculum consists of knowledge, attitudes, values and sensitizations that translate and mark an identity, surrounded by a cultural character that produces knowledge and power, collaborating to provoke and intend the status quo in search of denaturalizing behaviors.

Therefore, the multiple leisure experiences, called “teaching machines”, by Giroux (2001), or “teaching machines”, by Paraiso (2010), the theater, the tv, the cinema, the radio, the internet, the games, games, dances, lyrics, magazines, newspapers, corporations (Disney), among others, are artifacts that make up the field of culture that, consequently, have a curriculum involved in leisure practices that produce modes to be (Alves, 2019b).



The games: “Twister of diversity” and the “Race of privileges” and power relations

96 | In the first half of 2019, we created an adaptation for the Twister® game, called “Twister of diversity”, a strategy to mediate knowledge around different contexts, with questions about women, ethnicities and races, sports and geography. The objective of the game was to show the culture of several countries present in the six continents (Africa, Asia, Europe, Oceania, America and Antarctica).

We use this game during interventions to intend concepts and prejudices established around gender, race and class, to question the cultural elements that are transmitted to students, as well as to inquire about some teachings that are elected as more legitimate than others. (for example, knowledge about the history of the European matrix is more emphasized in the learning process than about the history of the African matrix many times), and to disseminate knowledge about the diversity that different societies have.

The “Twister of diversity” is one of the activities developed by the project that attracts the most attention of students and that most instigates their participation, arouses the interest of fun and experience for leisure and play. In addition, the game promotes teamwork and the sharing of different views on the same theme, so that the exchange of information takes place between the students themselves.

In addition to this game, we produced a dynamic called “Race of privileges”, in order to discuss the theme of difference and access to educational processes, inclusion of minorities in the labor market and how historical processes that fostered diverse prejudices resulted and result even current days in discriminatory conditions, and create a scenario that differs from the living conditions of different individuals belonging to different ethnic-racial groups or different social classes.

Thus, this dynamic aims to promote reflections on the social inequalities in force at various times, linked to the historical context of the characters whose roles are assumed by the players. To this end, forms were prepared containing essential personal information and a brief summary of the life and history of each of the personalities selected for the activity, these forms are distributed to the participants and during the dynamics personalities are presented who are or were important to humanity due their contributions to the struggle against gender, social and racial inequality, thus corroborating the questions about class, race and sexuality.

In this sense, the Science Banking project that has a curriculum, considered as a non-formal educational process, approaches the field of leisure and cultural studies, as we assume that leisure is formed by experiences that revolve around cultural manifestations with playful expressions that allow time and space for the subjects to produce and create meanings.

From educational processes in the sphere of leisure, subjects create conditions to break established standards about women and their role, about black men and women, about the LGBTQIA+⁴ community and to look at differences, to recognize themselves as identity agents who mismanage the social order established in search of equal rights for all people.

⁴ Acronym attributed to gender diversity that represents a political and social movement of inclusion of people of different sexual orientation and identity.



Final considerations

We note that during the interventions of the project, students are provoked through games and games to think about the uneven and disharmonious distribution of powers between men and women, to reflect on the diversity of identities and access to the educational processes of different people. We perceive that, in this context, the participants try to take a certain care of themselves and others and others, reflect subjectivities in the sense of being aware of the threats to democracy and the notion of systems of oppression, they seek through dialogues and speeches to combat processes that were naturalized, taking a posture of non-normalization and indignation in face of the situations presented.

We observe that they respect the differences, they are against the dynamics of violence that women suffer and yet, they are against the historical reproduction of gender roles. We also perceive that, although there are differences between male and female students regarding the way inequalities are expressed in society, most of them do not have access to support, a base, to promote discussions related to the themes we disclose, demonstrating expressive importance of this project and the urgency to reach other spaces and people.

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PHYSICAL EXERCISE PRACTICE AND EMPOWERMENT OF ELDERLY WOMEN: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW¹

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José Clerton de Oliveira Martins⁴

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ABSTRACT

We know that aging is a process that encompasses several areas, such as biological, psychological, social and cultural. These scopes are part of what is meant by active and successful aging. We also know that, in our western cultures, the aging processes experienced by women are quite different from those of men, given the hegemonic discourses that historically permeate the construction of being a woman, which includes knowledge, behaviours and apprehensions about themselves. Thus, taking into account this gender aspect and that the practice of physical exercises is of fundamental importance for the empowerment of the subject in aging, contributing to the construction of active and successful aging, the present study, of a theoretical and exploratory nature, sought to identify the academic production about the empowerment of elderly women from the practice of physical exercises in contemporary times. For this purpose, a systematic literature review on the topic was fulfilled in Scielo, LILACS and PePsic databases, using the descriptors «aging and contemporaneity», «old age and contemporaneity», «aging and women», «aging and physical exercise », «old age and physical exercise », and «physical exercise and elderly ». Such searches presented as inclusion criteria articles published between the years 2007 and 2018, in Portuguese and English. As a result, 33 articles were selected, from which it could be noted that, although there is an increase in the elderly population in Brazil and in the world, aging is still a process permeated by stigmas. Female aging, peculiarly, shows itself linked to physical inactivity, loss of reproductive capacity and dissatisfaction with one's own body, in a painful reality for the aging woman. It was also observed that increasing age can contribute to a decrease in the individual's functional capacities. On the other hand, in elderly women who practice physical exercises, their functional capacity and perception of well-being remained high. In this context, the practice of physical exercises proved to be open to new possibilities, with an increase in social plasticity and as a means of compensating and optimizing opportunities, also contributing to personal growth and awakening new ways of coping with adversities - be they those arising from physical limitations or stigmas about aging. In addition to the benefits mentioned, the practice of physical exercises contributed to a better perception of oneself, with an increase in self-esteem and health - in the face of stigmas that associate old age with words such as decrepitude and illness. The regular practice of physical exercises, in addition to preventing diseases triggered by physical inactivity and providing valuable social resources, is configured as a form of well-being and empowerment for an elderly woman. In this scope, these old ages do not necessarily need a body considered beautiful and young, according to the hegemonic discourses. This leads us to the statement that, from the experience of such practices, these elderly women become agents of their own lives, building their being-women and their old age, and thus questioning the rigidity imposed by the hegemonic discourses on being an elderly woman.

KEYWORDS:

Aging; physical exercise; old woman.

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Introduction

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It is known that the number of elderly people in the world is increasing significantly (WHO, 2005). In Brazil, this reality is no different, because this country, according to estimates by the World Health Organization (2005), is heading towards, until 2025, to be the sixth country with the largest number of elderly people on the globe. This, in turn, has called for studies and discussions on the subject. After all, the growth of a population now became a social concern (Debert, 2004).

Simone de Beauvoir (1970/1990), in the work *A velhice*, already warned us about the rapid process of population aging. The author even denounced a silencing of this stage of life, which was associated with illness, dependence and decrepitude. With that, space was opened to incite discussions about aging and stimulate reflections about the insertion of the elderly in these societies (Beauvoir, 1990).

However, if stigmas about aging were produced on the one hand, on the other hand it was possible for the elderly to seek new practices in their life, emerging, in some contexts, as someone who seeks the development of new practices, new forms of leisure, new possibilities to experience leisure, new needs, etc.

In this context, WHO (2005) brings us the concept of active aging, which “[...] is the process of optimizing health, participation and safety opportunities, with the aim of improving the quality of life as the people get older” (p. 13 [translated by the authors]). Therefore, the practice of physical exercise is inserted as a factor to increase the autonomy, independence and quality of life of people throughout this process. After all, in addition to disease prevention, the practice of physical exercises can contribute to the subject’s new views and questions about himself and his relationship with his context.

It is interesting to note that, even in the midst of searches for ways of aging understood as more optimized and participatory, aging and old age still come up against old stereotypes, and many stigmas still remain (Montefusco, 2013). A factor that calls our attention is that aging occurs differently for men and women, because “old age marks unevenly, no social judgment, women and men” (Le Breton, 2011, p. 23 [translated by the authors]). This is because the fate of women in society is crossed by hegemonic discourses that focus on their practices and views on themselves, on what it is to be a woman, how her body should be, what she should think and how to behave. Among these speeches, the need to appear youthful and beautiful, according to the standards adopted in our cultures, is emphasized. Such discourses, when internalized, contribute to produce subjectification processes for these subjects, according to the imposition of a normativity of what the body-woman is, thus contributing to the production of suffering.

Taking into account this aspect of gender and that the practice of physical exercises is relevant to the empowerment of the subject in aging, we seek to identify the academic production on the empowerment of elderly women from the practice of physical exercises in contemporary times.

Methodology

The present work stands out as a qualitative approach, with a theoretical-exploratory character, in which a systematic literature review was carried out on the theme pointed out



in the Scielo, LILACS and PePsic databases. To that end, the searches were relied on the use of the descriptors «old age and contemporaneity», «aging and women», «aging and physical exercise», «old age and physical exercise» and «physical exercise and elderly women».

The period covered in such searches corresponded to the interval between the years 2007 and 2018. And regarding the search languages, Portuguese and English were chosen. When looking at the results of the research, at first we read the summaries of each text. Once these consolidated data were in accordance with the proposal and followed the defined criteria, they were selected and included for further analysis. Otherwise, we consider the exclusion of texts.

We also consulted productions linked to the OTIUM Laboratory (Laboratory of studies on Leisure, Work and Free Time), which is justified by the fact that this is a Brazilian academic research group that stands out internationally for its studies on aging.

Results

The searches carried out from the descriptors «old age and contemporaneity» and «aging and contemporaneity» resulted in 32 productions in all. After reading their abstracts, 13 texts were selected and 19 texts were excluded, as they did not have a relevant relationship with this research theme. Five productions replicated between the databases were also identified, and were excluded, leaving a total of 8 final texts with these descriptors.

From the use of the descriptors “aging and women” and “old age and women”, 160 productions were found in all, which, after reading their abstracts, 17 were selected and excluded 143, because they have no relevant relationship with this research topic. Six replicated productions were also identified, as they were excluded, resulting in 11 selected texts.

With the descriptors «aging and physical exercise», «old age and physical exercise» and «physical exercise and elderly», 1025 productions were found, which, following the adopted procedures, 28 texts were selected for analysis, and the others were excluded. There were also 14 replicated productions, and 14 left for analysis.

Finally, adding the productions from each search mentioned in the three databases, we obtained a total of 33 texts, which were selected for analysis. Below, we can observe, in detail, the information related to these processes.

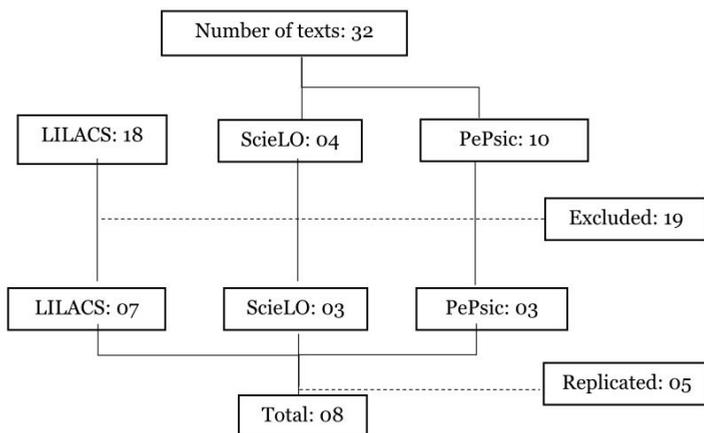


Figure 1. Selection process of texts with descriptors related to “aging and contemporaneity”



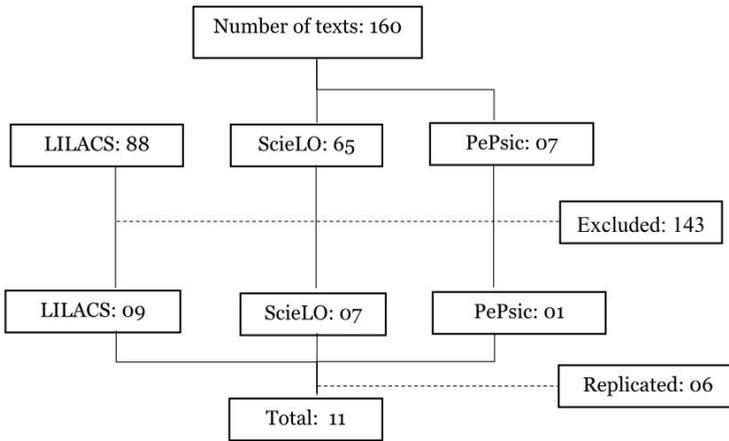


Figure 2. Selection process of texts with descriptors related to «aging and feminine».

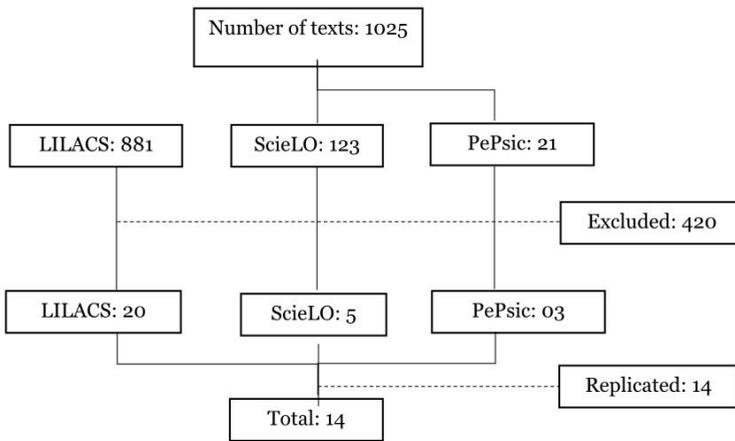


Figure 3. Selection process of texts with descriptors related to «aging and physical exercise», «old age and physical exercise» and «physical exercise and elderly»

Discussion

According to the results found, we developed our performance taking into account the relationships between the themes that are the axis of this study. Therefore, we discuss, respectively, about aging, specifically the female aging in contemporary times, and female aging and the practice of physical exercises.

Contemporary female aging

According to Moreira and Nogueira (2008), we live in the midst of the so-called post-modernity or contemporaneity, which, even when seen from different perspectives, has as a striking characteristic a media culture located in a scenario of strong appeals to consumption. In this scope, in contrast to the increase in the elderly population in Brazil and in the

world, it appears that there is a culture in which the discourses of valuing youth ideals are preached, from the physical body to performance and speed.

Amid the explicit, the elderly themselves often internalize many of these speeches, contributing to a feeling of vulnerability, low self-esteem, incapacity and conformity, which contributes to the increase in emotional malaise (Teixeira, Marinho, Cintra Junior & Martins, 2015). After all, we know that the body and its practices are cultural productions, and that the most explicit or even implicit signs of aging are outlined by the dominant discourses.

Particularly in relation to female aging, Le Breton (2011) states that the fate of women depends for a long time on their physical shape, as proclaimed by hegemonic discourses. In this sense, a loss of youthfulness associated with bodily changes (such as the appearance of wrinkles, a loss of muscle mass, fat gain, among others) is considered a landmark in the body, explicitly delineating the beginning aging.

In the case of women, another striking factor is the arrival of menopause, a factor that changes aspects of the female reality, promoting changes in sexual life, in psychological aspects and in physical appearance. The latter, in general, is associated with inactivity, according to standards promoted by hegemonic discourses, generating low self-esteem and dissatisfaction of many women with their own bodies (Trench & Rosa, 2003).

Physical exercise and female aging

About physical exercise, Caspersen, Powell and Christenson (1985) describe it as being all planned, structured and repetitive physical activity that aims to improve and maintain one or more components of physical fitness, defined as a set of attributes related to health or ability (Caspersen et al., 1985).

Gomes Júnior, Brandão, Almeida and Oliveira (2015) conducted a study that sought to analyse the understanding of a group of elderly people who practice physical exercises on the potential effects provided by the activities performed. Most of the individuals surveyed were encouraged to practice physical exercises on the recommendation of a health professional, friends or other participants. Other motivating factors reported were socialization and a sense of well-being. According to the research findings, the practice of physical exercises prevents diseases triggered by sedentary lifestyle, in addition to providing valuable social resources to the elderly. Therefore, active aging is a major factor for prolonging the quality of life of the elderly, since it provides the removal of functional dependence, lack of autonomy and cognitive and emotional impairments (Gomes Júnior et al., 2015).

Copatti, Kuczmainski, Ferreti and Sá (2017), in a literature review on body image and self-esteem in the elderly, pay attention to the importance of the elderly knowing their relationship with their own body, which ages and how it affects their self-esteem. Another important aspect highlighted in the study refers to the fact that the female population has lower levels of satisfaction with body image and self-esteem, when compared to the male population. As a conclusion of the research, there was a positive effect of the practice of activities and / or physical exercises on self-image and self-esteem in elderly men and women (Copatti et al., 2017).

When assessing the functional capacity and the perception of well-being of elderly women who practice physical exercises in gyms for the elderly, Oliveira et al. (2016) affirm



that old age as, what they call successful aging, involves, among other incentives, independence, autonomy and perception of well-being, and is closely related to the way the elderly woman feels in the relationship with family members, friends and work.

Coradini, Silva, Comparin, Loth and Kunz (2012) analysed satisfaction with body image among active elderly women, seeking to understand their view on the relationship between physical exercise and their body image. The data obtained that a large part of the elderly women in the study, who practice physical exercises, are not satisfied with their body image, since the majority would like to have leaner resources than those we consider to have. Most elderly women related their body image to the practice of physical exercises, recognizing the physical, psychological and social benefits acquired by the practice, which is reflected in what, for medical and psychological discourses, is a healthy and satisfactory aging in relation to the body: preventing and / or delaying the deterioration of physical and psychological processes (Coradini et al., 2012).

When studying changes in climacteric symptoms in women practicing aerobic exercise, Avelar et al. (2012) found that regular physical exercise provides proportional relief of symptoms, with remarkable results even in the short term. Physical inactivity can cause worsening of symptoms and the appearance of pathologies.

Benavente, Sanchez, Sanchez, Cerezuela, Noguera and Abellan (2018) carried out a research in order to identify difficulties and motivations for the practice of physical exercises in women over 65 years. The results showed that, among the difficulties are the perception of poor health and lack of free time. Both circumstances result from the obligation to assume the role of caring, being represented as a gender imposition. Some women expressed a perception of their health as bad, which generated a lack of self-confidence to perform physical exercise. It was also observed that the negative stereotypes associated with old age generate insecurity due to concern for their own needs. Among the motivations for the practice are related to the perception of strength, the need for socialization and the perception of freedom. Finally, these authors recognize that as ideological representations of gender they are an important factor that influences women with regard to the practice of physical exercises, their decision to exercise, as well as in their execution.

Considerations

This text presented as objective to identify an academic production about the empowerment of elderly women from the practice of physical exercises in contemporary times. To that end, a systematic literature review on the topic was carried out in the Scielo, LILACS and PePsic databases.

This path enabled us to identify 33 texts, in which we perceive that old age, in our societies, is still permeated by stigmas, and the elderly is perceived as someone who is unproductive, decrepit and close to death. This contributes to the manifestation of subject suffering, as expressed in the attempt to deny aging.

In this context, women, as elderly, are crossed by an intersection of hegemonic discourses: those who say about the body-woman and those who say about the old-body. This is what it can be perceived when we look at the apprehensions of elderly women about their physical body, since this body no longer meets the culturally adjusted standards for women,



when young. Not only does this result, but the search for a culturally idealized body for women is made explicit and unreachable, from which suffering derives, translated, for example, into internal questions and non-acceptance of herself, her own body and the her aging process at this stage of life, reflecting on feelings of low self-esteem, the image she presents about herself, as well as feelings of lack of autonomy, and inactiveness.

It is interesting that from the practice of physical exercise, elderly women point to a greater sense of benefits, which are reflected in sensations such as autonomy and well-being, as well as perceptions about their bodies than those predominant in the hegemonic discourses. However, there are cases of elderly women who, when carrying out physical activity practices, feel dissatisfied, as they perform them in the search for establishing a body as imposed and valued by culture, and propagated by the media.

In this way, we perceive physical exercise as a practice crossed by power, in which hegemony and resistance are evident. If, on the one hand, it contributes to new views of oneself on the part of the elderly, going against the culturally proclaimed and internalized discourses about women's old age; on the other hand, a way can be made for elderly women to try to achieve the ideal of a culturally imposed body, thus making a practice from which it is strengthened and showing the internalization of hegemonies, which result in suffering.

It is also important to emphasize that part of the studies found in this research points to the practice of physical exercise only taking into account its biological and cognitive consequences, without highlighting cultural and social issues and its importance for the aging processes. This research suggests the need for more in-depth studies on the issues that pervade female aging, including the fact that this knowledge itself performs interdisciplinarity.

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PERFORMED MASCULINITIES: SURVEY WITH THE SÃO PAULO BEAR COMMUNITY¹

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ABSTRACT

In this research we present the preliminary results of the quantitative analysis of a survey conducted with users of the app Growlr in São Paulo, Brazil (n = 171). Growlr is a Location Based Social Network aimed at people that self-identify as Bears. The APP allows users to establish contact with other individuals that are geographically close to them. Bears form a subgroup within the gay community that share characteristics that are opposed to what one would consider “expected” in gay men: “masculine” attitude, little to no vanity, big and/or fat body, hairy body, and facial hair. The objective of this study is to identify the level of acceptance of non-conforming identities presented by these subjects and simultaneously verify how the image of the “standard” Bear is crystallized in the self and hetero representations of this group. The results point to the fact that age plays a strong role in the level of acceptance of non-conforming identities among Bear subjects, since younger subjects respond less cis-heteronormatively when compared to older subjects. Age also makes the level of fixation of the standard Bear image differ; older subjects are more likely to limit what they mean by Bear identity.

KEYWORDS:

Cultural Studies; Bear Identity; Homosexuality; Queer Studies.

Introduction

In this paper we present the preliminary results of a survey carried out using the Growlr application with a group of its users in the city of São Paulo, Brazil. The objective is to assess how receptive the São Paulo Bear community was to non-conforming identities. We also wanted to see to what extent the image of the standard Bear was fixed in the minds of the local community.

This survey presents a quantitative aspect of the research currently under development by the first author under the Doctoral Program in Cultural Studies at the University of Aveiro, in Portugal, under the supervision of Professor Maria Manuel Baptista. The research carried out in this doctoral program seeks to understand the processes of subjectification of individuals that self-identify as Bears in the cities of Lisbon, in Portugal, and São Paulo, in Brazil. The research has a methodological design that combines quantitative and qualitative methodologies.

In this paper, we present an excerpt of the referred research. We will start by defining the origins of the Bear community and its most widespread identity, starting a discussion about the experience of being gay and fat, an experience that reflects on many of these subjects’ speeches. In the next section we discuss masculinities and how they arise in the context

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of the Bear and gay/bisexual community. We conclude the first part of this paper by presenting Location Based Social Networks and the Growlr application, aimed at the Bear audience.

In the methodology part of this paper, we present the steps we took to build our analysis tool, how we have chosen the questions for our survey, how we prepared the pre-test, and how we sent the survey to the subjects through Growlr.

108 | The presentation and analysis of the data we collect from the survey results is divided in three parts: first the characterization of the subjects, second a brief presentation of the data and finally an analysis that considers only the independent variable “age”.

In the final part of this work, we conclude that age plays a major role in the degree of acceptance of non-conforming identities among the subjects. In fact, among the subjects who answered our survey, cisheteronormativity is more prominent in the 45-54 age group.

Revisiting Pawsteps

The first publication describing what we know as the gay Bear community is from 1979, featured in the text “Who’s Who in the Zoo: A Glossary of Gay Animals”, written by George Mazzei in the American LGBT-interest magazine *The Advocate*, on July 26, 1979 (Wright, 2013). But the pawsteps towards the start of a reflection on this community can be seen even a few years earlier. In 1976, in the USA, a national network of chubbies, fat men, and chasers (men who are attracted to the other two) came up with the name Girth and Mirth, a reference to the size of their waists and the alleged “happiness” of the members (Hennen, 2005).

In the book *Fat Gay Men*, Whitesel (2014) reconstructs the history of the Girth and Mirth groups as a space for the empowerment of fat bodies: “Members congregate to create a cultural comfort zone, surrounded as they are by those with similar physical attributes (both in public and private settings)” (Whitesel, 2014, p. 15). The author also says that the members of these clubs were aware that they did not receive validation from the gay community itself, and because of this absence, they ended up building a community in their likeness as stigmatized people (Whitesel, 2014).

The Bears and Girth and Mirth groups start mixing sometime in the early 1990s, when the latter begin to integrate into events known as Bear Hugs. This is the beginning of a notable change in the way Bears are classified. Until then defining characteristics of Bears such as having facial or body hair, start have an equal, if not less, importance than body weight. (Suresha, 2013).

Simultaneously, the Bears also represent a link of historical continuity with the working-class gay male groups of New York, who identified themselves as “masculine” and adopted the nickname “wolves” (Wright, 2013). Even then, the very concepts of being masculine and homosexual were seen by many as mutually exclusive (Ridinger, 2013).

In addition to the pseudoprotection against “effemination” and the eroticization of the heavy body, another factor contributed to the emergence of the Bear phenomenon in the 1980s: the AIDS epidemic (Hennen, 2008; Suresha, 2013; Wright, 2013).

Suresha (2013) states that in the 1980s the “skinny” look went out of fashion among homosexuals. Any weight loss was a cause for fear and a reason to seek medical care. This kind of “slim-phobia” was eventually translated into the representations of gay men, that is to say “it was actually unhealthy to be of even average weight” (Suresha, 2013, p. 47).



Being gay/Being fat

When we talk about the social movements of minority groups, it is always possible to identify a search for breaking the dominant and hegemonic structures. We can see the questioning of established meanings, a challenge to fixed identities (Lima, 2004). And the Bears challenge these structures in two ways: first because they are men who have relationships with other men, second because they have a body outside of the socially acceptable standard.

The whole gay culture can be seen as a minority. It challenges and questions established notions of normality. For Lima (2004), the Bear experience is even more interesting, as it “problematizes again what was already problematized” by gay culture.

It is through their integration in this community that it becomes possible for what is considered abject bodies (such as fat, old, black or Asian) to change the view they have on themselves, making it possible to overcome difficulties and negative judgments, to allow them the possibility to arouse desire, to be desirable:

Fat people fall outside the parameters for ideal sex objects in two major ways: as desexualized beings or as degradable beings. Therefore, big men engaging in sex at all would qualify as transgressive to outsiders, and coming out as both fat and gay truly represents an act of courage. (Whitesel, 2014, p. 21)

The fat body is made not only by excess body weight, but also by the social weight associated with it. These are individuals who experience stigma and are looked down on a daily basis. This cannot be seen merely as unsolicited negative comments since it affects the psychological health and well-being of the individuals (Cardoso & Costa, 2013). In fact, there are reports of the difficulty that “overweight” people have in getting doctors and medical professionals to pay attention to something other than their fat. No wonder that classifying patients as “fat” versus “normal” is a source of constant shame (Whitesel, 2014).

Researchers Rebecca Puhl and Chelsea Heuer (2009) published a systematic review of studies produced between January 2000 and May 2008 that dealt with adult fat peoples in the United States of America. The data pointed to a 66% increase in discrimination against fat people in the first decade of the 2000s. According to the authors, it is possible to compare these rates to those of racial discrimination, as well as to state that women are the main victims. Corroborating what Whitesel (2014) says, the investigation also showed that there is strong evidence that even health professionals endorse stereotypes and negative attitudes against obese patients.

Culturally, fat people continue to be seen only as funny, but never as objects of desire. While a muscular body is seen as a sign of power and masculinity, fat people are considered ridiculous, asexual and lacking self-discipline and self-love (Brown, 2014).

(Homo)masculinities

Men who are part of the Bear community idealize themselves as “masculine” subjects, pursuing masculinity in a way that limits the possibilities of experience. In most Western societies, the “masculine” attitude, reserved for cisgender men, is associated with physical strength, courage, competitiveness and emotional inability. As for cisgender women, the “fe-



minine” characteristics of delicacy, concern for others, submission and passivity abound. (Huerta, 2019).

In his work with Bear communities in Mexico, researcher Alejandro Ávila Huerta (2019) found a type of masculinity that does not necessarily go through this narrow perception of the masculine. In the Mexican context, there is space for female experiences in the Bear community but even among those subjects it is recognized that the discourse against people who perform femininity is also present.

When analyzing the texts present in Grindr (a dating app focused in homo and bisexual men) profiles in Rio de Janeiro, researchers Renata Rezende and Diego Cotta (2015) perceived misogynistic and homophobic discourses in users:

The hyperbolic male, socially valued, prevails as a potent and powerful hegemonic actor, who runs over other forms that resist domination backed by heteronormativity and machismo. If in the past men were not seen as “real men” because they are gay, today they also display and venerate their “masc-ness” in apps, perpetuating hatred, intolerance and, often, violence, based on eroticized bodies and homophobic speeches (Rezende & Cotta, 2015, p. 363).

These speeches and attitudes are also present in the work of Charlie Sarson (2020), who identifies a kind of “homomascularity” among gay subjects. The author says the subjects end up emulating hegemonic masculinity processes: promoting the performance of stereotypically male gender attitudes, which are given a greater cultural value (Sarson, 2020).

LBSN and *Growlr*

Nowadays the internet crosses all environments and is not exactly a novelty. One of the main means of access to it is through smart phones, devices that are already part of the daily life of a large part of the world population.

Mobile devices have a great ability to process data. Through a GPS (Global Positioning System) receiver, smartphones have the ability to infer the location of the equipment, and, therefore, of its owner. Location Based Social Networks (LBSN) arise precisely from the appropriation of these two capabilities of mobile devices: the high processing power and the possibility to identify the geographic location of users (Farman, 2012). LBSN are social networks with a strong relationship with the user’s physical location. Contacts are made, primarily, with other individuals geographically close.

Growlr is an LBSN aimed at the Bear audience. It can be used by anyone with a smartphone, free of charge or through an optional monthly subscription that gives benefits within the application. The main objective stated by the tool is to incite ‘real’ dates between men who are geographically close.

Like all applications of this kind, over time the way people use Growlr have been expanded (Blackwell, Birnholtz, & Abbott, 2014). Now these applications are also used for non-sexual purposes, in part because of some users who find these ‘sex-seeking’ applications unpleasant but also because the user base has been greatly expanded, multiplying and diversifying the forms of interaction between the subjects.



Growlr is not alone in the category of locative social networking focused at men who have sex with other men. Grindr, Scruff and Hornet are other examples of applications of the same type, each with its specificities, but with basically the same functioning: an endless menu of people and possibilities (Gibbs & Rice, 2016).

Methodology

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The investigation presented here is of a quantitative nature and analyzes the data generated from an online survey, disseminated through the Growlr application, with subjects who were in the city of São Paulo, Brazil, during the study. Responses were received between December 3rd and 10th, 2019.

The first step taken was the making of the survey. The document consisted of 37 items divided as follows: (a) Informed Consent Form (ICF); (b) 10 items with independent variables and; (c) 26 statements in which the participants should indicate their degree of agreement with.

The informed consent form contained information about the investigation and those responsible for it; at the end of the document, a filter question: the subject is or is not interested in participating in the research. The following questions would only appear if the answer was positive.

The independent variables were intended to allow the characterization of the subjects. We asked gender; sexual orientation; city where they lived most of their life; city where they currently live; in what Bear category they self-identify with, and what apps and sites they use to find partners. In these questions the participants could choose their answer from a list of options. However, we also added an open 'other' field, that when chosen allowed them to write their answer. Using closed ranged options, we asked how many people from the app they met in person; their age, weight and height. The last three were open questions.

The statements that make up our dependent variables were presented in the last part of the survey. We used a 6 point (Table 1) Likert-type scale (Boone & Boone, 2012; Likert, 1932). We opted for an even number of options to try to minimize the risk of central tendency bias (Douven, 2018; Matell & Jacoby, 1971).

Table 1
Likert-type scale

Code	Level of Agreement
1	Strongly disagree
2	Disagree
3	Somewhat disagree
4	Somewhat agree
5	Agree
6	Strongly agree

Source: made by the authors

The statements seek to be clear, simple, unambiguous, avoiding containing more than one information (Carifio & Perla, 2007; Jamieson, 2004; Matell & Jacoby, 1971). For each set of statements, an objective and hypothesis of investigation were listed.



In this paper we will present the results of two sets of items (Table 2). The first intended to identify the users' perception of the acceptance of non-conforming identities (9, 10, 11, 12 and 13), the second to identify how the image of the so-called "standard" Bear is fixed within the community (14, 15 and 16).

Table 2
Analyzed statements

Code	Statement
9	The Bear community is open to diversity
10	Transgender men are part of the Bear community
11	I care more about the conversation than the appearance of potential partners
12	I avoid romantic relationships with effeminate men
13	I avoid sex with effeminate men
14	Only hairy and bearded men can be considered Bears
15	Fat men are Bears
16	Bears are men with a masculine attitude

Source: made by the authors

The survey was made on Google Forms and sent to 5 subjects that self-identify as members of the Bear community as a previous test. The tests showed improvements to be made in some items of the independent variables that did not have broad enough options. We also rewrote statements that seemed ambiguous during the tests.

Google Forms was set so that only the filter question was mandatory, the participants were also informed in the ICF that they could ignore any of the questions. We divided the questions into two blocks: independent variables and dependent variables. Within each of these groups, the platform randomly selected, with each page load, a different ordering for the items. Thus, we intended to minimize the conditioning of responses compared to others in the same set.

With the survey ready, we disseminated it using Growlr's Shout tool, used mainly for advertising. The system allows to define a radius of a region where all users of the app will receive the programmed message. We chose a central point in São Paulo and defined a radius of 16 km from it. The application estimated that 3,151 individuals were in that selected region. Thus, we consider this the total number of the population for the purpose of calculating the sample.

171 responses were received between December 3rd and 10th, 2019. Considering a population of 3,151 people, this survey has a margin of error of 7% and a confidence interval of 95%. The data were later exported to the SPSS statistical analysis software. In this paper we will present rounded up data.

Characterization of Individuals

Our sample consists of a total of 171 subjects. Most are self-declared cisgender men (96%). Other gender identities also appear, but they are residual. There are no women or transgender people. Regarding sexual orientation, the majority are homosexual (92%), there are also some bisexuals (6%) and pansexuals (1%). One subject (<1%) declared himself hete-



rosexual. Regarding age, we distributed the subjects in 5 ranges: 18-24 years old (18%); 25-34 years old (44%); 35-44 years old (21%); 45-54 years old (12%); 55 years or older old (5%). Most of the subjects state that São Paulo is the city where they lived most of the time (51%); second is Rio de Janeiro (8%). The majority lived in São Paulo (64%) at the time of the survey.

As for the self-identified Bear category: “Bear” is the most prevalent (46%), followed by “Chubby” (34%). The most used APP for romantic and/or sexual encounters is Growlr (86%), followed by Scruff (65%). It should be noted that in both questions it was possible to choose more than one option.

In order to help the research, some participants shared the link to the survey through other social networks and texting apps. This explains why 86% of people nominate Growlr as their app of choice, even when the survey was released precisely through it.

The survey also asked subjects to indicate height and weight. The information was used to get the respondents’ Body Mass Index (BMI) (only two participants did not answer the question). BMI is calculated by dividing weight in kilograms by height squared (kg/m²). The result is then distributed on a table divided into six ranges: underweight (<18.5); Indicated BMI (18.5 - 24.9); overweight (25 - 29.9); grade 1 obesity (30 - 34.9); grade 2 obesity (35 - 39.9); and grade 3 obesity (≥40).

Several studies have already pointed out that BMI is not a direct indication of healthy nor should it be used to measure the degree of obesity. The index ignores characteristics such as gender, age and ethnicity, which contributes to a bias in the interpretation of results (Carroll et al., 2008). We chose to calculate the participants’ BMI, and use them as an independent variable, so that it was possible to build analysis groups. Thus, the index will not be used to classify subjects as more or less healthy.

The Results

Our first set of questions was designed to identify users’ perceptions of accepting non-conforming identities. Our working hypothesis was that Bear subjects are not receptive to non-conforming identities, especially those associated with what is commonly understood as feminine. The subjects in our sample seem to agree with this hypothesis, when asked about their degree of agreement with the statement “the Bear community is open to diversity” (9) the median of responses was 3 (partially disagree). 71% of responses were spread through options that disagree at some level with the statement we have made.

But it is important to note that in the following questions (10, 11, 12 and 13), the ones that want to identify to what extent the individuals who answer are themselves open to diversity, the answers point to a greater degree of acceptance. Among these, we highlight the median for the question “transgender men are part of the Bear community” (10), which was 5 (agree). 46% of the individuals chose the option “strongly agree” for that statement.

For the question “I care more about the conversation than the appearance of possible partners” (11) the median recorded was 4 (somewhat agree); in the question “I avoid romantic relationships with effeminate men” (12) the median recorded was 3 (somewhat disagree), with 62% on the side that disagrees at some level with the statement; and in “I avoid sex with effeminate men” (13) the median was also 3 (somewhat disagree), with 58% disagreeing with the statement.



Another block of questions (14, 15 and 16) aimed to identify how the image of the “standard” Bear is fixed within the community: our hypothesis was that there is a fixed ideal image of what the Bear would be, in general associated with a male attitude and body hair. The data point in the opposite direction, even though it is not possible to reach strong conclusions. For example, in view of the statement “only hairy and bearded men can be considered Bears” (14) the median was 3 (somewhat disagree) and the items that indicate some level of disagreement reach 53% of the answers. When considering the margin of error, it is not possible to indicate a strong trend in either direction.

The item “Bears are men with a masculine attitude” (16) registered a median of 3 (somewhat disagree), with 61% of people choosing options that disagree at some level. Among this group, the answer with the greatest degree of certainty was for the statement “fat men are Bears” (15), which presented a median of 5 (agree), with 72% choosing an option that agrees with the statement, 35% strongly agreeing.

Trying to understand this apparent discrepancy between the information brought by the literature and the results of the field, we performed the Kruskal-Wallis non-parametric test (George & Mallery, 2020). This test is used to verify whether the distribution between three or more populations is the same or different.

When comparing the age groups, the test showed that there is a statistically significant difference in the distribution of responses between the age groups and items 10, 12, 13, 14 and 16. In the remaining items there is no difference in the distributions. To understand where the differences were, we performed a post-hoc test of the Pairwise type, which compares the ranges two by two. Significance values for several tests were adjusted using the Bonferroni correction (MacDonald & Gardner, 2000).

When analyzing statement 10, the Kruskal-Wallis test showed that there is an effect of the age group on the level of agreement with the item [$X^2(4) = 22.445$; $p = 0.000$]. In general, the older a person is, the less he agrees with the statement that puts transgender people as members of the Bear community. The biggest statistically significant differences are between the age groups 35-44 and 45-54 years ($p = 0.048$); 25-34 and 45-54 years ($p = 0.010$); 18-24 and 45-54 ($p = 0.000$).

Statement 12 also suffers the effect of the age group [$X^2(4) = 15.036$; $p = 0.005$]. The older the individual, the more he claims to avoid romantic relationships with effeminate men. The only statistically significant difference, after the Pairwise test, appears between the 18-24 and 45-54 age groups ($p = 0.038$).

The trend is repeated in statement 13 [$X^2(4) = 24.517$; $p = 0.000$]. In the subjects of this investigation, the older the subject, the more they avoid sexual relations with men perceived as effeminate. The Pairwise test showed that the biggest statistically significant differences are between the age groups 18-24 and 45-54 years ($p = 0.001$) and; 25-34 and 45-54 ($p = 0.001$).

Analyzing specifically the image of what a Bear would be, the Kruskal-Wallis test shows that age has an influence on how individuals answer question 14 [$X^2(4) = 10.335$; $p = 0.035$]. In this specific case, the difference is between the ranges 18-24 and 45-54 ($p = 0.031$). While the former think that body hair is not mandatory to be considered a Bear, the latter group thinks it is mandatory.

The trend is repeated in item 16 [$X^2(4) = 16.108$; $p = 0.003$]. Again the biggest statistically significant difference ($p = 0.009$) was among the youngest, 18-24 years old, who consider



that a “masculine” attitude is not a prerequisite for a person to be identified as Bear, while individuals between 45-54 years old believe that masculinity is an indispensable characteristic for someone to be recognized as a Bear.

Concluding Remarks

What seemed, at first, to be a contradiction between the data we have and the literature in the area, revealed the need to look at these data taking into consideration the age group the subjects are in. The Kruskal-Wallis test showed that age plays an important role in the level of rejection of non-conforming identities. Younger people have responded in a less cishetero-normative way. Individuals aged from 45 to 54 years old appear to be the most normative.

The test also showed that age plays a relevant role in the image of the so-called standard Bear fixed in the community. The youngest are less conditioned to a hegemonic construction about how a Bear should be and act. It is important to note, however, that the range of individuals aged 55 or more are, in general, less normative than those of the previous group.

This paper is not intended to be a photograph of the entire Bear community of São Paulo. The image captured here is limited to users of the Growlr app, who were in a specific region of the city of São Paulo, Brazil, on the day the survey was made public. The age distribution is not normal and is concentrated in the 25-34 age group.

For future quantitative researches, it would be important to reach users of other similar platforms. This investigation pointed out, for example, that the Scruff app has great adherence from this audience. Networks that are not designated for dating, such as Instagram, Twitter and Facebook, also deserve attention. As LBSN are associated with the search for quick sex, they end up alienating other individuals, who are also part of the Bear community, and who were not reached by this study.

The data presented here still constitute the exploratory phase of our doctoral research. The next step is to complete the analysis of the remaining items and move on to qualitative research. Our proposal is to conduct in-depth interviews with different subjects, who are part of the Bear community. What we discovered in this first phase will subsidize the choice of individuals and the writing of the interview guide.

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UNFOLDING OF BODIES IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE COUNTERSEXUAL SOCIETY¹

Bruno Novadvorski²

Chris, The Red³

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ABSTRACT

This article presents the artistic works proposed and developed by the Brazilian visual artists Bruno Novadvorski — with the lambe-collage⁴ series ZONA DE PRAZER (Pleasure Zone)⁵, and Chris, The Red with the photo-performance installation CONTRANOME: CHRIS (Countername: Chris). To add up to their research on human sexuality, and its unfolding in society, both feature the concepts of the contemporary philosopher Paul B. Preciado, author of the *Countersexual Manifesto*, a study on contemporary issues that reflect on sexuality, identities, bodies and resignification of social dichotomies, proposing the construction of a countersexual society that has become the guiding thread of the two following series of artistic work, which entitle this article.

KEYWORDS:

Preciado; countersexuality; body; *lambe-lambe*; photo-performance installation.

Introduction

Countersexuality is not the creation of a new nature but rather the end of nature as an order that legitimizes the subjection of some bodies to others. (...) Countersexuality does not speak of a world to come. It refers neither to a pure past nor to a better future; to the contrary, it reads the fingerprints of what is already the body's end, as defined by modern Western discourse. (Preciado, 2018, p. 20 e 22-23)

Before discussing the development of the body into the construction of the countersexual society, let us briefly situate our understanding of that society. As mentioned in the two excerpts above, extracted from the book *Countersexual Manifesto* by the Spanish philosopher Paul B. Preciado, the countersexuality is manifested in a society that is not configured as an upcoming one, but rather as a reframed one.

Preciado starts from the reflections of Michel Foucault, Judith Butler, Jacques Derrida, Gilles Deleuze, among others, to think not about sexuality, but countersexuality. The term as quo-

¹ Article presented to 7th International Congress on Cultural Studies Gender Performativities in Democracy Under Threat.

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⁴ In Brazil, a specific technique of street photography was called *lambe-lambe*, which means *lick-a-lot*, due to the fact that the photographer had to lick each film to find the gelatinous side of the emulsion, and lick again the photos to check the quality of the fixation. *Lambe-collage* is a technique of street poster collage as a form of art intervention or advertising.

⁵ *Zona* means both *mess* or *zone*, and it is often used to refer to a *red-light district*, an area in the town or city where pleasure is not subjected to society rules.



ted by the author, comes from Foucault⁶. In the sequence, the philosopher addresses the performative nature of gender identity raised by Butler⁷ and thus, throughout the book, he points out indications for the construction of a countersexual society with which we are seeking to dialogue in our own artistic works. But after all, how does this construction take place?

After reading Preciado and other authors, especially those quoted here, we have come to an understanding that our Western society still resides in a social structure based on male norms, as well as in a sexuality centered on heterosexuality. Promoting cases of misogyny, racism, LGBTIQA+phobia, our society represses those who somehow avoid or deny its structure. As a result, this system casts many sorts of fears into and upon our bodies, causing trauma and violence, such as the high number of aggressions against women in Brazil⁸, for instance. It is against this system that countersexuality is conceived, which is the reason for Preciado's quotes in the introduction of this article. We feel the urge to rebuild our society through the devices it has offered us with. Thus, to this end we use our artistic work.

CONTRANOME: CHRIS (2020) is a photo-performance installation by the Brazilian artist Chris, The Red, in which he relates to one of the features of the countersexual society, which is the idea of Living Bodies (Preciado, 2018, p. 20), a concept that will be presented in the next topic of this article. Based on this idea, Chris seeks to reframe not only his body, but also his identity, causing a rupture with everything that is thrown upon his body from his birth certificate — an important document for the State, by which we are registered as persons so forth identified and belonging to that society. In other words, he cuts off ties with the masculinity that is imposed on him by a masculinized name, thus expressing new perspectives on his body, patching his members in alternative ways.

Bruno Novadvorski, in his work *ZONA DE PRAZER* (2020), addresses another relevant issue for the countersexual re-signification: the *cu*⁹. The artist uses *lambe-lambe* photography to perform this work, which will be presented in the second item of this article. The *cu*, according to Preciado, is important for stablishing countersexuality because, "Through the anus, the traditional sex/gender representation system shits itself." (Preciado, 2018, p. 30) since the heteronormative system is based precisely on heterosexuality, which occurs through a binary system (male/female, man/woman, hetero/homo), propagating the idea that the biological identification of our bodies occurs through the penis and the vagina, it places reproduction as an important product of these binary ties. In this context, the *cu* is an exception because, mainly, it is not susceptible to the reproduction of the species. In addition, the *cu* is important for a countersexual society because it challenges the understanding we have about sexual and reproductive organs, as well as it reminds us of the digestive system — after all, the anus and the mouth are interconnected. Following this same line of thought, pleasure is also moved from the so-called "sexual organs" to the anus, and thus, Novadvorski takes on, through the image of his *cu*, a powerful pleasure zone.

⁶ See Preciado, Paul B. (Beatriz). (2018). *Countersexual Manifesto : subverting gender identities*. New York : Columbia University Press. p. 21.

⁷ See Butler, Judith P. (2016). *Gender Trouble – Feminism and Subversion of Identity*. Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira.

⁸ See the website *Violência contra as Mulheres em Dados*. Platform that gathers data, research, sources and syntheses about the problem in Brazil with a focus on domestic, sexual and online violence, femicide and the intersection with racism and LGBTTophobia. Available at <https://dossies.agenciapatriciagalvao.org.br/violencia-em-dados/>.

⁹ *Cu* means *anus*. The artist Bruno decided to not translate the word and use it in Portuguese because a political choice of him concerning theories and studies he has made about the anus, for example, "A Teoria do Cu", article written by Larissa Pelúcio.



Contranome: Chris (Countername: Chris)

The time has come for the Post-Pornography Era to be ruled under the Countersexual Culture. It is time to destroy once and for all each and every tie that has been imposed on us. Enough of these oppressive systems that determine our identities, sexualities, genders and bodies.

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Countersexual society exists upon the removal of the designations masculine and feminine, corresponding to what are supposed to be biological categories (male/woman, man/female), from identification cards as well as from all administrative and legal state forms. (Preciado, 2018, p. 32)

So, first, I renounce my birth condition and then recognize myself with a Living Body:

Within the framework of the countersexual contract, bodies recognize themselves and others not as men or women but as living bodies. (Preciado, 2018, p. 20)

As of today, I am the *Living Body Chris, The Red*. My name will no longer make me part of a binary gender world. I will no longer be located in the heterocentric environment and, «to avoid the reappropriation of [my body] as feminine or masculine» (Preciado, 2018, p. 32), I announce that I am adopting the *Countername Chris, The Red*, «a new name without any indication of gender, regardless of the language employed.» (Preciado, 2018, p. 32). I present my countersexual contract. I deny my birth certificate proclaimed by the State. There is no more cock or pussy to define myself in my record, to limit myself in a zone of power.

The Photo-Performing installation COUNTERNAME: CHRIS reflects the moment when I recognized myself no longer as Christian Gustavo de Sousa, born at 8:10 pm on August 8, 1977 and registered under the gender: male, but as the *Living Body Chris, The Red*: high-tech¹⁰ countersexual pedagogical device of knowledge and pleasure — signing my commitment to the construction of a countersexual society.

The artistic work is divided into three moments: *Revogo*, *Assino* and *Crio*.

Revogo (Revoking)

I invalidate the conditions of the heterocentered system that were placed by the State by means of a birth certificate, in which I am defined as male along with all social, economic and privileged conditions. With 3 original copies of my birth certificate in hand, this first moment consists of a process to revoke these definitions. I erase the first with red adhesive tape. The second, with a scissors. Then, I rip the third one.

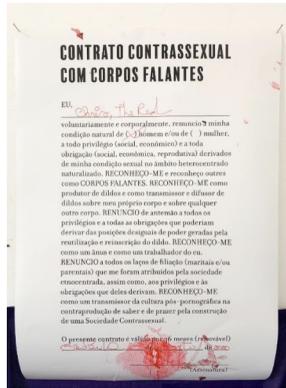
¹⁰ For *high-tech*, Preciado understands that “Countersexual society promotes the destitution of traditional educational institutions and the development of a high- tech countersexual pedagogy in order to maximize the erotic relationship between living bodies as well as diversifying and improving countersexual practices. Countersexual society favors the development of knowledge– pleasure; it favors the development of technologies aimed at a radical transformation of bodies and an interruption of human history as the naturalization of oppression.” (Preciado, 2018, p. 38)





Chris, The Red. Contranome: Chris [Revogo], 2020. Prints, 21 x 29,7 cm. São Paulo/SP.
Photos: Chris, The Red.

Assino (Signing)



Chris, The Red. Contranome: Chris [Assino], 2020. Print, 59,4 x 84,1 cm. São Paulo/SP.
Photo: Chris, The Red.

Revoked my condition given by the State by the time I was born, I assume my commitment through a consensual contract signed by me with blood and my anus. In this second moment, I recognize myself as a Living Body by means of the Countersexual Contract printed in an A1-sized sheet, in which I make it official the revocation made in the previous moment and make myself available as a technological device to generate, from my body, creative artistic processes that reflect the principles of a countersexual society.

Crio (Creating)

At this last moment, my body now becomes a high-tech tool for countersexual inversion practices within the Dildotectonic System presented by Preciado:

Dildotectonics is the counterscience that studies the appearance, formation, and utilization of the dildo. It localizes the deformations that the dildo inflicts upon the sex/gender system. Making dildotectonics a branch of first importance within countersexuality assumes consideration of the body as a surface and territory, a site of the dildo’s displacement and emplacement. (Preciado, 2018, p. 41)





Chris, The Red. Contranome: Chris [Crio], 2020. Prints, 40 x 60 cm. São Paulo/SP.
Photos: Chris, The Red.

Thus, *Crio* is composed of three images formed from parts of the work *Diltopias* (2020)¹¹ also of my own, created from a homonymous video performance. The pieces are parts of my body and here, they take on other forms. As a countersexual creative device, my living body takes different forms: “dildo-leg, dildo-arm, dildo-chest, [dildo-head]” (Preciado, 2018, p. 43) among others and with these dildo-pieces I am creating body representations outside of the dualities on which the heteronormative system was centered.

Zona de Prazer (Pleasure Zone)

Using *lambe-lambe* photography, I incorporate into the urban space the sign of a new zone, a specific perimeter, corresponding to pleasure; and, to illustrate this intersection, I use the photographic reproduction of my *cu*, edited in black and white, naming it ZONA DE PRAZER.



Bruno Novadvorski. Zona de Prazer, 2020. Lambe-lambe. Porto Alegre, RS.

¹¹ *Diltopias* (2020), a work created for the virtual exhibition *SEM*, organized by visual artist Bruno Novadvorski in partnership with the Research Group OM-LAB, from the Arts Institute of the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, under the coordination of professor Dr. Tete Barachini. Available at <https://www.instagram.com/omlab.poa>.





Bruno Novadvorski. Zona de Prazer, 2020. Lambe-lambe, 42 x 29,7 cm. Porto Alegre/RS. Photo: Bruno Novadvorski (on the left). Lambe-lambe, 126 x 118,8 cm. São Paulo/SP. Photo: Chris, The Red (on the right).

This work consists of a photo of my *cu* and the sentence that entitles it. For this one, after researching the fonts used on signposts, I opted for a similar typography and it is divided between the top and the bottom in order to draw attention to the image of a centralized, highlighted *cu*. The first *lambe-collage* was made in the city of Porto Alegre (RS), in an A3-sized sheet which was fixed at three distinct places in the city center: on Rua Antonio Carlos Guimarães, on Viaduto João Pessoa and on Rua Otávio Rocha. These streets were chosen due to being regular paths that I would take on a daily basis, as they used to connect my residence, university and internship location then. After this first collage, I could notice that the size of the *lambe-collage* needed to be changed. The visual impact I wanted was not yet sufficiently resolved in the A3-sized sheet, so I increased it to a sheet of 126 x 118.8 cm. This enlarged version of the *lambe-collage* was pasted in the city of São Paulo on Avenida Nazaré in front of the Independence Park, where the Independence Monument is located, on the banks of the Ipiranga Stream, the historic site where the Prince Regent Dom Pedro I proclaimed Independence of Brazil on September 7th, 1822.

Besides the geographic location where this work was performed; being inserted in the urban space, as highlighted in the introduction, ZONA DE PRAZER has its inspiration in reading about the ideas proposed by Preciado found in his manifest, mainly making use of the anus as a device for building a countersexual society.

According to Preciado, the anus has three peculiarities¹². Of these, I highlight the third: “the anus constitutes a technological workspace; it is the countersexual postprocessing facility.”¹³. Thus, I understand that the author touches one of the main wounds of the heteronormative masculinity. I think of the *cu* as this device that Paul mentions quoting Michel Foucault’s sexuality device¹⁴, expanding his discussions on countersexual devices. The countersexual re-signification proposed regarding the *cu* is the opposition of the heterosexual-normative system. The identification of who we are is carried out by our organs known as

¹² See See Preciado, Paul B. (Beatriz). (2018). *Countersexual Manifesto : subverting gender identities*. New York : Columbia University Press. p. 30.

¹³ *Ibidem*.

¹⁴ See Foucault, Michel. (2019a). Capítulo Sobre a história da sexualidade. In: *Microfísica do Poder*. Rio de Janeiro/São Paulo: Paz e Terra.

“sexual”, which countersexuality questions as reproductive organs, since the anus can be recognized as a “sexual zone”. The dichotomous oppositions are placed in “checkmate”, since in this way, we can understand that our society still carries the burden of sexuality aimed at the reproduction of the species, privileging the masculine. To expose my *cu* is also to provoke this analysis; it is to think of other spaces to make it meaningful, assuming it as a countersexual device.

Perceiving his discursive potential as a device, Preciado brings Ron Athey as an example of making countersexual art with the performance *Solar Anus* (1999), where the artist tattoos a sun around his anus, taking inspiration from Georges Bataille in the book *The Solar Anus*¹⁵ and, next, self-penetrates dildos that are attached to high-heeled shoes, a performative act that is characterized as countersexual by, first, explicitly showing the anus and secondly, publicly evidencing the practice of anal penetration, pathologized in Western societies as presented by Foucault in his first volume of *History of Sexuality*¹⁶.

Abel Azcona (1988) is another artist who, in his work *Make America Great Again* (2017), shows the *cu* as a countersexual and artistic device. In his performance, the Spaniard tattooed the phrase that entitles the work around his anal hole. An explicit criticism of the candidate for president of the United States of America at the time who used it as a slogan for his political campaign¹⁷. Azcona is known for his provocative work on institutions such as the State and the Church, especially the Catholic. This work is part of a performance series in which he criticizes the American society. When tattooing the electoral slogan, the artist draws attention to issues that confront the macho society that uses politics to oppress people who do not allow themselves to fit their standards.

In Brazil, I bring the work *Buraco* by the artist Luluca L, composed of stickers from her *cu* that were pasted around in the space of the Municipal Gallery of Balneário Camboriú (SC) and censored one day after the opening of the *Ruínas* exhibition, according to the article *Exposição que tem foto de ânus é censurada em galeria de Santa Catarina* (Exhibition that has a photo of an anus is censored in a gallery in Santa Catarina) published in the *Folha de São Paulo* newspaper¹⁸. In this one, the artist claims that her work is “a symbiosis with the gallery’s ceiling”¹⁹. In the face of this censorship, I remark how contradictory our Brazilian society is, after all, it cannot deal with the representation of the anus, but uses terms like “*Vai tomar no cu*” (Get it into your ass!) to offend others. And in this sense, Luluca, in her work *Buraco*, activates the countersexual device proposed by Preciado.

ZONA DE PRAZER is a work that brings, among other questions, its insertion in the urban space, significant for its central discursive proposal that is part of the social dogma in relation to bodies and their sexualities. By introducing it on the streets of cities, I enable dialogue with other urban “pleasure zones”, that is, every city has one or a few regions that are cha-

¹⁵ See Bataille, Georges. (1985). *O Ânus Solar*. Lisboa: Hiena Editora.

¹⁶ See Foucault, Michel. (2019b). *História da Sexualidade 1: a vontade de saber*. Rio de Janeiro/São Paulo: Paz e Terra.

¹⁷ Mundo ao Minuto (2017). *Artista performativo tatuou slogan de campanha de Trump à volta do ânus*. Available at <https://www.noticiasaoiminuto.com/mundo/759409/artista-performativo-tatuou-slogan-de-campanha-de-trump-a-volta-do-anus>.

¹⁸ Lourenço, Marina. (2020). *Exposição que tem fotos de ânus é censurada em galeria de Santa Catarina*. Available at <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/ilustrada/2020/03/exposicao-que-tem-fotos-de-anus-e-censurada-em-galeria-de-santa-catarina.shtml>.

¹⁹ *Idem*.



racterized by the concentration of sexual professional activity. In Porto Alegre, for example, there is Avenida Farrapos located downtown, where I deal with the theme in the summary “FARRAPOS” — *My naked body unfolding space and sex*, published in the annals of the 28th National Meeting of the National Association of Researchers in Visual Arts²⁰. ZONA DE PRAZER is part of my Course Completion Essay (TCC in Portuguese), the final stage of my graduation in Visual Arts under the guidance of Prof. Dr. Teresinha Barachini.

124 | In short, the incoherent sexual heteronormativities stigmatizes the cu while rejecting its sexual and political potential. Gender duality is based on this denial. The centralization of sexuality in reproductive organs is one of the ruptures that the countersexuality intends to achieve. For this reason, the recurrence of the appearance of the cu as an artistic object at different times, shows how important this debate is, expanding its countersexual transgression, moving social axes that structure not only the arts but other social fields. ZONA DE PRAZER unravels the body to sew a new social urbanization, contrary to the standardization of sexuality.

Conclusion

Before pointing out the final questions in this article, we highlight that when we wrote the summary for the selection process of the 7th International Congress on Cultural Studies, we thought about its performance in person. However, the world was faced with a pandemic that in Brazil alone has already left a death toll of more than 120 thousand people²¹. In this way, we adapt our proposal to the new molds. Thus, the photo-performance installation CONTRANOME: CHRIS and the *lambe-collage* ZONA DE PRAZER, which would take place during the event in Aveiro, were already held in São Paulo and recorded for exhibition during the online event.²²

Having made this clarification, the works presented here bring with them the peculiarities of the artistic work of each one of us, our perspective on the construction of the Countersexual Society, in which we use our own bodies as an artistic device, or rather, we re-signify ourselves in search of breaking with the oppressions imposed by the system in which we were inserted since our birth. Whether by revoking a name that places us or not in a zone of power, or by breaking the existing binary in our pleasure. In addition, regarding intrinsic issues in the reading of the cu in the society, we encourage the expansion of this debate so that, as a social group, we will have a better relationship with our orifices and who knows, understanding its breadth beyond the act of defecating.

Therefore, we find the contemporary art as an excellent path to move towards a countersexual society. Deconstructing our bodies is not something we can achieve by negation, on the contrary, it occurs in its valorization and thus, questioning the actions of the State is also challenging their actions upon our bodies, such as issuing documentation that, instead of freeing us, often exercises a greater prison than the penitentiaries. As well as, activating

²⁰ Novadvorski, Bruno. (2019). “Farrapos” *Meu Corpo Nu Desdobrando O Espaço e o Sexo*. Anais ANPAP. Available at http://anpap.org.br/anais/2019/PDF/RESUMO/28encontro____NOVADVORSKI_Bruno_2820-2830.pdf.

²¹ According to G1. (2020). Brasil registra média de 889 mortes pelo coronavírus por dia na última semana; 3 estados têm alta de óbitos. Available at <https://g1.globo.com/bemestar/coronavirus/noticia/2020/08/29/casos-e-mortes-por-coronavirus-no-brasil-em-29-de-agosto-segundo-consorcio-de-veiculos-de-imprensa.ghtml>.

²² Videos can be accessed at <http://bit.ly/DesdobramentosDosCorpos>.



devices that corroborate for this confrontation with the normativities that seek to impose themselves in society. And our artistic work is this countersexual device to oppose the apparatus of the State, which is often omitted in relation to our lives, as is the posture of our current President of the Republic (as a political gesture, we will address this person in this way, not to give him importance; on the contrary, we want to highlight the position he holds), who hides himself from the responsibilities in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic and to Brazilian lives, making our nation have more of this painful blood stain. We use this article to record this inhumane act. We dedicate this text to all the deaths caused by the pandemic in our society! And to all who die in the country that kills most LGBTQIA+ people in the world! LIVES MATTER!

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THE “VAMPIRE-IMAGE”: AN ANALYSIS TOOL OF MANIPULATION AND VIOLENCE IN SPAIN¹

Daniel Berjano Rodríguez²

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ABSTRACT

The “vampire-image” refers to technological simulations rooted in cinematographic modernity which aims at erasing and manipulating people’s experiences with systemic violence. First, I draw on Aníbal Quijano (2000), Teresa de Lauretis (1987) and María Lugones (2008) in order to introduce certain intersections between the movements against “gender ideology”, western racism, and the sex and gender binaries in relation to the Spanish context. Secondly, I depart from Gilles Deleuze’s film theory (1989) in order to analyze two films from the Spanish Transition as vampire-images (*Elisa, vida mía* by Carlos Saura and *Arrebato* by Iván Zulueta), providing some insights on Spanish national identity. The vampire-image stands as an analysis tool which points out the pervasive power of Eurocentrism and the sexual binary in the Spanish state. It could also contribute to the exploration of intersectional violences and new strategies of control aiming at the repression of social movements against capitalist destruction.

KEYWORDS:

Spanish Transition; gender ideology; sexual binary; Spanish national identity; vampire-image.

Introduction

Vampires have long been conjured in films with familiar tropes of coffins, garlic, mirrors and bloodsuckers (at least in a dimension where fiction and reality still are divergent realms);³ but how many of those films are actually themselves vampires — if not in form, then in image? In this article, the “vampire-image” aims at elucidating the intersections of the crusade against “gender ideology”, the representations of sexual violence and national identity in two films from the Spanish Transition, and the racist migratory policies in the European Union.

For more than five hundred years,⁴ the Spanish Catholic nation-state has prospered by the continual oppression of Romani community living in the Peninsula, the slave trade of Black African people, the Holy Inquisition, the patriarchal authority over denizens, the violent

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³ The vampire also stands as a usual metaphor addressing capitalist elites in critical theory since Karl Marx’s writings in the 19th century (Neocleus, 2003). For instance, Rita Segato (2003) has studied the “rape order” by interviewing multiple male prisoners accused of raping women in Brazil in the 1990s. She argues how an inter-subjective configuration of patriarchal male identity is at the heart of sexual violence against women, defining rape as “este abuso estructuralmente previsto, esta usurpación del ser, acto vampírico perpetrado *para ser hombre*, rehacerse como hombre en detrimento del otro, a expensas de la mujer, en un horizonte de pares [This structurally arranged abuse, usurpation of being, vampiric act performed *in order to be man*, to rebuild as man to the detriment of the other, to the detriment of woman, in a horizon of peers].” (pp. 22-23).

⁴ The Spanish Kingdom was established in the 15th century. Catholic kingdoms had previously spent centuries obsessed with the invasion of the whole Iberian Peninsula until the Emirate of Granada was conquered in 1492, which led to the subjugation of non-Christian communities. Millions of Muslims and Jews were forced then into conversion or exile, if not massacred. As Aníbal Quijano stresses, “This was the first experience of ethnic cleansing exercising the coloniality of power in the modern period and was followed by the imposition of the ‘certificate of purity of blood’” (2000, p. 558).

repression of social movements against the Kingdom's authority, and myriad racist, exploitative and genocidal colonization projects around the globe. According to Aníbal Quijano (2000), the imperial colonization of Ibero-America by Spanish and Portuguese kingdoms since the 15th century initiated the establishment of western modernity as a "world-system" of racial domination and capitalism.⁵ Following Quijano, the "coloniality of power" was further developed by Anglo-Saxon states from the 17th century within the production of Eurocentrism as "a hegemonic perspective of knowledge" based on dualism and evolutionism (p. 573). As Quijano argues, "[t]he foundational myth of the Eurocentric version of modernity is the idea of the state of nature as the point of departure for the civilized course of history whose culmination is European or Western civilization." (p. 551). After dictator Franco's death in 1975, the Transition furthered the modernization of Spanish society (Etcétera, 1995/2014).⁶ Such a juncture guaranteed the immunity of Spanish economic and political elites, while also providing a model for nascent neoliberal democracies, especially in Latin American and post-Soviet countries (Sánchez González, 2006). It has also become the current legal framework for social inequalities, especially since Spain's membership in the European Union in 1986 (Etcétera, 2014).

Drawing on Aníbal Quijano (2000), Teresa de Lauretis (1987), María Lugones (2008), Karen Barad (2014) and Gilles Deleuze (1989), this article introduces a tool of analysis of manipulation and systemic violence in Spain. By the analyses of two films from the Spanish Transition which I read as vampire-images (*Elisa, vida mía* and *Arrebato*), I also aim at reporting on María Lugones' significant inquiry into "how sexual dimorphism serves Eurocentered global capitalist domination/exploitation" (2008, p. 7), since the persuasive effects of the sexual binary could be effectively dividing feminist and LGBTQI+ movements as well as manipulating the public's stance towards crucial human rights.

Development

Teresa de Lauretis (1987) explains how gender ideology implies the socio-historical regime of western patriarchy which constructs human beings through "technologies of gender" (such as cinema, philosophy and institutions) as they develop hierarchical and binary gender identities based on reproductive functions aimed to sustain patriarchal authority. Since the 1990s, Christian actors have appropriated and re-signified the concept of gender ideology to target left-wing feminist and LGBTQI+ movements, as Mónica Cornejo-Valle and J. Ignacio Pichardo explain in the Spanish context (2017, p. 50). Cornejo Valle and J. Pichardo also study how this appropriation was mainly arranged during the Convention for Women's Rights in Beijing (1995), where "El Vaticano – estado gobernado exclusivamente por varones – se presentó a sí mismo como el auténtico defensor de la mujer, haciendo una representación de las mu-

⁵ Quijano points out that "'[p]urity of blood' is probably the closest antecedent to the idea of 'race' produced by Spaniards in America." (p. 576, n. 28).

⁶ As the Etcétera collective argues, "Esta Transición en mayúsculas se presenta, más allá de unos cambios administrativos, como el paso del obscurantismo a la modernidad, del miedo a la libertad. Esta es la leyenda. La necesaria adecuación de las formas políticas a las exigencias de la acumulación del capital en España [es] la tarea central de la Transición [This transition in capital letters is introduced, beyond administrative changes, as the transition from obscurantism to modernity, from fear to freedom. This is the legend. The main task of the transition was to adequate political structures to the requirements of the accumulation of capital in Spain]." (2014, p. 3).



jeros activistas como radicalizadas y poco representativas”⁷ (Cornejo Valle and J. Pichardo, p. 50). By this crusade *against* gender ideology, conservative groups are problematizing gender as a legitimate category of analysis in order to reinforce their patriarchal ideology and invalidate basic human rights, such as abortion and free non-heterosexual practices.

De Lauretis (1987) also argues that the conception of gender rooted on biological sexual difference contributes to gender ideology as it leads to universalist or essentialist understandings of “man” and “woman”. Such a conceptual standpoint enacted by “white or mainstream feminism” (De Lauretis, p. 10) conceals other women’s gendering oppressions (Lugones, 2008; De Lauretis, 1987; Talpade Mohanty, 1984⁸). Feminist intersectional knowledge developed by Black and racialized women and gender non-conforming beings intrinsically relates gender to other systems of domination, such as colonialism, racism, capitalism and sexual normativity (Lugones, 2008). Drawing on Paula Gunn Allen and Oyèrónké Oyèwùmi, María Lugones has complicated and expanded Quijano’s conception of the coloniality of power (2000), explaining how the “modern/colonial gender system”⁹ is deeply engrained in Eurocentrism:

The naturalizing of sexual differences is another product of the modern use of science that Quijano points out in the case of “race”. It is important to see that not all different traditions correct and normalize inter-sexed people. So, as with other assumption characteristics it is important to ask how sexual dimorphism served and serves Eurocentered global capitalist domination/exploitation. (Lugones, 2008, p. 7)

The vampire-image is a tool of analysis which centers on the simulation of facts and standpoints that often relocate accountability to the victim’s side. Vampire-images also work as technologies of gender and the sexual binary insofar as decolonial and intersectional perspectives are also involved. For my master’s thesis (Berjano, 2018)¹⁰, I organized audiovisual laboratory screenings of two films from the Spanish Transition and filmed the dialogues among the participants after the screening. This experimental method aimed at participating in collective knowledge as well as testing the intersectionality of the vampire-image as an analysis tool. I also situated my knowledge through self-analytic reflections of lived experiences to ethically apply feminist, queer and decolonial frameworks to my analyses.¹¹ This

⁷ [The Vatican – a state solely governed by men – presented itself as the authentic advocate for woman, enacting a representation of activist women as radicalized and unpopular.]

⁸ As Chandra Talpade Mohanty explains, “An analysis of ‘sexual difference’ in the form of a cross-culturally singular, monolithic notion of patriarchy or male dominance leads to the construction of a similarly reductive and homogeneous notion of what I call the Third World Difference’ — that stable, ahistorical something that apparently oppresses most if not all the women in these countries. And it is in the production of this ‘Third World Difference’ that Western feminisms appropriate and ‘colonize’ the fundamental complexities and conflicts which characterize the lives of women of different classes, religions, cultures, races and castes in these countries.” (1984, p. 335).

⁹ In Lugones’ words, “Considering critically both biological dimorphism and the position that gender socially constructs biological sex is pivotal to understand the scope, depth, and characteristics of the colonial/modern gender system. The sense is that the reduction of gender to the private, to control over sex and its resources and products is a matter of ideology, of the cognitive production of modernity that understood race as gendered and gender as raced in particularly differential ways for Europeans/‘whites’ and colonized/‘non-white’ peoples.” (Lugones, 2008, p. 12)

¹⁰ I developed the vampire-image in *Vampires in Transition*, my dissertation for the Erasmus Mundus Master’s Degree of Women’s and Gender Studies at Universiteit Utrecht and Universidad de Granada, supervised by Dr. Adelina Sánchez Espinosa and co-supervised by Gianmaria Colpani in 2018.

¹¹ I reflect on my own Eurocentric cognitive bias as a Spanish citizen in relation to the traumas of my socialization as a feminized boy (faggot), my male-oriented sexual desire, and a political stance of my non-binary trans identity.



methodology draws on Donna Haraway's epistemological reflections (1991) and Karen Barad's insights on non-essentialist identity and diffractive practices (2014)¹². Drawing on Gloria Anzaldúa, Trinh Minh-ha and Haraway, Barad maintains a new materialist understanding of material and discursive practices based on the invariable and ambiguous connection among every element of a phenomenon and is thus constituted as such by this very same relation, disrupting the "colonizing logic" of the binary boundaries in which western civilization is partially grounded (2014, p. 169).

As case studies, I analyzed two films which are commonly viewed as masterpieces of the Spanish democratic regime by Spanish film studies: *Elisa, vida mía* by Carlos Saura (1977) and *Arrebato* by Iván Zulueta (1980). Both films are drawn from aspects of cinematographic modernity developed after the Second World War, such as the distortion of linear temporality, the simultaneity of contradictory narratives, the strategic addition of disjointed soundtracks, the presence of intertextual devices, and the confusion of the character's points of view (Deleuze, 1989). While these techniques bear testament to the film-makers' craftsmanship, they also reproduce Eurocentric tropes, such as women subordinated to male characters and represented as icons of male standpoints, as well as men obsessed with achieving transcendence in order to justify their attachment to (Spanish) authority.

For Gilles Deleuze (1989), the "time-image" (*l'image-temps*) is a product of modern cinema's innovations which calls into question the classic narrative of motion pictures and its "dark organization of clichés" (p. 219), while raising our cognitive/affective powers through peculiar spiritual effects (p. 279). Nevertheless, Deleuze studies female characters in cinema simply as icons, explicitly excluding feminist perspectives from his points (p. 196-97). His own film theory performs what de Lauretis names the "violence of rhetoric" of western androcentric philosophy (1987).¹³ In the following film analyses, I will show how vampire-images rely on the innovative technics of cinematographic modernity in order both to mask sexual violence and convey Eurocentric notions of national identity.

Elisa, vida mía (Saura, 1977) portrays several weeks of the meeting between a father-writer-teacher about to die (Luis, performed by Fernando Rey) and his daughter, who is in the process of breaking up with her abusive partner (Elisa played by Geraldine Chaplin, who

¹² As Karen Barad explains, "Imagining light to behave as a fluid which upon encountering an obstacle breaks up and moves outwards in different directions, Grimaldi dubbed this phenomenon diffraction, citing the Latin verb *diffringere* – *dis* (apart) and *frangere* (break)". Barad argues that a diffractive viewpoint "queers binaries and calls out for a rethinking of the notions of identity and difference." (2014, p. 171).

¹³ Deleuze (1989) sustains an Ancient patriarchal citation of the story of Saint Eulalia as told by Christian and patriarchal perspectives (about a rebel girl against the Roman Empire who lived in Hispania's capital Emerita Augusta in the 4th century) by quoting an obviously sexist verse from the *Canticle de Sainte Eulalia*: "She collects her energy, she will rather suffer torture than lose her virginity" (p. 324, n. 34). Such a narration has been uninterruptedly reproduced by Catholic male scholarship for almost two millennia, reinforcing an Ancient Roman misogynistic understanding of womanhood ("the martyred saint who preferred death to losing her virginity", as de Lauretis puts it [1987, p. 191]) by which (extramarital) rape is not one of the most explicit and recurrent cases of torturous sexual violence against female bodies, but rather implies loss of chastity and honor. Deleuze attributes this sentence to Mikhail Bahktin's *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, authored by Valentin Nikolaevich Voloshinov in its English version (Seminar Press, 1973; p. 150, n. 7) in order to give an example of free indirect speech without any kind of reference to the subject of the speech, camouflaging the history of sexual violence against women. The findings regarding the analysis of *Elisa, vida mía* and Deleuze's vampiric theoretical procedures will be published soon in Berjano, Daniel (forthcoming). 'Vampire images' within *Elisa, vida mía*. In Sánchez Espinosa, Adelina (Ed.). *Coalitions and Solidarities in Gender Research: Researching with GEMMA*. Oxford: Peter Lang Publishing Group.



was Saura’s romantic and creative partner). In this film, multiple cultural references to the Spanish “Golden Age”¹⁴ from the 17th century work as intertextual devices adding dialogic layers to the plot, such as the title, *Elisa, My Life*, borrowed from a poem by Garcilaso de la Vega; the father reading quotes from Baltasar Gracián’s *El Criticón*, and his direction of Calderón de la Barca’s play *El gran teatro del mundo* with his female students and his daughter at a Catholic school run by nuns. They are upholding the father’s supposedly anti-authoritarian beliefs and nostalgic attitude before his proximity to death, which eclipses the fact that he is usurping his daughter’s self-consciousness by simulating her direct speech within six monologues — the core of *Elisa, vida mía*’s vampire-image.

Notwithstanding,¹⁵ most of the Spanish film scholars who have studied *Elisa, vida mía* regard Luis and Elisa’s relationship as a complementary process by which Luis will pass his knowledge to his daughter, who will presumably build up her personality over the ruins of her ancestor, paraphrasing Román Gubern (1979, p. 43). In fact, the unfounded reiteration of scenes of violence against “the Widow” is as old as Hispanic ruins (Cantarella, 1997). In the film, Luis recalls the story of a woman (the Widow) who had been killed in the path to Luis’ house and with whom Elisa empathizes, having been murdered by her ex-partner, as if she were the Widow in her imagination. Another scene shows Elisa struggling to break up with her partner in his car, parked in the middle of the unpeopled Castilian milieu near Luis’ residence. After the breakup, viewers face a sequence of the father kissing and touching Elisa, which has been commonly taken by film scholars as a recollection of the father, since memories of multiple temporalities merge throughout the film. The fact that Chaplin also performs Elisa’s mother (as in other films of Saura) cannot deny a reading of the scene as portraying Luis’ incestuous fantasy (Haislop, 2013, p. 120). When Elisa’s cries are heard, these disrupt the sequence and makes Luis’ fantasy fade away. Luis finds Elisa and pressures her to calm down until the point he almost hits her, which terrifies Elisa. After Luis meets his end, while Elisa is leaving her father’s house, a voice-over reproduces the first of his monologues — this time, it is Elisa presumably empowering herself with her father’s roadmap.

Arrebato (Zulueta, 1980) is a story about heroin and cinema addiction leading to a peculiar experience of rapture. The film is built up on a homoerotic and misogynistic bond between two men, Pedro and José. It is a cult underground film repeatedly analyzed by Spanish film scholars, who focus on the film’s innovations and reflections on cinema, leaving aside critical analyses of gender and Spanish national identity. Pedro, an effeminate and childish young man, is portrayed as a hyper-masculine genius (as an adult version of Peter Pan) after consuming heroin. When he meets José, a horror film director who is dating Pedro’s upper-class cousin (Marta), both will follow a route towards hypnotic transcendence by the use of

¹⁴ As Quijano explains, “In its beginnings, Spain was much richer and more powerful than its peers. However, after the expulsion of the Muslims and Jews, Spain stopped being productive and prosperous and became a conveyor belt for moving the resources of America to the emergent centers of financial and commercial capital. At the same time, after the violent and successful attack against the autonomy of the rural communities and cities and villages, it remained trapped in a feudal-like seigniorial structure of power under the authority of a repressive and corrupt monarchy and church. The Spanish monarchy chose, moreover, a bellicose politics in search of an expansion of its royal power in Europe, instead of hegemony over the world market and commercial and finance capital, as England and France would later do.” (2000, p. 559).

¹⁵ Saura himself defined *Elisa, vida mía*’s father and daughter relationship as a “proceso de vampirización [process of vampirization]”, addressing their seemingly “imposibilidad de coexistencia [impossibility of coexistence]” due to their sexual differences (1993, p. 59).



technologies, most compellingly through vampirical disappearances into the screen. Furthermore, inter-textual devices reference cinema's classic tableau of vampires (like Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau's *Nosferatu* from 1922), supporting Pedro's increasing loss of empathy and obsession with filming himself, which eventually leads to his camera (now a camera-vampire)¹⁶ abducting Marta, Pedro and José. Several argumentative layers portray Pedro telling José his own multi-media story seeking his vampiric dreams (which are heard through a tape recording with magical features) as well as José's own recollections meeting Pedro and following instructions to find his own peculiar rapture at the end of the film, seemingly death by a (possibly Fascist?) assassination squad. In fact, the complex soundtrack involving the noise of machinery supports and problematizes the film as a vampire-image, which is mostly enhanced by the portrayal of gender roles and national identity within the routes towards transcendence. The film portrays Pedro's spectacular rituals of hipnosis with practices of remembering that are based on technologies of gender and racism. Ana (José's second girlfriend performed by Argentinean actress Cecilia Roth) is enraptured by a Betty Boop doll (which is Pedro's ploy so as to have sex with José). In another scene, she will perform a Betty Boop striptease in order to connect with José (he is impotent), which highlights the continual sexual objectification of female characters (Ciller Tenreiro, 2011). Ana is particularly featured as exotic when contrasted to Marta's plain and even comic naivety (dubbed by Pedro Almodóvar in a scene in which she is caring for Pedro and eventually is abducted by the camera for following his commands).

During the film screenings in my research, some topics were highlighted by the participants in relation to my reading of the films as vampire-images. *Arrebato* foresees the negativity of western homonormativity¹⁷, which masks the Transition's concealment of the new state's continuity with the Francoist heritage of misogyny, racism, colonialism and homo-transphobia. For instance, the picture cards with which Pedro (en)raptures José at first are from the film *King Salomon's Mines* (Bennett and Marton, 1950), based on H. Rider Haggard's racist 19th century novel.¹⁸ This is by portraying the coalescence among new (bio)technologies, male homoerotics, and sexual violence as vehicles towards transcendence, which is simultaneously mocked both by the devastating effects of heroin addiction and the horrifying procedures of the camera-vampire. On the other hand, Saura's film posits topics which were taboo in Spanish culture during Francoism, such as women's agentic processes against men's control and violence. Nonetheless, the fact that Elisa's emancipation is linked to her father's deceitful wisdom is problematic, since this knowledge is built on patriarchal supremacy and Spanish post-imperialist nostalgia¹⁹. Perhaps this could be Saura's last film built on a metaphor, such as

¹⁶ In the case of *Arrebato*'s camera-vampire, it works as a vanishing point, since it makes the characters disappear on screen. In *Vampires in Transition* (Berjano, 2018), I develop the "camera-vampire" as another semiotic component of vampire-images, which both represent and reproduce vampire-images. The "phoenix" highlights the power of transformational experiences by reading vampire-images (Berjano, forthcoming).

¹⁷ As a product of gay-friendly legislation, homonormativity refers to the privileges of recognition granted to certain groups above others within the LGBTQI+ community.

¹⁸ They show a white heterosexual couple about to kiss each other and another close-up picture of a Black man's face in ecstasy. These cards nostalgically belong to shared memories of Pedro and José's experiences of ecstasy within their male socializations in childhood, which provide insights on the strong influence of Anglo-American culture in Francoist society.

¹⁹ Renato Rosaldo stresses about US colonialist cinema that "a mood of nostalgia makes racial domination appear innocent and pure." (1989, p. 78).



woman’s empowerment bonded to the promise of gender equality in the Transition and its inherited ruins. The films are labelled as vampire-images not only for their representations of gender subordination and sexual violence, but also because such examples of Spanish cinematographic modernity participate in the Eurocentric mythification of the Transition (Etcétera, 2014), which strongly conditions Spanish film studies (Esquirol and Fecé, 2005).

Vampire-images are thus technological devices of control developed within cinematographic modernity. They can be easily traced in the rhetoric of authoritarian movements and western migration policies.²⁰ In Spain, institutional racism holds onto colonialist arrangements of nationhood and is protected by the Spanish Immigration Law of 2004 and other racist migration policies from the European Union. For the last ten years, the EU has been offering asylum to women and LGBTQI+ individuals who are in need of protection. The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (2017) echoes the extreme vulnerability of these asylum seekers, who experience the racist violence of sex and gender binary stereotypes (among many others) within EU asylum procedures and whose petitions are for the most part rejected. The Agency stresses that “[m]ost incidents of violence or harassment motivated by bias against [LGBTQI+] asylum seekers [by EU nations and institutions] are not reported and are not recorded as such”, apart from the fact that “[v]irtually no information could be collected on intersex asylum seekers.” (p. 2). In most Spanish autonomous communities, EU countries and the majority of the world’s nations, infants with variations of sex characteristics are submitted to involuntary surgical interventions such as genital mutilations in order to fit within the sexual binary (Suess Schwend, 2018), which is a consequence of the western scientific constructions of human differences (Cabral, 2009; Lugones, 2008).

Vampire-images also undergird the eruption of the far-right party Vox (“voice” in Latin) in the Spanish parliament. Along with the Popular Party, Vox is the most prominent group strengthening Spanish colonialist national identity and encouraging racist measures against impoverished migrants from the global South, which are widely supported by most of the Spanish political parties. Since 2017, HazteOir (“make yourself heard”), which is a Spanish ultra-Catholic association linked to Vox and other authoritarian groups worldwide such as CitizenGo, has been spreading propaganda against feminist and LGBTQI contributions to society using both new media and private shuttles in cities around the Spanish state (as well as Bogotá, Mexico City and New York City), often followed by police escorts. HazteOir and Vox seek to abolish “gender laws”, including the Gender Violence Law of 2004 geared towards protecting women who suffer abuse or threats of murder, decrying the fraudulent opinion that these legislations discriminate against men. The pervasiveness of HazteOir’s slogans queerly evokes Elisa’s father’s usurpation of her conscience in Saura’s film, promulgating mottos such as “Boys have a penis. Girls have vaginas. Don’t let them fool you. If you are born as a man, you are a man. If you are born as a woman, you will continue being so”²¹.

²⁰ For instance, the “hotspot” is a trope historically addressing war zones and urban areas considered clusters of crime, hence apt to police intervention. Mark Neocleus and Maria Kastrinou (2016) explain how this concept has been re-signified since 2016 by the European Union migration policies as part of an “international police war against the migrant” (p. 7). Hotspots now denotes areas of high flows of refugees, hence equating vulnerable migrants with criminals threatening European citizens’ lifestyle.

²¹ Originally: “Los niños tienen pene. Las niñas tienen vulva. Que no te engañen. Si naces hombre, eres hombre. Si naces mujer, seguirás siéndolo.” See “HazteOir lleva su autobús transfobo hasta Nueva York” (2017).



In many democratic nations, the “TERF wars²²” are resurrecting themselves²³ and spreading conspiracy theories in order to oppose legislation aimed at protecting trans and intersex people due to the unprovable opinion that these legislations will discriminate against women. Echoing Pedro’s consuming antisocial quest by means of virtual technologies for the absolute truth about transcendence in *Arrebato*, these theories are applying similar Eurocentric tools of rhetoric and propaganda to authoritarian movements, aimed at scapegoating women, intersex and trans people who do not comply with their agenda (especially on the Internet). For instance, the latest HazteOir shuttle, seen in Madrid in 2019, compares feminism with Nazism by showing a portrait of Hitler with lipstick, eyeliner, and a feminist symbol on his hat under the hashtag “#feminazis”. Recently, Patricia Merino (2020) stated in *Tribuna Feminista* that LGBTQI+ and trans-feminist activist groups are the highest threat to human dignity and freedom produced within western culture since Nazi supremacist doctrines. These post-modern arrangements of hate speech posit the potency of vampire-images as audio-visual and rhetorical procedures via technologies and new Media, aiming at the massive propagation of Eurocentric dogmas — such as sexual and gender binaries and the concealment of western racism.

Conclusions

In this article, the vampire-image has been introduced as a proposal for new materialist and intersectional analyses of contemporary violent media which are masking and erasing traces of abuse and exploitation. The vampire-image also embodies the collapse of political affinities and the concealment of social inequalities. The configuration of the vampire-image has been originally designed by applying Aníbal Quijano’s coloniality of power (2000), María Lugones’ decolonial perspectives on the intersectionality of gender (2008), Karen Barad’s epistemological reflections (2014), and Teresa de Lauretis’ insights on gender and representation (1987) into Gilles Deleuze’s concept of the time-image (1989). Invariably linked to Spanish national identity and the Spanish Transition, as the analyses of *Elisa, vida mía* and *Arrebato* attempt to prove, the tool of the vampire-image also aims at making intelligible the consistency among Eurocentric representations of gender and Spanish national identity, rhetorical strategies against gender ideology and the EU’s discriminatory asylum procedures. The battle against gender ideology has been plotted by far-right sectors against feminist and LGBTQI+ movements indistinctively in order to spread biased propaganda and oppose legislation aimed at protecting people against systemic violence. The pervasive wrangle over the univocal meaning of gender involves certain feminist and LGBTQI+ actors and could be working as a smokescreen with many objectives, such as lobbying political parties and governments, dividing social movements fighting oppression, and especially displacing attention from colonialism, racism and the intersectional nature of patriarchy and sex/gender binaries. In the meantime, racist measures and policies against impoverished migrants are increasingly being inflicted as well as gaining more popularity in Spain and other capitalist societies. The ability of certain signs to camouflage, simulate or rebrand traces of exploitation and to inspire mimesis in other realms is alarming. The relation of vampire-images with the war against

²² (Trans-Exclusionary Radical Feminism).

²³ See Sandy Stone’s “The Empire Strikes Back: A Posttranssexual Manifesto” about its origins (1987/2006).



gender and queer “ideologies” through fake news and online platforms, as well as their connection to the industrial-extractive war against nature and Native communities, institutional plots against Islamic communities, and the authoritarian resignification of anarchists as “terrorists”, ought to be studied in greater depth.

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“GENDER IDEOLOGY” IN JOURNALISTIC COVERAGE IN BRAZIL AND PORTUGAL: COMPARING DISCURSIVE POLITICAL DISPUTES¹²³

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ABSTRACT

The growing controversy and polarization on issues of gender and sexual diversity have been recurring news in the world. Research highlights that the term “gender ideology” has moved from the sociological framework to a political instrument against feminist and LGBT narratives. Investigations found an argumentative pattern and the profile of the people who use this expression, however, comparing the use of the term between two or more countries is rare. In this study, we comparatively analyze the use of the term “gender ideology” in the coverage of the newspapers with the greatest digital circulation in Brazil (Folha de S.Paulo) and Portugal (Expresso) between 2000 and 2019. Quantitative and qualitative Content Analysis points that even though there are quantitative and temporal differences in the presence and visibility of the term in both countries, its use has defined and standardized characteristics. The themes ‘elections’ and ‘educational policies’ impact political reactions involving the use of the term in both countries. When it is associated with education, religious and conservative groups see it as a threat to the *status quo*, creating more effective negative reactions.

KEYWORDS:

Gender ideology; Democracy; Journalism; Portugal; Brazil.

Introduction

The growing controversy and consequent polarization on issues of gender and sexual diversity (GSD) in society have been recurring news in the media in several countries. The academic field is not unaware when it comes to these themes. In particular, many studies highlight the change in the framework of the term “gender ideology”, which changes from a sociological concept to a political instrument against the narratives of feminist and LGBT movements (Garraio & Toldy, 2020; Souza & Eduardo, 2020; Junqueira, 2016). The sociological concept was developed and used to understand and criticize the asymmetry of power between genders, considering not only the reflection of economic and social structures but the “crucial recognition of the need to understand the complex ‘link between society and a persistent psychic structure’”(Scott, 1995, p. 79, free translation). Since the 1990s, it has been

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used as a rhetorical strategy that aims to delegitimize feminist and gender theories, refute the concept of gender and heteronormativity, and oppose gender and LGBT policies, reaffirming heteropatriarchal conceptions of sex, gender, and sexuality (Corredor, 2019). In other words, the expression “gender ideology” is appropriated and reframed, weakening its resistance in favor of a reactionary anti-gender narrative.

138 | It is important to note that research on GSD discourses, specifically on the use of the term “gender ideology”, shows that they have a pattern in their arguments and in the profile of the people who use them (Garraio & Toldy, 2020; Corredor, 2019). However, as shown in the dossier “Hacer y deshacer la ideología de género” (Vigoya & Rondón, 2017), most analyze the occurrence of this discourse only in one country, and few, such as Kuhar (2015), make the comparison between countries. In order to fill this gap, we compared the use of the term in Brazil and Portugal, countries selected for having proximity for the fact that they are Portuguese-speaking, have gone through long dictatorship periods, and have recently re-established democracy (Drummond, Souza & Almeida, 2019).

The object of analysis of this article is the GSD issues synthesized in the term “gender ideology” present in the coverage of newspapers with the greatest digital circulation in both countries between the years 2000 and 2019. The questions that guide the investigation are: How do the newspapers *Expresso* and *Folha de S.Paulo* (FSP) participate in the discursive dispute over “gender ideology”? How do newspapers frame this discourse? What does the journalistic coverage tell you about the stage of gender disputes in both countries? The general objective is to make a longitudinal and comparative observation, through a quantitative and qualitative Content Analysis. For this, we seek the online productions of the Brazilian newspaper FSP and the Portuguese *Expresso*. First, we identified the characteristics of the presentation and use of the expression “gender ideology” by newspapers based on the constructed Code Book. In the qualitative analysis, the focus was on observing the results to build a panorama of the recent debate in countries, responding to the specific objectives of: (i) Identifying which discursive political issues or disputes on GSD were at issue in society and the parliament of each country in the period that may have produced the newspaper productions; (ii) Identify whether the term’s framework mobilized any discursive political bias, especially if it is favorable or contrary to anti-gender narratives; and (iii) Compare the characteristics and results of the two countries to identify similarities and differences related to the change in the use of the term and the characteristics of the speeches of each conception.

To fulfill what was proposed, we divided this article into three parts. In the first, we present the concept of discursive power - in the dispute for the hegemony of heteronormativity - and the process of reframing the term gender ideology. In the second, we expose the results of the Content Analysis about the GSD discursive disputes, synthesized in the term “gender ideology”, present in the news coverage of *Expresso* and FSP, and we discuss the quantitative and qualitative findings. Lastly, we present the final considerations of the research, with a summary of the findings and notes for future research.



The discursive power of heteronormativity and the reframing of the term gender ideology

We understand that power is a useful tool in understanding political results in social relations and, in this article, we mobilize an expanded conception that involves the formation of value systems with the ability to name positions of subjection and induce behavior. In this sense, the discursive power operates the construction of narratives about identities and the normalization of behaviors. This process also implies resistance (Foucault, 1979).

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Language and discourses about sex and sexuality are the first expressions of the tool of domination, legitimation, and perpetuation of heteronormativity (Foucault, 1988). Discursive practices show the relationship between power and discourse, socially and historically variable, constituting, and constructing society in various dimensions that shape and restrict the social structure through language (Butler, 2002). Throughout history, this discourse has been mobilized by different actors, formed through different strategies of power and assumed various outlines as an issue: moral, rationality, 'police', educational, medical, psychological, among others. The discourse is the foundation of the power used "in a social relationship to ensure that the will of its bearer prevails over the will of another (...) a *specific way of obtaining the desired behavior from the other*" (Perissinotto, 2008, p. 32 and 33, italics by the author, free translation).

The discursive power of heteronormativity establishes domination with legitimacy in social relations by establishing patterns of sex, gender, and sexuality in a hierarchical, binary, and oppositional structure as a causal, universal, and normal principle (Foucault, 1988; Butler, 2002). The purpose of this discourse is to promote compulsory heterosexuality by restricting the production of identities in accordance with the axis of heterosexual desire. This discourse is

produced and circulated by a system of significations oppressive to women, gays, and lesbians (...) as abstractions forcibly imposed upon the social field (...) the reality-effect of a violent process that is concealed by that very effect (...) denotes an historically contingent epistemic regime, a language that forms perception by forcibly shaping the interrelationships through which physical bodies are perceived. (Butler, 2002, pp. 144, 145 and 146)

Convincing and imposing a pattern of gender and sexuality behavior happens through threats. In this logic, not having the social recognition that the heterosexual standard is fulfilled causes marginalization and exclusion, effective or symbolic, from society for punishments and loss of cultural privileges (Louro, 2009). In this perspective, the established standards and their representations such as *machismo*, sexism, misogyny, homophobia, among others, were studied by several areas of knowledge and conceptualized as gender ideologies (Junqueira, 2016).

In the 1990s, the use and debate of the term gender in documents of the UN Conferences marks the antagonistic political objectives of two groups and the moment when the term gender ideology starts to be reframed and used as rhetoric and political instrument of conservative groups and Christians (Corredor, 2019). On the one hand, the feminist and diversity movements organized themselves to address issues of reproductive rights, sexuality, and the integration of the concept of gender in international politics. On the other hand, Catholic, Muslim and conservative movements and leaderships that pointed out the proposals as a



way to erase the differences between men and women, promote homosexuality and incite gender confusion in children, one of the main concerns being the inclusion of the word ‘gender’ in the final documents of the Conferences. The antagonism and tension grew staggeringly, having its peak at the Beijing Conference in 1995, where conservative movements were victorious by excluding expressions of diversity and defining that the reference to ‘gender’ in the document, as in the previous ones, refers only to women, or to dichotomous biological sex. Thus, we observe that the discursive power of heteronormativity is not limited to decision-making, but is also found in the process of removing certain themes from the public agenda, where the “‘mobilization of bias’ in the community; of the dominant values and the political myths, rituals, and institutions which tend to favor the vested interests of one or more groups, relative to others.” (Bachrach & Baratz, 1969, p. 97). This event illustrates the power relationship of heteronormativity, where this discourse not only generated effects on international policies for women and LGBT people, but also had an impact on the organization of a transnational anti-gender movement.

Bearing these questions in mind, we decided to analyze journalistic productions as a way of visualizing the use of language on GSD issues. In other words, a space for observing discursive disputes on the themes, with discursive disputes being “conflicts over power inscribed in communication resources and mobilized by different groups to achieve their goals” (Souza & Eduardo, 2020, p. 223, free translation). The discourses that use the term “gender ideology” are observable conflicts between antagonistic preferences and expression of the discursive power of heteronormativity as rhetoric designed in the logic of legitimizing exclusion and combating gender and sexual equality policies that generates ‘moral panic’ in society (Corredor, 2019; Souza, 2017; Junqueira, 2016; Souza, 2014).

Content Analysis of the discursive disputes of the ‘gender ideology’ rhetoric in Brazil and Portugal

The discourses operate domination in a subtle way, but they also use threats of ‘severe deprivation’ and strategic calculations of the groups involved, forming the ‘democratic game’. Game in which people or groups try to legitimize their worldview and politics through available resources, while others challenge them, being able to modify them. A game in which in the long run some have advantages over others, but which is not absolute. In this sense, the analysis of heteronormativity allows us to see how the relationship between ‘domination’ and ‘power’ has been changing throughout history or can be modified by observing the episodic and conflicting situations present in journalistic productions.

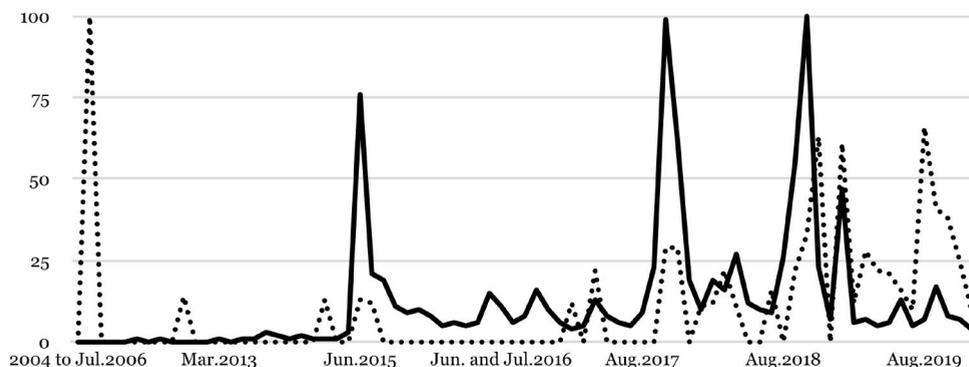
To operationalize the research and fulfill its objective of making a longitudinal and comparative observation, we defined by analyzing the online productions of newspapers with the greatest digital circulation in Brazil and Portugal. The countries were selected because they have proximity, but also because the Google Trends⁸ data from the search of the term

⁸ Google Trends is a tool that provides data on the terms searched on the Google site, the most accessed in the world, from 2004 to the present date. The tool shows graphs with the frequency that were searched worldwide or in specific countries, allows you to select categories, the type of search performed, and the news related to the searched terms as possible reasons for the increase or decrease in the volume of searches.



“gender ideology” in the countries show us differences between them regarding the discursive disputes on-screen, related to the term’s interest and visibility (Trends, 2020).

Graph 1 - Occurrence of Google search for the term “gender ideology” in Portugal and Brazil from 2004 to 2019⁹



Source: Prepared by the authors based on data from Google Trends (Trends, 2020). Accessed on 27 apr. 2020.

Based on this data, the choice of newspapers with greater circulation in the countries is also justified by their expression of national reach (Mídia Dados, 2019; APCT, 2019), understanding that “the stories tend to spread vertically, in a hierarchy of news, with editors at the regional level often submitting to these ‘elite’ newspapers and the news channels, which set the media agenda” (Vimieiro, 2010, p. 89, free translation).

The first step was to search for productions with the term “gender ideology” on the website of the newspapers¹⁰. The initial results went through the Content Analysis stages of pre-analysis, material exploration, and data treatment. We define it by using it as a procedure to analyze texts and generate inferences about the social context of the productions, as it is commonly applied in communications studies (Bardin, 1995). In the pre-analysis stage, we excluded results from *Expresso* that did not present the term or its variations, and from *FSP* those referring to equal articles, to the “*Painel do Leitor*” and the newspaper *Agora São Paulo* (belonging to the *Grupo Folha*). We kept the informational¹¹ and opinion¹² productions (personal and newspaper) in the results, based on the theories of journalism that share the news paradigm as social constructs that contribute to the construction of reality itself (Traquina, 2005), because the “producers of media content are immersed in this cultural background that permeates them and that they also help to build” (Vimieiro, 2010, p. 66, free translation). As a final result and *corpus* of this work we have 49 productions from *Expresso* and 328 from *FSP*.

⁹ To improve the visualization of the data in the graph, the same results in the two countries in continuous periods, mainly those equal to zero, were aggregated.

¹⁰ In the *FSP* we obtained 384 results, delimiting the period from 01/01/2000 to 12/31/2019; on *Expresso*, without time limits, but cutting the results until 12/31/2019, we obtained 129 results.

¹¹ We classify informational productions as interviews and reportings, this being the union of news and reports, because as Bonini (2003) points out, in many cases, they are used as the same journalistic genre.

¹² We differentiate opinion productions between newspaper (editorial) and personal (Opinion articles, Blogs, Columns, Podcasts, Review, Video debate), since the first refers to the voice of the journalistic institution and the others are expressions of personal opinions of journalists or invited people.



For the stages of material exploration and data processing, we built a Code Book, based on previous research (Souza, 2017), forming the elements to analyze the discursive disputes of the term “gender ideology”, allowing “the necessary articulation to identify general understandings, constructed based on culture, in a broad way, and which materialize discursively” (Vimieiro, 2010, p. 57, free translation). Due to space limitations, we present some categories here, but for greater transparency and possible replications of the study, we provide the complete results tables (<https://bit.ly/318JLrh>).

The first highlight of the discursive disputes involving the rhetoric of “gender ideology” is the quantitative difference in results between the two countries. The Brazilian newspaper presents many more results with the term (328) than the Portuguese newspaper (49). Some may argue that this is due to the population difference between countries, but our analysis of the results points to other evidence. Like the presence in *Folha* of eight editorials, all arguing about the fallacy of the term, which demonstrates that the controversies had great visibility in Brazil, with the newspaper expressing its opinion about them since this type of production is one of the forms of the periodical schedule themes and priorities (Mont’Alverne, 2016).

Table 1 - Type and year of *Expresso* and FSP productions with the term “gender ideology” between 2000 and 2019

Type of production	Expresso		FSP		Expresso		FSP	
	N	%	N	%	Ano	o		
Informational	Interviews	3	6,12	13	4	2000	0	1
	Reporting	29	59,2	184	56	2004	0	1
	Total	32	65	197	60	2009	0	1
Personal Opinion	Opinion articles	6	12,2	23	7	2010	0	1
	Blogs	10	20,4	21	6,4	2013	1	0
	Columns	0	0	74	23	2014	0	1
	Podcasts	1	2,04	2	0,6	2015	0	12
	Review	0	0	1	0,3	2016	1	28
	Video debate	0	0	2	0,6	2017	4	25
	Total	17	35	123	38	2018	4	90
	Newspaper Opinion	Editorials	0	0	8	2,4	2019	39

Source: Prepared by the authors based on the search results for productions with the term “gender ideology” on the *Expresso* website (<https://bit.ly/2E2Cd0s>) and FSP (<https://bit.ly/3iPjAfd>).

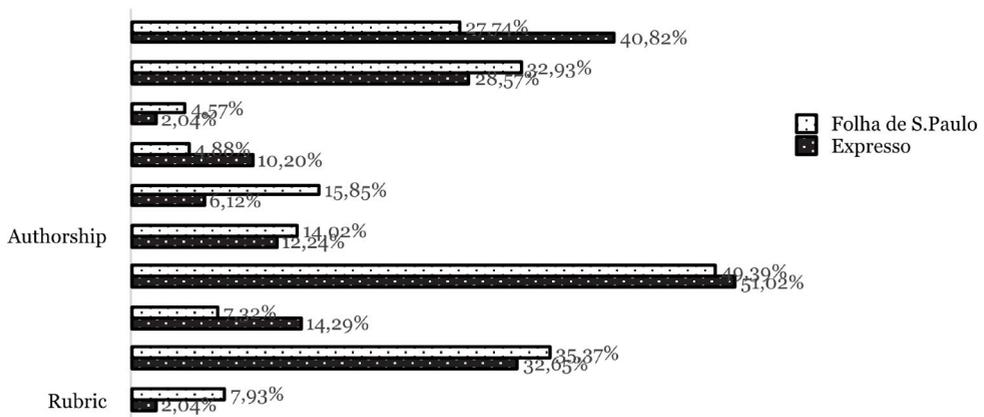
When we change the focus to percentages, we see similarities between countries that do not differ significantly in informational and personal opinions. The Portuguese newspaper having a slightly greater representation of ‘reportings’ and interviews than the Brazilian. This

same pattern is perceived in the ‘Rubrics’¹³ - sections in which the productions were aired - in terms of ‘politics’ and ‘opinion section’, with differences in the rubrics ‘world’ and ‘other rubrics’. These two categories are relevant because the type and space where the production was broadcast also speak of the meanings and approaches defined for the issue addressed (Vimieiro, 2010). As a rule, the productions considered as major by newspapers are dedicated to national or international politics, with special sections such as opinion, sport or culture being placed less prominently (GMMP, 2020).

Regarding the item ‘politics’, the highest result in newspapers, we point out that in the period analyzed, countries went through electoral processes. The highlights in Brazil’s results are the 2016 elections (for mayors and councilors) and 2018 (for president, governors, senators, state and federal deputies) in which the term “gender ideology” was used as the “campaign flag” of Bolsonaro and other candidates of right-wing parties. In Portugal, the term appears in seven articles about the 2019 European elections, all related to the Facebook post of the Patriarchate of Lisbon on the classification of parties that «defend life», in which one of the criteria is to be against the «gender ideology». One article is about the post and the other six about the responses of representatives of the parties mentioned (PCP, CDS, ‘We citizens’, Basta, PSD, and PS).

Graph 2 - Authorship and Rubric of the productions of Expresso and FSP that present the term “gender ideology” between the years 2000 and 2019

Graph 2 - Authorship and Rubric of the productions of Expresso and FSP that present the term “gender ideology” between the years 2000 and 2019



Source: Prepared by the authors based on the search results for productions with the term “gender ideology” on the Expresso website (<https://bit.ly/2E2Cd0s>) and FSP (<https://bit.ly/3iPjAfd>).

¹³ The ‘Rubric’ was classified as: ‘Politics’: related to politics with reference to elections, parliamentarians, their spaces and actions within the country, and demonstrations in reactions to political proposals and debates; ‘World’: referring to international events and debates from countries other than the newspaper, in the world, or from institutions with global representation; ‘Opinion Section’: referring to productions classified as ‘Personal Opinion’ and ‘Newspaper Opinion’; and ‘Other rubrics’: related to culture, arts, music, advertising, seminars, celebrities, media, etc.



Under the rubric ‘world’, the interesting thing is that most of the results of the newspapers correspond to the Bolsonaro government and its entourage. In *Expresso* (7) two are articles about the elections in Spain (one about the decisive participation of women in the result and the newspaper *El País* being banned from the Vox campaign) and five articles about the government of Bolsonaro and Damares Alves - Minister of Women, Family and Human Rights, highlighting the titles “Bolsonaro promises to end the ‘Marxist crap’ in schools” and “Blue for boys and pink for girls: Brazil has entered a new era, says Bolsonaro’s minister”. At *FSP* (24), half talk about the Bolsonaro government (related to Brazilian diplomacy, its speech at the UN, and its approach to the Trump administration and its political line). Of the other articles, we highlight that four refer to documents and actions of the Catholic Church and four talks about elections in other countries (Colombia, Bolivia, Uruguay, and Argentina) being one of the titles “Argentine ‘Bolsonara’ defends anti-abortion front in this year’s elections”.

In ‘other rubrics’ *Expresso* has only one blog post about the release of a post-movement #MeToo album, which talks about private space and feminism. In *Folha*, there are more results (26), with greater diversity and covering issues related to television and theater in section F5 (8), going through a legal fight (“Legal fight between teacher and student illustrates a political divide in the country”) and arriving at *Folha* Seminars on Child Sexual Exploitation (2).

As for the ‘authorship’ of the productions, we emphasize that the majority of Portuguese ones are made by women (26), whether they are journalists (21) or guests (5), while the Brazilian ones are written by men (175), journalists (123) or guests (52). The productions ‘without authorship’ have close percentages, with the difference that those of *Expresso* (6) correspond to two written by the newspaper, three authored by the *Lusa* news agency, and only one without authorship. While in *Folha* (46) they are mostly without authorship (41) and only five are identified as from other news agencies (*Agência Brasil*, *BBC Brazil*, *Ansa* and ‘from the newsroom, with international agencies’).

Regarding the use of the term “gender ideology” in productions, the results of *Expresso* (sociological - 2, conservative - 46, both - 1) and *Folha* (sociological - 4, conservative - 319, both - 5) show that in almost all the two countries use the term in its conservative bias. This category is important because “the terms used to refer to the question indicate values that are culturally shared” (Vimieiro, 2010, p. 82, free translation).

These results combined with the qualitative analysis of the productions make it possible to construct an overview of the debate on the themes of GSD in Brazil and Portugal. The first relevant evidence is the time difference in the use of the term in countries with a conservative bias regarding the debate on State policies. In Brazil, it appears in 2004 and is widely used since 2015 in the debates of the country’s Education Plans (Souza, Souza & Drummond, 2018). In Portugal, it emerged in 2013, but only in 2019 it gained prominence with the action of 85 deputies from PSD and CDS against the approved law that defined the State’s obligation to promote measures in education related to the “exercise of the right to self-determination of gender identity and expression of gender and the right to protection of people’s sexual characteristics”. As says the journalist Aurélio Costa (*Expresso*, 2019, free translation) “gender ideology, this expression was already late in Portuguese politics”, but for Louçã (2019) the



term was not fixed in Portuguese politics, because the country’s right wing had the ‘precipitation problem’ and did not follow the Bolsonaro model, in which

Fear needs to mature, it takes months, years, of fear, it takes a lot of hatred for hatred to become a voice. And all of this was done in a rush, wasn’t it? Managing the ‘defense of the family’ to try gain a religious vote, suggesting the missal and the confessional to protect the family (...) is simply crude. Inventing the danger of a ‘gender ideology’ to criminalize feminism on the fight against homophobia (...) is not just crude but also silly. (Louçã, 2019, online, free translation)

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When identifying the topics on the agenda in society and the parliament of each country in the analyzed period that may have sparked newspaper productions, it is essential to emphasize that the most emphatic political reactions are related to the debate on educational policy issues. This demonstrates that even though there is a greater permeability for specific policies for women and LGBT people, when the themes are associated with educational policies, religious and conservative groups see them as threats to the status quo, creating more effective reactions. The difference is that in Portugal the reactions are related to the implementation of the law already approved, but in Brazil, they refer to the exclusion of the terms and themes of the Education Plans and the Common National Curricular Base. Reactions that hinder the debate and proposals to solve educational problems such as homophobia, sexism and other forms of violence, discrimination, and prejudice such as the pedagogy of sexuality (Louro, 2000) and pedagogy of the closet (Junqueira, 2013) that affect the quality of education for all people, causing series-age distortion, dropout and repetition rates (MEC, 2009). An aggravated situation for transgender people, who already experience exclusion or disorders in the family and community sphere, and in schools face obstacles to enroll, have their identity respected (social name), use school structures (such as bathrooms) and preserve their physical integrity (Peres, 2009).

The productions also make it unequivocal that the value culturally shared by countries about the term is that established by anti-gender discourse. Even when used by people who discredit this conservative bias, it is reproduced as the synthesizer of the debate. This is one of the outstanding characteristics of the use of the term, in the vast majority of productions, there is no explanation, exemplification, or argument about the term. As other studies point out (Garraio & Toldy, 2020; Corredor, 2019; Souza, 2014), the term is the linguistic expression of a monster to be fought as well as others to which it is associated (cultural Marxism, communism, socialism, globalism, feminism, etc.).

the ideology of gender has become a great scarecrow that fits with its fragile size in the structure, but symbolically potent, meanings that have come to identify, by derivation, the political left with moral corruption and favoring population segments that would not deserve to inhabit the nation. (...) Adjectivations that unfold in apparently disconnected webs, but that actually compose a social fabric stitched along the lines of fear of violating values considered untouchable (heterosexuality, children’s sexuality, family in the canonical model, roles of gender, racial issues) (...) In this scenario, being in favor of discussing these issues and/or expanding the field of rights to historically subordinated segments in our society, is putting them at risk. (Vieira Junior & Pelúcio, 2020, p. 99)



The profile of people who use the rhetoric of “gender ideology” is also defined in both newspapers as conservative and Christian, confirming the relationship of discourses about sex with the definitions and texts of the Catholic Church, in the delimitation of acceptable ‘sexual standards’ (Foucault, 1988). In particular, parliamentarians who mobilize the discursive political bias contrary to the themes are not exclusive to Brazil and Portugal. “Attacks on ‘gender ideology’ have been marking political debates in various parts of the globe for the past two decades, contributing decisively to certain electoral results” (Garraio & Toldy, 2020, p. 130, free translation), marking a “rise of an authoritarian, nationalist and ultraconservative extreme right” (Pellegrino & Miklos, 2019, free translation). Other examples of parliamentarians are Trump in the USA, Rodrigo Duterte in the Philippines, Erdoğan in Turkey, Viktor Orbán in Hungary, Matteo Salvini in Italy, among others. As points out by Ferreira (2019, free translation): “Governments that elect enemies of the country and create narratives of conspiracies is nothing new. What is new is the entry of Christian rhetoric into gear”.

Final considerations

We present in this article, through quantitative and qualitative Content Analysis, data on how the newspapers *Expresso* and *Folha de S.Paulo* participate and act in the discursive dispute over the “gender ideology”, which served as an indication of the stage of the disputes of gender in the countries that are inserted, Portugal and Brazil, respectively. The panorama was constructed observing the episodic and conflicting situations present in the journalistic productions about the debate on GSD themes that used the term “gender ideology”. The results suggest that even though there are quantitative and temporal differences in the presence and visibility of the term in the countries, they correspond to notes made in other investigations that the use of the term has defined and standardized characteristics in the world. As for the differences in the participation and performance of newspapers in the discursive dispute of the term in its conservative bias, we highlight that the FSP presented more results, over a longer period (it appears in 2004 and gains visibility from 2015), it has eight editorials with the term and most of the productions were written by men. In *Expresso*, the term appears only in 2013, with projections starting in 2019 and most of the productions are written by women. Regarding the debate and political reactions involving the theme, it should be noted that in both countries they are linked to elections and educational policies, reinforcing other findings that when the term is associated with educational policies, religious and conservative groups see them as threats to the status quo, creating more effective negative reactions. The difference is that in Portugal they are related to the implementation of the approved law to promote measures in education related to gender identity, but in Brazil, they mostly refer to the exclusion of terms and themes from educational policies.

The results presented here are part of a larger ongoing research that analyzes the term “gender ideology” as a rhetorical synthesis of the discursive power of heteronormativity in Brazilian and Portuguese politics. The aim is to contribute to the analysis of heteronormativity, which allows us to see how this type of ‘domination’ is changing throughout history, or can be changed. The study also provides a useful framework for studying the term “gender ideology” using quantitative and qualitative Content Analysis based on the development of a Code Book. The proposal is that the analysis of the use of the term can be replicated in other countries. In this sense, we understand that looking at only one newspaper in each

country may seem insufficient, even if the newspapers with the greatest circulation are chosen. However, with this structure, future research may add more newspapers to the analysis, or choose other media to analyze and compare the results. Another need is to aggregate the debate of intersectionality, reflecting on how other issues (race, ethnicity, class) cross, interfere, or have different consequences in the debate.

Finally, we highlight that the use of the term “gender ideology” is a relevant topic that deserves greater attention and further research in the future, since its use as a political instrument has generated fruits around the world. Its use by actors and agents, whether they are parliamentarians or not, is linked to the dismantling of social, political, and cultural conquests, especially of women and LGBT people, as well as threats and attacks on democracy. As Butler said, “When violence and hatred become the instruments of religious morality and politics, then democracy is threatened by those who would tear apart the social fabric, punish difference, and undermine the social bonds required to support our co-existence here on earth” (Butler, 2017, online).

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INSTITUTIONAL ADVERTISING AND ITS MEDIA REPERCUSSION: AN ANALYSIS OF ADVERTISING CAMPAIGNS IN THE FIGHT AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE¹

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ABSTRACT

According to Cook (2001), advertising is one of the most controversial media productions today, partly because it is a relatively new form of media, partly because it is associated with the negative aspects of capitalism, and is still seen as responsible for the increase in competitiveness of the global market economy. The author states advertising generates controversial feelings because, while its productions can be considered fun and intelligent, they are often associated with the problems arising from advancement and economic changes. Economic growth is often associated with an increase in consumption, which according to some authors (among others, Altstiel, Grow, & Jennings, 2020; Thorson & Rodgers, 2012) can potentiate anti-normative processes and social states, which can be expressed through feelings of dissatisfaction or inadequacy, childhood obesity, behavioural issues, consumption of psychotropic substances, among others. Advertising can be either a vehicle that promotes an specific ideologies, such as the culture of consumption, obesity, exclusion or violence, or a mechanism for deconstructing power relations, social inequalities or symbolic processes that can transform or even expand knowledge and produce positive changes for society. The objective of this article was to investigate the production of advertising campaigns in the fight against domestic violence in Portugal, as well as to analyze the campaigns produced by means of discourse analysis. Cook (2001) states that the main focus of discourse analysis is on language, although it is not only related to language. He also examines the context of advertising: who the advertiser is, what is being advertised, to whom ad is addressed and why the ad was created. What means of communication are used and what is their scope? In addition, images or music used in a campaign should be part of the analysis. The author justifies this broad analysis because he understands that acts of communication and internal mechanisms of language cannot be understood separately. Thus, discourse analysis comprehends language and context in a holistic way. Institutional advertising campaigns against domestic violence in Portugal are mainly produced by governmental entities such as CIG – Comissão para a Cidadania e Igualdade de Género, GNR – Guarda Nacional Republicana and by the non-governmental APAV - Associação de Proteção e Apoio à Vítima. However, in recent years, the growing presence of the feminist movement in the media and the growing consumption of media productions on the subject, in addition to the emergence of important manifestations, seem to have served as a context for the development of advertising campaigns against domestic violence by companies which are not directly related to the topic, such as Revista Cristina in 2018, Vodafone, Avon, Meo, Josefinas Portugal in 2019 and Fox Portugal in 2020. Most of the ads are still targeted to victims, although the crime has been public since 2000, which means that it is not necessary for the victim to report it.

KEYWORDS

advertising, public communication campaign, domestic violence

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According to Cook (2001) few things can be as controversial and generate such heated discussions about their effects and consequences as the advertising phenomenon. Critics associate advertising with the growth of consumerism and materialism. On the other hand, even relentless critics may consider some ads to be smart, fun or even necessary. Thus, advertising maintains a divided and contradictory relationship with its critical consumers. Advertising tends to use recorded photos, stories, puns and fun phrases. On the one hand, they provoke spontaneous amusement, on the other hand, they can cause feelings of rejection based on a conscious reflection of the problems associated with what is being advertised.

Thorson and Rodgers (2012) point out that “advertising messages are commonly defined as paid communication from an identified sponsor, using mass media to persuade an audience.” (p. 4). Lendrevie, Baynast, Dionísio, Rodrigues e Emprin (2008) point out that, socially, the word ‘advertising’ is used to characterize all forms of communication used to promote products or brands with people. Altstiel, Grow e Jennings (2020) state that, in addition to all the digital techniques already developed, what makes an advertisement capable of influencing people is the same characteristic that we already found in cave drawings: a great concept, a great idea.

From Cook’s perspective, the best way to define advertising is by means of an analysis of its function. However, when doing so, we must bear in mind that the role of advertising is not always to persuade people to buy goods or products. There are ads that do not sell, but rather inform people or alert them to the existence of a social problem, for example. However, Cook (2001) also makes it clear, when he talks about his objective when studying advertising, that advertising is a discourse and should be analyzed as such.

Cluley (2017), on the other hand, presents the field of advertising as a multi-layered area of knowledge and when asked about what characterises a sample of discourse as advertising, answers this question with the statement: “any attempt to change demand through communication” (p. 2). In the present article, these two definitions will be combined, and the definition of advertising that will be adopted sees it as a discourse which intends to change demand through communication. It is important to highlight that one of the concerns of advertising researchers when they define what advertising is, is not to associate it only with sales, since not all advertising aims to sell a product. In addition, advertising, regardless of whether it aims to sell a product, convey ideas, values and ideologies (Cortese, 2015; Johnson, 2008), can change demands not only related to product consumption, but also to behaviours and attitudes.

Advertising can thus promote a change in behaviour and attitudes. Balonas (2011) states that advertising, at this point, seems to have the function of an agent of social change. If advertising is able to teach people about ideas, and if, through this power of persuasion, advertising can be, at least partially, pointed out as responsible for the growth of problems such as consumer culture or obesity and problems of female self-esteem and self-image, it may also be able to expand knowledge about social problems and produce positive behavioural changes for society.

Atkin e Rice (2012) conceptualized public communication campaigns and defined them as:



purposive attempts to inform or influence behaviors in large audiences within a specified time period using an organized set of communication activities and featuring an array of mediated messages in multiple channels generally to produce noncommercial benefits to individuals and Society (p, 3)

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A social problem that is considered quite serious in the world and that has been receiving greater media and publicity emphasis is domestic violence. According to WHO (2005), women face the challenge of knowing that home is not a safe place for them, as the study carried out by the institution shows that women are at greater risk of experiencing violence in their intimate relationships than anywhere else. The study also states that it is particularly difficult to combat domestic violence because many women accept domestic violence as normal.

According to the Institute for Economics & Peace (2020), Portugal is the third safest country in the world. And according to the Associação de Apoio à Vítima - APAV (2020), 41 of the 88 homicide crimes that occurred in Portugal in 2019 were crimes related to domestic violence. In addition, of these 41, 26 took place in the context of a current or past relationship of intimacy. Most of the victims, 22, were women, while 4 were men. Thus, although there are fewer life-threatening crimes in Portugal compared to other countries in Europe and the world, almost half of these crimes are related to the context of domestic violence.

According to Carrilho (2018), in September 2007, Law No. 59/2007 was enforced and the crime of domestic violence was typified for the first time in Portugal. Until that moment, the law of mistreatment prevailed. However, the crime of mistreatment has been characterized as a public crime since 2000, that is, the *District Attorney Office* could initiate the legal procedure to protect the victim and punish the aggressor even without a complaint by the victim, and even when the complaint was made by other people.

One of the ways to fight domestic violence is prevention, which depends on education and information on the subject. The Portuguese Government produced a number of guidelines for the media on this issue, named 'Guia de Boas Práticas dos Órgãos de Comunicação Social na Prevenção e Combate à Violência contra as Mulheres e Violência Doméstica' (2019). It was prepared by the State Department in charge of citizenship and equality issues - Secretaria de Estado para a Cidadania e Igualdade do Governo de Portugal. The document states in its introduction that the role of the media in the field of violence against women and domestic violence is decisive, since it gives visibility to a crime that is still, very often, considered a private matter. If we do not talk about a subject, it is not discussed. And if it is not debated, it is not questioned. It is necessary to trigger a dialogue on the subject. Furthermore, it is necessary to inform the population of the first actions necessary for the intervention of the entities that can fight against it.

The objective of the present paper was to analyze the advertising campaigns that fight against domestic violence in Portugal, as well as to look into the campaigns produced through the analysis of the discourse from the perspective of Cook (2001). Therefore, the context of the production of advertising campaigns in Portugal was questioned, by taking into account



the persuasive strategies that were used, as well as the images and information contained in them. Taking that into consideration, the specific objectives were:

- To analyze the production of institutional advertising campaigns in the fight against Domestic Violence in Portugal
- To check the main persuasion strategies in institutional advertising campaigns in the fight against domestic violence
- To analyze the images and information contained in educational campaigns against domestic violence

Method:

Thus, to achieve the proposed objectives, an exploratory documentary study was carried out on institutional advertising campaigns with governmental and non-governmental bodies in the fight against domestic violence in Portugal, in order to identify advertising campaigns with written and visual material (posters and folders) broadcast on billboards, press ads, television, internet and social networks. It was, therefore, a documentary research of written and visual data compiled from primary sources (through research with the responsible institutions) and secondary sources (press announcements, social networks, etc.) and contemporary ones (Marconi & Lakatos, 2008).

Initially, a search was carried out across the internet with the keywords “domestic violence Portugal” and “dating violence Portugal”, with the objective of identifying the institutions that develop campaigns in the fight against domestic violence in Portugal. Therefore, the institutions responsible for most of the production of institutional campaigns in the fight against domestic violence were identified. It is also noteworthy that the institutions responsible for the campaigns selected for analysis were contacted by the authors so that they were given permission to include them in the study, which was promptly granted. In addition, the study was approved by the ethics committee of Fernando Pessoa University.

The campaigns were analyzed using the Discourse Analysis method from the perspective of Cook (2001). The author states that the main focus of discourse analysis is on language, but it is not only related to language, but also examines the context of advertising: who is the advertiser, what is being advertised, to whom is the ad addressed and why the ad was created. Other pertinent questions in the analysis of an advertising discourse, according to the author, are: in what type of society and context is a particular ad launched? What means of communication are used and is their scope? Thus, discourse analysis comprehends language and context in a holistic way.

Results:

Institutional advertising campaigns in fight against domestic violence in Portugal are mostly produced by government agencies CIG – Comissão para a Cidadania e Igualdade de Género, GNR – Guarda Nacional Republicana and by the non-governmental organization APAV – Associação de Proteção e Apoio à Vítima.

Institutional campaigns are broadcast on television, radio, in the press, on billboards in the streets, leaflets to be distributed and on the internet. The main communication vehicle



used today is the internet. The campaigns are launched not only on institutional websites, but also on social networks, where people engage with hashtags and shares. 22 sets of institutional campaigns were found to combat domestic violence on the CIG website. Within each set, posters and folders can be found that are shown on social networks and on billboards, videos and leaflets.

From 2016 to the present day, there is a greater number of examples of posters and folders with different phrases, but with similar images. In previous years, examples of posters and folders are also found, however, with fewer different copies of the same campaign. One reason for this, possibly, is the sharing of different images on social networks, which generates greater engagement of the population, especially among the youngest.

The APAV website has the advertising campaigns for all themes on one page, separating them by themes and providing information on the year. However, campaigns of a single theme over the years are not found, which made exploration difficult. In addition, campaigns were found on the institution's social networks that were not found on the website.

The APAV has 23 sets of the campaign against domestic violence displayed on the website. Although the institution's social networks contain other examples, they have no identification of the year in which they were produced, and are therefore not included in the present analysis. With the exception of the year 2020, which is just a video provided on the website, the other campaign sets usually contain different dissemination of posters. This was a standard practice, which was observed not only in the latest campaigns, but in all of them.

The GNR website does not contain institutional advertising campaigns on this issue, unlike the other institutions. To find the campaigns created by the institution, it is necessary to search the internet with keywords, adding the acronym GNR. Only five copies of such campaigns could be found.

Regarding the main persuasion strategies used in the identified campaigns, puns were found with the reconstruction of popular phrases and sayings related to domestic violence, the use of shocking images with injured people, the use of images of children to provoke sensitivity regarding the theme and the use of images of famous people to promote public attention to the problem.

Although the crime is public, many of the campaigns found have a specific targeting for victims. From the analysis of these campaigns, this could be observed:

All GNR campaigns are targeted at the victim, with the exception of the campaign produced jointly with Delta Cafés, in which messages are found that call the population to report the crime, such as: "em briga de marido e mulher, mete-se a colher". This is a Portuguese popular saying that means something like «if you hear or testify some episode of domestic violence, you should do something» even if you think that situation is none of your business because, actually, it is.

Half of the sets of CIG campaigns are specifically and directly related to the victim, with phrases such as «you are not alone», «don't be silent», «report». Two of the sets are aimed at aggressors or possible aggressors, with clear indication of punishment for offences or advice such as «do not insult, do not humiliate, domestic violence is a crime». Of the other groups, five of them have phrases that call on a population to act against the problem and



denounce the hypotheses that are like “Until when will you ignore this?” or “the solution goes by itself”, in addition to the re/deconstruction of popular sayings.

In the APAV, 12 of the sets contain phrases directed specifically and directly to the victim. There were no campaigns directed to the aggressor, to the characterization of the victim support organization. Many APAV campaign sets are about the characteristics of domestic violence, containing statistics on the problem in Portugal, containing phrases for victims and the general population. Among all the sets, 7 were found that contain phrases that directly summon the population to report the problem.

In addition to the campaigns by these institutions, several other institutional campaigns were found promoted by companies that have no relation to the theme, such as campaigns found in Revista Cristina in 2018, Vodafone, Avon, Meo, Josefinas Portugal in 2019 and Fox Portugal in 2020. There was also a campaign made in partnership by GNR and Delta Cafés in 2019, with messages that contained reconstructions of popular sayings related to domestic violence.

Discussion:

Balonas (2011) discusses the possible contributions of advertising to improve the quality of life and our life in society and uses the term advertising of a social character. However, the author points out that this way of referring to advertising can include institutional communication campaigns that have as main objective the promotion of awareness of a problem or social cause as well as campaigns by commercial institutions that, in addition to promoting their own brand or of the product, promote issues related to social responsibility.

Institutional campaigns to fight domestic violence in Portugal are produced by government agencies and non-governmental bodies. Among the government agencies, CIG stands out, which is a commission from the Portuguese government to promote and defend the principle of gender equality and GNR, which is a security and military body. The non-governmental body is APAV, which is a support association for victims of various crimes, such as domestic violence, child sexual abuse, cyberbullying, violence against the elderly, among others.

However, in recent years, the growing presence of the feminist movement in the media and the increasing consumption of media productions on the subject, in addition to the emergence of important manifestations, seems to have served as a context for the development of advertising campaigns to combat domestic violence by companies. which is not directly related to the topic, such as Revista Cristina, Vodafone, Meo, Josefinas Portugal, Fox Portugal and Delta Café. Some of these campaigns were produced in partnership with the main institutions and others were not: they are initiatives undertaken by the companies themselves.

The campaigns produced by these other companies that are not directly related to the theme can be characterized within the concept of Social Marketing, which is the explicit use of marketing techniques to promote social actions and influence the audience of certain brands or companies in favour of change of behaviours for social benefit, relating your product or brand to this form of social responsibility. (Kotler & Lee, 2008; Kotler & Zatlman, 1971).



Coffman (2002) differentiated public communication campaigns in two types: campaigns to change individual behaviour and public mobilization campaigns (public goodwill campaigns): the main difference lies in the target audience of the campaigns. The author points out that the classification of campaigns to change individual behaviour or public mobilization should be undertaken with the analysis of the campaigns, based on the characteristics presented. Among the advertising campaigns analyzed, there is a greater prevalence of individual behaviour campaigns, with campaigns that contain phrases aimed at the victims or even the aggressor. However, there are also public mobilization campaigns that call on the population to help fight crime.

The 'Guia das Boas Práticas dos Órgãos de Comunicação Social na Prevenção e Combate à Violência contra as Mulheres e Violência Doméstica' (2019) refers to the objectives of social communication as a whole and does not differentiate the informative practice of journalism from the practice of institutional advertising. However, it is possible to establish an analogy here with the role of advertising campaigns. Thus, based on this document, campaigns need to have a role in educating people on the subject, framing it as a crime of violation of human rights that is based on historically unequal power relations between genders, avoiding a speech where we blaming the victims and promoting, instead, their empowerment, so that they can escape a situation of violence. In general, Portuguese campaigns, especially the most recent ones, highlight the characterization of domestic violence as a serious violation of human rights.

It is noteworthy that the Guia makes it clear that it is necessary to emphasize the public nature of the crime, and it is necessary to promote the empowerment of other people in society and not just those directly involved in the situation of violence, so that everyone can understand the first steps to be taken in order to help people or to report a situation. This point of view is found in many Portuguese campaigns, mainly in those which correspond to Coffman's characterization of public mobilization concept (2002).

The Guia also suggests providing examples of people who managed to break the cycle of violence, as well as good examples of institutional practices to protect victims. In relation to this point, a recent 2019 CIG campaign was found, which, on video, tells the story of a woman who managed to break the cycle of violence by denouncing a neighbour. However, the story is only presented on video. The posters that are part of this set of campaigns do not make this reference, limiting themselves to presenting some doctored popular sayings.

Along these lines, it is considered that the Portuguese campaigns are, in their majority, campaigns that still aim at changing individual behaviours, despite the fact that the crime has been considered public since 2000 and there is a government recommendation to promote the education of society as a whole about the problem, since it is a culturally-based problem, and, therefore, the change in individual behaviours is insufficient. However, it is clear that the most recent campaigns already present this concern, including bringing aspects already proposed in the Guia das Boas Práticas, such as the presentation of stories of victims who managed to escape the cycle of violence, even if it has not been disseminated in all advertisement forms.

It should also be noted that the present work is the first study of the doctoral thesis of the first author and is being supervised by the other two authors. Therefore, the results presented here are introductory and are being used as support for the research in progress that



includes the analysis of specific and selected campaigns after this work. In addition, an online survey was conducted with residents in Portugal about cultural beliefs that support the problem of domestic violence, the impact caused by advertising campaigns and a focus group will be held on the reality of domestic violence and institutional advertising campaigns.

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ENCRUZADA: KNOWHOW TRANSFER STARTING FROM THE FERTILE ZONE OF COEXISTENCE BETWEEN WORLDS AND CULTURES IN POETIC QUALITY¹

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ABSTRACT

This article presents a structured discussion network based on the analysis of some symbolic aspects of the audiovisual production entitled *Encruzada*, which works with the conception of a body-cosmos, fundamental in Germaine Acogny's Modern African Dance and in the corporeality present in Capoeira Angola (Cortiço do Abelha), the result of the characteristic crossroads of Third World cultures. This analysis articulates the conceptual field of Cultural Studies, namely, the crossing of identity issues of gender, race, performance, coloniality and knowledge-power. The concept of cross here encompasses border areas from the notion of body, mind, soul as well as artistic works from the field of theater, dance, music, for example, which have their materialization in an integrated and not watertight way, in dialogue with their social, cultural, economic and political contexts in a real relationship with otherness and with the sensitive universe.

KEYWORDS:

Body; Crossroad; Performance; Coloniality; Power.

Introduction

The object of analysis of this article is the process of creating the audiovisual performance entitled *Encruzada*, which was developed during the final stage of the master's research entitled "Body in *Cross*: an articulation between Cultural Studies and Modern African Dance by Germaine Acogny". The work, authored by researcher Thaís Azevedo, was carried out within the Postgraduate Program in Performing Arts at the Ouro Preto Federal University and focused on the discussions about the corporeality present in the work of these Senegalese choreographer, from the perspective of the field of Cultural Studies, thus enabling a more in-depth discussion of power relations in the production of knowledge in the field of performing arts.

The audiovisual material was primarily inspired by the notions arising from the crossroads - a theoretical-practical and methodological perspective that allowed the topics studied to be tied, giving meaning to the empirical material gathered during the investigation. For the construction of the video, several symbolic images were used, linked to the mythologies and to the ritual and performance processes present in the terraces built by the African diaspora in Brazil. For this work, we intend to demonstrate how, from the contact with these theories, from the approximation with the Acogny technique, from the meeting of these stu-

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dents / artists through the experience in Capoeira Angola practiced in the city of Porto-Portugal, this final result was arrived at structured for communication at the VII International Congress on Cultural Studies at the University of Aveiro.

The audiovisual production was based on the scenic-musical script produced during the aforementioned master's research. The script sets up a kind of *xirê*⁵, in which the body - central figure of the work - dances its life path, which goes through moments of great communion with some orishas (forces of nature) and with some entities, namely, *exus*, *pombas giras*, *caboclos*, *encantados* and *pretos-velhos*, above all, the figure of Exu, who is the one who carries the gourd powder, thus symbolizing the encounter that feeds life at the crossroads and the performance of the whirling skirts of *pombas giras* - the feminine quality of Exu, which, in this way, opens paths in their turns, constructing other possible routes to transgress and promote practices of freedom.

The central work core of the audiovisual material was composed by Thaís Azevedo's artistic direction and performance, the conception of the visual and symbolic aesthetics conducted by Bruno Lorenzi and the capture and editing of the images was carried out by Igor Boechat. Having in common the region of Brazil from which they came - the Southeast, the chosen destination for residence - the city of Porto in Portugal, and the desire for a construction of knowledge crossed by Afro-Brazilian popular art, resulted in a collaborative process of exchanges and sharing of knowledge arising from different backgrounds, but with a primary point of intersection within the bodily practices conducted at the "Cortiço do Abelha"⁶ Capoeira Angola School in the Porto city.

The intention here is not to talk about capoeira, much less about us, but it seems important to us to understand this context, that is, where did this construction come from and thus signal how the corporeality present in the practice of Capoeira intertwined with the African modern dance made in this space, generated and effervesced the necessary dialogues for the production of audiovisual material linked to the text of this article.\

Entering the context

The meeting place mentioned above was what made it possible for the three interested in the question of the corporeality of the crossroads, to incorporate several of these elements and concepts, because, as the great guardian of Capoeira Angola says: "Capoeira is the mouth that eats everything" (*Mestre Pastinha*, y/n). Corporeality understands the body as an indissoluble instance of its cultural and social aspects to exist as an integral being, the notion of bodily engagement, brought up by Martins (2008, p.81) is precisely this awareness of the importance of corporeality in the articulations of life in society.

In the case of the organization of Capoeira Angola, this understanding works as a kind of device to represent the social roles of life, where teachings are presented about a parti-

⁵ The term in the Yorubá language means "let's dance" and in the ritual of religions of African-Brazilian origin it characterizes the moment open to the public when a presentation of the dance of the orishas is performed: a sequence of gestures and steps that symbolically reproduce scenes from the mythical biographies of the orishas and (in the case of this work) also of the entities of *Caboclos* (Indians), *Encantados* (humans who lived in another time in other countries) and *Pretos velhos* (enslaved). This triad of entities' phalanges is closely related to Brazilian identity matrices. Ver mais em: Prandi, 1997, p.10-11.

⁶ For more information: <http://www.corticodoabelha.com/>.



cular *modus operandi* of this corporeality, such as *mandinga*, *ginga* and *neçaça* – fundamentals that support the management of the body within practice and that configure a specific way of dealing with adversities, alterities and the structures of power relations, as well as the religiosity and spirituality present in the tradition of Capoeira Angola in its creation in the Brazilian context - understood from the notion of crossroads, which is established as a theoretical perspective arising from the many elements of the ritual practice of the Afro-Amerindian *terreiros*⁷ developed throughout the process of historical and social construction of the African diaspora in Brazil.

The displacement sometimes brings a feeling of emptiness in relation to what Hall (2006) calls anchoring within the process of (*re*)construction of identity, which can translate into an attempt to understand and act consciously within the processes of social and cultural changes. Hall (2016) also discusses the way in which the image of the West - as a historical category - caused real effects in the organization of thought:

Many psychologists and psychoanalysts maintain that a small child understands himself as a separate and unique «self» when he recognizes himself individually, realizing what differentiates him from others (especially his mother). By analogy, national cultures acquire their strong sense of identity when they contrast with others (Hall, 2016, p.318),

In this sense, an anchor projected in the traditional popular culture of the Brazilian *terreiro*, acts as a strategy to ensure what is understood by national identity and culture, this still seems to explain a peculiar form of negotiation and adaptation of the new living conditions within this other socio-cultural space of dispute between a self (Brazil/Afro-Amerindian culture) in relation to the image of one other (Portugal/Western culture).

We are constantly in negotiation, not with a single set of oppositions that always puts us in the same relationship with others, but with a series of different positions. Each of them has its point of deep subjective identification for us. This is the most difficult thing about this proliferation of spheres of identities and antagonisms: they are often displaced from others (Hall, 1992, p.158).

Hall (2006), still on the changes in identity processes in the modern world, points out that theorists such as Giddens, Harvey and Laclau, present variations on the broader conceptions of identities and on the way of perceiving the new world configurations, always giving an emphasis on: “discontinuity, fragmentation, rupture and displacement” (Hall, 2006, p. 18). It is important to note that, according to Hall (1992), these forms of diaspora cultures:

They are always the product of a partial synchronization, of engagement across cultural boundaries, of the confluence of more than one cultural tradition, of negotiations of dominant and subordinate positions, of underground recoding and transcoding strategies, of critical meaning, of the act of signifying (Hall, 1992, p.155).

These same cultures, according to Simas & Rufino (2018), can be called *syncope cultures*: The crossroads perspective as a world power is directly linked to what we can call syncope

⁷ Is the name given to the place where orishas services are held in Brazil.



cultures (...) In practice, syncope breaks with constancy, breaks the predictable sequence and provides a feeling of emptiness that is soon filled in an unexpected way” (Simas & Rufino, 2018, p.18). These unexpected forms of action seem to shake and dismantle the dichotomous notions arising from the coloniality of power in the production of hegemonic knowledge.

The coloniality of power is defined by Quijano (2005) as being the “imposition of the idea of race as an instrument of domination” (Quijano, 2005, p. 136), being that it is not restricted to the understanding of colonialism as a historical moment, but as a configuration of the structuring power relations and, sometimes, conditioning a certain way of thinking, conceiving and producing knowledge and actions. Regarding the concept of hegemony, according to Hall (1992), this “is never a cultural game of inversions; it is always about the changing balance of power in cultural relations; it is always about changes in the dispositions and configurations of cultural power that cannot be avoided” (Hall, 1992, p.151). These relationships permeate several areas that articulate the processes of subjectivation of individuals.

The condition of hybridism in which the New (Third) World was built, produced several know-how called *supravivência*. In short, *supravivência* can be understood as the act of negotiating death - whether physical or symbolic - engendered in the structures of domination of the coloniality of power, perceiving the manifestations of bodies in their syncope cultural contexts as acts of resilience based on ancestral consciousness, which, between conflicts and negotiations, battles and *mandingas*⁸ play with hegemonic culture, displacing colonial structures and power relations (Simas & Rufino, 2018, p. 101).

“The caboclo concept, as an example of be *supravivente*, multitemporal and an anti-nomy of civility, reveals other paths of reflections about the existence and nature of being and its knowledge production” (Simas & Rufino, 2018, p.102). *Caboclo* is a term used in Brazil to designate miscegenation between white and indigenous people⁹, also characterizes a class of entities - spiritual beings very close to humans - worked in various rituals of *encantaria*¹⁰: “The notion of caboclo as a key category of a historical repositioning and the emergence of other wisdoms”, assumes here a function of theoretical device for understanding this way of life (Simas & Rufino, 2018, p.98).

In this way, some questions about structural conceptions of a single mode of science production are established, as each body carries with it layers of diverse experiences and crossings that require new configurations to enhance coexistence. Hall (1992) points out that the people of the black diaspora have used the body - “as if it were, and often is, the only cultural capital that we have. We have been working on ourselves as on representation screens” (Hall, 1992, p.154). The notion of body present in Western culture - which comprises Cartesian divisions of the same, with the mind displaced from the rest of the body and in a place of greater prestige, comes into conflict and moves from perspectives and practices that they see in corporeality, to real possibility of interaction with the world.

⁸ The term *mandinga* can be attributed the meaning of guile, but its symbolic meaning expresses a magical-religious dimension present in the ritual performance of Capoeira that is linked to the way in which this corporeality alters the way of being and interacting with the world. See more in Gallo (2003).

⁹ See more about this discussion at: Ferreti (1994).

¹⁰ *Encantaria* is the term used for the rituals that worship enchanted beings, that “in Maranhão the term enchanted is found in the *terreiro de Mina*, both in those founded by Africans, as well as in the newer and syncretic ones, and in the halls of curators and shamans. Refers to a category of spiritual beings received in mediumistic trance, who cannot be observed directly or who are believed to be seen, heard or felt in a dream, or by people with clairvoyance, mediumship or extrasensory perception, or as some prefer to name it.” (Ferreti, 2000, p. 24)



The Exu image is directly linked to the figure of the messenger, he is responsible for the communication power, that happens in this threshold place threshold, which is his home, which brings together the dynamic principles rooted in the conception of the crossroads. In this sense, the use of audiovisual language seemed to us to be adequate for meeting the research objective of synthesizing and creating a dialogue with the complex network of poetic languages chosen as carriers of the message in the communication of this work: “The cunning to practice the fold in language is the way that we have to not subordinate ourselves to the imposition of norms that violate and deny us as a possibility. So, we talk when it is expected of us to be quiet and we don’t speak when we should talk (Simas & Rufino, 2018, p.73).

We consider it important to incorporate other languages, such as the poetics of the body, for the construction of an expanded reading of the world, focusing on the lines more than on the text itself. As an example of a methodological approach that provides a context for promoting research that incorporates arts processes and forms in academic works, establishing a bridge between University and community, the Center for Arts-Informed Research, created in 2000, “this was important so as to, in Eisner’s (1993, p. 9) words, achieve complementarity rather than methodological hegemony” (Cole; Knowles, 2008, p.59). Therefore, it becomes essential in this work, consciously assume another ways and languages as disrupt proposition of methods and methodologies about scientific production

The notion of *crossroads*, used as a conceptual operator, offers us the possibility of interpreting the systemic and epistemic transit that emerge from inter and cross-cultural processes, in which performance practices, concepts and worldviews are confronted and interwoven, not always in a friendly manner, philosophical and metaphysical, diverse knowledge, anyway (Martins, 2002, p.73).

Thus, we built a methodological proposition with mixed techniques and methods derived basically from the experiences of this *mandingueiro* body, which produces artifices between the interstices of contemporary technologies, circumventing the limited possibilities present in the colonized idea of modernity, globalization, commodification linked to the idea of technological advancement. We intend to open paths to “say the unspoken” (Simas & Rufino, 2018, p.73), to build other routes of knowledge production, not running out in predetermined ways and always escaping between the lines or running through the computer network and spreading like a virus practiced in the powder of the Exu gourd.

Reflections on archetypal symbols and images of the crossroads and *encantaria*

Ronnberg (2012), regarding the “evocation of the image as the threshold for the new dimensions of meaning”, she stresses that “symbolic images are more than data; they are vital seeds, living vehicles of potential” (Ronnberg, 2012, p.6). In this sense, during this work we intend to use the image as a vehicle of expression and possibility of ancestral connection within the flow of an identity in transit that is characteristic of the complex configuration of the current world. Second Hall (2006):



The so-called «identity crisis» is seen as part of a broader process of change, which is displacing the central structures and processes of modern societies and shaking the frames of reference that gave individuals a stable anchorage in the social world (Hall, 2006, p.7).

Hall (2006) he further argues that it is precisely these factors that have caused changes in the conditions of postmodern identity: “The subject, previously experienced as having a unified and stable identity, is becoming fragmented; composed not of a single, but of several identities, sometimes contradictory or unresolved” (Hall, 2006, p.12).

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Still on this process of intense transformation of the so-called processes of subjectivation, Hall (2006) points out that “this is fragmenting the cultural landscapes of class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, race and nationality, which, in the past, had provided us with solid locations such as social individuals (Hall, 2006, p.9). Like him, so many other authors bring a discussion that points out very singular characteristics about the cultural identity of the peoples of the African Diaspora. According Leda Maria Martins (2002):

In this operation of asymmetric balance, displacement, metamorphosis, and covering are some of the basic principles and tactics that operate in African American cultural formation, which the study of performance practices reiterates and reveal. In the Americas, African arts, crafts, and knowledge take on new and ingenious formats (Martins, 2002, p.71).

This process does not seem to delimit edges for the configurations of the being within, previously understood in a pre-defined way in relation to the most objective factors of the cultural and social values that have been attributed to it. Concerning this popular culture of black diaspora, Hall (1992) says that:

It is an arena that is deeply mythical. It is a theater of popular desires, a theater of popular fantasies. It is where we discover and play with the identifications of ourselves, where we are imagined, represented, not only for the audiences out there who do not understand the message, but also for ourselves for the first time (Hall, 1992, p.159).

One of the ritual functions of the enchantment is precisely linked to the understanding of the state of transformation as a basic principle. The image of the *cambono*¹¹ represents the mediator of the transit between spiritual entities and their *horsehuman*¹², that in dialogue with the image of the Caboclo (mythical entity), we can perceive an identity that activates the between place (void) as the power itself, the body in a state of readiness to receive knowledge and thus transform itself into a new being: “[...] the enchanted are the spirits of people who once lived and who did not die, but were ‘enchanted’, coming to exist in the ‘invisible’

¹¹ The cambono is a kind of auxiliary to *pai de santo* and to the entities themselves (...) The figure of the cambono, as a symbol that comprises a series of doings / knowledge, is potent for weighing the attitude of the researcher who is guided by the settled knowledge in the epistemologies of *macumbas* (...) it is one that allows itself to be affected by the other and acts in function of the other. In the performance of its activities, it actively participates in the dynamics of production and circulation of knowledge (...) the one who operates, in the dialogue, with all the activities that precede the necessary actions / knowledge to open paths” (Simas & Rufino, 2018, p.37).

¹² Katherine Dunham was responsible for the creation of the African-American modern dance and the field of dance anthropology. She used the term *horseman* to designate human beings that are initiated and receive the entities in the Voodoo and Orisha communities of the Caribbean and the United States. Here we chose to use the term *horsehuman* to broaden the perspective in relation to gender in the performance of this function.



world, from which they return to the world of men in the body of their initiates, in ritual trance ” (Prandi & Souza, 2011, p. 217-218 in Vasconcelos & Paradiso, 2019, p.62). This vital energetic flow of the Caboclo’s primordial function can be used as a key of thought to understand the place of discontinuity in contemporary processes of subjectivation, because “the fully unified, complete, secure and coherent identity is a fantasy” (Hall, 2006, p.13).

Considerations about visual and symbolic aesthetics of the audiovisual performance “*Encruzada*”

The discussion on the processes of subjectivation, the transformation and discontinuity in the formation of identities, served to contextualize and prepare the ground for what we will enter specifically below, the gathering of the main symbolic aspects present in the images and concepts used in the construction of the audiovisual proposal. With the intention of exemplifying how we appropriated the images of this universe of the crossroads, of the figure of Exu and pomba-gira for example, to demonstrate this attempt to artistic and academically disarticulate, the notions of coloniality of the body and the knowledge production of that body.

In the beginning, what we call *fetus-body* appears sublimated, this body dances its ritualized birth in the gourd of Exu (first Orisha). During the scenes, the body goes through several stages of transformation until the development of its *old-body* state, in which it appears ritualized inside the *Capoeira* circle, dressed in white, thus symbolizing the quality of *Oxalá* (the last Orisha). In the scenes that take place between Exu and *Oxalufã* we try to represent the qualities of some of the primordial Orishas in the creation of the universe (Ayê¹³), aligned with the construction processes of the human being’s survival cycle, which worships this potency through trance in ritual and, in this case, through symbolic performance in everyday life, that is, from the establishment of this connection between human beings and their essence ancestor it becomes possible to activate the power of survival. In summary, the script presents the life history of this body, which are our own, fruits of the subjectification processes characteristic of the crossroads of the Third World, and which, to a certain extent, is present in the configurations of the world in its growing modernization process. and globalization.

The general aspect of the plot is in line with the concept of a body-cosmos, representing the primordial connection of the human to the orisha. According to the creation myth, told by the *Yoruba*-speaking peoples¹⁴, all things in the Universe are contained symbolically within *Igbadú* (the gourd of existence), materialization of the link between the spiritual world (*Orun*), represented by the upper part of the gourd, and the physical world (*Ayê*) represented by the lower part of the gourd. *Igbadú* can also be understood as the link of masculine (*Oxalá*) and feminine (*Oduduá*) energetic polarity, energies directly linked to the elements Sun and Moon, which are in constant flux, as well as to the image of a snake that bites its tail, in cyclical and continuous movement between dualities. (Oxalá, 2005, p.10-11)

To be enchanted is to have the power to trigger the *supravivência*, that is, to live in the material world in connection with the spiritual world, inhabiting the integrality of its own

¹³ “In the *Yorubá* language, the word *Ayê* is used to refer to the Earth, the physical world, the world of men.” (Prandi, 2001, p.564).

¹⁴ The myths we are referring to here come from different sources, both from Yoruban Africa and from this diaspora in Cuba, Brazil, and other territories. A collection of these myths is recorded in the book “*Mitologia dos Orixás*”. Prandi (2001).



power, an untouchable and sacred place, the space of the body, which can be understood at from the image of the great Baobab (tree of life with its roots facing the sky and the earth), symbol of the connection that connects *Orun* to *Ayê*, respectively heaven and earth. The subdivisions of the cycles of this *body-cosmos* are linked to the symbols of the orishas (qualities of natures present in the universe) and entities (the qualities of the orishas already experienced by these human beings in some distant time on Earth). Each of them was composed from a quote that was used as a conceptual and theoretical guide during the image editing process and appears as a narrative of the scenes in the audiovisual material that will be presented during the congress.

Final Considerations

The good follower of the orishas religions must do everything possible for their desires to be fulfilled, because it is through human realization that the gods become stronger, and can thus help us more (...) For all this it is said that the Afro-Brazilian religions are religions for the liberation of personality, as it is neither part of their ideas nor their ritual practices to cover up and annihilate human passions of all kinds, however hidden they may be (Prandi, 1996, p. 16-17).

This article presents a conceptual and symbolic vocabulary of the Afro-Diasporic cultural universe, based on the crossroads of perspectives from the Brazilian *terreiro*. As they are very specific, sharing this material within the cultural context of a Portuguese university has become a very dense and complex task, sometimes even contradictory. However, we believe that this common scenario of migrations and flows in the contemporary globalized world, reflecting the relations of coloniality and power, needs to be considered and discussed from transversal and transdisciplinary points of view. Thus, it seems important that this production of knowledge can generate reflections on the material conditions of survival of this social and cultural corpus, which also comprises a place of great flux, where “identities intersect and move mutually” (Hall, 2006, p.20).

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LUTHERANISM GAUCHO IN SOUTHERN BRAZIL: AN UNDERSTANDING OF GENDER FROM THE FEMALE ECCLESIASTICAL CONSTITUTION¹

Joyce Aparecida Pires²

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ABSTRACT

This work will discuss the negotiations and assimilations that occur in the practices of women of the ecclesiastical hierarchy in the Evangelical Church of Lutheran Confession in Brazil and the contribution of the Traditionalist Gaucho Movement in the construction of the status and religious female identity in the south of Brazil.

KEYWORDS:

Protestantism; Gauchism; Ecclesiastical hierarchy; Gender justice.

The present work is part of a doctoral research in Social Sciences, carried out at Universidade Estadual Paulista, UNESP Brazil, which aims to understand how evangelical women of Lutheran confessionality work in the hierarchy of the Evangelical Church of Lutheran Confession in Brazil and how it occurs. incidence of feminism in these women's subjectivities; from there, discuss how this theme is inserted in the Brazilian political-religious context.

Religion in research is understood as an element that participates in a particular historical context in which social and political social processes are two intrinsically articulated movements (Asad, 2010). By deepening the historical context in which the religious symbols of Lutheranism were constituted and authorized and its project of Church in Brazil, I am seeing ways in which the condition of women is discussed and reworked in religion and current politics.

The theory of performativity also contributes to the analysis of political space, frameworks and representativeness, because it seeks to understand gender formation and to subsidize the idea that gender expression is a fundamental right and freedom. In this way, I am trying to intend and understand the subject / agent of feminism of Lutheranism in Brazil to apprehend the social dynamics, in the face of hegemonic sexism.

This is a church formed by the communities of Protestant, German and Swiss immigrants who arrived in Brazil from 1824, charged with colonizing the South of the country and defending the territory, with the participation of men in the conflicts and wars that occurred in the South, in particular in the Farroupilha Revolution. In the beginning, communities lived without any religious organization; 40 years later, Germany's first pastoral families arrived.

The appearance of the bodies of Lutheran women with some degree of religious authority, can be seen since the arrival of the first German deaconesses in 1913 to meet the religious and health needs of women in the immigrant communities of the South, particularly when carrying out births. Over the years, communities have managed to reach other levels

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of institutional organization and provision of religious services and for women in the Church, through associativism with women's organizations in Germany, the construction of a Casa Matriz de Diaconia and Ordem de Auxílio de Senhoras Evangélicas (OASE), currently present in most parishes of this Church.

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The pastors, interlocutors of the research, represent a femininity based on equality and the so-called gender justice, and the subjectivity of gender freedom and the positivity of the feminine also appears in their speeches and practices, entangled in the Rio Grande cultural mosaic and in traditionalist practices of the *gauchismo*, which are spread in other territories of Brazil, besides the Centers of Gaucho Traditions, also by the members of the Church.

In general, what stands out at the IECLB, within the scope of traditional gender relations, are the present ethnic cultural aspects, a legacy of German immigration in Brazil and the formation of the Rio Grande do Sul identity. Lutheran communities negotiate identity belonging to *gauchism* and invoke them in holding services, among other situations, in women's meetings, parties and cooking, within the scope of religious practices. The so-called *Culto Campesino*, for example, was published on social media with an image composed of a man riding a horse and the flag of Rio Grande do Sul. This style of religious worship runs in chosen spaces, close to nature and the shepherdess dresses gift. The gift is the complementary pair of the male gender, represented by the *gaucho*. Her feminine *gauchesque* dress is always a long-sleeved dress or skirt and blouse.

But *gauchism* is not an evangelical subculture, evangelicals following immigrant Protestantism use elements of *gauchism* and German culture in order to affectionately serve communities that have a minimal German ethnic factor. In this way, *gauchism* concentrated symbols and elements of a past idealized by immigrants and their proposal for a nation (to evolve without losing tradition) that distinguishes Lutheran practices from other religious belongings cultivated in the country.

In the figure of the gift, the practice of these traditions reallocates the representation of the feminine as a form of allegory that also occurs in other situations, also common at the *Oktoberfest* in Blumenau, Santa Catarina and at pedestrian parties and rodeos. In Lutheranism, the gift appears as a cultural offering of the ethnic-religious tradition in Brazil. A Lutheran pastor who is gifted, affirms and positive a representation of the feminine that accommodates traditional gender relations.

According to Verena Stolcke (1991), in class societies, certain socially relevant inequalities, such as color and religion in this case, are social markers legitimized by an explanation that represents them as having roots in the differences classified as natural. In this sense, we can remember the conception and construction of women, produced through traditional theological discourses around the womb with the function of reproducing the species and, therefore, the race (Furlin, 2016). We are talking about the control of the procreative capacity of women to perpetuate class and national privileges with racial, being this ideological naturalization, as stated by Henrietta Moore (1997).

Changes in the status of women were made possible by the incidence of feminism in the subjectivities of women involved in the ordained ministry in the elaboration and diffusion of a feminist ideology in this sphere. It is a process that has the field of theological knowledge, the locus of disputes. In addition, the IECLB has a history of relationships and associations



with its sister churches, in a very present way, as is the case of the Church of Sweden, which gives breath to the identity disputes that occur in Brazil, starting from this Church.

The actions of women organized in religious communities was, in some aspect, the reason for the creation of other groups of women, such as the Lutheran Women's Discussion Forum (FDML) where issues related to the feminism of equality and gender justice are discussed.

What is striking is the location of women theologians in this religious institution, who have built a trajectory of conquering authority in the Church and in the Theology course itself and which feed female activism in other areas of society. Theologians used the affirmation and positivization of the feminine in the field of rights, by seeking equality with men. Since the 1980s, Lutheran theologians have gone through processes of disputes and conquests for the role of women in the diakonia to ministries and ordination, when they reach representation in the ecclesiastical hierarchy, thus reaching, in 2018, the election of the first female president to the most important position. of the Church.

First woman to occupy the chair of Feminist Theology at EST in 1992, Wanda Deifelt (2013), conceives that it is in the critique of deconstruction of the naturalizing assumptions of culture, androcentric in the context of the production of knowledge and the stimulus to empowerment independently which is at the heart of feminist ethics of care, through historical and theoretical practical knowledge, there is a search for gender justice in society and its organizations and for gender equity, care is taken, including with nature.

At congresses made possible by the Gender and Religion studies group at EST, academic and religious also linked to the Lutheran Church in America, they discuss the feminist Lutheran perspective in contributing to the discussion of sexism as an ecumenical agenda, violence against women, vulnerabilities among other issues.

The understanding of the idea of gender justice by Evangelical Lutherans, follows through the turn that Luther took in the Reform Movement, the Christian's autonomy / freedom in not needing an interference or mediation by men or institutions to obtain the grace of God. The subject can, from an inner, reflective movement, evaluate his actions. Protestantism draws a personality to the Christian agent and his belief is based on the historical facts of the religious Reformation, starting from Luther who corroborates for the faithful to experience a church in time. An observation recorded in a field notebook exemplifies this notion of Church in time. In different situations, between informal conversations, two pastors expressed: "our Church is a church that is always in reform" or "we need to be empowered women of the Reformation", using the rebellious and political sense that was the context of the reforms in the Church .

In addition to the importance of the Pietist movement, aligned with the IECLB, feminist epistemology guarantees the struggle for the so-called life in abundance, thought of feminist ideology and culture, as a desire of God. Thus interprets Mary Streufert (2017), director of Justice for Women in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, she affirms that the Church's patriarchal structure, male idols and sexism are impediments to abundant life. In this context, some institutional and governmental reforms come into the discussion, such as ecology and sustainable economy. Therefore, the social category of women is also procedurally interpreted by these new parameters of political equality between theirs and others.



There is an intersection of feminist concerns of theoretical framework and organized movement with the actions of Lutherans from the use of the notion of gender justice, discussed by the theorist and feminist, Nancy Fraser (2007), as a reform proposal. The objective, in relation to Christianity, is to take this perspective of gender, sex and sexuality into ecumenism, promoting ethical and religious reforms. “[...] um compromisso global a criar um cuidado da saúde reprodutiva que apoiaria vida abundante para todos e todas [...]”, afirma Mary Streufert (2017, p. 28).

During the VI Gender and Religion Congress, held at EST in 2019, the academic and interreligious dialogue, with services promoted by the IECLB during the days of the event. The importance of women’s intellectual training is a factor that Evangelicals of Lutheran confessionality in Brazil built in the historical process of an ethnic church, through their associative ties with Germany, community-based care and education on a territorial scale via intellectual / professional training / confessional through a movement of democratic progression to build female leaders. In this process, women moved with assistance and organized, in greater number, by OASE, in the FDML in a significant way, with regard to the discussions on violence against women, sorority and other issues present in feminist culture.

In this sense, the particularity of the processes by which Lutheran women historically participated in the organization of the faith, such as the Lutheran Church in Brazil, set the tone of authority and legitimacy during disputes in the theological field of knowledge, until the appearance of the feminine in the hierarchy ecclesiastical. The context was that of alignment for liberal democratic policies and secularization of society in Brazil. The result is more autonomy for women in churches and the need to create a chair in Feminist Theology for the development of continuing religious and professional training for Lutheran women and their insertion in religious communities and diaconal work.

The production of feminist Lutheran theology has a tendency marked by the feminism of equality, spreading a more holistic view of religion and ecofeminist, from some theologians. One of the concerns of female theologians is how to foster a lucid spirituality and engaged feminist practice. In this attempt, the feminine is also positivized by the difference, including directing the feminine work in the Church and the interest for the human development and of its communities. Not that this is an end point of the finished feminist project of the Lutherans, but the regional and cultural practices that are widespread in Church groups, resume a female corporality, stabilizing the gender dualism in the institutional discourse. Consequently, traditional gender relations, regionally founded on notions and moral pretensions for the Brazilian nation and that come from the South.

Heteronormativity with whiteness is also a privileged place in Brazil, its cultural extensions can be located in the history and cultural practices of the specific group of women pastors surveyed. Its origins are parameters of identity belonging, historically highlighted in the processes of the formation of Protestantism as a Church in Brazil, from the south.

In the face of society, it is an inclusive church, “here you have a place”, “we are a church that cares”, as the president says, but the genders recognized for ecclesiastical exercise remain guaranteeing the appearance of female and male bodies, without approving the gay marriage. Although there are official pronouncements from the institution that stands in accepting the suffering of people who are discriminated against, it is not accepted by the IECLB



that non-normative people hold hierarchical or ministerial positions. While in the Church of Sweden and other sister churches in the world, it is permitted.

The understanding of the historical Protestantism of German immigrants and their contribution to changes in the contemporary Christian frame of reference is placed and presents itself in a dynamic way. The social process of the appearance of women in the ecclesiastical hierarchy confirms that women are seeking gender justice in the Church through evangelizing means.

Theologians, theologians and students at EST, from feminist theology and gender studies, insist on the tensioning of the rules to legitimize the representativeness of women in different spaces, of women and their bodies. They also seek to advance reforms of remaining problems, such as violence against women and even the decriminalization of abortion. This demonstrates that the intellectual work of religious women is heterogeneous and presents plural trends and possibilities for more versatile feminist practices among the faithful and their traditions. Lutheran pastoral women and religious leaders want freedom on the Christian horizon.

I believe it is possible to support the hypothesis that a new religious configuration is taking shape in this third millennium from the plural role of women. This protagonism or activism in the sphere of public and religious space seems to me subtle, disguised, intelligent and dynamic. It is not openly challenging, but it presents clear breaks, insubmission, mobility, infidelity and the creation of new modalities of spiritual life and moral parameters. In other words, women are creating, with responsibility in institutional spaces, alternative paths to those of hegemonic religions, their structures and discourses. It is now up to you, as a researcher, to further explore these alternative paths for women, their evangelical Church projects in Brazil and their experiences.

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FROM CIATA D'OXUM TO DORA D'OYÁ: WOMEN ON THE FRONTLINE OF SAMBA AND CANDOMBLÉ¹

Maíra de Deus Brito²

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ABSTRACT

Brazil is a country made by its women and black people. This article aims to recall the importance of the role played by black women in the history of samba and Candomblé, based on the lives and trajectories of Ciata d'Oxum and Dora d'Oyá – women from the State of Bahia who made and still make history in Rio de Janeiro and Brasília, respectively.

KEYWORDS:

Women; samba; candomblé; Ciata d'Oxum; Dora d'Oyá.

Introduction

This article aims to reaffirm the importance of the role developed by black women in the constitution process of samba and the Candomblé, based on the trajectories of the Iyakekere Ciata d'Oxum and the Iyalorisa Dora d'Oyá³ – black women, born in the state of Bahia and with important participations in the samba and Candomblé cultures of Rio de Janeiro and Brasília, respectively.

Candomblé is an Afro-Brazilian religion born from the hands of women in the Brazilian territory and history. Some leaders of the Candomblé religious centers – called “terreiros” – are known as high-standard social figures in their communities, with great sense of initiative, verified in the religious atmosphere and in the public sphere of the State of Bahia as well (Serra, 2008, p.7).

Among those women of “partido alto”⁴ was Hilária Batista de Almeida (1854-1924), known as Tia Ciata⁵. Tia Ciata was one of the Tias from Bahia who lived in the portuary zone of Rio de Janeiro. Their houses were refuges of material, spiritual and cultural reception for

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³ The Iyakekere is the backing leader of a Candomblé house, supporting the Iyalorisa; the Iyalorisa is the main leader, called “Mãe de santo” as well. Iyalorisa is the religious title given to the women who head the Candomblé centers, the terreiros, and their communities, taking care of the initiation of the neophytes in the cult. Oxum/Osun is the Candomblé goddess represented by the fresh waters, rivers and waterfalls; Oyá is the goddess of the storms and winds. Tia Ciata was consecrated in her Candomblé initiation to Oxum, and Mãe Dora to the goddess Oyá.

⁴ This expression refers to a type of samba with some particularities. In the world of samba and its subgenres and reunions, “partido alto” songs can represent a time for improvisation and disputes, besides a stronger singalong opportunity for the participants to play in the reunion. Important figures in these meetings, the black women were great examples of the “partido alto” posture and practice. To say that someone is a “partido alto” is a common expression in Brazilian Portuguese that recognizes a person's assertive and proactive behavior. Freely translated, “partido alto” means “high party”.

⁵ In Brazil it is very common to refer to someone as “aunt” or “uncle” (“tia” or “tio”) when there's a close relationship, independently of blood bonds.

the black population of Rio de Janeiro at the turn of the 19th century to the 20th century (Diniz, 2008, p. 27).

Several authors point out that, due to the meetings at their homes, it was possible to establish “conditions for the development of cultural associations and later carnival groups, such as the samba itself, in all its spheres, especially financial, political and religious contributions” (Werneck, 2007, p.129). Although there were several *Tias* in this history, it was *Tia Ciata* who was crowned as the matriarch of samba.

In the current capital of the country, Brasília, strengthening the samba culture of the city, there is *Mãe Dora d’Oyá*⁶. The *Iyalorisa* was born in 1956, in *Riachão das Neves*, in the State of Bahia. Fifteen years ago she founded her religious center, the terreiro *Ilê Axé T’Ojú Labá*, in the central region of Brazil.

The terreiro *T’Ojú Labá* is the place of birth of the *Afoxé Ogum Pá* (a musical and dance group with repertoire formed by Afro-Brazilian music) and the samba group *Filhos de Dona Maria*, that plays some of the musical works of *Mãe Dora d’Oyá*.

The performances of *Ciata d’Oxum* and *Dora d’Oyá* invite us to remember and highlight the central space held by women in the history of samba and *Candomblé*, personages that were placed as minor or secondary characters in the social, cultural and religious tactics of articulations in these mentioned contexts.

The methodology used in this article gathers the different techniques of the bibliographic reviews, the oral history and stories and the interviews as well. The practice and study of the oral history is an essential methodology to recover “unclear or never evoked events, personal experiences, and particular impressions” (Alberti, 2004, p.22). Placed at the end of this work, an interview with *Mãe Dora d’Oyá* brings originality and contemporaneity to the present work.

Development

Brazil is a country formed mostly by black people and women. The latest researches show that 56,2% of the Brazilian population is black. Women represent 51,8% of the 210 million Brazilians, according to the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics, IBGE (2019). Although they correspond to a numerical majority, these portions of the population are considered political minorities and, in the past years, they have suffered with the intensification of authoritarian governments and exclusionary policies, which do not reach the most basic Human Rights principles.

In face of the overwhelming conservative and reactionary wave in Brazilian contemporaneity, it is necessary to look to the past and connect it with the present, showing the importance of remembering how resistance practices have been essential pillars for maintaining the life of certain populations, highlighting the case of black people and women in this tactics.

Frequently, in interviews, *Makota Valdina* (1943-2019) said that “black women always have been religious leaderships” (Tve Bahia, 2017). The educator and religious leader from Salvador, the capital of the State of Bahia, also highlighted how the principles and knowledges of the *Candomblé* should be transmitted by the orality: the learnings of this cultural complex

⁶ As seen in the case of the “*Tios*” and “*Tias*”, in the *Candomblé* culture it is common to refer to the religious leaders as “mothers” or “fathers” (“*Mães*” or “*Pais*”), despite the blood connections.



are incompatibles with the written logics, and must be shared not through the books, but by human characters, that teach by the action and the speech (Tpsm Conexão, 2018).

Thinking from these reflections, there is an urgent need to remember the importance of women in Candomblé, an Afro-Brazilian religion that was born from the hands of Brazilian African women. According to the historiography, the first Candomblé center in Brazil was the terreiro of the *Casa Branca*, also known as *Ilê Axé Iyá Nassô Oká*, in Salvador, headed by the Iyalorisa Iyá Nassô (Serra, 2008, p.1).

Founded in the neighborhood of Barroquinha, and currently located in the Vasco da Gama Avenue at the Engenho Velho da Federação (peripheral neighborhood of the city), the terreiro has a very important characteristic: in the tradition of this community, only women can be initiated in the cult of manifestation of the deities, embodying the Orisas⁷, remaining for men the non-psychic functions in the religion (p.7).

Another relevant point is the fact that the *Casa Branca do Engenho Velho* gave birth to another two important Candomblé centers of the State of Bahia, the *Gantois* and the *Ilê Axé Opó Afonjá*. The terreiro of the *Gantois* was founded by the Iyalorisa Maria Júlia da Conceição Nazaré, and the terreiro of the *Opó Afonjá* by the Iyalorisa Eugênia Ana dos Santos (pp.5-6).

Reports made by senior members of the *Egbé Iyá Nassô* expose the exponential role played by the so-called “partido alto” women, leaders known as people of great initiative, proven both in the religious field and in the civilian life of the black-mestizo population of the Bahia State: very enterprising ladies, with a dominant presence in the street commerce and with significant influence in their environment, where they exercised strong leaderships. (Serra, 2008, p.7)

These women celebrated exclusively female rites, called *Gueledes*, articulating under the cover of the *Irmandade de Nossa Senhora da Boa Morte* (p.8), a Catholic sisterhood formed by the insiders of the terreiro of *Casa Branca* that still exists and acts in Cachoeira, a city located 110km from Salvador.

Among those “partido alto” women is Hilária Batista de Almeida (1854-1924), the above-mentioned Tia Ciata. Born in Santo Amaro da Purificação, a city near Cachoeira, Tia Ciata was initiated in the Candomblé religion to the goddess Oxum in the terreiro of the *Casa Branca*, and was an active member of the *Boa Morte* Sisterhood. When she was twenty-two years old, she traveled to Rio de Janeiro, where she became Iyakekere of the terreiro headed by João Alabá d’Omulu. Tia Ciata was one of the many Tias from the Bahia State that lived in the portuary zone of Rio de Janeiro, a region named “Little Africa” (Diniz, 2008, p.26) by the composer Heitor dos Prazeres (1898-1966).

Famous cooker recognized by her delicacies (p.26), Tia Ciata was – according to her great-granddaughter Gracy Mary Moreira – the first woman to sell her *délices* in the streets using the Candomblé characteristic dress code, known as the *baiana* clothing (Hipolito, 2016). In interview, Gracy, who is daughter of the instrumentalist Bucy Moreira (1909-1982), said that the name *baiana*, used to refer to this typical clothing, was imported, and before it the sellers were known as other pejorative terms, such as “crioula de tabuleiro” or “crioula de

⁷ Orixá is the name given to the worshiped divinities in Candomblé, who can present themselves at the religious parties through the incorporation into the insiders.



venda”, freely translated as “sale creole” or “board creole”, referring to the movable table on which the meals are displayed.

However, one of the biggest contributions of Tia Ciata is seen in the Brazilian popular music, especially in samba. Her house was the place where the city musicians gathered together. According to Muniz Sodré:

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The house – according to the testimonies of the regular visitors – had six rooms, a central hall and a yard (terreiro). In the living room were held balls (polkas, lundus, etc.); in the back yard, “partido alto” samba or samba-raiado; and, in the terreiro, “batucada”. (Sodré, 1998, p.15)

The reason for so many divisions of musical genres in the same house was explained, in parts, by the composer Pixinguinha (1897-1973) in an interview published in the extinct *Manchete* magazine: “the choro had more prestige at that time. The samba, as you know, was mostly sung in the terreiros, by very humble people. If there was a party, the choro was played in the living room and the samba only in the yard, for employees” (p.79).

Returning to the importance of Ciata and other Tias in the *Little Africa* of Rio de Janeiro:

In the times of Donga, Heitor dos Prazeres, João da Baiana and others, it was around black women like Tia Davina, Perpétua, Veridiana, Calú Boneca, Maria Amélia, Rosa Olé, Sadata, Mônica, Carmem do Xibuca, Gracinda, Perciliana, Lili Jumbaba, Josefa and especially Tia Ciata, that were established the conditions for the development of cultural associations and later carnival groups, such as the samba itself, in all its spheres, especially financial, political and religious contributions. (Werneck, 2007, p.129)

Moreover, it was at Tia Ciata’s house where the first registered samba song (1916) at the National Library was born – a very important episode for the professionalization of the musical genre. The music “Over the Phone” was recorded by Donga; however, according to some versions, it would have been made in a collective process, in one of several meetings that took place at the matriarch’s house (Diniz, 2008, pp.35-36).

Polemics aside, we must remember that Tia Ciata was not a mere spectator of the parties and gatherings. As Roberto Moura recalls, she sang with “authority, answering the choruses at the parties that lasted for days, with some participants leaving for work and returning. Ciata took care that the pans and pots of food were always reheated, that the samba never died” (Moura, 1995, p.99).

A black woman, from Candomblé, born in the northeast region and migrant in a country that had recently abolished slavery (1888) and that still didn’t allow women to vote (1932), Tia Ciata overcame racial, gender and class-based prejudices, exclusions and violences due to her “capacity to manage the structures of power and control of society” (Werneck, 2007, p.112), and made history as the matriarch of samba.

In 520 years of history, Brazil had three capitals. The first one was Salvador (1549-1763), currently capital of the State of Bahia, where the samba was born. The country’s second capital was Rio de Janeiro (1763-1960), that was the scenario of the multiplication of this musical genre. The current capital is Brasília, a city that has become a place for mixing cultures from various regions of the territory. Curiously, the samba artists are one of the most prominent



artistic groups in Brasília. Renata Jambeiro, Rafael dos Anjos, Cris Pereira and Breno Alves are some of the names that bloomed from the capital to culminate in national projections.

Strengthening the culture of samba in the city of Brasília, there is Mãe Dora d'Oyá. The Iyalorisa of the terreiro *Ilê Axé T'Ojú Labá* was born in 1956, in Riachão das Neves, in the State of Bahia. When she was six she lost her mother and, at the age of 13, she went to Brasília after her father, an employee of the National Department of Highways, was transferred to work in the capital.

Since childhood, Mãe Dora saw and talked to Caboclo Ventania⁸. She also knew that she would have an important role as Iyalorisa in the Candomblé religion, but she fled as far as she could from this religious fate. 15 years ago she finally founded her terreiro in Santa Maria, a peripheral neighborhood in Brasília (Brito, 2017).

At the Mãe Dora's terreiro *T'Ojú Labá*, the order is music. On the Saturday mornings, in the ABC Musical Project, the terreiro's community offers music classes to children and teenagers of the Jardim ABC, a neighborhood of Cidade Ocidental, a city of the State of Goiás next to Santa Maria and marked by precarious services of urbanization, health care and security.

The *T'Ojú Labá* terreiro is also the home of the *Afoxé Ogum Pá* (which places the Candomblé and the Afro-Brazilian cultures on the streets and public events of Brasília with popular songs and the traditional rhythm of *Ijexá*) and the samba group *Filhos de Dona Maria* (which also mixes in musical expressions the influences of the chula, afoxé and jongo traditions).

Creator of the projects presented above, Mãe Dora d'Oyá is also a singer and songwriter. Some of her samba creations are "Curimbeiro", "Salve Dona Maria" and "Clareia Minha Mãe", the last one a partnership with Vinícius de Oliveira. All of them are considered hits by the public of the samba scene and circuits of Brasília, especially by the fans of *Filhos de Dona Maria*, the samba group born in Brasília and named in honor of Dona Maria Padilha, a spirit of a woman that manifests itself in the Afro-Brazilian religions.

About her creative process, Mãe Dora explains:

I make some songs... the lyrics and the music come to my head. It is not intentional. Who sits down to do this is Paulo César Pinheiro and Paulinho da Viola. "Curimbeiro" I did to Amílcar Paré, who had been confirmed to assume the position of Ogã in my Candomblé center during the ceremony of the Waters of Oxalá. The music came in three minutes. I have this facility since my childhood. (Brito, 2017)

At the interview, Mãe Dora also explains that every Candomblé house has an Axé⁹, and the Axé of her terreiro is the cultural one: "nothing of what I do in my house just came out of my head. Otherwise, I would be a genius. Things here pop up. And I just guide the community. And the things that pop up are always aimed to touch the culture".

Due to family issues, Mãe Dora d'Oyá left the West region of the Bahia State as a child on her way to the new capital to start her life over again – as many other Brazilians from all the regions of the country did. The Orixás made the path for Mãe Dora to open in Brasília her terreiro and to work to strengthen the samba culture of the city.

⁸ Caboclos are spirits that, as the example of others as *Pretos Velhos*, *Exus*, *Erês* and *Pombagiras*, can also manifest themselves in the mediumship sessions of Afro-Brazilian religions, giving advices and working to help the needy.

⁹ Axé is the expression used in the Candomblé to refer about the inner force of the community, its spiritual context and ancestry.



In an interview adapted to the pandemic context produced by the COVID-19 in Brazil, Mãe Dora d'Oyá talks about the role women in samba: “women have a fundamental role in samba. They harmonize the samba circle. What gives meaning to the samba culture is the wheel, the spinning motion, the circularity, which is what moves the energy”, details Mãe Dora. In her view, samba would be nothing without women:

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Without the women in samba, there would only be several men playing instruments. The grace of samba is the feminine power, the stirring of the hips, the joy, the power to gather people around the musicians. There is also the fact that the female voice makes a counterpoint with the male voice. Have you ever seen a samba session without a woman? It gets stiff. (Mãe Dora d'Oyá, 2020)

In the Iyalorisa's view, it is not possible to think the Candomblé without samba, vice versa. She remembers that it was in a terreiro of Candomblé that the first manifestation of samba emerged: “samba comes from the kimbundu term *semba*, a word brought by the enslaved black people from Africa to Brazil. The samba roots and origins are embedded in the *Xirê*¹⁰ of the Candomblé. And allow me to say more: samba is the profane party of the Candomblé”.

Tia Ciata has the greatest importance for the formation of the Brazilian cultural identity. She woke up in the people the memory of what was put to sleep by the slavery process. She brought to surface the self-esteem, the voice, the dance, the dress code and the love for our ancestors. For me, Tia Ciata is the great ancestor of samba. The great *Agbá*¹¹. (Mãe Dora d'Oyá, 2020)

Resistance seems to be a word that has always been alongside the Afro-Brazilian cultures of samba and the Candomblé. Roberto Moura, in *Tia Ciata e a Pequena África no Rio de Janeiro* (1995) – freely translated as “Tia Ciata and the Little Africa in Rio de Janeiro” – remembers how the black cultural manifestations were treated by the State. “There was a lot of police attention to black people meetings: both samba and Candomblé would be objects of continuous persecution, seen as dangerous things, as primitive marks that should be extinguished” (Moura, 1995, p.99).

In Rio de Janeiro it was necessary to go to the police to notify and explain that a samba session would happen in someone's house before the event; and, in the State of Bahia, the terreiros of Candomblé had to request an authorization from the Police Stations to practice their liturgy and celebrate their parties. These authorizations were mandatory until 1976 (Mascarenhas, 2016).

Despite some achievements, black people and the insiders of the Afro-Brazilian religions saw, in recent years, the institutional weakening of the National Secretariat for Racial Equality Promotion Policies and the Palmares Foundation – two important Federal agencies of protection policies for the Afro-Brazilian cultural manifestations.

The time has also transformed the structure of samba. The capitalist promotion in the musical atmosphere has placed men as protagonists of this history that, as we saw, is marked by the female presence. A century later, little is known about the Tias of the Little Africa in

¹⁰ Circular dance responsible for invoking the Orixás in a Candomblé ceremony.

¹¹ *Agbá* is the term in Yoruba language that means “the older woman”.



Rio de Janeiro, as the role played by each one of them (Velloso, 1990, p.207) in the consolidation of the urban samba. Besides that, it is also evident that the work of Dona Ivone Lara, Jovelina Pérola Negra, Clementina de Jesus, Alcione and Leci Brandão – among many other samba artists – gets a minor highlight when compared to the work of male composers and singers.

Conclusion

The possibility to develop paid activities as the selling of street food (as the acarajés¹², sweets, etc.) created a category called “partido alto” women, formed by free black women who, with the incomes of their sales, bought the manumission and emancipation documents and provided dignified funerals and other social actions to their communities.

The prominent position and the influence of these women went beyond the social sphere, reaching the cultural atmosphere. Tia Ciata was a black woman, “partido alto”, active member of the *Boa Morte* Sisterhood and Iyakekere of a big terreiro of Candomblé in Rio de Janeiro. These factors, added to the charisma and the aggregating power of the women from Bahia living in Rio, transformed her into an essential figure in the history of samba.

Other Tias (as Bebiana, Mônica, Carmen, Perciliana and Amélia¹³), contemporary to Tia Ciata, also played important roles in the socio-cultural relations of Rio de Janeiro in the early 20th century. However, it was Tia Ciata who was marked as the matriarch of samba, responsible for uniting Donga, João da Baiana, Sinhô and Pixinguinha, among other masters of the Brazilian popular music.

To realize that 100 years ago a black woman, from the Brazilian northeast, member of the Candomblé religion, was able to accomplish such significant achievements for the narrative of the Brazilian music, encourages us to imagine a future marked by the diversity of religions, races, genders and classes.

The death of Tia Ciata, in 1924, was the end of a cycle, but not the end of a trajectory. Samba has multiplied throughout Rio de Janeiro and all over Brazil, and it is known that in this process this cultural manifestation was always protected and encouraged by black women within the principles and knowledges of the Candomblé.

More than a thousand kilometers away from Rio de Janeiro and a century apart from Tia Ciata, Mãe Dora d'Oyá makes her home, the *Ilê Axé T'Ojú Labá*, a place to honor samba and the Candomblé. The terreiro, located on the surroundings of Brasília, is a place for religious ceremonies, but also is the birthplace of cultural manifestations and projects in the city. There is religion and there is samba – which is still a way to pray.

¹² Acarajé is served as both as religious offering to the gods in the Candomblé religion and as street food in Brazil. The dish was brought by enslaved communities from West Africa, and it is made by cooked and mashed cowpead that are seasoned with salt and chopped onions molded into the shape of a large scone, deep-fried in the traditional dendê oil, derived from the fruit of the oil palms.

¹³ Around 50 years after the contributions of Tia Ciata, the samba in Rio de Janeiro was organized around other Tias, such as Tia Vicentina (eternalized in the song “Pagode do Vavá”, of Paulinho da Viola) and Tia Surica, both considered bastions of Portela, a school and samba guild in the North Zone of Rio de Janeiro. However, this chapter in the history of Brazilian music will be studied and detailed in another publication.



Member of the *Boa Morte* Sisterhood, the group Brazilian Women of Axé¹⁴, singer and songwriter, Mãe Dora d'Oyá is a black and female leadership in several spheres – just like Tia Ciata was in her context. It is possible to see Mãe Dora d'Oyá as the continuation and the maintenance of the power established by the great Ciata d'Oxum. Their trajectories prove that there is no Candomblé without samba, and no samba without Candomblé.

Despite all the hate speeches that try to be normalized in the country, black women of Axé leave as their legacy not only their faith and cultural celebrations. Women like Ciata d'Oxum and Dora d'Oyá have taught resistance practices that enhance our ancestry and highlight the value of the memory for a community. As the popular expression says: “whoever forgets where he came from does not know where he is going”.

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¹⁴ Political, social and cultural movement of women from Afro-Brazilian religions, headquartered in Bahia, with centers in several states of Brazil.





DISSIDENT PARENTING: CARE PROVIDED BY TRANS* MEN IN BRAZIL AND PORTUGAL¹

Milena do Carmo Cunha dos Santos²

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses the implications that dissident parenting, represented by the care provided by trans* men, can have in the transformation of a heterosexual and cis normative family model. The reception of these experiences goes through legislative and cultural transformations in society and this analysis points to the state of the art of regulations in Brazil and Portugal in relation to the theme. A trans* care ethics, in turn, advocates the de-generization of care practices and highlights the democratic and inclusive potential of this plurality.

KEYWORDS:

Trans men; gender identity; parenting; trans* care ethics.

Introduction

Politics, practice, and the experience lived while trans*³ have caused the deconstruction of gender as a fixed binary category in the social, cultural, political, and legal spheres (Platero, 2014). However, the portraying of trans* identities as mental illness in medical textbooks has persisted since the 1970s, pathologizing them and impairing their social recognition (Lionço, 2009) based on standardized medical diagnoses in countries like Portugal and Brazil.

On the other hand, the movement for the depathologization of these identities demands the re-signification of gender transitions in the field of Human Rights (Davy, Sorlie & Schwend, 2018), equity and integrality of health care (Almeida & Murta, 2013; ILGA, 2016a). In addition, it proposes that the intersectional specificities of cultural contexts should be considered in the construction of social policies and research (Bento, 2010, 2017; Pelúcio, 2012), thought based on the promotion of intimate, sexual, and reproductive citizenship (Plummer, 2003) and politics of difference (Young, 1990). These initiatives are capable of deepening the belonging of these individuals in society, demonstrating the potential of forming alliances (Hines & Santos, 2018). In this sense, the questioning of a binary epistemology reflects the multiplicity of experiences lived (Preciado, 2018) by trans* people and re-signifies social roles and categories of male and female.

Recent changes in the Portuguese and Brazilian legislative frameworks have brought changes to the *Lei de Identidade de Gênero* (Gender Identity Law) (Santos, 2018) and to the civil registry of trans* people (Richter, 2018). Observing the international scarcity of studies on this theme (Hines, 2017) and the fact that it is unprecedented in the contexts of Sociology in Portugal and Brazil, my object of analysis aims to expand scientific production in this field and contribute to LGBTQIA+ social movements in the understanding of exercised parenting

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³ Here I use * aiming to include people with other non-normative gender identities or practices.

by trans* men who become pregnant and make it possible for the “father” to live the reproductive role socially attributed to women.

To this cultural link between sex and behavior and gender to genitalia (Foucault, 2001; Rubin, 2003), defining the male by the presence of the penis and the female by the presence of the vagina, it is offered a perspective of reproduction not linked to bodies and identities (Haraway, 2013). The destructuralization of these stereotypes creates performative subversions (Butler, 2017) and ensures that there is no essence on what it is to be a man or a woman, except for social constructions. It is not just an exchange of places between father and mother, but the construction of new places and meanings based on diversity: experiences, family arrangements, possibilities (Medrado & Lyra, 2002).

In this context, I seek to analyze how the legislative and lawful panoramas applied in Brazil and Portugal recognize and protect the gender identities of these men, promoting rights and welcoming demands. And also, how this parenting can be exercised based on an ethics of care (Gilligan, 1982; Tronto, 1993), which makes the individual and collective responsibilities capable of overcoming biological arguments, deconstructing traditional family processes and rebuilding them based on in this variability of experiences (Dierckx & Platero, 2018).

Pathologizing and Depathologizing Trans* Identities

Diagnoses of transsexuality have been essential for trans* people to have access to the right of health in many countries. In the United States, where guides such as the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) and International Classification of Diseases (ICD) have been developed, a psychiatric report is required to confirm the condition so that patients can have treatment subsidized by providers of healthcare services. Even in countries that offer health care subsidized by the State, the medical report also became necessary.

What is observed as a pattern in these documents is that, despite their singularities in dealing with the issue and their uses in different areas, they present the multiplicity of gender identities as pathologies. Basing diagnoses in a predetermined background prevents gender expressions from being distinct from the heteronormative pattern, although feminist research itself has already elaborated that behaviors are not inherently male or female, nor fixed, being transformed through time and space (Lorber, 1994).

Furthermore, associating transsexuality with “dysphoria”, “disorder”, “incongruity” relates it to the obligation to present suffering, anguish or discomfort, making other non-dysphoric identities that require definitive procedures invisible. Even when it comes to suffering, there are social variants that influence the lives of trans* people in a society that is regulated by a binary gender pattern and that, therefore, some diagnoses of dysphoria can result in false positives or false negatives.

One of the effects of this regulation for trans* people seeking health care is the fact that they need to perform in front of health professionals and postures that meet the pre-determined clinical categories and respond to a heterosexual matrix that naturalizes social gender roles (Butler, 2017), reducing naturalness and masking the countless possibilities of existence. There is now the “correct” and the “incorrect” to be shown to guarantee access to citizenship.

The binary perspective excludes the possibility of a debate to think about the ‘man’ and ‘woman’ categories. That is, the absence of a gender perspective when updating these manuals,



as well as implementing laws and policies, makes this population, by defining itself as trans* “serve the rest of society to maintain their security in their condition and divert attention away from the political dimension of the conflict between gender norms” (Platero, 2008, p. 126).

New approaches based on the demands of trans* people brought the debate closer to a perspective of rejection of the pathologization of gender variation and to a proposal for complete de-medicalization and diagnostic reform. Since 2009, every year during October, the movement Stop Trans Pathologization! proposes themes that can guide activities promoted by organizations, activists, and networks around the world. In 2016, there were more than 120 activities in 47 cities around the world and, in 2017, more than 410 activism groups and networks indicated their support for the movement (Davy et al., 2018, p. 20).

For activists, the most effective way for the effective inclusion of trans* people in society is to completely remove the connection between psychiatry and access to transition processes, adopting a human rights perspective within the health structure. Although diagnostic manuals such as the ICD or the DSM have shown a concern to disassociate trans* experiences from a stigmatization that may result from them, keeping them pathologized to guarantee financial access to transition processes, tends to have the opposite effect (Davy, 2015).

However, there is no consensus among trans* people regarding depathologization, as they fear losing access to state-subsidized health care (Lionço, 2009). The movement’s counter-argument shows that state subsidies are not lost due to divergent gender identity not being considered a disease, precisely because its protection is based on the panorama of human rights, pointing out that pathologization is considered a violation when opposed to international agendas, such as the Yogyakarta Principles (2007) or the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UN, 1948/2009).

In this perspective, if «human beings of all sexual orientations and gender identities are entitled to the full enjoyment of all human rights» (Principles of Yogyakarta, 2007, p. 12), any difficulty in access can be considered a violation of the treaty. In addition, both the requirement for diagnosis and the occurrence of compulsory medical procedures represent an affront to the rights to human dignity, self-determination, bodily integrity, and protection against medical abuse. The defense of the “right to the highest attainable standard of health” (p. 25) can itself be a strategy for guaranteeing access to health care in the countries that are signatories to the treaties.

Depathologization is not only focused on the transition from one gender to another, but fundamentally to “the falsehood of these opposite poles and points to a plural and diverse reality” (STP, 2012). It is in an attempt to erase fluid identities that “a gender binary model of citizenship continues to marginalize both the experiences and subjectivities of those who cannot or will not be defined as “man” or “woman”, and, as such, is unable to account for the full spectrum of gender diversity” (Hines, 2007, p. 83).

Therefore, the perspective of self-determination is the reference for the development of policies and actions related to the trans* population, as it is through the choices made exclusively by the claimants and guaranteed by the State that access to intimate citizenship will be guaranteed (Plummer, 2003). This is, in this light, represented by the rights related to your choices in relation to your bodies, emotions, and relationships, «those matters which relate to our most intimate desires, pleasures and ways of being in the world» (Weeks, 1998, p. 121).



In addition, all other identities that are not limited to female or male tend to maintain the debate around their inclusion in legal and medical settings. According to Hines (2007), these identities will offer a challenge to the political objectives of assimilation, «signposting a radical politics of gender transformation in which ‘difference’ is positioned as a site of importance and celebration in its own right» (p. 97). Illustrating this conception, it can be pointed out as a result of the self-determination approach that goes beyond dualistic notions of body and mind and the association between gender roles and identities, the progress in legislation represented by the lack of diagnoses for legal recognition and access health care.

Legislations: in what have Brazil and Portugal progressed around trans* cause?

Contrary to Portugal, Brazil does not have a Gender Identity Law, only Bill 5.002 / 2013, popularly known as the João W. Nery⁴ Law. Authored by Congresswoman Erika Kokay (PT/SP) and former Congressman Jean Wyllys (PSOL/RJ), the bill was filed in January 2019, shortly after the Presidential Inauguration of Jair Bolsonaro. The majority of the Brazilian National Congress, both in the Chamber of Deputies and in the Senate, has long been composed of conservative party acronyms diametrically opposed to any and all progressive agenda and defense of social rights of populations in greater vulnerability.

But it wasn't always like that. In the 2000s, with the participation of civil society, the Federal Government instituted the *Brasil sem Homofobia – Programa de Combate à Violência e à Discriminação contra LGBT e de Promoção da Cidadania Homossexual* (Brazil without Homophobia - Program to Combat Violence and Discrimination against LGBT and to Promote Homosexual Citizenship) (Ministério da Saúde-Brasil, 2004), elaborated by *Secretaria Especial de Direitos Humanos* (SEDH) of the Republic's Presidency. In the same year, the Ministry of Health established the *Comitê Técnico de Saúde da População LGBT* (LGBT Population Health Technical Committee) in order to formulate a national health policy for the LGBT population. During the formulation process, the 13th National Health Conference (2007) was held, which included sexual orientation and gender identity in the analysis of the social determination of health (Ministério da Saúde-Brasil, 2013).

Also in 2007, aligned with the objectives of Brazil Without Homophobia Program, the National Plan for Confronting AIDS and STDs among Gays, MSM and Transvestites (CONASS & CONASEMS, 2007), was established, which pointed out specific strategies for reducing transmission and adequate treatment for this population.

In 2008, the *SUS Transexualizador Process* was implemented, which ensures that the demands for procedures in trans* people who wish to do so in the public health system are met (Ministério da Saúde-Brasil, 2008). The year 2009 was marked by the possibility of printing the social name on the SUS Card together with the civil name, ensuring the use of the preferred name (Ministério da Saúde-Brasil, 2009).

Dates in 2018 the historical decision and one of the most important measures for the trans* population in Brazil. Between March and August, the STF and the CNJ initiated the rules for authorizing the change of name and gender in the civil registry of people born in

⁴ João W. Nery was a trans* man, an important activist and writer who died in October 2018. Author of “Viagem Solitária: memória de um transexual 30 anos depois”, he was recognized as the first trans* man to undergo surgical body modifications, when the practice was a crime in Brazil.



Brazilian territory, specifically benefiting transsexual people and, subsequently, expanding the range for transgender (STF, 2018). Although some certificates for rectification must be presented, it is facultative to present a medical report or psychological opinion that attests to the condition of trans* person, as well as a report that proves the performance of sex reassignment surgery (CNJ, 2018).

In Portugal, until 1995, in article nº 55 of the Portuguese Code of Ethics, there was a ban on medical interventions for the reassignment of sex, and from that date onwards, there was the possibility of surgical intervention and the completion of the transition process in the National Health Service (SNS) (Hines & Santos, 2018). In addition to surgical procedures, multidisciplinary staff are now available for hormonal and psychological issues (ILGA, 2008; Ordem dos Médicos, 1995).

In relation to Portuguese legislation, since 2003 sexual orientation has been included in the Labor Code and, since 2015, also gender identity, especially with regard to the right to equal access, discrimination, and harassment (Lei nº 28 de 2015 in PGDL, 2015). The registration of the first category to the Penal Code, on the other hand, would be done in 2007 in a revision after the great national commotion for the murder of Gisberta Salce Júnior⁵, passing sexual orientation to a particular motivation for discrimination (Art. 240) and in crimes against life or hate crimes (Art. 132º). Gender identity was introduced in 2013 (Código Penal, 2013).

Regarding the Constitution of the Portuguese Republic, the term sexual orientation was added to the 13th article “Principle of Equality” in 2004, although there is still no mention of gender identity (Constituição da República Portuguesa, 2005). In relation to educational standards, the Student Statute and School Ethics has been in effect since 2012, establishing gender identity as a category suspected of discrimination and, therefore, subject to protection (PGDL, 2012). In 2017, the Portuguese government guaranteed compliance with this measure for education, health, and justice institutions.

Following this panorama, the measure considered the most important for the trans* population dates back to 2011: the promulgation of the Gender Identity Law (Lei nº 7 in PGDL, 2011). Until then, there was no specific legislation for changing name and sex in the documentation, although there was also no ban. Regarding the choice of names, the country has a peculiarity: there is a list of possibilities in the Index of Names, and the names chosen cannot raise doubts about the person’s gender, with few options for ambiguous names (Santos & Santos, 2017). The Law makes it compulsory to present the “diagnosis of gender identity disorder”, although it does not require sterilization or other treatments as a legal requirement for recognition. In addition, it ensures that unions and marriages established prior to rectification are not dissolved, in view of the approval of Law 9/2010, which allows same-sex marriage in the country (PGDL, 2010).

Although at the time it was considered one of the most advanced and coincident with the Yogyakarta Principles (2007), activists suggest improvements related to the reduction of bureaucratic barriers and age for gender self-determination from the age of 16, as well as the extension of the benefit for people from other countries living in Portugal, the ban on medical interventions in people born intersex, among others (Hines & Santos, 2018, p. 45-46).

⁵ Gisberta’s body was found at the bottom of a 15-meter well located in an unfinished building on Avenida Fernão Magalhães, in Porto. Trans woman, homeless, HIV positive and immigrant, was continuously inflicted aggression and rape for 3 days by a group of 14 teens between 12 and 16 years old. She was thrown into a well, where she ended up dying drowned (ILGA, 2016b).



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The degendering of parenting promoted by single-parent families reshaped the family and, in particular, the male gender roles, allowing the creation of alternative models (Brinamen & Mitchell, 2008), with regard to the most varied ways of obtaining this descent. This reconfiguration promoted by people who, historically, occupied places on the sidelines and were not represented by the rules, resulted in new opportunities and models also for non-marginalized people (Benson et al., 2005).

The possibility of playing roles and tasks more appropriate for each person in the relationship - and not culturally determined for each gender - tends to be responsible for the greatest satisfaction in the relationship (Gianino, 2008). The bond starts to happen through emotional connection and mutual care between people, transcending biology and also minimizing the importance of differences in color, race, religion, sexual orientation, and gender identity.

This emotional involvement that shapes parenting is relevant because it illustrates how parents can become significant emotional sources in family life (Brinamen & Mitchell, 2008), despite the social role they should play in a traditional heteronormative arrangement. In addition, the bond strengthened from the beginning is maintained in case of a future couple separation (Promundo et al., 2015).

There are many dimensions to be taken into account regarding plural family configurations, especially those with trans* people in their composition. Lucas Platero Mendéz and Esther Arjonilla (2017) point out the need to bring light to their positive experiences in life choices, relationships, building family bonds, and caring relationships.

Regarding their practices, family compositions with trans* people have a better division of care tasks, gender roles are less segmented, and education is more respectful of differences, allowing greater freedom in experiencing one's own sexuality (p. 45). On the other hand, there is often a feeling of lack of support and encouragement to experience the reproductive phase in a different context of the heteronorm.

In the specific case of trans* men who became pregnant after going through the gender transition process, there is the aggravating factor that pregnancy is culturally seen as an intrinsically female process, linked not only to biology, but also to an expression of female gender. What happens is that trans* men can be considered "confused", or even delegitimized as men, as if getting pregnant and "being a man" were incompatible (p. 75).

The process of having descendants and exercising care, however, can expand the meaning of the experiences of trans* men, taking into account that meeting the demands of a child removes urgency of specific issues that they go through during the claiming of their identity. The parenting experience can even be a protective factor against suicides and act to improve mental health in the adult trans* population (Moody & Smith, 2013; Wierckx et al., 2012), as well as the socialization promoted by groups of parents in a similar situation (Schacher, Auerbach & Silverstein, 2005; Platero Mendéz & Arjonilla, 2017).

Acting in the transformation of the binary structure of society, the ethics of care arising from the relationships of affection of trans* men who exercise parental functions has the potential to weaken the heterosexual and cis normative logic of the patriarchal system on several fronts. Dissident parenting proves that, in intimate relationships of mutual care and support, it is not only through nuclear families, nor the exclusive care of the mother – and women in general – that the continuation of the human species takes place (Gilligan, 2013).



The understanding of care as a task for women, however, only becomes naturalized from the moment it is internalized as a structure of domination. The acceptance of this model causes the disqualification of the characteristics attributed to women and care, therefore, becomes devalued (Gilligan, 2013).

In contrast, in a democratic context, the ethics of care is a human ethics (p. 50). Care is a capacity that can be developed by all human beings, based on the relationship with others in a model that values interdependence (Tronto, 1993; Kühnen, 2014). Everyone needs to be taken care of to some extent and everyone can take care, within their means.

Conclusion

In this article, I take the perspective of the ethics of trans* care as a tool to subvert the patriarchal model, by asserting that care is the responsibility of all people and, therefore, should be de-gendered (Gelabert, 2015). A fertile ground in which such ethics can flourish is one of intimate relationships, especially in family arrangements such as those presented here.

For this panorama to develop, it is important to take into account the transformation of the approach in relation to the trans* population and their reproductive capacity, disseminating information that becomes subsidies for professionals from the most diverse areas who will come into contact with this family, either through children and adolescents or even in the health care processes of adults.

In addition, to be able to minimize the health implications from a perspective of self-determination of trans* people who, populating the various intersections of which they are part or are on the border, can avoid their dehumanization or any justification for eliminating or maintaining a precarious life and less livable (Butler, 2011, p. 13).

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BETWEEN OPPRESSION AND AFFIRMATION IN THE (IN)CONFORMITY OF A THREATENED DEMOCRACY: NOTIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF LGB FAMILIES¹

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Summary

The family has evolved throughout history, beginning as a concept of categorization and social organization, going through traditional conception during modernity, and today is on its way to a post-modern vision, where it includes multiple forms of organization, composition and operation (Ibarra, 2017; Stacey, 1990). The construction of the notion of the family is also closely linked to the products of political institutions and democratic states with representation and places of power. The democratic crisis is today strongly linked to conservative and neo-liberal political currents, and therefore to family narratives as a conservative institution. The main objective of this study is to explore the conceptions and experiences of people living in LGB families as members of these families, taking into account political and socio-cultural influences. To this end, the focus for data collection was based on LGB families, their notions of family, and the experiences and social challenges experienced. Eight semi-structured individual interviews were conducted with people who consider themselves members of this type of family. The procedure for analysing the corpus was the Braun and Clarke Thematic Analysis (2006), and the following themes were identified: (1) (in)conformity; and (2) between oppression and affirmation. The narratives collected allow us to highlight the visibility that the LGB population is giving to new forms of family, reconceptualizing them in a more diverse and inclusive way. It is also reflected on the influence of power systems on the social acceptance of these families, specifically in a democratic social context that is not representative of the community and which poses ideological threats to their recognition, leading to various situations of oppression of their free expression of identity as LGB people and/or families.

Keywords:

LGB families; family diversity; post-modernity; threatened democracy

Introduction

Since 2002, according to the World Health Organization,

«the concept of the family cannot be limited to blood ties, marriage, sexual partnership or adoption. Family is the group whose relationships are based on trust, mutual support and a common destiny».

However, the notions and experiences of people in everyday life still seem to be partly «stuck» to a traditional family, oppressing deviations from this pattern and keeping social organization away from the affirmation of multiplicity and true inclusion.

Over time, social, cultural and economic circumstances have led to the establishment of the traditional family model of father, mother and children. However, in recent decades,

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the constant geographical mobility required to obtain employment or career progression, the mobilization, self-organization and empowerment of minorities, and subsequent legislative changes, have called into question the traditional model and the emergence of new forms of being family (Ibarra, 2017). This possibility of different forms of family organisation and expression led to a new concept - that of the postmodern family, stating that the social interactions of the relationships referred to as family no longer have only one format of existence (Stacey, 1990).

The notion of family is also related to and in itself the product of political circumstances. Democracy can be conceptualised as a long-term historical process (Gerring, Bond, Barndt & Moreno, 2005). Theoretically, in a democracy, the less privileged sectors of society would be able to better organise themselves and defend their interests (Beer, 2009), but developments of permanent power contestation (Geissel, 2015) and political, social and cultural constructs influence this representation, especially when threats arise. Today, the democratic crisis is closely linked to conservative and neoliberal political currents, and therefore to family narratives as a conservative institution. In this sense, self-determinations and sexual freedoms closely correlated with the principles of democracy are also threatened and perceived as destructive of the status quo (Blühdorn, 2020).

Family diversity encompasses a wide range of characteristics or dimensions in which families vary, which include social class, ethnicity, race, gender expression or sexual orientation, the latter being the focus of this study (van Eeden-Moorefield & Demo, 2007). Thus, in relation to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) families and their notions of family, a recent study by Hull and Ortyl (2018) highlights the importance of the «chosen family», which encompasses people beyond blood ties (friends, neighbours and ex-partners, for example), also stressing that their meanings are as conservative as they are revolutionary, and that they value functional rather than structural characteristics to define the family. Besides personal perceptions, on a social level homonormativity can be considered the collective influence and reproduction of heteronormative family and relational values for and in the LGBT population (Richardson, 2004).

In Portugal, since joining the European Union (EU), a path of awareness and affirmation of the rights of the LGBT population has been initiated, and since 2010 relevant changes have emerged for the legal expression of LGBT families and homoparenthood, such as the law on adoption and same-sex marriage. However, it is important to bear in mind that legal advances do not reflect an inclusive society or a non-oppressive cultural system, leading to the LGBT population still feeling discriminated against, including by state institutions (Oliveira & Nogueira, 2010). In fact, research has found a higher level of stress in homoparental families than normal (Vecho & Schneider, 2005), which indicates that the LGBT population and their families face additional challenges in their daily lives. It is therefore relevant to produce scientific knowledge in order to promote informed social responses to the specific needs of this population (Gato & Fontaine, 2016).

Empirical Study

Thus, the objectives of this study are: to understand what are the notions of family among LGB individuals who consider themselves to be part of a LGB family, and whether this category



represents an important piece of their identity (Goal 1); to understand more comprehensively how they live in society as an LGB family, reflecting on the main challenges, benefits and/or impacts that mark their social belonging (Goal 2); to analyse the indicators of change in the social, cultural and political dimensions of our society (Goal 3); to understand whether the concept of family can be transformed into one that is more inclusive and diverse (Goal 4).

A total of eight Portuguese citizens over the age of 18 who characterised their social grouping as a LGB family were interviewed for the purposes of this study. The main objective of this study was to explore people's experiences, taking into account their inherent subjectivity and thus being an exploratory study, so that a qualitative approach was considered the most appropriate. The qualitative methodology affirms the complexity of the socio-cultural world and highlights the importance of symbolic experience, thus being a key tool for understanding social groups such as LGB families.

As far as the technique of collecting information is concerned, the interview was chosen because it is the richest way of collecting information that allows to explore the objectives of this study. Participants were approached for convenience, using the «snowball» method to attract more volunteers, and seeking gender parity and multiplicity of formats and variations of LGB families. Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis was the data analysis procedure chosen for this research as it allowed the identification, analysis and communication of data by patterns (themes), describing and organizing the data in a rich way. In addition, the author positions herself before a reflective/organic Big Q-type thematic analysis, i.e. one that is related to a qualitative analysis framework and that prioritises the fluidity of the process in the interpretation of the results, which is congruent with the theoretical options of the study at the level of philosophy and research format. These characteristics are fundamental for the coherence between the method and the theoretical bases of this work, which is very much associated with social constructivism and seeks to know and explore multiple meanings and discourses.

Narrative Analysis and Interpretation

The thematic analysis of the narratives resulting from the semi-structured interviews resulted in two main themes - (In)conformity and Between Oppression and Affirmation. The first, (In)Conformity, explores the notions and members encompassed in the concept of the family. In the analysis of the sub-theme inconformity, it is possible to conclude that for people from LGB families, the notion of family is open and emerges as a place of human diversity and a celebration of the union of people who share something together, in addition to blood ties or legal commitments. Even in conformity, the participants' notions of family continue to focus on more functional aspects of human relations, continuing to question the structuralism underlying the traditional family. Within (in)conformities, the LGB population is giving visibility to new forms of conceptualizing the family, extending it to a more diverse and inclusive concept. One of the interviewees expresses an example of a diverse and non-conforming notion of family, since it focuses on anti-structure:

(...)... and there are multiple types of family that can range from one and their dogs and their cats and their birds, to one more and their dogs and their cats and their birds and



maybe sprout, which is yours by blood or adopted, I don't know, there can be a family of people that are not even connected, just friends living together, and that can be a family, I say. Definition, I think there is no definition of family, just as there is no definition for love. It is an open concept, I think.

194 | In this second example, a reflection that presents a notion of the family on the norme since it praises more functional and universal aspects associated with the family, yet still diverse and open:

Family are people who take care of each other, who love each other or like each other, and who are part of each other's day-to-day life, deep down they are a constant part of someone's life and they basically take care of each other and are there for each other regardless of everything else. This is family.

Between oppression and affirmation emerges as the second theme when analysing the collective and personal experiences of those interviewed, taking into account the social messages imposed. This theme allows for a broader understanding of the expressions and forms of oppression and affirmation in the lives of LGB people, highlighting that their experience mainly entails challenges and barriers to their identification as families. This fact is also related to the heterosexual subjugating values and rules that prevail, and the population is also aware of this effect. In this context, the inexistence of legal protection emerged as one of the main factors of social fragility, but the importance of promoting accessibility to diversity as a promoter of true social change is also addressed. Furthermore, designation as a family and its consideration as «normal» reflect the importance of this concept as a social organization for this population. In short, the influence of power systems on their social acceptance is clear to the participants, expressing these various situations of oppression of their free expression of identity as a LGBT person and/or family. This is followed by an experience of oppression and homophobia on the part of one participant, followed by an affirmative narrative of the LGB family space:

There were many challenges because of homophobia. Moreover, this family started before marriage and adoption, which are recent, very recent. Then it went through a period of post-approval of the marriage law. But I would say that there are more challenges, I don't see many advantages.

My [LGB] family is, like many families fortunately, a group of people that love has brought together, that responsibility has held together, and that joy, madness if we want, makes us share smiles.

Final Thoughts

The resulting themes are both opposite stages of a continuum of social analysis of the phenomena, and it is interesting to think of them as a spectrum. Both for the first theme, between non-conformity and conformity, and for the second, between oppression and affirmation, the experiences of individuals and their families can be interpreted taking these



two notions into consideration. However, it is important to think that these experiences are not all of the same intensity and form, and can therefore be distributed as a continuum. The importance of considering people's experiences as fluid between concepts rather than as «categorised» into distant poles is stressed.

The dichotomy of (in)conformity and oppression/affirmation can also be interpreted as an example of the situation of LGB families in Portugal, since they are also between acceptance and vulnerability, determined by the growth of legal conditions and the simultaneous resistance to social change. Faced with this analysis, it is important to reflect on the urgency of the response to oppression and vulnerability, so that the path is one of affirmation and acceptance, never forgetting that between conformity and non-conformity, the most important thing is their full, multiple and secure expression.

The results also show that, increasingly, the family is summed up in its affective component, necessary for emotional balance, support and stability. The family no longer seems to be the institution necessary for the social positioning that determines who we are, where it has to be normative in order to result in integration, but the group in which we support ourselves affectively. The path seems to lead to a family that is less and less institutional, and more and more affective, however, there are still barriers to its open and ostentatious expression in diversity, thus reinforcing the focus of future action. Silva and Smart (1999), reinforce the idea that, contrary to the interpretations that insist that family ties are increasingly weakened, families continue as a crucial relational entity, and play a fundamental role in the intimate life and connections between people.

It is also important to reflect carefully on the political and social influence on family expression, as highlighted by the participants. In this context, Silva and Smart (1999) argue that although personal choices seem increasingly autonomous and fluid, they are in fact closely linked to social conditions that continue to produce tensions and anomalies. There is a lack of congruence between policies based on how families should be and how they actually operate, yet this does not mean that the path is the abolition of institutional support for family life. Rather, it is support from political structures, from the various forms of family experiences, that can improve their autonomous choices to «be family». For this, «it is necessary to take seriously the fluidity and change in family arrangements, rather than seeing change itself as something dangerous and undesirable» (Silva & Smart, 1999, p. 2).

One can also reflect on the influence of the role of these LGB families in changing the family paradigm in Portugal and the West, in addition to the other generalized movements that organize adult personal life around very diverse models, and that distance themselves from marriage and the constitution of a traditional family nucleus, as the data previously presented in this work regarding marriage, divorce, single-parent families and births outside marriage point out. Perhaps the paradigm shift is due to causal relations in both directions, i.e., that this widespread, hetero movement in the population towards family diversity also leads to greater acceptance of LGB families. This idea is supported by Weeks, Donovan and Heaphy (1999) who suggest that there are new LGB models, similar to patterns of rapidly changing heterosexual lives, which does not diminish the importance of these new hetero narratives. Rather, the new narratives reinforce changes in family notions in a broad way.

The present work would not be complete without a reference to the (in)equality issues to which the path of LGB families is inherently linked. Accordingly, the relationship of the fa-



mily with societies has always been closely related to constitutional demands for equality, explains Mayeri (2017). Over time, the failure of the courts to recognise claims based on intersectional experiences has led to far-reaching and lasting consequences for equality law. Thus, according to the author, constitutional protection of traditional family status ignores broader visions of individual freedom and family pluralism, taking no account of racial, economic or even gender differences. Societies have a role in constitutional claims for sexual freedom, and it is important for the State to play an active role in supporting parenthood, co-parenthood, and caring for the extended family, regardless of family structure or marital status. Thus, in many ways political institutions influence the construction of social categories of family in society, which is now more than ever at stake by the state of democracy under threat, and thus sexual and family freedom is also under threat.

Reflection on the main conclusions drawn for practical application was, from the outset, one of the most important objectives of this study. First of all, it contributes to the growing understanding of family notions as multiple and open, valuing their functionality as a support network and disregarding their rigid structure. It also enables a better understanding of the challenges facing LGB families in society, understanding experiences of internalised, socially subtle or direct and explicit discrimination that contribute to an oppressive context. The exclusion of the LGB family in the historical context and in today's global political economy also portrays its role in social relations as heterogeneous and controversial (Spivak, 2010), being important the promotion and true inclusion and visibility in all contexts. The narratives of the participants stress the importance of this accessibility in services such as schools and hospitals, which can mean real environments of fragility for people. Regarding the Portuguese context, the positive path over the last few years is acknowledged, stressing that there are still more steps to become a truly inclusive place, as legal changes are not always reflected in social change.

This study, by collecting the narratives of the LGB population from their family, personal and social experiences, gives the floor to this population and in this way hopes to contribute to the adjustment of social responses to their real needs. As far as the author is aware, it is the first work to investigate the experiences of these families in Portugal, providing an opportunity to better understand the emerging situations, largely resulting from the recent legal changes in the country.

I conclude with a reflection by Morgan (1999, p. 16):

The family can often be seen as a primary colour, interesting in itself, but in a limited way. However, the true meaning of family is only achieved by combining it with other colours, resulting in multiple variations.

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PERFORMING GENDERED POWER: MEDIA DISCOURSES ABOUT ANGELA MERKEL IN TIMES OF CRISIS¹

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ABSTRACT

Angela Merkel is a figure placed at a point of intersection that is particularly conducive to understanding the interaction between the categories of power and gender, being the leader of one of Europe's most powerful countries, for the last fifteen years, in a period marked by a succession of crises in the E.U., and, at the same time, being one of the few women* in this position of power. This article proposes an exploration of media representations of Angela Merkel in two Portuguese media outlets, in key electoral moments, between 2011 and 2017. Through a qualitative analysis (Bardin, 2007) of these representations, we were able to identify three frames, that interact and combine with one another, illustrating the value of intersectional empirical approaches (Hancock, 2007): gender, power and national origin.

Keywords:

Gender, Power, Angela Merkel, Intersectionality

Merkel: at the intersection between gender, power and national origin

In the past fifteen years, the German government has been led by chancellor Angela Merkel, who, being the leader of one of the most powerful (if not the most powerful) countries in the European Union, has played a central part in the European political space during some of its most challenging crises, namely the Eurozone economic crisis, and the so-called migration/refugee crisis. During these periods, particularly marked by internal divisions in the E.U., especially between Northern and Southern Europe, discourses about power become more apparent and conducive to the exploration of ideologies (Hall, 2016) not only about power, but also, in relation to the role played by Merkel, about gender.

An approach focused on the representations of Angela Merkel in the Portuguese media benefits from an analysis under the paradigm of intersectionality, since "Merkel is not simply a female Chancellor, she is also an eastern, Protestant, scientifically-trained CDU *Bundeskanzlerin*" (Davidson-Schmich, 2011, p. 326). "Intersectionality" is a term coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989), in the field of critical legal studies, as a proposal for addressing issues of exclusion, namely in US antidiscrimination laws, that marginalize the intersectional experiences, of racism and sexism, of black women. Although it is, usually, applied in order to explore multiple subordinations or oppressions, as a paradigm of empirical research, the "term "intersectionality" refers to *both* a normative theoretical argument *and* an approach to conducting empirical research that emphasizes the interaction of categories of difference

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(including but not limited to race, gender, class, and sexual orientation)” (Hancock, 2007, pp. 63-64). This perspective is, in fact, in line with the way in which Stuart Hall understands the concept of identity, as a non-essentialist, “but a strategic and positional one” (Hall, 1996a, p. 3), in which certain resources (such as history, language and culture) are used, “in the process of becoming rather than being” (ibid., p. 3). In our research, we, too, have found frames that point to the suitability of the lens of intersectionality in order to understand the representation of Angela Merkel, around categories such as gender, power and national origin, having in mind that “intersectionality posits an interactive, mutually constitutive relationship among these categories” (Hancock, 2007, p. 67).

Gender, as a performance, is prompted by more or less evident, more or less coercive, social obligatory norms “to be one gender or the other (usually within a strictly binary frame), and the reproduction of gender is thus always a negotiation with power” (Butler, 2009, p. i). When it comes to exercising political power, these social norms trace, in the Western European context, clear distinctions about the expectations that fall upon the dividing axis of the gender binary. Literature about executive power exercised by women* is highly contradictory, illustrating the inadequacy of essentialist approaches on the subject (Davidson-Schmich, 2011). However, approaching the category of “gender” allows us to identify media representations that can act as coercive mechanisms of the patriarchal structure:

These mechanisms will range widely in the consequences they visit on women, from life-threatening violence to subtle social signals of disapproval (e.g., when people are unconsciously slightly “taken aback” when women are as interpersonally direct or unapologetic as their male counterparts). (Manne, 2017, p. 47)

In the European context, more specifically, Germany, as Northern Europe, and Portugal, as Southern Europe, power dynamics further complexify these media representations of Merkel, not only as a leader who is a woman*, but as a head of State of a particularly powerful country. This has expectable consequences regarding Portuguese media representations of the figure of Merkel, that will bring to the surface entanglements between gender and power narratives, with an interesting potential for allowing us to think about the enormous complexity of “politics of domination” (hooks, 1989/2015, p. 44). The “focus on patriarchal domination” (ibid., p. 45) allows us to examine the placement of the woman* in a position of weakness and inferiority, but the dynamics of domination are complexified when women* are also holders of power, and possible dominators:

Clearly, differentiation between strong and weak, powerful and powerless, has been a central defining aspect of gender globally, carrying with it the assumption that men should have greater authority than women, and should rule over them. As significant and important as this fact is, it should not obscure the reality that women can and do participate in politics of domination, as perpetrators as well as victims—that we dominate, that we are dominated. (ibid.)

As an “imagined community” (Anderson, 2016; Hall, 1996b) and “the principal source[s] of cultural identity” (Hall, 1996b, p. 611), national origin, also from a non-essentialist perspective, is one of the sections interacting in the media representations of Angela Merkel, mainly from the Portuguese, i.e. external, gaze. Thus, being “German” has certain connota-

tions, from history (including references to the eternal Nazi ghost), to religion (and the myth of the protestant work ethic unleashed by Weber (1939/2005)), which influence these representations. But this idea of “Germanness” is also complexified, since Merkel grew up in context that is *othered* within Germany, the GDR, in a protestant family.

Using the intersectional paradigm, it is possible to place ourselves “ontologically between reductionist research that blindly seeks only the generalizable and particularized research so specialized that it cannot contribute to theory.” (Hancock, p. 2007, p. 74).

Methodology

For this empirical exploratory paper, we conducted a qualitative content analysis (Bardin, 2007) of articles published in the online versions of the most read tabloid and elite media outlet, in Portugal, at the time of data gathering (Markttest, 2018) – *Correio da Manhã* (CM) and *Diário de Notícias* (DN), respectively – during five strategic timeframes, around the legislative elections in Portugal (2011, 2015) and Germany (2013, 2017) and the European Parliament elections (2014), based on relevant keywords, using the search engine Google, and complementing with a data collection within each news outlet website’s internal search engine. The data was gathered according to a strategic selection, in order to obtain theoretical saturation (Frow & Morris, 2006), by selecting the articles that allow us to explore the different representations of Angela Merkel: 14 in *Correio da Manhã*, and 7 in *Diário de Notícias*. In each article, the various discourses about Merkel were identified, and subsequently grouped into categories, that we named “frames”, and subcategories, that we named “narratives”. The tables, presented below, contain some illustrative examples of these narratives.

Gender: The Personal is Public

Regarding the representations framed by gender issues, the focus is on Merkel’s private life. In this frame, the following narratives were identified: “Family and Home”, focused on marriage, divorce and intimacy, “Looks and Style”, focused on Merkel’s sartorial choices, and “Lifestyle”, on her living habits. Through these references, Merkel is portrayed as someone who performs the female gender in a dissonant or even defiant way to the image of the “traditional woman”: divorced, badly dressed, a nudist – a *non-palatable* performance according to conservative social norms, reinforcing social norms that restrict gender performance (Butler, 2004).

Narrative	Media	Quote
Family and Home	CM	59 years old, married and without children Joachim Sauer, divorced and father of two boys, with whom Germany’s ‘iron lady’ maintains a “cordial” relationship She divorced five years later and met her current partner at 32, to whom she dedicated an acknowledgement in her doctorate thesis in Physics
	DN	She divorces in 1982, but keeps her ex-husbands name to this day She says she liked to cook for him every chance she gets Merkel and Sauer don’t have children in common
Lifestyle	CM	practicing nudism in the 70s



		bathing in the warm waters of Southern Italy, next to her husband, a Chemistry professor
Looks and Style	CM	Merkel was photographed in an elegant black bathing suit and Bright green cover up Angela Merkel's life is more rigorous and grayer than necessarily trendy. Even in clothing. Her pantsuits became famous for, apparently, being always the same even with ugly suits and fake smiles
	DN	Eight years later she was able to give her image more color, literally, since the CDU/CSU candidate became known for her blazers in a thousand colors or for her colorful brand handbags.

Table 1 – Gender

Feminine Power

At the intersection between the gender and power frames are the narratives in which issues of gender frame the exercise and/or holding of power by Merkel, with various connotations, both legitimizing and delegitimizing, of this gendered power. Thus, Merkel is “Europe’s (most) powerful woman”, mommy (*Mutti*), a cold “iron lady” or a girl (*Mädchen*). These narratives that gender the exercise of power are, in two cases, representative of two contrasting views on power based on a feminine gender performance: the caring mother-woman, and the cold, iron-woman. But, when she appears as a *Mädchen*, there seems to be a delegitimization of the exercise of power, since these narratives represent Merkel as an inexperienced girl, protected by Kohl, a hard-working, a good student and diligent, but never causing waves, even somewhat subservient. Reflecting the imbalances of power at the European level, the narratives in which Merkel appears as *Mutti* (mommy), as having adhered to “relevant social roles – as, for example, loving wives, devoted moms, “cool” girlfriends, loyal secretaries, or good waitresses, to name just a few of the most obvious examples” (Manne, 2017, p. 47), refer to her representation within the German context, regarding her fellow citizens. From the Portuguese gaze, the connotations of being a cold or ruthless woman, a “powerful woman” or “iron lady” demonstrate the interactions between the use of these patriarchal mechanisms as a way to react to the exercise of political-economic power within the European space.

Narrative	Media	Quote
Powerful Woman	CM	she was José Sócrates fairy godmother; feeding campaigns to show her as the wicked witch of austerity most powerful woman in the world it won't be the Lady of Berlin that will come to help us
	DN	most powerful woman in the world woman who rules Europe
Iron Lady	CM	Germany's “lady of steel” Berlin's iron lady
	DN	Merkel is as cold as to her idol as she is pragmatic with the consequences
“Mädchen”	CM	the minister, whom Helmut Kohl, in the 90s, referred to as “my girl” hard-working student, always the best in the class, but who wasn't competitive
	DN	The girl who became chancellor She was a minister of Helmut Kohl, who, given her youth, referred to her as “my girl”



		An ace at Mathematics and not very social during her youth
"Mutti"	CM	The great German mother without help from "mutti" Merkel the Germans now call her 'Muti' [sic] – mother
	DN	The chancellor's supporters celebrated "Mutti"'s – "mommy» - victory

Table 2 – Gender and Power

Power: Queen of Europe or Merkievel

Regarding the frame focused on power that is not necessarily, or, rather, not obviously, gendered, we found the narrative of "Merkievel" (Beck, 2014), as the bad powerful leader in Europe, in contrast with the "Queen of Europe" narrative, in which she is represented as the savior, or someone who is carrying the continent on her back. Here, too, the two views of the figure of Angela Merkel are revealed: the cold calculating leader and the diligent caretaker.

Narrative	Media	Quote
Merkievel	CM	Merkel, a cold and ruthless stateswoman
	DN	Timing and will are two of the most important traits of top politicians and Angela Merkel added them early on to ambition; refined calculation seen as the boss of the European Union, she never showed much enthusiasm in a Parliament and Commission able to affirm themselves to the detriment of the States someone who the overwhelming majority of Europeans consider to be inhumane and responsible for the protection of Germany's financial interests in detriment of the people of other countries assumed (for many, Maquiavellian) German hegemony in Europe
	CM	opening the door to Syrian war refugees, giving an example to all of Europe Merkel faces the great challenge of leading Germany and Europe to a path of prosperity. Only in this way is it possible to keep the peace in this continent. The leader in Europe who has contributed most persistently to the reform of the institutions and complete what remained to be done The German chancellor saved the Euro, and, thus, the European project.
Queen of Europe	DN	Some admire her for the handling of the German chancellery and control of the European machine Angela Merkel emerges as a leader on all fronts. Not as much with a clear purpose of becoming European czarina – although, Catherine, the Great is the portrait in her office Merkel, 59, is also seen by the media as the Queen of Europe Merkel enjoys a high popularity rate, namely because of the way in which she as responded to the Eurozone crisis The chancellor could have wanted to have Europe's moral regency by practicing a welcoming policy for war refugees

Table 3 - Power

German Power

From the intersecting frame of power and the representation of German identity, the narrative focused on Germany's dominance in the European context is present, in which a



critical position to this exercise of power is assumed, sustained by identity representations, references to Germany's Nazi past and to its current hegemonic position. Specially following the Eurozone crisis, and its social-economical consequences, the «resentment and sense of crisis has resulted in a Gothic narrative of the resuscitation of the monstrous Third Reich in popular European discourse (...) Much European resentment, particularly in the Greek, Spanish, Italian, British and French press (...) has been focused on the figure of German chancellor Angela Merkel herself" (MacMillan, 2014, p. 31).

Narrative	Media	Quote
Nazi Ghost	CM	German leaders seem to have a natural inclination towards hiding their true family origins. Before the most powerful woman in the world did so, Adolf Hitler also omitted his Austrian origin...
	DN	But there are also those who paint her as the reincarnation of the worst evils that Germany gave the world in the last century
European Hegemony	DN	Beyond Merkel lies a permanente, geographically imponente and politically impacting reality called Germany
		Germans like leadership, trust in their model and many admire the way in which she exercises power. exercise of a German hegemony

Table 4 – Power and National Origin

Germanness

In this frame, Merkel is presented as being German, a European *other* to the Portuguese media, represented through the protestant religious heritage and a set of identity traits, such as frugality, pragmatism and stability, but also coldness, arrogance and monotony, which are, ambiguously, traces that are connotated with a certain superiority, but also a false sense of superiority. However, Merkel, in addition to being a woman*, also represents an added identity mark as an internal *other* in the German context, having been brought up in the German Democratic Republic (GDR).

Narrative	Media	Quote
Germanness	CM	Rigor, pragmatism and frugality, in the German spirit
		The Economist considered this "frugal, pragmatic and unpretentious" woman the "safest pair of hands" for Europe
		On her side, Merkel has the bad taste, Lutheranism, Germanic discipline and half of her electorate The German intestine, used to sausages, pork meat and savoy cabbage in sauerkraut (...)
	DN	In a very particular style, without exuberance of states of mind, in a growing, self-confident and changing Germany. In other words, we could have an Angela Merkel in any European government, but we couldn't have this Angela Merkel outsider of this Germany.
Protestantism	CM	The current chancellor is the daughter of a couple of Lutheran pastors
	DN	daughter of a Lutheran pastor
GDR	CM	traded the city for communist Eastern Germany. But there, Angela's family was never like Eastern ones.
		There is not much unanimity about her father, who remained between criticism and adaptation to the regime, and who could have had a short relationship with the Stasi (the former GDR's secret services).



Peer Steinbrueck, who blamed Angela for “not being passionate about Europe because she grew up in the GDR”.

DN	the first head of government from the East
	She belonged to the Free German Youth, and thanks to having lived with the communist regime, she knows how to speak Russian well

Table 5 – National Origin

Conclusion

Portuguese media discourses about Angela Merkel are informed by gender narratives, based on binary performances (Butler, 2004) of the role of women* (Manne, 2017), by narratives of power, in the context of European power dynamics, in which Merkel represents the powerful Germany vis-à-vis an idea of a powerless Portugal (Beck, 2014), and narratives about German culture itself, based on ideas about history and cultural and national identity. These three frames interact discursively in the construction of media narratives. In the context of a German Europe (Beck, 2014), Portuguese media, at times, resort to intersectional identity representations, focused on gender and national origin, in order to legitimize and/or delegitimize Angela Merkel’s exercise of power. In the analyzed data, in the frame focused on power, Merkel is represented as the oppressive Merkievel or the worthy Queen, leader of the most powerful government in Europe. In gendered representations of power, we can observe both legitimizing views, as well as others marked by expectations of a certain gender performance associated with power, which could be understood as a form of delegitimization through a gendered *othering*. This delegitimization becomes more evident when Merkel is represented as a “girl”, contrasting with a legitimate view of a charismatic political leader. However, when the discourse is framed exclusively by gender issues, specifically in the intimate sphere, Merkel is represented as deviating from a certain standard of femininity. Regarding power and national origin, Merkel appears, once again, as doubly *othered*: disciplined and rigorous when formed by German protestant “culture”, but also the internal *other*, as “Eastern”.

This is a merely exploratory analysis, that would benefit, in the future, from the introduction of variables such as the “social personality” (Hall et al., 1978, p. 60) of the media outlets, type of article, definers of the different discourses, as well as the respective thematic contexts, so as to understand how these narratives interact within the intersectional paradigm. It could also be of interest to compare these representations with those present in the German media, in order to explore the aforementioned European power dynamics.

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PERFORMATIVITY IN HYSTERIA: A DEPATHOLOGIZING LOOK¹

Helena Volani²

ABSTRACT

This research initiates from an approximation with the work of Dr. Jean-Martin Charcot on hysteria, the conceptualization and diffusion as neurological / psychiatric pathology of which happen during his practice inside de Salpêtrière Hospital. Thus, the intent here is to reflect on how a doctor who “accidentally” becomes responsible for an entire wing of France’s largest women’s asylum, the Salpêtrière, “is known as the founder of neurology” (Didi-Huberman) and how, that is, through the use of which methods, does he consolidate his working practices. The research takes interest in Charcot because of the preservation of the image of hysteria created by him, through the practice of hypnosis, which continues to affect bodies even many years after his passing and, therefore, without the practice of his work method. It just goes to prove the intensity of the strength with which these images still penetrate bodies, especially female ones, even nowadays – and how the reproduction of these images (in screens, photographs or in the performance or the bodies themselves) promotes the penetration of them in their existences and in new bodies, colonized and inhabited by demonstrating possible and validated forms for suffering, and their performance ends up manifesting itself in a way that can be decoded and welcomed by those who surround them, through codes of body, image and sound languages. These bodies do not perform like the actresses who pretend to be Ophelia on the stage, and also no longer like Charcot’s patients, hypnotized; they perform like all women perform their gender throughout life, with symbols that will be recognized, but that don’t cease to be part of how someone expresses subjectivity.

KEYWORDS:

Hysteria; Charcot; Performativity; Butler.

Charcot holds a woman, his patient, by the waist with one arm only. The weight of the hanging body seems to be effortlessly sustained by the doctor who doesn’t even look at it. The woman appears to have fainted or to be in some senseless state – for this reason she does not sustain herself. Her back curves on Charcot’s forearm, her feet rest on the floor and her head tilts back: the body naively performs the arc so symbolic of the pathology it represents, despite her doctor’s arm being the vector of its curve. Behind the woman, two nurses and a doctor watch out for the body in case it collapses. Beside them, there’s an empty stretcher, where the lady will once more be laid on, unconscious, after the spectacle presented. Facing them all, twenty men sitting and six standing, boxed up in the narrow space of the painting. Outside the frame where this scene happens, there’s more than enough room to fit more men like those. The room is not too large, it has an earthy tone, orange almost. The chairs are simple, wood made, cluttered on the floor. There’s just one small table, under three lamps, where a few medical instruments lay within the doctor’s reach. Charcot stares at his pears, while they all stare at the hanging body. This is a possible description of André

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Brouillet's «*Une leçon clinique à la Salpêtrière*», a work that is a pictorial representation of one of Charcot's Tuesday lessons, during a hypnosis session with one of his patients.

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This research intends to approach Charcot's work on hysteria by reflecting on how a doctor who “accidentally” becomes responsible for an entire wing of France's largest women's asylum, the Salpêtrière, “is known as the founder of neurology” (Didi-Huberman, 2003, p. 18), and how, through which methods, does he consolidate his working practices. This theoretical movement does not, however, intend to invalidate chance and randomness in taking everyone to the unimaginable places they find or will find themselves in in their lives, nor does it claim being able to truly unveil the man that was Charcot, but shares the belief that he leaves, in his writings and in his story as well, clues to his desire towards those bodies – what is considered extremely relevant for the consolidation of as well as familiarity with history as it occurred. The criticism here in question is also not accompanied by a hypothetical proposition of how the events could have occurred in a gentler fashion, but by an analysis of how the episode of hysteria at the Salpêtrière survives violently in bodies until this day, so that it can be, then, possible to think of a freer life.

It is greatly important to distinguish, first and foremost, the functions of “cure” and of “research” in the medical profession. Charcot was a researcher – not a healer – and shouldn't be the person responsible for curing hundreds of suffering people. Thus, this study shows how curing hysterics was never the doctor's main goal, given that there's a shift in focus in the curing of these hundreds of people (or, at least, in the relief of their pains). The practice of research, frequently accompanied by scientific and personal recognition, can go against medical duty and can increase people's suffering. What is put forward here goes beyond merely ethical questioning: it is about reflecting on how Charcot's actions, geared primarily towards research, instead of the cure of relief of those bodies, bring out clutters in his own theory. How is it possible to *promote* the cure for a pathology when your own practice sets itself in a way as to *promote* the pathology?

The way in which Charcot became an “expert” in and responsible for hysteria, says Didi-Huberman, was by chance. Salpêtrière's Sainte-Laure building had to be shut down because of the environment's bad conditions and, for that reason, the hospital's administration decided to use the occasion to separate the patients, who were all in the psychiatric ward, into psychotic and non-psychotic, thus creating a new sector in the hospital: the “simple epileptics sector”, assigned to Charcot for being the institution's oldest doctor. This new “special sector” cared for both epileptic and hysterical patients, given that the condition that gathered them there was simply the symptom of convulsive crisis.

Charcot thus descended into hell; but he didn't feel so badly there.

Because the four or five thousand women of hell furnished him with material. Immersed in the inferno as early as 1862, Charcot, in fact, had the pleasant—and scientific, as one says *calori-, sopori- or honorific*, the “*fic*” (from the Latin *fictus* or “*make*”) indicating a very strong factive derivation—the pleasant sensation of, quite simply, entering a museum. He himself put it quite well: it was a living museum of pathology, with its old “collection” and new “collection” (Didi-Huberman, 2003, p.17)

Indeed, Salpêtrière's “special sector” was transformed precisely into a living museum, bringing to its essence the centuries-long tradition found in a Natural History Museum; the



scientific validation of a Science Museum; the “beauty” in signifying/inventing bodies and the world around them encountered in an Art Museum and the cruelty of an animal zoo. The sector grew into a spectacle that delighted – and delights – with its symptoms, once chaotic, now organized by this doctor, by way of bodies that repeated, repeated and yet again repeated the four stages that a man had described: they trembled, writhed, screamed, and – if they were women – crucified themselves or ended up edging an orgasm. How spectacular this description seems to be for doctors: someone who offers order to chaos, symptoms to a false, description to a disease, and still manages to demonstrate it with the bodies themselves, ready to perform their pain, at the will of those who watch their suffering and, thus – though getting ahead of some issues here proposed – control them, promote them.

“Charcot is like Adam, an Adam before whom God paraded nosological entities for him to name.” (Freud apud Didi-Huberman, 2003, p. 19). Who is he who names, who baptizes, who puts into language, into signification, if not the creator? For “in the beginning was the word”, a genesis remembered here as a metaphor for the human state towards the world, making explicit that creation is realized through verb, word, language. Naming things is precisely what makes them come into existence. Not that they didn’t materially exist before being named, but it is understood that there’s only human relation with the world through naming, conceptualization, signification, which goes beyond the materiality of the thing itself, thus becoming a human creation. There is no naming without altering, no photographing without changing; it is not possible to conceptualize and, in that very act, change the conception. Humanity is doomed to having the world’s materiality flowing through its hands while it insists in the attempt to enclose it. One can attempt to analyze, interpret, understand, but never apprehend reality. Laws are created so that they are obeyed, but the universe is not restricted to them. In spite of this, it was an ambition of Charcot to find the parameters of hysteria; being the person who unraveled its mystery and that, under his own law, no one could contest him, the creator, or contest her, the creation: “hysteria presented to his eyes a well-defined symptomatology, obeying precise rules. This remark is important, because it allows him to deny the hypothesis of simulation, which haunted psychiatry in the 19th century” (Garcia-Roza, 2008, p. 32).³

Hypnosis was one of the main methodologies employed by Charcot to explain hysteria’s functioning and also as one of his “cure” tools. Besides that, in hopes for the improvement of cases, it also used with the intention to understand the hysterical symptom in the fabrication of some other symptom in the patients in order to generate crisis and interchange sufferings. Hypnosis was also used in an attempt to remove hysterical symptoms, although less successfully. The symptoms created by Charcot were frequently *anceled*, according to him, given that he could *remove* them from the patients in a short period of time. If they persisted, as it happened to people that arrived at the Salpêtrière, whose symptoms were more lasting, it was rarely possible for Charcot to eliminate them with his method – at least not with the same facility he had for producing them. It seems clear, then, that the method employed by Charcot in the treatment of hysteria was much more efficient in its promotion than in the cure itself.

The use of hypnosis was to control the situation. Through hypnotic suggestion, the doctor could obtain a well-defined and regular set of hysterical symptoms; but this makes clear, at

³ My translation.



the same time, that hysteria had nothing to do with the neurological body, but with the doctor's wish. It is in an attempt to overcome this deadlock that Charcot will elaborate the theory of trauma. (Garcia-Roza, 2008, p.34)⁴

212 | Because hysteria didn't present anatomical injuries Charcot could use to prove the pathology, he saw in the creation of a strong, indisputable iconography the best way to create an order, a law to rule it. So, even without an anatomical injury that could be identified by doctors, a series of movements that hysterical bodies should reproduce would be established, in stages that would also be repeated, of which photographic records had been catalogued timely by him, in a period where photographs were taken as proof by science, as the world's materiality. Such accomplishment finds Charcot very close to his objective, given that controlling these bodies and assuring said uniformity in the way hysteria manifests itself turns out to be the pivot of his research. Therefore:

[...] something was constructed at the Salpêtrière, something resembling a great optical machine to decipher the invisible lineaments of a crystal: the great, territorial, experimental, magical machine of hysteria. And in order to decipher the crystal, one had to break it, be fascinated by its fall, then break it again and invent machines permitting an even more visible, regimented fall, and then break it once again—just to see (Didi-Huberman, 2003, p. 9-10)

So, Salpêtrière's patients began to be broken, in search of the uniformity of their breaking. And each time they were broken in better ways, more visible, more intense, deeper, more lasting. Every crystal cracks, but not without its peculiarities, always with its differences. The need for uniformity in the name of creating a well-defined symptomatology, which would result in an image that could be validated as a nosography of hysteria, makes hypnosis, then, besides a research tool, a powerful control and performance tool as well, in a way that the symptoms, the four stages, largely inspired in one of his patients, Luise Augustine Gleizes, were reproduced into other bodies. But control over the body went even beyond hypnotic control: Charcot invaded bodies with drugs too (in addition to those already ingested by patients, there had to be an "out-of-mind" for the performance): "in his stagings held at the Salpêtrière, the amyl nitrate inhalations given by his assistants to patients played a role as important as the ritual of hypnotism" (Garcia-Roza, 2008, p. 33).⁵

Charcot, then, was a man whose goal was to create diseases, not to cure them. His works in medicine didn't have to do with a will to lessen the suffering of those he treated, but with having power over their bodies and suiting them to a pathology. He was more interested in these bodies as *research corpus* than as human, hospitalized bodies, in search of treatment and, therefore, he constantly left these bodies to their pains in view of what he believed to be "best for the society".

Power is only so powerful because one cannot, truly, define or encompass it. Charcot is not the carrier of power that confines the bodies in these images. He creates, using certain references, credible images for a pathology and validates them inside the extremely colonizing discourse of the medical sciences. But the real difficulty and resistance actually emerges in the encounter with powers' rhizomatic feature, which demands that individuals be un-

⁴ My translation.

⁵ My translation.



derstood as agents in the permanence of an order of a given power. When they borrow the concept of rhizome from biology, Deleuze and Guattari take possession of the functioning system of plant roots and reimagine the forms of interaction. The image of rhizome is thus used to cease thinking of the world from direct, horizontal, bidimensional and unilateral connections, and to start thinking about it through a system of scattered, heterogeneous, multiple, plural and free connections. A rhizome is preserved, then, by all those who belong to its chain of signification, in a way that “ceaselessly establishes connections between semiotic chains, organizations of power, and circumstances relative to the arts, sciences, and social struggles” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2005 p. 7). As such, it’s understood that the permanence of the images produced by Charcot is part of a rhizomatic movement of dissemination of a validated form of suffering, either by those who suffer or by those who observe suffering.

The rhizome itself assumes very diverse forms, from ramified surface extension in all directions to concretion into bulbs and tubers. When rats swarm over each other. The rhizome includes the best and the worst: potato and couchgrass, or the weed. Animal and plant, couchgrass is crabgrass. (Deleuze & Guattari, 2005, p. 7)

Among non-extreme conditions of contemporary life, nothing and no one forces an individual to be or to produce in the way that others are or produce. Still, the individual does so, carrying discourses of powers that take hold of his body and become part of his discourse, in a way that doesn’t comprise of an “obligation” – he becomes an agent of these powers. It is because of this alienating appropriation that acting as a resistance to these powers becomes necessary. It is thus considered essential to understand the paths of these powers, how they come to inhabit bodies, turning them into their agents; to comprehend how it was possible for things to turn out as they are now, in so that individuals were built in the way they are built.

It is for this reason that Charcot is of so much interest to this research: because of the conservation of the image created by him for hysteria, through the practice of hypnosis, which keeps affecting bodies even years after his passing and, therefore, without the practice of his work method. It just goes to prove the intensity of the strength with which these images still penetrate bodies, especially female ones, even nowadays – and how the reproduction of these images (in screens, photographs or in the performance or the bodies themselves) promotes the penetration of them in their existences and in new bodies. As prophesied by Judith Butler in “Bodies That Matter”, “the effects of one’s words are incalculable, since performatives and their significations do not begin or end” (*apud* Salih, 2003, p. 97). These images colonize and inhabit the bodies by demonstrating possible and validated forms for suffering, and their performance ends up manifesting itself in a way that can be decoded and welcomed by those who surround them, through codes of body, image and sound languages. These bodies do not perform like the actresses who pretend to be Ophelia on the stage, and also no longer like Charcot’s patients, hypnotized; they perform like all women perform their gender throughout life, with symbols that will be recognized, but that don’t cease to be part of how someone expresses subjectivity.

At this point, we must take into consideration Austin’s performativity concept, rethought by Judith Butler, which comprehends sex as a construct: “performativity must be understood not as a singular or deliberate «act,» but, rather, as the reiterative and citational practice by



which discourse produces the effects that it names.” (Butler, 1993, p. 2). Thinking of the image/body manifestation of hysteria as performativity of suffering differs from joining the various 19th-century doctors and saying that those bodies were faking. On the contrary: the belief is that these bodies are taken by the possible and validated manifestations of suffering. There is no conscious thought or control over these performances of suffering, but such performance is not suffering as such, it is only the way it manifests itself. Remembering Butler, then, is to think of how there’s a performativity starting from an anatomical model scientifically validated through a body performance, shaping a normative suffering.

Butler develops the concept of gender performativity, based on philosophers like Austin, Derrida and Foucault, in order to think of gender as a construction, part of a binary logic that is built and perpetuated through discourse. What makes this possible is the reiteration of acts that legitimize genre as natural, binary and unhistorical. The concept of performativity, first theorized by Austin in linguistics, fundamental for queer theory, proposes that the discourse over such bodies not only witnesses them, but produces truths in them as well. There’s a naturalization of such discourse that admits and reinforces heteronormative identity, and materializes in everyone’s lives the sex-gender-sexuality sequence. (Vilseki & Volani, 2017, p. 444-445)⁶

A sexual orientation and/or a gender expression is validated through a sexual performance, flooded by binary signs, which separate individuals into “women” and “men”, “gays” and “straights” ... One thinks, here, then, of the proposition of a performativity that not only draws the boundaries between “insane” and “sane”, but that promotes the only ways through which it is possible to suffer, the only ways one can interact with pain, the only ways to connect the world with its burdens, and for those to communicate with and for the other. This is Charcot’s job: having created a catalogue of the image of hysteria through which this illness is seen, decoded and validated. It is only performed the way it is because of this; so that the catalogue of images can be welcomed by society, penetrating his performances.

It is worth remembering, however, that these writings are not designed in the light of the concept of hysteria coined by Charcot, which was rapidly replaced, but over the powerful iconography produced by him at the Salpêtrière Hospital, that incarnates in bodies until this day. If Salih, thinking of Butler, adapts Beauvoir affirmation, “one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman”, to “one is not born, but rather called, a woman” (2002, p. 78), we can take the liberty here to think of another reworking of this line of thought: one is not hysterical, one is called hysterical, on the grounds that the “constative claim is always to some degree performative” (Butler apud Salih, 2003, p.88). In other words, those bodies only become hysterical (in the same manner that some bodies only became women) because they were verified as such through such denominations and, for it, fated to perform their pains (and identities) by means of a code. These bodies, on the other hand, take ownership of these same codes so they can be and understand themselves as subjects through the denominations proposed for their bodies.

Surely subjects themselves are committed in the production [of this image] in their bodies. The process, however, is not done randomly or at their will. Although active participants in

⁶ My translation.



this construction, subjects to not express it free of constraints. A matrix [...] delimits patterns to be followed and, at the same time, paradoxically, provides the parameters for transgressions. (Louro, 2015, p. 17)⁷

It's not hard thinking of transgressions when it comes to insane bodies, but there is, within psychic suffering, a large area for bodies in domesticated suffering, in which transgressions are actually necessary in order to keep these bodies tamed and scared. The arrival of emotional pain in the field of medical sciences promotes a new image for pain itself, in a way that it is detached from a suffering-pain and drawn nearer a disease-pain, making these bodies more and more confined to an anatomic, amenable and medicalizing discourse: "the domains of political and linguistic "representation" set out in advance the criterion by which subjects themselves are formed, with the result that representation is extended only to what can be acknowledged as a subject." (Butler, 2002, p. 4).

To recognize oneself as subject and to be recognized thus becomes a central issue in the contemporary world: "the body is figured as a mere instrument or medium for which a set of cultural meanings are only externally related. But "the body" is itself a construction" (Butler, 2002, p. 12-13). In this sense, thinking of the construction of hysteria, those women weren't hysterical before being constructed that way. Therefore, what is being said here is not that those patients, each in their own way, didn't suffer – their suffering-pain is very much considered –; what is questioned here, ultimately, is the disease-pain that was entrusted into those bodies, and so this research "does not mean that there is no such thing as the material body, but that we can only apprehend that materiality through discourse" (Salih, 2003, p. 74).

So, reinforcing much of what has already been said, despite the certain desire that things would be different, they could not, at the time, have been gentler with those Salpêtrière bodies. However, as a gesture of resistance and vindication, it is proposed to think, today, at last, of a freer life, because

[...] identities are constructed and constituted by language, which means that there is no gender identity that precedes language. If you like, it is not that an identity 'does' discourse or language, but the other way around – language and discourse 'do' gender (Salih, 2003, p. 64).

And, starting from Salih's thought alongside Butler, one can stress language in search of a more autonomous life and a less pathological suffering, which doesn't mean a complete revolution in the health system, or the total abandonment of these images through a scientific study, but ways to undermine depotentializing practices through small short circuits; actions that, beyond making the system freer, can emancipate people so that they themselves are able to perceive "that they are much freer than they feel, that people accept as truths, as evidence, some themes which have been built up at a certain moment in history, and that this so-called evidence can be criticized and destroyed." (Foucault, 1988, p. 10-11). And so that they can, finally, change the way they see themselves and can put themselves inside de order of signification, for "there is no power that acts, but only a reiterated acting that is

⁷ My translation.



power in its persistence and instability” (Butler apud Salih, 2003, p. 82). These are the biggest challenges, but also the biggest potential as a search for new ways of freer living: persistence and instability.

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MEDIA AND BIOPOLITICS: A CASE STUDY ON VERÔNICA BOLINA¹

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ABSTRACT

An important biopolitical mechanism in the communication system is the erasure of the “face” (Emmanuel Lèvinas). In this text, we present how this concept works through the Verônica Bolina case, a Brazilian transgender woman who was brutalized by the police. The text used a *corpora* formed by 5 journalistic articles, which help to contextualize the case, and by 3 images, which are the focus of our analysis. Discourse analysis is the method used to highlight three forms of erasure that work in this case: (1) the inhumanization; (2) the displacement of the victim’s position; (3) insertion into normative regimes. Finally, the text suggests that, in addition to an ethical awareness of humanization, openness to the face constitutes an urgent political device capable of promoting further engagement.

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KEYWORDS:

Cultural studies; queer studies; digital journalism; image; discourse analysis.

Brazil, April 2015. A sequence of violent images have gone viral on the Internet. The first image portrayed a person with a mutilated ear. The others depicted another person with a disfigured face: an image showed her sitting on the floor, handcuffed, with her hair partially shaved and her breasts uncovered; another image showed her prostrated on the ground, face down, with part of her ripped pants showing her buttocks and, in the background, handcuffed prisoners lining up towards a wall, giving the impression that they belonged to the same gang. The presence of the police in these last two images, displaying the body as a trophy, left no doubt about who were the perpetrators. Quickly, journalistic texts tried to explain and contextualize those impressive images. That was how the transgender woman Verônica Bolina was first introduced to us. On the 10th of that month, she was arrested for beating an elderly neighbor in an alleged psychotic break. According to the police report, two days after the arrest, Verônica attacked the warder and ripped part of his ear off, which was the alleged reason for the beating.

Among the various testimonies that followed the arrest – which included the attribution of guilt to detainees for the attacks suffered by the victim and a confession that discharged the security agents – Verônica was only released in May 2017, when the court ruled that she could not be held liable due to a psychiatric report indicating mental disorder.

Naturally, the fact made a case in Brazil, inflated social media and divided the public opinion: there were citizens who applauded the police action and praised the exemplary treatment given for Verônica’s disruptive behavior; there were those who, on the contrary, repudiated violence by criticizing the entire public security apparatus involved in the case;

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there were also journalists from independent websites who portrayed Verônica as a victim because of her medical condition.

This text proposes to answer the following questions: 1) How does the Verônica Bolina case reveal particular aspects of the current communication system when faced with images of bodies under threat? 2) What aspects of the image itself allow a politics that puts this system in crisis?

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Figure 1. Security agent with a mutilated ear

Source: Eduardo Suplicy cobra apuração rigorosa no caso da travesti Verônica Alves (2015, April 19th). Extra.



Figure 2. Verônica Bolina on the floor, handcuffed

Source: Folhapress. Travesti espancada diz que mudou depoimento para reduzir pena (2015, April 18th). O tempo.



Figura 3. Verônica Bolina in face-down position

Source: Eduardo Suplicy cobra apuração rigorosa no caso da travesti Verônica Alves (2015, April 19th). Extra.



The Biopolitical Structure of Communication

In the book *Community and Communication I—The crisis of the common* (2017), I presented theoretical and conceptual foundations that allow problematizing communication as a biopolitical issue. I observed that biopower, as proposed by Michel Foucault in the 1970s as a field of research on techniques of social and subjective control used by Western societies which main function is the total control of life, was expressed through the practice of *munus*, discovered by Roberto Esposito, as a key element of the subjective organization of the Western world. *Munus* (donation, duty, obligation) is the basis of antagonistic words like community (*cum+munus*) and immunity (*im-munus*), which, in a philosophical sense, indicate that modernity is seeing an agonistic movement of openness and closeness of the subjectification process. For Esposito (2008), biopolitics lies precisely in government's decision to halt this process when it reaches unbearable limits to the normative functioning of the social body.

That is why Brazilian *favelas* are biopolitical laboratories, both because its bodies are on the threshold of law, hence of the State (they can be killed with impunity, excluded from citizenship, etc.), and because subjectification processes are interrupted by strict representations, such as the *favelado* (a negative imputation for anyone) or the *comunidade* (community, an euphemism for urban degradation). On the other hand, these representations, instead of drawing a line of flight from the oppressive system, are inserted in the flow of capitalistic production and in government security apparatus³.

The fact that *munus* is also the basis of the word communication (*communis*) allowed biopolitical issues to be individuated and systematized with reference not only to the means of communication (the so-called media), which operate by producing and spreading representations, but also to the relationship among Beings in general. From this point of view, more than knowing discursive meaning production mechanisms, from which individuals organize their identity and engagements, it is important to question the relationship itself⁴, the real reciprocity, the coming and going transformed on which representation imposes certain limits.

In my analysis of the images of the Verônica case, I would like to present two political practices that can be observed in the current communication system. The first one is expressed as a narrative dispute over the meaning of those images. It may suggest a political action that frees the represented body, but the effect of meaning intensification detains it simultaneously. This is mainly due to the biopolitical structure of communication that operates at the pace of immediacy and through algorithms that isolate and fragment the discourse. The second practice, in turn, implies an effort of being affected by images at the expense of explanatory anxiety and the discourses that determine what we should feel and think about those images.

So, we will start with the first practice. The concept of “rules of formation” of discourse, as a sociolinguistic structure that provides regularity to a set of discursive practices within a

³ An example of this was the regulation imposed by the Community broadcasting law (nº 9612, of February 19, 1998) that forced dissident voices from the outskirts of the city (favela) to join the game of the State.

⁴ *Relatio*, for Gaffiot (2016, p. 1141), refers to “the act of carrying again, of carrying the quill in the inkwell at all times.” In Yamamoto (2019), I make a genealogy of communication that indicates *relatio* as one of its original practices.



discursive formation⁵, helps us reveal a set of voices that, although enunciated by different individuals, affirm the same discourse, since they reiterate (in different ways) the same narrative, point to the same effect of meaning (Foucault, 1972). Thus, we can deduce three discursive regularities that correspond to three forces of appropriation of meaning on those images⁶, namely: (i) police; (ii) activism and; (iii) medical.

220 | Interestingly, it was through the police narrative that the images were made public. They were taken by the police and shared on social media⁷. The sequence started with the image of the officer with the mutilated ear, followed by the images of a haggard Verônica lying on the ground (Figures 1, 2 and 3). The idea was to produce an effect that, within that deformed body, there was no human being.

In fact, the first news about the case, dated April 13, 2015, reiterates this effect of meaning. The reporter refers to Verônica as (a male) prisoner or transvestite and adds details that turn her into a monstrous creature: he assaulted an elderly woman; was “caught red-handed;” “Inside the police station, he tried to attack police officers who had arrested him;” and the most shocking scene: “When he bit the warder’s ear, the prisoner kept the ripped part in his mouth and only released it after about an hour.” (Tomaz, 2015)

Another mechanism present in this rule of formation is the shift towards victim blaming. Thus, the employee with the mutilated ear and the beaten elderly woman take the place of Verônica, who is now presented as someone unreasonable or lacking judgment capacity. Such shift is remarkable in the report of another news website, dated April 19, 2015, which brought a detailed report of the violence suffered by the elderly woman⁸. There, images of bruises and wounds are displayed on all parts of the elderly woman’s body, in addition to a clinical report on each of the injuries. These images are, evidently, a response to the images of Verônica, as if the impact of her disfigured body had set a precedent in the communication system for the spread of violent images of both victims thus generating a kind of competition between them.

But if there is competition, what is the object of the dispute? The statement of the elderly woman’s son in that report gives us a clue. He says: “We are outraged because they are trying to turn Verônica into a hero.” (Albuquerque, 2015) He does not speak in the first person – I am outraged – but rather in the second person. And plural in this case does not only encompass the elderly woman’s family, but all those who believe that Verônica should not be a hero, as the author of that article, clearly observed from the approach adopted. The victim’s position, therefore, is the object of the dispute, a competition whose loser will not only have its images erased, but will be deprived from any commiseration.

⁵ Due to the great controversy surrounding this concept in the field of Linguistics, its use here is limited to the specific purpose of outlining forces operating on the images of the Verônica case. The delimitation of these forces follows the social conditions of discourse production and offers us a horizontal picture of this dispute.

⁶ From a methodological point of view, such voices were extracted from a set of 5 journalistic reports on the Verônica case. The choice of reports met the following criteria: relevance of the communication company in the Brazilian market; the differentiated approach to the theme; the interest of readers on the topic (observed in the comments of each report).

⁷ According to a report on the case presented two years later, “[...] the photographs and their leak were allegedly taken by police officers, who would also have released the warder’s picture without part of the ear on the web.” (Tomaz & Araújo, 2017)

⁸ In this report, the elderly woman describe Verônica as follows: “I was sitting at work when he [Verônica] knocked on the door. He said ‘you are Satan and I am going to kill you’. Then he started punching me.” (Albuquerque, 2015, online)



We insist on the statement from the elderly woman's son: when he uses the second person, he reveals an opponent ("they"). We now come to the second rule of formation of discourse present in this case – activism – which felt outraged by the images of Verônica and built the supposed heroic narrative against which the elderly woman's son tries to compete. The fact that the latest reports on the Verônica case do not give voice to representatives of LGBTQ+ communities (or even to Verônica herself) does not imply the silencing of activists in the communication system. If that was true, why should the elderly woman's son worry? Here is the invisible materiality of the discourse, but not negligible for that matter; in fact its strength lies in the subtlety of the unsaid. If we look at how the articles on the case are gradually abandoning terms such as the *transvestite* or the *prisoner*, and start to refer to her as Verônica or according to her gender identity, we realize the virtual presence of this rule of formation in enunciation. As a result, in an article published on April 16, 2015 (three days after the article that described Verônica as inhuman), we can already observe the presence of voices like the São Paulo Public Defender's Office (which accuses the police of coercion and torture), the federal deputy and activist Jean Wyllys, in addition to the movement on Facebook (#SomostodasVerônica) that gave rise to another narrative and shed light on those images.

There is also the third rule of formation. It is associated with the second one, as it establishes a narrative that criticizes Verônica's inhumanization, but does so by moving her from one issue to another, from police to medical. The article published on March 8, 2020 (Vasconcelos, 2020) not only updates the case (after almost 5 years), but also brings the discourse that such cases can be addressed as a matter of mental health, in other words, they are registered in a power-knowledge apparatus. From the biopolitical point of view, asylum differs little from prison, because both feature the normative modeling of subjectivation for the capitalist purposes (of the pharmaceutical and the therapy industry, of the labor market, etc.)

The problem of this rule of formation—which also affects the previous two—is that, in order to make sense of those images, one can lose one's own image and its ability to disarm, surrender, take by storm, making one accomplices and even victims of it. This is because there is a dispute going on elsewhere; it is not for the audience attention, the shift towards victim blaming or for the most truthful or accurate interpretation of the fact – since we know from pragmatics that, if the truth is impossible, it does not mean that all narratives are equivalent, but they rather work for different purposes, as it can be seen in each of these three discourse formation rules. It is a dispute, therefore, for the sensitization of the image, in which the "affects" emanating from it matter more than the arguments describing it. Jacques Rancière (2009, p. 96) had already expressed something similar when he commented that the problem with the current communication system is not the excess of images "rendering us insensitive", on the contrary, we have increasingly fewer images, which are presented to the audience through the face of "rulers, experts and journalists who comment on the image, who tell us what they mean and what we should make of them."

It is evident that the narrative war for the dignity of Verônica's body is extremely important in bringing these images to a larger audience and denouncing her inhumanization. But in biopolitics, communication system hardly excludes antagonistic voices; rather, it integrates and stimulates this vocalization that provokes, incites and encourages other voices. From a systemic point of view, no matter what they say or who they represent, the important



thing is to ensure that they continue to operate uninterruptedly until they get tired, make them live and let them die on their digital work platforms.

Communication systems like *Facebook* are able to integrate dissonant narratives and make them live democratically within themselves. The absurd, the controversy or the conflict are situations that hold attention and time of users, which are later converted into exchange value in the advertising market. If conflicts and antagonisms used to be obstacles to capitalist production, now they are its engine, while the power structure remains intact.

The coexistence of opinions and different views is guaranteed by algorithms such as *Edgerank*, which in many ways resembles a security subjectivity, as it enables the creation of affinity groups on a global level (the so-called echo chamber), while it separates us from those we would never be interested in. This algorithm acts as a personal gatekeeper when selecting, in a gigantic network of contacts, people and information that are of interest to each user based on the tracks previously left by them while navigating the platform (comments, shares and likes). If, on the one hand, the algorithm prevents images (such as Verônica's) from reaching audiences without any affinity with the subject – or if they do reach, they do so by filtering comments that “tell us what they mean and what we should make of them” – on the other hand, it exhausts those images in political groups with similar views.

If some people – mainly the critics of communitarianism and identitarianism – see this as a problem, the question that needs to be asked is: how can we claim the dignity of a body in the face of inhumanization operated in this communication system?

Judith Butler (2014) presents some ideas that can help us to outline an answer. When questioned about certain moral demands that are addressed to us—ones that we do not ask for, ones that we are not able to refuse—she uses by Emmanuel Levinas' concept of “face”, to explain that regardless of who sends the demand (or who owns the face looking at us), we always face the other in danger, we face the eminent death of the other. Synthesizing some arguments: the face is above me, it is sovereign (so the demand cannot be refused); the face is not necessarily human (it can therefore appear on the hands, on the back or on any other part of a body or object); the face does not speak, but expresses a commandment “Thou shalt not kill” that produces an internal division in the subject (an action that impels it to eliminate the other and another one that forbids him).

The tension brought by “Thou shalt not kill” has been presented by Butler in some moments of Western history, but, presently, when *mediatic* images start to compose an important sphere of existence from which we build our praxis, the issue involving face becomes crucial. Why governments of countries like the USA strive to intervene in the production of *mediatic* images (either in the construction of inhumans like Osama bin Laden and Saddam Hussein, or prohibiting the prolongation of mourning)? Based on Butler, we can answer: to prevent the face from arriving and bringing humanity with it. For if the perception of the face produces that division in the subject, the human (humanity) is precisely that rupture⁹.

If the face evokes humanity; if humanity is a rupture of the subject (present in the tension of “Thou shalt not kill”); and *mediatic* images work to prevent it from arriving, Butler's essay cannot be understood as belonging solely to the field of ethics, but rather a valuable biopolitical reflection on the image.

⁹ “[...] humanity is a rupture of being” (Levinas Apud Butler, 2014, p. 134).



Biopolitics and Humanity

In the narrative war for the control of Verônica's images, what we see with respect to her face is an attempt to erase it, restrain it, represent it or even anthropologize it for the most diverse purposes. But the strength of those images makes Verônica's body echo and persist in the memory of those who see her is in its humanization capacity, linked to something beyond representation.

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[...] the human is not *represented* by the face. Rather, the human is indirectly affirmed in that very disjunction that makes representation impossible, and this disjunction is conveyed in the impossible representation. For representation to convey the human, then, representation must not only fail, but it must *show* its failure [...] the human is not identified with what is represented but neither is it identified with the unrepresentable; it is, rather, that which limits the success of any representational practice (Butler, 2014, p. 144-145).

If the human is expressed in a failure of representation, then where does this appear in the images of Verônica? We suggest below evidence of this failure.

Initially the effort of security agents to produce a monster or an inhuman is perceived by the method of *plongée*, which is generally used to visually recover a dissymmetry of power (Yamamoto, 2011). The images that are portrayed from this angle look smaller than they really are; it can also produce the effect of moral demotion when compared to our habit of observing domestic animals (we always look at them from top to bottom). Portraying her in this way would also serve to consecrate the police victory against the furious beast. But that representation fails.

(I) The way the composition is made leaves no doubt: the other is clearly Verônica. That is where the demand comes from, which we do not ask for, but we are not able to refuse it. The imminent death of the other is clearly presented by the officer, in the background, who prepares a sepulchral chamber at the rear of the vehicle and, in the following photo, by another officer wielding a shotgun.

(II) The coming of the face is inevitable: it is (by chance) on Verônica's deformed face, but also on her back, on her buttocks, on her handcuffed limbs, on her battered hair and breasts, in the position in which she is lying, haggard. The whole body vocalizes "Thou shalt not kill" and internally divides those who see her. If the first rule of formation responded to this commandment in favor of the officer's right to self-survival, the images bring signs that not only frustrate that possibility, but also echo that vocalization: the wielded weapon, the tense hands of the police officer, as if they were about to attack a helpless being, intensify the condition of victim and the clamor of mercy that ruins the intention of police discourse. It is precisely from this failure that the narrative war described above arises and thrives.

(III) But, unlike other images of violence that we see on a daily basis, these images convey an anomalous (perhaps moved by the brutality) and impossible representation that involves us in a strange way, because it links us to a dimension that is pure possibility. Just as the face is not human, abnormality is not necessarily within the trans body. It is true that the images of Verônica sitting with her breasts exposed and her shaved hair attract attention and make us think about the gender or owner of that body brutalized by the police. But when we look at Verônica's gaze, we are taken to a vortex that empties us and disarms our capacity



for representation: is it a look of pain, anger, sadness, tiredness, compassion, serenity? The violence over Verônica's body produced a mute body but paradoxically full of expressiveness. Assigning a voice to the body, an expressive quality, may imply the loss of this anomalous and absorptive power of deafening silence.

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Figure 4. Close up detail on Verônica Bolina

Source: Folhapress. *Travesti espancada diz que mudou depoimento para reduzir pena* (2015, April 18th). *O tempo*.

About this anomaly, the question that seems politically important is not whether we should be silent when images like Verônica's images gain public visibility. Or perhaps, if we must spread more images of suffering, violence and humiliation so that they present the face as the face by itself, that is, without the filter of specialists saying what we should think about them. Not because such questions are of no interest, but because they are previously determined by the biopolitical structure of communication. Our lack is not of information, but of affects, "becomings that spill over beyond whoever lives through them (thereby becoming someone else)." (Deleuze, 1995, p. 137) The question that urgently needs to be answered about the anomaly is: to what extent are we capable of (or are we willing to) endure its strength in our discursive practice?

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INTERSECTIONALITY AND ORIENTALISM: TOWARDS A CHINESE DECOLONIAL *QUEER* PERSPECTIVE ¹

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Regiane Ribeiro³

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ABSTRACT

Since the 1990s, important queer reflections about gender and sexuality have been reworked in search of epistemologies and knowledge produced by/for/on identities that were deemed unintelligible and abject by a virtue of performative acts that entails a compulsory order between sex-gender-desire. Through these categories of analysis, any binary scope between sex/gender and nature/culture is rearranged, in a way that they are perceived as results of irregular relations based on power structures and its cultural, social, political, and economic citational acts. Nevertheless, if the intersectionality between race and culture is not considered, such studies can propose alternatives built on euroamerican and individualist models. For this reason, this paper seeks to delineate brief notes on the definition of theoretical dynamics of culture, gender, and race through a Chinese decolonial critique. Therefore, we discuss the concept of Orientalism (SAID, 1979), coloniality (QUIJANO, 2009; BALLESTRIN, 2007), as well as the definitions of intersectionality (CRENSHAW, 1994; PEREIRA, 2019). At last, we present Xiang's (2018) transdualist perspective as a non-Western tool to comprehend sex/gender, as well as its relationships with discursivity and materiality.

KEYWORDS:

Cultural Studies; orientalism; decoloniality; transdualism; gender.

Introduction

By historicizing and understanding heterosexuality as a political, economic and social regime, queer scholars point to abjection as both formation and potentiality of alliances, not only causing debates on identity, but also about the tactics of representation by which it is formed. If identity functions through a set of affirmations and negatives within power and language relations, the idea of women as the subject of feminism raises some questions. Butler (2002) states that the discursive production of an apparent stable category reinforces the subalternity of the bodies that are not considered intelligible and, because of that, are not deemed capable to represent and be represented. According to the author, such theorizing “has come under criticism for its efforts to colonize and appropriate non-Western cultures to support highly Western notions of oppression [...]” (BUTLER, 2002, p. 6).

In the face of these arguments, a queer theoretical approach aims at undermining any linear scale between sex-gender-sexuality that implies a pre-discursive, ahistorical, and universal nature. This fictional and binary stability — male/female, heterosexual/homosexual, nature/culture — is eroded by the deconstruction of sex and gender notions. In other words,

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it does not mean that the materiality of the body is rejected, but it is assumed that sex does not exist outside of the culture, since it is structured through language and the discursive field, becoming a result of power effects and regulations (LOURO, 2004). Sex is conceived as “the construction of construction” (BUTLER, 2000, p. 114), or else, it is equally produced by gender. It suggests that assuming sex is not a process of adoption or appropriation, but a condition to a subject that may be represented.

It goes without saying how much these theoretical endeavors reinforced the possibility to comprehend the process of abject bodies’ discursive production. However, although they are opposed to any claim of universality, queer studies — as a scientific field that is formed by historical and political subjects — present minimal intersection “between the production of sexual identities and dissident genders, coloniality and race/ethnicity or class oppression.” (REA E AMÂNCIO, 2018, p. 6). It is therefore proposed to decolonize the ‘queer’, considering the specificities and contexts of colonial difference, racial and orientalist logic as part of the sex/gender system. It seeks to confront any dichotomous relation between North/South and West/East that set a Western epistemic hegemony. As Miskolci and Pelúcio (2012, p. 10) explain, these attempts take shape as subaltern knowledge that, from an epistemic position built on geopolitics, criticizes theoretical elaborations that define “the West, whiteness, the male, and heterosexuality as the measure of a human being”.

To that end, we appropriate the questions made by Pereira (2019): what happens when such theory travels? Apart from our concern to translate the meaning of ‘queer’ to other contexts, how can we take such theory according to certain localities, in intersectionality between gender, sexuality, and race? Going even further, how can we use a theory that demands deconstructions under a non-Western perspective? Therefore, this theoretical article seeks to delineate brief notes on the dynamics of culture, race, and gender through a Chinese decolonial critique. For this purpose, we address the notion of coloniality based on the Orientalism category. In a second moment, we present intersectionality as an analytical tool, as well as its approximation to the queer critique. Finally, we suggest an attempt to present the concept of transdualism (XIANG, 2018).

Beyond the West/East and North/South Divide

We start our itinerary from what Said (1979) calls Orientalism. It is not a simple invention or a fantasy about what is named “Orient”, but a whole constellation of knowledge, grammar, and regimes of truth that describes and produces the Other under an attempt to fix, naturalize and essentialize certain non-Western identities. If the language provides symbolic systems to the production of meaning, which is arbitrary and tangled in power relations, it is right to affirm that “Orientalism, then, is a system of representations framed by a whole set of forces that brought the Orient into Western learning, Western consciousness, and later, Western empire.” (SAID, 1979, p. 202-203)

As the theoretician explains, orientalist logic is developed in art, literature, news, on the internet, television, and cinema, and also in political, economic, and social institutions. According to this angle, Said (1979) criticizes the distinction between culture and politics as monolithic lines, given the fact that they often act in exchanges. However, this argumentation does not pursue any definition of culture as degraded or distorted, but a capacity to unders-



tand it as a space of negotiations, asymmetric conflicts, and different dynamics of subject positions (HALL, 2016).

Behind this apparent ontological divide between “Orient” and “Occident”, knowledge is produced in different thesis — Biology, Economics, Linguistics, Anthropology, and History — from a Western/modern conscience that was considered to be axiological and neutral. Within this binary classification, the structures of domination are formed by the “Occident” defined as advanced, rational, and positivist over the “Orient” labeled as backward, medieval, uncivilized, and agglutinative. In a nutshell, it is clear that the “the Oriental is depicted as something one judges (as in a court of law), something one studies and depicts (as in a curriculum), something one disciplines (as in a school or prison), something one illustrates (as in a zoological manual).” (SAID, 1979, p. 40)

Thus, a relationship between power and knowledge is framed, in a way that the former is developed by language and its discursive formation through performative actions that are placed in historical reality. Knowledge, then, produces the understanding of what can be said and thought, of what is assumed as an authority and, at times, who must be regulated. (HALL, 2016). Under this perspective, Said (1979) writes about the latent Orientalism of the nineteenth century, in which the knowledge about the “Oriental” was linked to biological sciences and social Darwinism, resulting in binary divides between races, cultures, and societies. Moreover, a masculine visuality was fuelled: “This is especially evident in the writing of travelers and novelists: women are usually the creatures of a male power fantasy.” (SAID, 1979, p. 207)

Given the discursive formations that delineate the “Occident” as present and “Orient” as absent, Quijano (2009) notices modernity as a rearrangement of intersubjective relationships based on gender, sex and race categories, as well as the hierarchization and naturalization built on cartesian thought. Therefore, there is an alignment with colonization, which arises from the ethnic and racial classification that operates through political, economic, and social scales. As the author underlines,

In the course of the evolution of these characteristics of the current power, new societal identities of coloniality were formed - *Indians, blacks, olive-skinned people, yellow, white, mestizos* - and as geocultural of colonialism, such as *America, Africa, Far East, Near East* (the latter, later, Asia), *West or Europe* (Western Europe, afterward) (QUIJANO, 2009, p. 74, emphasis in original)

Ballestrin (2013) explains that such reading of the concept of race not only becomes a reference of humanity but of the very coloniality of power, of knowledge, and also the coloniality of being. The first one applies to geopolitical divides, in which the global North is described as an intellectual, technological site, whereas the global South is depicted as developing countries and producers of commodities. The second one embraces the knowledge construction so that the North produces its theories and the South only elucidates them, without any affirmation of local epistemologies. Ultimately, the coloniality of being falls within a “taxonomic” order that classifies individuals under a binary, Western, and eurocentric viewpoint. Hence the divisions between male/female, black/white, straight/gay.

Lugones (2014) stresses that this dichotomous system produces atomic, homogenous, and hierarchical categories, marking the presence of the superior member of the dichotomy — thus, “women” relate to white women, whereas “Black”, for instance, only represents



Black men. For this reason, as the author explains, it is essential to conceive intersectionality as a means to understand the different oppressions that reach each other, including overcoming single categories of race, class, and gender. Following Lugones' (2014) discussion, we highlight that we do not seek to delineate a non-colonized construction of gender, since its definition does not "escape" modernity. We aim to read different theories that embody multiple relationships between the subjects, considering their specific context as an exercise to expand the theoretical and analytical aspects of gender, sexuality, and race.

Intersectionality and Decolonial Queer Perspective

To achieve a decolonial queer viewpoint, we look at intersectionality as Crenshaw (1994) defines it as the acknowledgment of different forms of domination through gender, sexual orientation, race, and class, for instance. The intersection of these dimensions allows us to dive into multiple layers of vulnerability and agency of the subjects that lie in correlated structures of power but are deemed mutually exclusive. When the intersectional locational is not considered, the intra-group hierarchies are overshadowed, since the specific experience of a dominant group defines the entire group, even if they are all subordinated to others. By saying this, we mean that beyond patriarchy, the frameworks must consider oppression and self-definition situated in racism, heterosexism, classicism.

In this context, queer studies, intersectionality, and decolonial critique can work together to serve as a compass to comprehend the Other, as well as the abject bodies and the disengagement from a universal basis of the subject. As Pereira (2019) clarifies, this requires thinking about the geopolitical contexts of epistemic production, in a way that queer proposals from the global South must always be committed to decolonization. It means that we should recognize theoretical intersections to uncover the colonial difference as a discursive strategy of binary hierarchies that, based on race, entails the production of the sex-gender systems, therefore, performativity. According to the author, although these theoretical movements are still in a cloudy process, they allow us to reframe the concepts and develop new reflections from different positions of enunciation.

Such background can be detailed by which Lee (2019, p. 221, emphasis in original) notes as "a collective ambition to *queer* the postcolonial societies in Asia, on the one hand, and, on the other, to *decolonise* queer theory from the West". For him, it is important to not conceive a monolithic and imagined "West", but rather its hybridizations, as a critique to the limitation and universalization that were imposed by both Western and non-Western cultures. For this reason, we could think about plural ethics that goes beyond normative knowledge, identities, and places, in a way that queer studies also argue against the production of identity and its relationship with consumerism, the lesbian and gay "lifestyle", as well as the colonial notion of nationalism that marginalizes bodies that are deemed abject.

Conforming to Xiang (2018a), it is about unlearning and relearning from "other" places that are remote from the researcher but promotes a break with totalizing history, discipline, temporality, and epistemology. As a channel to engage in local theories that provoke the modern and binary systems of sex/gender, we propose a concise exercise of reading the concept of transdualism, also formulated by Xiang (2018b). On that account, it could serve as a non-Western tool, specifically from Chinese philosophy, to the discussion within gender studies.



In what way does the concept of transdualism contribute to a critic against sexual binarism and cisnormativity? What is its perspective of discursivity and materiality of the body? Due to limited space and time, we do not seek an exhaustive description, but rather we propose a brief note on Xiang's (2018b) concept.

A Materio-Discursive Tool About Gender: Brief Notes on Transdualism

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The key point to understand the concept of transdualism lies in the yinyang theory, which is central to Chinese philosophy. Coming from one of the most important and classic texts of Chinese thought, *Yi Jing - Book of Changes*⁴, such theory is generally conceived as binary when it comes to sex and gender. According to Xiang (2018b), since yin is separately interpreted as female/moon/passive/femininity, whereas yang is observed as male/sun/active/masculinity, it would not be uncommon to face the argument that the theory would structure heterosexist and dominant dualism. However, the author argues that this is a reductive reading because yinyang is/are not ontologically and sexually separated entities, but rather coexisting. That is, they are restraining/rigid, but also generative/mutable elements.

Different from the current binarism of Western philosophy, Xiang explains (2018b) that yinyang are mutually different and the same, they are attached but not merged into one single thing. Therefore, they must be seen through a non-essentialist, non-deterministic, and non-dualistic standpoint. On the contrary, yinyang are mutable and transitional as they constantly change, since "the tendency of yang-masculinity is to turn into yin-femininity" (XIANG, 2018b, p. 436) Such tensions of Chinese cosmology are depicted by black and white (figure 1), but without any mixture that would result in a gray area. For this reason, yinyang "[...] posit a challenge to thought: how to understand their coexisting difference and distinguishable sameness" (XIANG, 2018b, p. 431).



Figure 1. Taiji symbol, representation of yinyang

Source: <https://www.pngwing.com/pt/free-png-kannj>

Upon that, Xiang (2018b) draws attention to the Orientalist propensity of supposing that yinyang is an immutable/unchangeable concept, without any correlation with power negotiations for politics of difference. As a matter of fact, over the ancient Chinese dynasties, the yinyang harmony has been interpreted under subordinating and heterosexist optics, in which yin (femininity) was subjugated to yang (masculinity). Such heteronormative representations would have been addressed in Chinese society before modernity/coloniality, in a way that the author points out the importance of abandoning any narrative that characterizes the West not only as the origin of knowledge but also the genesis of all conflicts and hierar-

⁴ According to Bueno (2012, p. 64), the *Yi Jing - Book of Change* dates from the 12th century B.C and, among the years, "would be a book on early forms of Chinese thought and science, as well as of important oracular and religious use". As the author says, unlike what is generally believed, both the book and the yinyang system are not simple mystic representations, but a part of associative thought that defines and analyses the relationships between bodies and people. This logic permeates, moreover, the studies of political processes.



chization that exist in our social world. As the scholar nicely explains, “another significant risk of the critique of Orientalism is to retain the West as the one and only speaking subject, even when it is being criticized.” (XIANG, 2018b, p. 429)

One of the Yi Jing - Book of Changes hexagrams can be used to explain the materiality of the bodies from their bodily orifices, as Xiang (2018b) notes. Such a semiotic image is formed by three open lines/yin and three full lines/yang, which emphasizes their oppositional and complementary attribute. The first three lines represent the double orifices of the eyes, ears, and nostrils, whereas the other three lines depict the single orifices of the mouth, genitalia, and anus. The author highlights that despite the tendency of a phallic interpretation, the penis is not different from the vagina, since it has the urethra as a hole. Then, the body would not have any essence or substance based on sex, acting with full possibilities/potentialities to be independent of any linearity of sex-gender-sexuality. Because of this, yinyang would embrace the discourses that act on reality and mark bodies (BUTLER, 2002), as well as their materiality.

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Figure 2. Tai hexagram, representation of the body-of-orifices

Source: <https://www.taoistiching.org/11.html>

As a result of this view, Xiang (2018b) defines the transdualism concept as a tool to comprehend yinyang beyond a unidimensional philosophy, that is, as “*either* different and the same” (2018, p. 436, emphasis in original). A transdualist analysis takes the binary opposition as an important distinction to signifying practices in the social world, however, it simultaneously recognizes that such dualistic pairs transit between each other, without any stationary and essentialist character. This approach is enabled by the author’s use of “*either...and*” pairing. Thus,

Either marks their separately differentiable qualities: private and public, inside and outside, and certainly male and female, masculinity and femininity, yin and yang. *And* marks their *transing* capacity by way of “yinyang.” “*Either . . . and*” retains the necessary distance and difference between the two propensities, and meanwhile it reminds us of their inseparability, “sameness”, and “porosity.” (XIANG, 2018b, p. 437)

To some extent, Xiang (2018b) goes further and adopts the notion of transdualism to write a critique on different theories addressed by queer scholars, that is, both discursive framework and the focus on bodily materiality. While the former is distinguished by the definition of sex/gender as performative/citational acts that are tangled in linguistic and discursive formation, the latter points out the importance of embodiment and materiality. Xiang (2018b) realizes that such arguments should not act under an exclusive angle, since we cannot discursively understand the bodies outside the language. At the same time, we must consider their materiality, since it resignifies both itself and the very language that circumscribes the matter. The author, then, activates the ramifications of transdualism to replace any binary logics of “*either/or*” pairing, that is, either this theory or that theory. Thereby, he organizes these dimensions according to yinyang propensities: the embodied/material/mo-

lecular aspect aligns with yin, whereas discursive/citational/performative element aligns with yang. We can argue that both theories are different but also inseparable, in a manner that none of them should be imposed as a totalizing concept. In fact, they must be seen as an intersection of different knowledge, an enlargement of culture comprehension and its political, economic and social relations with sex/gender.

Final Considerations

Queer Theory arises as a critique of the gay and lesbian studies and its cultural assimilationism, which aspired to demarcate a unified/essentialist identity that would be represented. However, they ended up reverberating white and middle-class values, aside from the masculine privilege and discrimination against “other” subjects, like transexuals and bisexuals (LOURO, 2001). Nonetheless, when such theory travels to other territories, it goes through lapses, twists, and torsions not only to get the importance of thinking about oppression and self-definition of gender and sexuality but the very intersection of race and class.

With that in mind, we propose an initial exercise to articulate Queer Theory and the reflections about Orientalism and colonial differences, that is, the symbolic discourses that acts on the epistemological production of the Global South and, consequently, the embodiments that are marked by binary logic. Returning to Pereira’s (2019, p. 52) arguments, what brings these different theories closer are their self-questioning and deconstruction movement, in other words, “they are not modes of thinking closed in upon themselves, but rather opening movements for Others, movements of insertion in other-theories and in other forms of thinking and being.”

In this sense, we presented the notion of transdualism as one of the non-Western concepts, especially from the Chinese context, to embrace the sex/gender as a moving and situational system. At last, we stress that it is not about abandoning/disregarding the Western/modern thinking, but consider the epistemological diversity from hybrid positions of enunciation, in a way that we can develop different theoretical dynamics that challenge totalizing, essentialist and ontological knowledge. Thus, we can contemplate — along the same line of Xiang (2018b) — *either the West and the East, either matter and discourse.*

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HALO'S DISPOSABLE LIVES¹. MEANINGS ABOUT THE MUSLIM HERO OF THE ANIMATED SERIES YOUNG JUSTICE: OUTSIDERS

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ABSTRACT:

Animated series have been common materiality for gender and race issues. Thus, the aim of this research is to point out meanings produced about the superhero Halo as a figure linked to Islam. The theoretical north permeates Islamic feminism; the relationship between animated language and the production of meanings; and the media representation of the Muslim community. There is also Content Analysis as an applied technique combined with the Riz Test, in order to accentuate the most common elements in this representation. Among the results, there was a strong tendency to images of aggression and violence against the female body when it comes to the character Halo in the series.

KEYWORDS:

Representation; animation; Islamic feminism; orientalism.

Introduction

Historically, Islamic community and its mores were rarely present in a plural way in the fictional Western imaginary. With uneven space for Muslim characters or actors and actresses, the frequency with which many people have access to representations about this culture is still limited to characters linked to villainy and terrorism, commonly played by a western cast. Therefore the content plan on Muslim characters points to unfair and incomplete representations, commonly reinforcing stereotypes and ideological discourses against this community.

Thus, animation also play a relevant role in this process. Therefore, the present work seeks to look at the Muslim character Halo, from the serial television production *Young Justice: Outsiders*, as a representative element, with the research question as the concern: the presence of the character linked to Islamic culture contributes to the deconstruction or reinforcement of stereotypes about such community? Lawrence Bardin's Content Analysis (2004) is used here to enter the object of study in order to deepen the responses to the Riz Test (Choudry and Habib, 2019). Similar to the Bechdel-Wallace Test⁴, The Riz Test brings a series of questions to help understand the representation of the Muslim individual on the scene, his negotiations, reinforcements and reframings. With these two analytical movements, we seek to understand how and which meanings the series produces about Muslim women in its narrative.

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⁴ Test that points to a series of elements that indicate whether an audiovisual production has a misogynistic representation of its female characters in the narrative.

The Muslim issue and the animated text

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Animation has been operating as a rich source of powerful meanings for the manifestation of ideologies, identities and configuring possibilities for inclusion and exclusion of individuals. The way in which they are represented, however, can sometimes be a detrimental element in their struggles for equality and recognition. As a technique, animation can bring life to any being and make it lively. But giving life is not its only purpose, as stated by Cholodenko (2017) when saying that

not only does animation have to do with bringing life and movement, it corresponds to bringing death and non-movement [...] the object has two aspects, inextricably mixed: the metamorphosis of the inanimate to the animated and the metamorphosis of the animated to the inanimate. (Cholodenko, p. 217)

Metamorphosis, mentioned by the author, is part of expressions of the animated language present in this format. To compose their stories, the series and films use it in order to anchor much of its symbolic representative potential as a form of expression. The political nature of some animated productions may not be declared central to their history, but all animation is culturally specific and somehow reflects aspects of the social, political and cultural reality in which it was produced (Furniss, 2008). The characters are conductors of speeches operating in order to build a logic in which what they represent can bring to light, through the likelihood, clues about the themes they address, as Paul Wells points out:

In animation, the trajectories of movements can contain meaning and emotive suggestions that bring out symbolic relationships or ideas [...] that in turn effectively narrate a visualization or dramatic situation. Many animations have no beginning, middle and end, but are visual expressions of memory, and, although they allude to larger stories and issues, they still function as a narrative materialization of a feeling (Wells, 2012, p.26)

When entering the history of the ethnic conflict that permeates the West and the East, the way in which animation represent Muslim characters, for example, varies considerably. So, this issue of the Oriental's representation in the West is central to Edward Said's thinking. In its conception, "Orientalism" supposes the view that we have in the West of the people and culture of the East as that built by the colonizing force of the countries of the global North. The Orientalist, then, is one who is always outside the East, but has the power to produce the image of the East, speak for it, describe it, but never let it speak. In the case of the research presented here, the construction of this image in the West occurs through the American series *Young Justice*, available on the streaming service of DC's original productions, for example. Therefore, the result of such conditions of discourse production would be as a material force that positions the Oriental in a dark, mysterious, "different" and, mainly, inferior place for the purposes of imperialist submission and domination (Said, 2007). The author's thinking has initiated other reflections over the years and has undergone reviews and improvements mainly through researchers in the context of post-colonial and decolonial studies.

According to Spivak (2010, p.41) "by representing them (the Orientals), intellectuals represent themselves as being transparent", when in fact they are not. Bhabha's (1991) positioning, on the other hand, comes close to reflections on representation when he states that



it can act in the symbolic and visual realm through stereotypes that, depending on constant repetitions and other stereotypes, would dictate a single image of the colonized oriental as his primordial image. In what the author points out as regimes of truth⁵ there is a system of representation that is confused with realism and can place the subject already marginalized in a place that increases his visibility as an object of surveillance, paranoia, etc. In its logic, the more a stereotype is repeated and gains strength, the more difficult it is for the subject represented by him to escape his oppressive power.

The relations between the image that the West has and creates in relation to the East is also very emblematic when it comes to women. For Spivak (2010) the subject of colonized countries is in a subordinate position that has little access to discourse, an important tool for visibility and mobilization. In the case of subordinate women, the author comments that they are located even more in obscurity than men.

The image of Islam begins to emerge much more powerfully in the Western imagination after 9/11, a decisive moment for the location of these peoples in the media context as synonyms of terrorism, war and terror. John and Pizzini (2015) report that in Brazil, considering the low number of Muslims compared to Christians, many citizens do not have information about this culture if they do not resort to the media, and this is worrying. When dealing with women, for example, some magazines contained statements about the supposed horrors of life under the burqa, the endless suffering of women in Islam, among others. In order to go into some points about the female condition in Islam, reflections from theorists dealing with Islamic feminisms⁶ and the image of the hijab. According to Aicha Hajjami

The condition of women in Islam is one of the most controversial issues today. In the West, this theme is linked to the representation that is generally made of Islam and Muslims, perceiving only the most negative and spectacular aspects, widely covered by the media and disseminated without any discernment. It is a representation that consists of stereotypes and reductionist schematics and also conceptual confusions. (Hajjami, 2008, p. 109).

In this sense, Abu-Ludhog (2012, p. 460) warns that “we must be careful not to reduce the diverse situations and attitudes of millions of Muslim women to a single piece of clothing”. If it cannot be representative of all women, Lamrabet (2014, p.33) however says that hijab, for Islamists, «represents the entire Islamic identity and is a symbol of religious authenticity». The author comments that it is a space of struggle between Islamic feminists who take ownership of it and secular women who see it as a way of oppression, a view more linked to the West. Therefore, with ambiguous appropriations

while hides, the veil also exposes the vulnerability of the egalitarian ideal, of the differences and of the domination / dominated relationship, but it also shows the inconsistency of the Muslim interpretive imaginary on the body of women (Lamrabet. p.34).

⁵ Michael Foucault's original term in *The truth and the legal forms*, 1978.

⁶ Among the main strands are the secular - which is most supported in the West for its desires to break with religion in order to bring more equity to women; and the Islamic, which is less adhered to for its desire to maintain ties with religion, but to reinterpret the laws of the Qur'an in a more just and less patriarchal way.



The view of hijab as an oppressor is very recurrent in the West, possibly due to a generalization that points to the lack in our imaginary of meanings that we were unable to construct about such cultural contexts. This gap leads to the common thought that Muslim women need to be saved. Something intrinsic in the Islamic feminism.

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When someone is saved, it is assumed that the person is being saved from something. You are also saving it for something. What violence is associated with this transformation and what assumptions are being made about the superiority of what you are saving it for? Projects to save other women depend on, and reinforce, a sense of superiority on the part of Westerners, a form of arrogance that deserves to be challenged. (Abu-Ludhog., p.465).

It is clear, then, that what is sought is a reframing of the meanings that have historically been produced about the relationship of the woman of Islam with their tradition of covering their hair or face. Kian-Thiébaud's comment (2008, p.169-170) is enlightening. Avawhen he says that there are many women in Iran who "thanks to the veil were able to go to universities and work after the Revolution. I mean, for them, the veil meant an instrument of emancipation". This garment guarantees them access to the public space and, although its use may be mandatory in some countries, it is seen by the author as also a tool to assist the conquests in areas previously controlled only by men, such as the academy, for example. This, however, would not remove the religious role in a system of patriarchal oppression from the equation. What is perceived are forms of resistance and appropriation of elements whose function can be attributed to an existing and patriarchal male thought that "instrumentalizes his reading of religion to legitimize situations of domination, violence and exclusion in relation to women" (Hajjami, 2008).

A Muslim superhero

Wanting not only question, but also offer evidence-based answers, The Riz Test analyzes the description of Muslims in fictional audiovisual and points out whether these may be contributing to Islamophobia. Here it will be used as part of the methodological path, also supported by Bardin's Content Analysis (2004). The five questions that make up the test will be used as first contact with the object of analysis constituted in Young Justice: Outsiders.

The series is an original creation by Warner Bros. Animation for the streaming service of DC Universe and produced by Americans Brandon Vietti and Greg Weisman, who is also a screenwriter. In its third season, the focus is a meta-human trafficking scheme, so-called humans with special abilities. At first, the season's twenty-six episodes were observed to answer the test. The focus was on the character Gabrielle / Violet, a non-white⁷ girl from Qurac - a fictional nation located in South Asia whose capital is Dhabar⁸ - inserted in the series in a context full of mysteries that unfold throughout the season.

⁷ The animated version of Halo indicates an attempt to bring more ethnic-racial plurality to the DC universe, since originally the hero created by Mike W. Barr and Jim Aparo in 1983 was blonde.

⁸ There is a few information on the exact location of Qurac in the series. In Google Maps, Dhabar is the name of a region located in India, close to Pakistan.



Gabrielle Doe is a girl who works in the palace of the regents of the fictional country Markovia, located in the European continent, and is killed after receiving money to help in the murder of the king and queen of the country. After her death, she is resurrected by an alien artificial intelligence technology - the Mother Box - that inserts into her body, giving her superpowers such as the ability to regenerate herself to the point of coming back to life. The process erases Gabrielle's memories and the technology that brings her organic body to life changes its name to Violet Harper, who then assumes her identity and her new condition as meta-human.

It is important to make it clear that, taking into account the fictional context of some of the nationalities that appear in the series, Halo cannot be considered representative of any real country, but of a region, the Middle East. The same careful interpretation must be clarified regarding the girl's wearing the hijab. Although it is indicative of a possible adherence of Qurac women to Islam, this fact is not stated in the series. However, it is a strong marker code of this community and, in addition to its use, there are other indications that point to this adherence, such as when Violet drinks alcohol socially on an isolated occasion and is questioned by a schoolmate about a possible violation of her mores. In addition, the use of hijab and the geographical location of Gabrielle's country of origin are understood here as clear allusions to Muslim customs. Below, the first impressions about the presence of the character on the scene are pointed out through the Riz Test (Choudry and Habib, 2019), followed by an analysis located in the research corpus.

Table 1
The Riz Test applied to Halo

RIZ TEST QUESTION	ANSWER
The character who is identifiably Muslim is talking about, the victim of, or the perpetrator of terrorism?	No
Is she resented as irrationally angry?	No
Is she presented as superstitious, culturally backwards or anti-modern?	Yes
Is she presented as a threat to a Western way of life?	Yes
If the character is male, is he presented as misogynistic? or if female, is she presented as oppressed by her male counterparts?	Yes

Initially, the results can be explained ambiguously in many cases. Gabrielle, for example, has nothing to do with terrorism, but is shown as girl who takes bribes to help murder the king and queen of Markovia. She is also not irrationally angry, but is shown as too much emotional in many scenes.

However, there are also other aspects to be mentioned that go beyond the options that the test offers. The narrative complexity and the character itself as central to the plot that unfolds cannot be achieved only with the initial surveys. We then resort to Content Analysis (Bardin, 2004) to understand in what other ways its presence occurs in the series and what meanings it creates, reinforces or resignifies. Pre-analysis was adopted here as a way to have the first impressions about the character, extracted with the use of the Riz Test (Choudry and Habib, 2019), to then enter the exploration of the material and the treatment of the results,



three movements identified as essential in *CA*. For the exploration of the material, the author suggests cutting it into units for thematic analysis, here being considered through the episodes of the series chosen for analysis, which are: 1 – Princes all; 2 – Royal We; 3- Eminent threat; 6 – Rescue op; 9 – Home fires; 19 – Elder wisdom; 20 – Quiet conversations. In choosing these episodes, two recurring factors were taken into account in Halo’s history: his violent deaths and the flashbacks of Gabrielle’s life. This is in line with what Bardin (2004) advises regarding the creation of registration units that can be representative of the object.

Halo’s disposable lives

Images from the past

Gabrielle’s first appearance in the series takes place in a mysterious way in episode 1, at the moment when she opens the door to the assassins who are going to kill the king. It can be seen that, as a scene that introduces the character, she is already inserted in the viewer’s imagination under a negative direction. While movement is central for an animated character to express his personality (Costa, 2018), Gabrielle’s suspicious gaze, his silent steps and defensive and sneaky posture in this episode communicate a personality shrouded in mysteries and obscurity, which meets the idea of the oriental people that Said (2010) says it’s the most widespread in the West.

The identity context is reinforced when Gabrielle’s memories begin to be accessed by Violet. Episode 20 takes Violet to the city where Gabrielle’s parents live to tell them about what happened to their daughter. The scenario shown refers to a place destroyed by war, precarious and arid. The house where Violet meets Gabrielle’s mother, Nadia, and her cousin Samad, has little furniture and only one room is shown. The content of the scene creates an image of inferiority over the family when compared to the American city where Halo now lives. Their marginalization refers to the subordinate subject as the one belonging “to the lower strata of society constituted by specific modes of exclusion from markets, political and legal representation, and the possibility of becoming full members in the dominant social strata” (Spivak, p.12).

If we also look at the logic of the notes made by John and Pizzini (2015), the only images in the series about where Gabrielle comes from serve to reinforce the precarious oriental stereotype that exists in relation to Islamic countries. In this representation of Halo’s place of origin, one can perceive a simplifying character of a context that in itself is complex. The Middle East and its different nationalities and cultural possibilities is reduced to a single, fictional city, which produces a totalizing image of an entire region. This image is still strongly linked to orientalist notions.

Images of death

Apart from her memories and her past coded as oriental, the presence of the girl in the series is constantly accompanied by violence against her body. The fact that it has regenerative powers results in her being murdered several times in brutal and gratuitous ways, without the slightest narrative justification beyond a trigger for the emotional development of



other characters around. In the second episode, even before becoming Halo, her body is dumped in a grave with men throwing earth over her and burying her over other corpses. The scene already allows a certain amazement at the brutality of how the girl's body is treated, being merely discarded as it is no longer useful for research with metahumans.

In terms of the character's body functions in animation, for Wells (2009, p.110) "the representation of the body, instead of simply operating in functional terms and conditions to portray a character, is also used to deal with the experience subjective «. In this way, Violet's subjectivity in the first episodes is always constructed through absence. After rising from the first death she suffers, she wakes up with no memories of herself, and an inability to communicate and to deal with basic social notions, limitations in the understanding of mundane events and an ignorant personality justified by the absence of memory.

Her initial narrative limitations would reinforce the position of subordinate as a colonized woman that Spivak (2010, p.15) mentions when she says that "the woman as a subordinate cannot speak and when she tries to do so she does not find the means to make herself heard".

Over time, Halo's personality begins to stabilize and she becomes a powerful hero, but still vulnerable when it comes to her body. The logic of repetition that Bhabha (1991) points out as essential for the formation of stereotypes here is manifested in the repetition of the image of death that is fixed on Halo. In episode 3 the girl is killed again by an alien being composed of lava that burns her face to death. The sensorial violence that the image brings is explored with her body lying on the floor and half of her face disfigured. Thus, metamorphosis from animate to inanimate (Cholodenko, 2017) is explored as a pattern that begins to repeat itself in episodes: several heroes are fighting the same villain, but only Halo is killed several times and in brutal ways, always by a male character.

With that, it is important to bring the question of Lamrabet (2014): why are Muslim women alone who must bear the weight of multiple visibility, modernity, and Islam? The hijab as a demarcating element of the entire conflict between West and East is indicative of the potency of the symbolic association described by COSTA (2018) as one of the primary forms of animated expression. In the series it seems to deprive Halo of her humanity as her life is treated as more likely to die than her western white companions simply because she can regenerate.

The last death pointed out here - but not the last of the character - brings Halo being traversed by a spear in mid-flight and, afterwards, being dragged across the floor to the feet of the villain Lobo, who steps on her body. If the hijab is seen by Islamic feminists as a form of emancipation and divine protection of women in the laws of Islam (Kian-Thiébaud, 2007) this protection does not seem to apply to the body of Halo outside the Middle East. In North America, the garment seems to operate as a marker of the difference that makes Muslim women vulnerable (Lamrabet, 2014) and directs the hero to a target position, destined to fatalism repeatedly.

Images of hope

Much of what has been pointed out so far refers to the way Halo is treated by characters and situations outside of it. Given the problematic meanings, it is looking directly at the character that one hopes that the presence of this hero with an oriental context can be, in some



ways, transgressive. Halo is pacifist, calm and serene most of the time when addressed via aggressive actions, either through speech or physical aggression. This does not make her a victim, as her powers develop and increase throughout the series to the point that, in the end, she is responsible for saving the heroes and closing the narrative arc of the third year of *Young Justice*. Being one of the strongest heroes in the group, she saves the lives of many colleagues in battle, even when the reverse is rare.

242 | Another aspect to note is when Violet is questioned about wearing a hijab. Even though she is internally a being who does not have the same past as Gabrielle or her cultural heritage - therefore without the «obligation» to use it - she replies that she keeps it «because it seems right». This emblematic choice highlights the main goal of the Islamic feminist movement: the hijab is a symbol of oppression if you see it as one, but it can also be the symbol of free will in choosing or not to use it when resignifying its meaning (Kian -Thiébaud, 2007). There are constant negotiations between what is expected of Halo, what is done to her and how she interprets this context that wants to position her as a victim.

Except for the school environment, where she suffers bullying, Violet is inserted in the social relationships of the characters as an equal, starting a relationship and creating bonds with a character of equal or lesser presence on the scene than her. She is free of prejudice and when kisses another girl, she deals with it naturally. From the Muslim girl that Gabrielle represented to the hero Halo and companion Violet, the nuances of the character's identity pass through the same body, marked by race, ethnicity and the hijab as extremely important elements for maintaining the image of the Muslim community in the animated text.

Conclusions

«I am not a Muslim» is the statement that Violet makes after being scolded for drinking alcohol in a moment of frustration. It can be a way of rebelling against the identity that existed before her, or an internal conflict between respecting a chosen ideology when using the hijab, but not being defined by it. The fact is that, even though Violet is not overtly Muslim, she is in the body of a girl understood as a Muslim and that body carries meanings. Moments of strong perpetuation of images of violence against the woman's body contrast with a hijab hero who arrives flying in a warm light to save those in danger. Halo is not what they do with her, but neither is completely what she shows to be externally.

Young Justice: Outsiders has a transgressive character; however, colonizing american morality still seems to dictate the narrative rules and make it unclear on how to be inclusive without conflicting with conservative ideologies constantly rising in the USA. Thus, it is suggested that future research on the series explore issues such as the contextual differences between non-white and white characters; the treatment given to genomorph communities as a possible reference to the issue of immigrants in the USA; and the representation of the LGBTQ + community on scene.



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PRISON AS A SOLUTION? – THE PRINCIPLES OF ECO-FEMINISM APPLIED TO THE SOCIAL REINTEGRATION OF WOMEN DETAINEES¹

Helena Ferreira²

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this investigation, born within activism, is to present an alternative to the current prison services that requires radical transformations in society. In other words, it aims to replace the space currently occupied by prisons with new institutions that will work to expel the prison from our social and psychic landscape. This project focuses on organizations in open spaces that prioritize the social well-being of female detainees and their families: eco-villages. Besides contributing to the global motion towards a society of sustainable communities, eco-villages promote social reintegration and solve the issue of severe poverty amongst female inmates. These eco-villages, built from the remnants of abandoned villages, on the principles of eco-feminism, provide an opportunity for women to overcome unfavorable conditions and build better lives for themselves and their communities – while contributing to the construction of a fairer, more sustainable democratic society.

KEYWORDS:

Prison; women; social reintegration; eco-villages; eco-feminism.

Introduction

In modern society, prison – designated by Goffman (1988) as a “total institution” – is the main mechanism for punishment and care within the criminal justice system. The length of time spent in deprivation of liberty and rights characterizes the effective penalty degree for “deviants” (Cunha, 2010) in practically every country. In other words, it is “the temporary enclosing of a free citizen in a determined physical space in order for them to learn how to live freely in the future” (Lopes, 2017, p.154). A paradox, then.

Even those who claim to be anti-prison think only of system reforms, intended to improve living conditions for those who are in prison. Abolishing prisons is unthinkable for the vast majority of populations. Prisons are considered “natural”, whereas the ideas of abolitionists are considered “unrealistic and impractical at best, and, at worst, myths and nonsense” (Davis, 2003, p.10). Foucault (1999) emphasized the great inconveniences of prisons, and considered them useless and even dangerous, but could not see a reasonable replacement for this despicable solution. Angela Davis shares this line of thought. Life without prisons is unimaginable for Davis, even though she believes there is a lack of courage to face the lives happening inside them – which means they are simultaneously present and absent from our lives. In other words, prison is something meant for “others”, those who act against the law, and it therefore frees us from them while simultaneously freeing us from the responsibility of having to think about the real problems of society – those that lead to individuals being arrested every day.

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However, prisons have nevertheless been proven not to be a factor in reducing antisocial activity. Quite the contrary: in some cases they favor its increase. Prisons are a system of liberty deprivation that does not rehabilitate prisoners and makes them less and less fit for social life; that is, a system that does not achieve its proposed goals (Kropotikin, 2012).

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Still, populist speeches are bound to emerge in a democracy under threat: the extreme dramatization of violence, the call for a close war against crime with the assurance of a hardening in penal practices and public security policies, entailing the creation of new, harsher forms of punishment and devaluing human rights, regarded as privileges for “bandits”. According to Caldeira (2000), these discourses are associated with three central strategies: the first denies the humanity of criminals, relying on stereotyped representations, in terms of the fight for good against evil; the second consists of associating the increase in crime with the efforts of democratic governments to impose the rule of law, control police violence and reform prisons; and, lastly, the third one consists of claiming and arguing the so-called humanizing policies for prison establishments would be nothing more than ways to grant privileges to miscreants.

For Bauman (1999), this discourse, supposedly about more effective public security policies, with promises of a new legislation that will multiply and amplify sentences, increases the popularity of candidates and governments because it conveys an image of austerity, severity, capacity and, above all, commitment to citizen well-being and the country’s economic prosperity. Therefore, they are extremely dangerous in the context of postmodern reality - that should already be discussing possible solutions to end criminality and make current prison facilities obsolete.

Prisons in Portugal

According to the World Prison Brief, in Portugal there are forty-nine prisons of different types: 17 called “central”, which are usually large and destined for prisoners sentenced to more than six months; 27 “regional prisons” for prisoners sentenced to less than six months; four “special” prisons for prisoners in need of special attention, such as women, juveniles, police officers and the sick, and a “support jail”. In June 2020, 1153 people were detained, of which 761 are women – that is, 7.0% of the total prison population and 7.4% per 100,000 inhabitants (WPB, 2020).

The Portuguese prison system is a fragile one, which has been overlooked and “left to its own devices” by the political class over the years. This means each establishment has its own set of rules, without any attempts at administrative or legislative standardization regulated and/or ensured by such entities as courts or police forces. These problems lead to the stigmatization of prisoners and all those who work in prisons. Even though prison statutes establish all minimum requirements for all basic standards of human dignity to be met, in reality, the report of the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, resulting from a visit to Portugal from September 27 to October 7, 2016, revealed that prisons offer terrible safety, hygiene and health conditions. In addition, they are overcrowded, not least because Portugal has the highest average prison time in Europe. Facilities are dilapidated and poorly cared for and detainees often have to sanitize their cells with their own cleaning products, when they can purchase them (COE, 2018).



Female prisoners are housed in institutions or units that are separate from male prisoners and were specifically created to meet their needs. Concerning food, prison statutes stipulate that three meals a day and a supplement must be provided. However, food quantity is inadequate and its quality is very poor, not least because contracts with meal providing companies establish an average of 4 euros per detainee and there is no quality control or inspection. Meals are often cold when they reach the cell.

With regard to communication with the outside world, regulation states all prisoners are entitled to one five-minute telephone call a day, except for situations that will have to be authorized by the warden. But some prisoners always have phone cards and others cannot buy them. Nowadays, obviously, there are countless cell phones purchased on the prisons' very own black market – again, only for the privileged. Prisoners are also entitled to one-hour visits twice a week. In practice, due to security procedures at the entrance, this time can be reduced to fifteen minutes. Entry is limited to three or four adults and the visits have little privacy, as the guards can hear all conversations. In exceptional cases, conjugal visits may be granted. They are used as “prizes” for good behavior, as a symbol of power for those who allow such visits to occur – that is, prison guards. Leaving the institution under escort requires special authorization by the wardens, who practically only grant it so that detainees can attend funerals of direct family members. This power is also used to punish prisoners who may be prevented from attending funerals due to their bad behavior. Situations when legal and emotional relationships do not coincide, for example the death of an unmarried partner, may pose a problem as they are not covered by law (Dores, Pontes & Loureiro, 2013).

Although Portuguese legislation foresees the creation of inmate employment programs in different fields, reality is that most available work is institutional cleaning. Employment opportunities are insufficient, which means prisoners spend their days in aimless idleness and are unable to acquire the necessary skills for future job market integration (Dores et al, 2013). Also foreseen by the Law is the Individual Readaptation Plan (IRP), which is to be devised during the prison stay and should aim for “the acquisition of skills that allow [the inmate] to choose a socially responsible way of life, without committing crimes, and provide for their needs upon release” (Law 115/2009). In practice, the IRP is just a formality and generally not implemented.

Women in Prisons

Punishment has always varied according to gender, even though, until the early 20th century, in Portugal and the rest of Europe, women shared the same spaces as men, in collective and mixed prisons, and were therefore subjected to various kinds of violence (Henriques, 2017). Before that, as Angela Davis (2003) rightly states, women were usually punished in private. Female punishments took place in domestic spaces and were carried out by family members such as husbands, parents and even brothers, who could keep women imprisoned in their homes or apply more severe punishments, such as corporal punishment. Since women had no rights or any public position under the law, they could not be punished by being depriving of their rights through imprisonment. Thus, women were punished for their failures against domestic duties committed in private, in their homes, and never for violating public laws, since they did not have a responsible public life. Therefore, domestic corporal



punishment has survived in time, even after these modes of punishment became obsolete for men. This is why we still talk about “culture” when talking about domestic violence in present day.

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Also according to Angela Davis (2003), women were detained in psychiatric institutions in far greater proportion than in prisons. This means that the dominant institutions for the control of women have been mental institutions and while “deviant men have been constructed as criminals; deviant women were constructed as insane” (Davis 2003, p. 66). This fact is also related to the low presence of women in public space. When women expanded their participation in social space, there was talk of an increase in female criminality, as women started to have more opportunities to (also) commit crimes, and thus, facilities for female criminals started to appear.

In women’s prisons around the world, sexual abuse is a constant, though unrecognized, form of punishment women are subjected to. This is an aspect of prison life that “women can expect to find, directly or indirectly, regardless of the institution’s regulations” (Davis, 2003, p.80). Sexual abuse is rendered unfeasible and often perpetrated in customary practices such as intimate inspection. This means the State is directly involved in the sexual abuse routines carried out by guards and other prison officials, including the regulatory procedures that lead to them, such as intimate examination and body cavity search.

It is this same State that establishes, in Portugal at least, that the particular needs of women should be considered. Therefore, in female prisons, conditions exist for children up to 3 years of age (which can go up to 5 years, with authorization special), to be able to live with their mothers (Law 115/2009). The number of children in these conditions is unknown, but in some prisons there are areas specially equipped for children, as well as specialized staff to care for them. Legally, fathers can also have their children with them, but in practice this does not happen (Dores et al, 2013). Reality is, despite all efforts, prison services never provide the right conditions for women to maintain close relationships with their children and family in general, while they also fail to take into account the need for other special conditions concerning gender, such as special health care, for example, or access to specific products such as sanitary pads and tampons. According to the law, all services and products must be provided, but in practice, they do not always arrive when they are needed.

An Alternative to Female Prisons: The Principles of Ecofeminism

The ideal would be to (re)build a society that did not need prisons. However, it seems we are still far from that and, as such, we agree with Angela Davis (2003) when she argues we should set aside the ambition to discover a single alternative system to prison services, but consider a series of alternatives that require radical transformations in society. And, like her, we claim to fill the space now occupied by prisons with new institutions that, in some way, will expel the prison from our social and psychic landscape. In this case, it is still important to note this is a reparative alternative, that is, the law here is no longer criminal but becomes reparative; the transgressive woman is not a “bad criminal”, but a debtor – a person responsible for their actions that assumes the duty of reparation towards society. For this reason, we chose to include the principles of eco-feminism, which aims at coexistence without dominants and dominated, complementation and never exploitation. This way, the



cultivation of collaborative relationships would begin, without linking hierarchical and power relationships, thus directing thoughts towards political, economic and social equality.

Eco-feminism is understood here as a movement that claims for women's equality and autonomy, implementing feminist policies while keeping a strong ecological sense - but not in the essentialist sense that defends women are closer to nature due to their biological characteristics. Quite the contrary. The reasoning coming from Puleo (2011) is constructivist, in the sense that it defends the participation of all human beings to face the current environmental crisis and that gender equality, linked to an ecological conscience, is fundamental in caring for other human beings, activities that will also have to be performed by men. This eco-feminist conception only seeks alternatives in the face of an alienated and consumerist world that has led to nature destruction, environment degradation and, above all, to the suffering of human beings affected by climate change, indiscriminate use of chemicals, water scarcity and the inability to access biological products.

Female inmates, in addition to being victims of all this, are also victims of a system that values incarceration as a solution to crime. Here, they may take on a role of active subjects in the preservation of nature and the environment as well as in the abolition of a penal system that has been unsuccessful. Furthermore, with regard to women who have been imprisoned, it must be said that the stigma of being ex-prisoners, associated with sexism, sexism and stereotypes, contributes for power to remain male and for feelings of female inferiority and submission to intensify.

It is also worth considering that, like Martins (2008), we believe capitalism to be amongst the main causes for the extreme poverty, deprivation and social marginalization of a large part of the population, because it excludes it both from the over-competitive job market and the enjoyment of production. This creates a marginalized class that, when looking for survival strategies, collides with established social order and violates the law. According to Martins

(...) the poor insist on being part of that which does not want them but as victims and residual beneficiaries of their possibilities. In these strategies, not always compatible with the common good, in the use of the illegal and antisocial by the victims, the whole of society is reached and compromised on the understandable actions of survival by those to whom it does not offer an appropriate alternative of life. Because, make no mistake, capitalism that expands at the expense of limitless reduction in labor costs, debiting the price of progress without ethics or principles on the accounts of workers and the poor, privatizes gains which are in this case unjust and socializes losses, crises and social problems. Through different paths, these deformations spread, penalizing everyone and not just some, even the main beneficiaries of this mode of producing and accumulating wealth (2008, pp.10-11).

In fact, the vast majority of female workers, in situations of extreme poverty and discrimination, are subjected to precarious work, in precarious conditions, with wages that do not cover their basic needs. To try to escape these situations they enter the world of criminality that leads them to prisons. Incidentally, this is exactly what Henriques (2017) concludes: women prisoners have low economic conditions and low educational qualifications, and the vast majority are in prison for crimes related to drug trafficking.

The goal, therefore, is for women to seek, "with intelligence, their path of pleasure, equality and autonomy" (Puleo, 2011, p. 23). The movements of poor indigenous and rural women



in Latin America seeking sustainability give us a great lesson and we must learn from them. The idea is a critical eco-feminism that claims ideals of autonomy, equality and freedom.

Unpoliced Prisons Are Already a Reality

250 | In Brazil, since 1972, a model has been implemented that, in some way, holds detainees responsible for their acts and for the duty of reparation to society. The Association for the Protection and Assistance of Convicts (APAC)

is a non-profit legal entity, with the objective of assisting Justice in executing the sentence, recovering the prisoner, protecting society by helping victims and promoting restorative Justice (FBAC, 2016).

Its main philosophy is “kill the criminal and save the man”, using the twelve-element method: 1. Community participation; 2. *Recuperando*³ helping *recuperando*; 3. The work; 4. Legal assistance; 5. Spirituality; 6. Health assistance; 7. Human Valorization; 8. The family; 9. The volunteer and the course for their formation; 10. Social Reintegration Center – CRS; 11. Merit, and 12. Liberation Journey with Christ.

The first APAC was born in São José dos Campos (São Paulo) in 1972 with a group of Christian volunteers led by lawyer and journalist Mário Ottoboni. The acronym originally meant “*Amando o próximo, amarás a cristo*” – Loving your neighbor, you will love Christ, because, in fact, God was seen as the source of everything. It was only in 1974 that APAC – Association for the Protection and Assistance of Convicts was created as a legal entity, because it was necessary to respond to all the difficulties and vicissitudes faced in prison services. APAC’s main objectives are to humanize prisons, prevent recidivism and provide conditions for detainees to recover and achieve social reintegration.

There are about one hundred APAC units throughout Brazil and abroad: Germany, Argentina, Bolivia, Bulgaria, Chile, Singapore, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Ecuador, Peru, Colombia, Slovakia, United States, Canada, United Kingdom, Hungary, South Korea, Mexico, Moldova, Uruguay, New Zealand, Norway, Holland and Italy. The APAC model was recognized by Prison Fellowship International (PFI), as innovative and an excellent alternative to humanize prison services, since all detainees are seen as recoverable and considered reliable. They are even entrusted with the keys to the premises and relied upon to comply with the rules without the presence of police. This system has numerous advantages: it administers a dignified and humane treatment to detainees, it has adequate facilities for the number of occupants, it leads to a decrease in costs with prison services and a decrease in the rate of recidivism of detainees, it steers them to create ties in family relationships and leads them towards reintegration into work and social environments. But it also has a few problems: it imposes spirituality as an entry requirement, it regards itself as a privilege and uses the common prison system as a threat whenever detainees rise up, it has the explicit goal of religious “conversion”, it severely underpays detainees for their work, among others (Grossi, 2018).

³ Literally, “recoveree”, i.e., the person undergoing a recovery process. APAC uses the Portuguese word in its official online communication.



The detainees, called *recuperandos*⁴, have a lot of responsibility in managing the facilities, which all bear a sign at the entry that reads “Here comes the man, the crime stays out”, a sign of humanization and, mainly, of a fight for difference and change in the obsolete prison system we currently have.

Utopia Is Feminist: Women as Subjects of Action

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Far removed from the APAC model, the principles and assumptions of our worldview and what we want to transform or achieve are present when choosing the alternative proposed in this project. This vision determines the capacities that will have to be developed and the practices that will have to be carried out. The most important aspect of this alternative is the starting point, which is the idea that women are the subjects of action, of transforming their own reality of prisoners/oppressed and that this is marked by the liberation from the occasional situation of detention, on the one hand, and, on the other, and perhaps more importantly, the possibility of autonomy and sustainability in a capitalist patriarchal environment that has always led them to the position of subordinates. It is intended to foster a critical sense that questions the established power relations and values the experiences, perceptions and knowledge of each of the women detained, so that they can transform their reality and respond to their daily needs. It assumes the constitution of women as political subjects as the determining factor in changing the relationships of exclusion and discrimination and that this occurs through emancipation, which is achieved through the feminism/eco-logy alliance that leads to sustainable projects and collaboration/inclusion.

Implementing a new project is never easy. Implementing a project of this scale is extremely difficult and complicated. We must be aware of this. The first step is to admit to wanting to replace prisons not solely because this model is ineffective, but because we want a new society. The second step is to recognize women prisoners as direct beneficiaries of this public policy.

Then, some practices must be put into operation and the necessary skills must be developed. The following are suggested: 1) Survey of abandoned villages and selection according to location, space, conditions; 2) Restoration of the villages, dotting them with the basic and necessary structures to house families; 3) Launching the volunteering program inside and outside prisons, with awareness and information-raising campaigns concerning the future occupation of these villages; 4) Selection of women volunteers, (initially) prioritizing women from single-parent families with small children, to prevent them from growing up in prisons or away from their mothers and to detainees in a continuous cycle of poverty and minor crimes, driven by circumstance or need. Our suggestion is to start with 20 families per village; 5) Survey of experience and knowledge of voluntary participants: what they have already done, what they know and what they will be able to do. This element is extremely important, because from there the roles each one fulfills within the eco-village can be established; 6) Training in the areas of organic farming, sustainability, permaculture, renewable energy, wastewater treatment and sustainable building; 7) Assisting and encouraging women’s self-organization processes; 8) Prompting and assisting the definition of tasks/roles: leader, manager, farmer, trader, educator, cook, artisan, etc...; 9) Providing financial support

⁴ See previous note.



for food and basic expenses for three to five years – time needed for women to organize. Such support will be adapted and readjusted, as needed, until they become independent and sustainable; 10) Promoting and assisting in the admittance to eco-villages of families whose elements are not detained; 11) Acknowledging and favoring the role of women in the production, management and commercialization of products; 12) Promoting experience exchange; 13) Fostering debates on autonomy and sustainability; 14) Working to bring consumers closer to these new producers.

Ecovillages

The first eco-villages emerged in the seventies and were considered

a microcosm within the macrocosm, as they represent a very small area – typically 50 to 400 people – with all the elements and problems of society present, which generate visible solutions to these problems, living sustainably, solving conflicts peacefully, creating jobs, raising children, providing relevant education or simply enjoying and celebrating life (Jackson, 2004, p. 2).

The ideal and fully functioning eco-village does not yet exist, because there is presently still a work in progress where there is much to learn. There are some experiences spread around the world, in completely different cultures, societies and climatic conditions, based on the same premise of challenging the paradigm of the western world that is not working – and there are some studies carried out on these experiences (Algarvio, 2010).

Eco-villages are the most favorable social contexts for putting the ecological principles of the eco-feminist movement into practice. These entail relations of equality that respect differences, opposed to gender domination, as well as the principles of environmental sustainability. These spaces aim to: decentralize power and found a non-hierarchical and democratic system; support an ecological and solidary economy and fair trade; give preference to low-impact technology that is not aggressive to the environment; prioritize local products and producers; and maintain equitable and balanced relations between genders, classes, “races” and the environment (Flores & Trevisan, 2015). Hence, the rules would have to be followed – rules that should always be adjusted over time. As of now, the rules are the following: 1) The eco-village is a democratic system and decisions are taken by consensus of all; 2) Each family lives in a private space – their home – and shares communal spaces; 3) All elements are obliged to cooperate in performing tasks in the activities assigned to them; 4) The plots (agricultural lands) are communal, meant to satisfy the needs of families in the eco-village, and the surpluses are traded in conventional markets or exchanged with other eco-villages; 5) The products sold are produced or created in the community; 6) There are the communal spaces necessary for the survival of the eco-village: school, bakery, workshops, first-aid station, etc. ; 7) The eco-village is responsible for providing educational programs for children, based on the National Education System; 8) Access to health services is guaranteed by the eco-village; 9) Sharing and mutual aid are mandatory.



In Conclusion

This alternative is not meant as a definitive answer; it is merely a way towards the goal of replacing the obsolete prison and, concurrently, of building society that is fairer and more sustainable, particularly for women – who, over the years, have been the main target of patriarchy and, in turn, of capitalism.

Some factors are pointed out that may favor an improvement in the situation of participating women, as well as of society in general: 1) Consolidation of family relationships, because there will be space and time to educate children and keep the remaining family together, if so wishing - which was something that ended as soon as a woman was arrested in conventional prisons; 2) Radical change by the participants in the relationship with other people and with nature, always taking respect and ethics into account in dealing with the environment and other human beings. This attitude calls into question authoritarian and hierarchical relationships; 3) Valuing activities developed by women (vegetable gardens, orchards, animal husbandry, home-made product transformation, handicrafts) that autonomously control the production process – previously monopolized by men – thus implicating them directly in the processes of gender equality; 4) Occupation of public space by subordinate and detained women, that is, women in a very vulnerable situation, which gives them the visibility to be able to debate with external entities (State, NGOs, society in general) over the resolution of their dilemmas, as well as the motivations that led to their detention, in other words, giving them a voice; 5) Possibility of acquiring new knowledge, skills and know-how that bring about social recognition, increasing their self-esteem; 6) Broadening the perspectives of participating women, thus increasing their critical sense and making them hold themselves to higher standards, leading them to seek new knowledge, through courses and seminars; 7) The fact that women attain, on their own, permanent remuneration, a direct result of their work, leads to their independence and autonomy, which is to say they have the ability to support themselves and those who depend on them; 8) Preservation of natural and cultural heritage (abandoned villages) and repopulation of Portuguese villages.

We are evidently in the world of ideas. It will take a big step for this to become something real, something concrete, but maybe the most important is the willingness to acknowledge that in order for there to be a reintegration of female and male prisoners in society, it is necessary to correct the conditions of social exclusion, otherwise they reoffend and return to prison (Henriques, 2018). In other words, it is necessary to provide conditions for survival of female and male prisoners. In addition, we believe that when women understand it is important they collectively organize to fight for their rights and challenge the hierarchical structures that oppress them, they will create new possibilities for an entire society.

Of course, many questions and problems can be raised to this proposal. The most evident is probably the creation of ghettos. It should be noted that this only happens if eco-villages are composed exclusively by prisoners and their families. If they are open in any way to the general community – always through volunteering, as proposed from the beginning – this issue can be safeguarded.

Almost at the end, we cannot fail to hear in our mind the argument that this project is a utopia. Yes, it is true, it is an objective utopia, with the purposes assigned by Bloch: 1. It criticizes the current reality of prisons; 2. It presents a new path, an alternative to the current prison model, outdated and obsolete, with no results to show, in a society that claims to be



and wants to evolved, and 3. It analyzes the possibility that this alternative (utopia) can work - and this is what generates the content of the utopian function: hope for a better world.

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WOMEN AND WORK: A CONFLICTUAL RELATION¹

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Abstract

The relation between women's roles and work is conflictual and affected by social categories such as race and class. The literature tends to divide the concept of work into three main spheres: paid work in the formal labour market; unpaid housework, which includes household chores; and caretaking (childcare and eldercare). Women circulate among these three spheres and they have to deal with time in a complex way. In general, the work performed in the private sphere has been found to be culturally related to women. Such kind of work includes caretaking, has no economic value and this reality is even worse to black and poor women. Several clues indicate that this relation is still being perpetuated, although there are some scape routes perceived in determined historic contexts.

KEYWORDS:

Women; unpaid work; inequality; free time.

This discussion takes part in the research carried out in my thesis "Women's leisure at the negotiating table", in which I advance on the investigation of six social movements that defend Brazilian women's rights. For the cartography undertaken, one of the established connections was shaped by the testimony provided by one of our interviewees: "We talk more about work than leisure because we work too much and we have fewer rights, including the right to rest and leisure" (Flora).³

For the most part, women's lives are shaped by unequal relations due to culturally determined implicit values that reinforce the dichotomy between public and private spheres. The public sphere is historically cast as male, representing productivity, creativity and objectivity; the private sphere, which includes housework and family, is associated to female work, reproductivity, uninventiveness and subjectivity. The sexual division of labour represented in these two spheres is not absolute, neither represent a natural phenomenon nor corresponds to a complementarity and reciprocity between men and women (Tabet, 2004). The author reinforces that the social construction of the public and private spheres has made men occupy positions with strong surplus value (such as in politics, religion, military) while women occupied positions, even though considered important, with no surplus value (such

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³ The women's movements mentioned in this research are the Brazilian Women Articulation (Articulação das Mulheres Brasileiras, AMB), represented by the interviewee named Flora; the World March of Women (Marcha Mundial das Mulheres, MMM), represented by the interviewee named Dora; and the Union of Brazilian Women (União Brasileira de Mulheres, UBM), represented by the interviewee named Loreta. The other are union movements that count with specific secretariats dedicated to women: the Unified Worker's Central (Central Única dos Trabalhadores, CUT), represented by a leader named Margarida; the National Confederation of Rural Workers and Family Farmers (CONTAG), represented by Margarida do Campo; and the National Union of Students (União Nacional dos Estudantes, UNE), represented by Loreta.

as motherhood, household, caretaking, beauty). The public (productive) and private (reproductive) sphere's dichotomy had fed and strengthened gender hierarchies and inequality.

Vicente (2018) demonstrates how the society has been shaping work possibilities for women in the labour market. The author points out that, during the World War II, the female workforce had to occupy new positions created in the context of war or had to replace men that went to the field of battle. After the war, those women were reconducted to the roles they previously occupied. To deal with it, a set of actions taken by governments and the media was created and nominated "The Feminine Mystique". By the same time, there was an industrial production increase aimed at creating technologies designed to facilitate housework, in an effort to "persuade women to stay where they belonged, a more comfortable and attractive home, offering female role models through advertisement and implementing a consumer culture" (Vicente, 2018, p. 23). This consumer culture is still related to women, even nowadays.

Despite all these actions, many women have continued pursuing, occupying and conquering spaces in the labour market, even when prone to exploitation by being less well paid and less highly valued than men. Women continued to bear the brunt of responsibilities for domestic work and they take it with them to the labour market. More and more, this system put women in conflict with social time management (Ávila; Ferreira, 2014).

The conflict imposed by social time management is illustrated by data found in the research "Leisure in Brazil".⁴ Under the question "What are your obligations", paid work was the spontaneous answer given by 61% men and 46% of women interviewees. Housework chores represented 33% of men's obligations and 73% of women's. When the question was stimulated, paid work maintained its percentage, however, housework was indicated as an obligation by 43% of men and 85% of women. The results bring to attention the differences between men and women interviewees, and the difference changes with spontaneous or stimulated answers are given. On the one hand, paid work is seen as a mandatory commitment, so much so that the change between the spontaneous answers and the stimulated ones is minimum. On the other hand, housework chores and caretaking present different results for both answers. The difference is maintained even when data are crossed considering only interviewees who declared performing paid work. In this case, while 41% of women declared being in the labour market at the same time they perform housework chores as an obligation, only 24% of men declared doing so.

From the data presented, Carrasco (2012) argues that a third category should be added to the division between public and private work spheres: the household or domestic work. The author discusses differences between the domestic and private spheres, claiming that the elements composing the private sphere are not in fact particular to a specific person, something that hinders women from participating in decision-making processes. If the concept

⁴ The research "Leisure in Brazil" aimed at collecting data and information about the habits, interests, experiences and barriers related to the leisure of the Brazilian population in order to subsidize public policies and new studies (Stoppa; Isayama, 2017). The collection and systematization of data were carried out through individual face-to-face interviews, with 2,400 interviewees, from the age of seven, living in the 26 states of the Federation and in the Federal District and contemplating small, medium and large cities, including residents of rural and urban areas. Representative quotas of the population, considering the variables of region and federation units, constructed the sample. In each state, quotas for sex, age, education and family income were also foreseen, according to population data from the 2010 Demographic Census of The Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE).



of “private” carries a sense of positiveness, being related to world distancing and finding well-being in private spaces, the concept of “domestic” might lead to an understanding that it would be something for “yourself”, but, for women, “domestic” means, in fact, “for other people”.

The private sphere takes place inside their homes, with their families and the demands their families create. It is exactly the opposite of «being by yourself»; it means to «be there for the others», it is a situation of service, of total dedication. Under this concept of «privacy», any action that is considered «for them only» evokes a feeling of guilt and it is qualified as selfishness. The feminine privacy has no economic value. Such domesticity means a renounce of your own time and space in benefit of others, it means to give up of time to satisfy material and affective needs of the family (Carrasco, 2012, 42 - 43).

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In order to understand the complex context around the relation between women and work, it is relevant to identify the specificities around the meaning of «work». Vicente (2018) argues that defining “work” as a set of actions performed in public or private spheres has been a challenge for literature, specially considering its surrounding complexity regarding women. Three factors may be perceived in this relation: the work in the labour market, even when informal (paid work inside a structure of social production); the household work (domestic chores related to maintaining the house and guaranteeing the well-being of the people who live there); and caretaking (taking care of dependents, which also involves affection). Interviewees in our research also bring activism as a time-consuming activity:

So, for us, women, it is more difficult to be in political spaces, even in the trade union movements... we need to deal with triple working hours, to take care of the kids, to take care of our families... to take care not only of our children, but sometimes our mothers, fathers, anyway, we are the ones who take care of the domestic chores, so, for the free time, (pause) and there is also, if you are a union leader, many times you don't participate of some things because you have no one to take care of your children. (Margarida do Campo).

Margarida do Campo reminds us that, as well as in the urban setting, the sexual division of labour in the rural setting has bounded women to reproduction, housework, caretaking and family responsibilities, all of them related to the private sphere. In the case of rural women, there is still the fact that they actively participate working in agriculture. While exclusively men occupied the public sphere of unions, women did not even had authorization to be partners and their particular issues were not addressed (De Jesus, 2018).

All these types of work are time-consuming for women, with more or less emphasis depending on their own singularities. Duran (2010) argues that humanity disposes of more precise and up-to-date information on work processes in the Automotive Industry, Oil Rigs or Mineral Coal Extraction than about the time and effort required to perform housework.

Such issues have been stimulating researchers and research institutes to look for more information about the relation between women, work and free time. The United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), for example, created, in 2000, The International Classification of Activities for Time Use Statistics (ICATUS), which has been used in researches under development by several countries. ICATUS classifies the activities someone carries throughout



the day, offering a standardized framework to improve research tools for dealing with time. The framework might be developed and applied by countries regardless of their different natures (United Nations, 2017).

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In order to contemplate all the types of work previously described, this classification defines what are economic and non-economic activities, productive and non-productive activities and paid and unpaid work, leaving room for adaptations. The activities are separated in levels, and each group of activity is related to one of them: 1) Employment and correlated activities; 2) Production of consumer goods; 3) Unpaid housework; 4) Unpaid caretaking; 5) Unpaid voluntary work, such as internships; 6) Learning; 7) Socialization and communication, community and religious participation; 8) Culture, leisure, media and sports practices; and 9) Self-care.

This initiative shows that, if for a long time the relation between production and reproduction in the economic sphere was ignored, with the studies concerning the sexual division of labour it was possible to understand that women limited their professional development as a consequence of domestic obligations, facing difficulties in pursuing their careers, receiving lower wages and submitting themselves to lower quality jobs.

After the emergence of women's movements, discussing the concept of work started to be an issue, in a way that it should be considered as part of both public and private spheres (Souza-Lobo, 2011). For the author, by addressing this issue, the sexual division of labour became a clear part of the historically constructed division of social relations between genders, which separates what is expected from men and women.

The tendency in our society is, for example, to expect that women will be the care providers. Tronto (2009) highlights that caretaking, therefore, is modulated by gender, class and race, emphasizing the historical dimension present in the articulation of these social relations. According to the author, not only gender, but class and race define, in our culture, who provides care and how.

Both in Brazil and in Spanish speaking countries, the noun "care" expresses an attitude, but it is the verb that seems to better translate the concept. "Care", "care activities" and "occupations related to care", as terms, were only recently introduced in our languages. Expressions such as "to care" and "to take care" have several meanings in the daily use. The later, in Brazil, is related to a long and widespread range of actions with common and diffuse language meanings. "To take care of the house" (or "to be in charge of the house"), "to take care of the children" (or "to look after the children"), "to take care of the elderly" or even "to take care of the husband" are tasks performed by subordinate and feminine agents. That is why, in the Brazilian lexicon, these expressions are related to submission, slavery (initially) and black and white (later) women (Guimarães, Hirata, & Sugita, 2011, p. 154).

Thus, the provision of care is an action related to gender and it is naturalized as inherent to the position and the disposition of a woman. However, Guimarães, Hirata & Sugita (2011) bring attention to the fact that "care" is being discussed as an activity with economic value, making people consider it as work. The emergence of "care" as an occupation implies the acknowledgment and valuation of housework; in other words, the association of "care" as a woman's occupation starts to be denaturalized. The unpaid and voluntary domestic work starts to be questioned, as well as women's lives circumscription to domestic chores.



Regarding differences of race, class and level of education and its relation with women and housework burden, Melo and Castilho (2009) point out that women with low levels of education spend, on average, 54% more time in domestic chores than men with the same level of education do. The authors also conclude that women working in agriculture, production, repairing and maintenance of goods and services, as well as women working as vendors and service providers, are the ones dedicating more time to domestic chores.

Observing data about income extracted from the research “Leisure in Brazil”, 66% of answers provided by women that perform housework chores as obligation declared an income up to three minimum wages. Among men, 54% are from the same socioeconomic class. De Jesus (2018) founded similar data in the research called “Brazilian Consumer Price Index” using the “Continuous National Household Sample Survey” (PNADC, 2016). The author has identified that, by the age of 20, a low-income woman does, on average, four hours of housework per day, while others, by the same age but with high-income, dedicate only one hour to these chores. Although in lower proportions, the number of hours increases if they have children and the wages change. By the age of 30, the daily housework journey in hours for low-income women varies from 5 to 8 hours, while for the high-income women, two hours is the average time spent. The author understands that higher income favors the hiring of domestic workers, and the reduction in the number of hours spent on housework chores comes for those women who have more financial resources. For men, the number of hours spent in housework chores is lower in all levels of income, with a minimum increase by the age they usually have little children at home.

Another indicator that affects data related to housework chores is the level of education. This indicator is linked to income, since the groups with higher education levels also present higher income and, therefore, are more able to hire domestic workers. Among women, the peak of time devoted to housework chores follows the average age of women at childbirth and the number of hours is reduced as the level of education increases. Thus, women with lower levels of education have more housework chores by the age of 25, totaling almost 6 hours per day. Among women with higher levels of education, the peak is at 35, totaling 3 hours of housework per day, which corresponds to half of the time devoted by the women with lower levels of education. “Among men, little difference is observed when we take into account their level of education” (De Jesus, 2018, p. 99).

From the analysis of the PNADC, De Jesus (2018) concluded that women spend, after childhood, practically their whole lives carrying out unpaid housework. In other words, the time women supposedly spend for themselves is in fact spent performing unpaid work for others. The lower the income and the level of education, the highest is the time they spend in this kind of work. On the other hand, regardless of their income or age, men consume more housework than produce it. Flora comments on such inequalities:

One of the consequences of this system is the absolute lack of time. We are absorbed by production and reproduction of life because we are socially constructed as people devoted to others, [...] The time that should be ours, the time that constitute our lives, that time is consumed by other people. The time has a value, right, time is what makes the world move, time means existence, existence is time, to exist is not only to have a body, it is to have time! So, the appropriation of time is the appropriation of life time (Flora).



The multiple conceptions of time have been deterritorializing the static notions present in contemporaneity. If there was no absolute and linear separation before, when the centrality of the discussions were targeted at the labour market, technological innovations, new ways of production and questions about gender have made the conceptions of time liquid, fluid (BAUMAN, 1998). These new settings challenge us to rethink time in relation to women, specially when they were not at the negotiating table.

By the moment activists such as Flora have problematized the role of housework and caretaking in the reproduction of life and have brought attention to the imbalance between production, consumption and payment for this kind of work, the possibility to incorporate these activities to the macroeconomic models has begun. There are methods for calculating working hours, through which the value of housework, considering the amount of time spent in domestic activities, could reach a quarter and a half of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in several countries (Vargha, Gál, & Crosby-Nagy, 2017).

De Jesus (2018) has participated actively in the development of methods to quantify the contributions of housework production to the Brazilian economy and concluded that indirect contribution provided by women through housework «[...] is at least three times larger than the male contribution» (p. 96). Using the opportunity cost approach, which attributes economic value to housework, the author has found that accumulated annual production should be equivalent to 15.77% of GDP. From that, women would be responsible for 11.95% of production while men for 3.81%.

In considering the labour market production, De Jesus (2018) points out that there is a large difference between men and women: men's production is 50% larger than women's production around the age of 30. This fact is attributed by the author to the "lower participation rate, lower number in the working hours and lower wages among women" (p. 99). Nevertheless, when housework production is added to the calculation, women produce more for GDP than men in all stages of the life cycle. That is to say, if housework production, which represents a significative portion of production, was included in GDP calculation, it would correspond to a good share of women's production, specially for those coming from the lower classes and with lower levels of education. "These results only illustrate the already known sexual division of labour, corroborating the fact that men are still accounted for paid work and women for unpaid housework" (DE JESUS, 2018, p. 101). Such scenario can be understood as a reaffirmation of female subordination, specially for those women with lower income and lower levels of education.

The predominance of this pattern and the consequent analysis of the relations between women and work have brought to light issues such as double workload, low wages, informality and wage disparity, which directly affect women's autonomy. Rich (2012) deals with qualitative differences among women's experiences and argues that the impossibility of exercising choices is most of the time an unacknowledged reality. Such lack of choice makes dependency a difficult problem that should be overcome.

One of the problems to be overcome concerns the pursuit of professional success. Gonçalves (2010) and Vicente (2018) bring attention to the importance of taking into account women's possibilities for social action, realization, creation, satisfaction and well-being. Those possibilities, in general, are the result of a profession, which is only a reality for part of the



women who have the chance to invest in a career, a path for the construction of an identity otherwise linked to marriage and family.

Gonçalves (2010) points out that studies dedicated to the contemporary ways of life in complex societies indicate that there are new and different relational perspectives in which the construction of people's social identities tend to be more related to the professional domain than to the domain of the family. This is an important change in the social relations that affects the pattern of «male provider/female caretaker», the traditional nuclear family structure. These changes «[...] could explain how work became fundamental in the lives of a considerable amount of women in 'occidental' societies in contemporaneity» (Gonçalves, 2010, p. 240). Although these changes have been taking women out of the private sphere and making them conquer the public sphere, it is important to bear in mind that what may be causing such changes is the labour market and not women. Moreover, many women

[...] kept silence about their private lives, as if it was something illicit. By compressing two lives inside the unchangeable twenty-four hours a day has, they said to the labour market 'take me and I will be like any other man'. In their homes, they declared they would leave, but that nothing would change, and no one would notice they left (Oliveira, 2012, p. 30-31).

Not rarely, the price paid by these women has been a relative personal satisfaction accompanied by constant complains of stress, fatigue, guilt, anguish, physical and emotional overload and anxiety.

On the other extreme of the process of deterritorialization are women that, conscientiously rejecting to assume multiple roles at the same time, renounce paid work to dedicate themselves to take care of their children and their homes. However, as territories are on the path of deterritorialization, therefore creating new territories without the former ones ceasing to exist, it is possible to notice cultural changes regarding some aspects. These changes come from the redefinitions of the concept of work and reconfigurations about the productive and reproductive spheres conquered by women.

Returning to the domestic environment is neither an option nor a possibility for most women. Costa (2014), based on the results found in the research "Paid work and domestic work: a permanent tension", indicates that, to the vast majority of the interviewees, solidarity between women is the main resource to face the tensions generated by the sexual division of labour. The solidarity is found specially when there are no financial resources to pay for assistance and due to the lack of support given by the State when maternity is involved. Considering this context, The Unified Worker's Central (Central Única dos Trabalhadores, CUT) in Brazil has a proposition:

The reduction of working hours without reductions in average earnings is necessary to create more jobs and to improve the quality of life at work. To women, reducing working hours leads to an expansion of their entry into the labour market, to an increase in their free time to build their autonomy and to a better life with less health problems and occupational injuries. This reduction would also help them to exercise their right to leisure, to improve professionally and to promote convivial encounters with friends and family. (CUT, 2014, p. 33).



In addition to the proposals made by CUT, the Brazilian Women Articulation (Articulação das Mulheres Brasileiras, AMB) defends overcoming the sexual division of labour present in work relations by offering universal social protection. In a mobilization of other social and women's movements, the organization fights for freedom at work, focusing on the satisfaction of people's needs and diminishing private profit and advantages. The organization proposes the construction of another economy, defending a fair and democratic division of labour with policies for redistribution of wealth that promote economic autonomy for all women.

Although Brazil is subscribed to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), approved by the United Nations (UN) in 1974, the fulfillment of these commitments places the country as guarantor of late rights to women. Sometimes the country is not even a guarantor, since these rights are in permanent dispute. Bringing visibility to these issues, as in academic discussions like the one we propose here, contributes to create new lines of thoughts connecting the relation between women and work to new challenges and opportunities.

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ARCHITECTURE, MY BODY IS NOT PUBLIC: - PERFORMANCE AS A RECORD OF GENDER DISRUPTION AT “ESCOLA DO PORTO”¹

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ABSTRACT

From the non-conformity with the refusal of the presence of women in the universe of architecture - in academia as in profession, in history, in practice and in theory - present in the discourse of the faculty of the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Porto, arises the need to expose the current landscape as a problem and bring it up for debate in the public sphere of the Faculty. This resulted in a concrete action that was divided into two moments: a collection of testimonies and their exhibition in the physical space of the school.

KEYWORDS:

Architecture; body; public; gender; Escola do Porto; feminism.

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Several concerns and nonconformities led to the reflection on an action-project that would allow denouncing sexism and sexual violence within FAUP, that would have an impact and that would leave fertile ground for implementing radical changes and transformations in the academic environment of architecture. “Architecture, my body is not public” - our body (women) in the space of the college and the classroom should not be subject to discrimination, harassment or sexual violence.

266 | In October 2019, the Feminist Circle was created at FAUP (Rodrigues, 2020), motivated by the lack of representation in the course and by the still very sexist academic environment, with the purpose of creating moments of discussion and action. The accusation of architecture as discriminatory against women is not new. In 1989, architect Denise Scott Brown made this criticism in the publication of her essay *Room at the Top? Sexism and the Star System in Architecture*. It was published two years before she herself was excluded from the Pritzker Prize in which despite the joint practice, only her architect partner Robert Venturi was awarded. In the text, she characterizes the specific situation of women studying architecture and their relationship with the feminist movement.

Some young women in architecture question the need for the feminist movement, claiming to have experienced no discrimination. My concern is that, although school is not free of discrimination, it is probably the least discriminatory environment they will encounter in their careers. (Brown, 1989)

In the first months following the creation of the feminist circle, conversations and social dinners were organized, online posts and the publication of a small manifesto in a zine made by the student council (AEFAUP, 2019) were made. However, it was found that the expected rise in awareness by our community was not achieved. It was decided we were to try something different.

The idea of an installation appeared in one of the collective’s open conversations in which a mural installation exhibited in 2016 at the Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism (FAU) of Mackenzie Presbyterian University, in São Paulo (Brazil), was presented. Members of the feminist Zaha Collective spread across the walls of the building posters with sexist statements made by teachers of the course inside the classroom. All sentences collected in the intervention were denounced by the students and did not mention the names of the victims nor the aggressors (Aun, 2016). Later it was also learned that similar initiatives happened at FA-URJ in Rio de Janeiro and at FADU in Uruguay (Machismo en FADU, 2020). Considering its political and visual impact, we took the initiative to replicate the installation in the context and space of our Faculty.

In December 2019, the #AcordaFAUP (#WakeUpFAUP) campaign was launched. We called for the sharing of testimonies on situations regarding sexism and discrimination in the classroom, which could be done through an anonymous online form created for that purpose. Its announcement was made through the spreading of posters on school grounds and through online posts. Reactions to the initiative were mixed.

By February 4, the closing date of the form, 63 responses had been received. Some of them were messages or criticisms directed towards the feminist circle, such as “I am inferior and I take refuge in both lies and unreal worldviews” said by “Any member of this group” or “This group makes perfect sense and feminism is essential for the common good”. One of



these responses was a twelve-paragraph text written with great care, which criticized the work developed by the feminist circle of FAUP and the feminist movement as a whole, accusing it of being "the biggest obstacle to solving women's problems and the boys' crisis (...)".

There were comments of misogyny, about humiliation through criticism and contempt for what is feminine - such as «*You are not in your days, you must be on your period*», said by a teacher. There have also been reports of racism and xenophobia, particularly towards female students of Brazilian nationality. There were comments made on the objectification and sexualization of women's bodies, such as when a teacher explained that "*This "skin" you want to make in your building is like a negligé on a woman's body. If what's underneath is worthless, it won't be a negligé that will save it.*" There were reports of inappropriate comments about students' sex and love lives, such as «*this project could be better if you weren't dating.*» said by a teacher. Or about the student's bodies, like "*So young and already with a huge rack*" said by a security guard. It was noted that the vast majority of testimonies submitted on the form were about denying the presence and role of women in the world of architecture. "*Women only serve to make surveys and sometimes not even that...*". Some testimonies also exposed the fact that some teachers pay less attention to the participation of female students than to that of male students. It is considered that all this, naturally, leads male students to start saying things like «*Architecture is for men.*»

It is considered important to talk about sexism and sexual violence in the student body. The widespread notion that women do not belong to the profession of "architect", the environment in which, when women are present, are only as an object or adornment to the male reality, always sexualized, and the normalization of inappropriate and sexual comments made by teachers directed towards female students, all of the above open the way for male students to reproduce these behaviors, thus perpetuating the cycle of misogyny and exclusion of women. It's not surprising when situations like the next start to happen: «*What? You got an A? What dick did you have to suck to get that grade?*» Even when female students demonstrate good results (which calls into question the sexist discourse that women cannot be architects) they are both denied the merit and accused of having achieved it through their self-sexualization and self-objectification (prostitution). Continuing to describe reports about male students, rape jokes were received. «*Lying like that in the "piscina seca" (an outdoors place in FAUP's campus) with your legs spread out, you are clearly asking for it.*» Jokes like this one are considered by APAV and Rede CARE (APAV) as acts of sexual violence. In this way, FAUP's academic environment is characterized as hostile and sexually violent for the women who study there. According to reports submitted on the form, there are also students who criticize the feminist movement itself and criticize their colleagues who say they are feminists: «*I think you are very angry, you should calm down with feminism, you are becoming too radical*». It is noticed that on the part of the male student body there is some disbelief in the movement, its motivations and there's even its blaming as a problem.

The most relevant contributions received through the form were submitted by two female students who gave up studying at FAUP because they had suffered moral / sexual harassment from teachers. The lack of support from the institution (FAUP and UP) and the Student Ombudsman at the University of Porto also contributed to this. The two testimonies are serious examples of sexism and harassment that had led to real consequences in the lives of two students.



One comment was repeated several times and with some variations, which besides being vulgar in language, is a fusion between all the themes that we identified in the collecting of testimonies. *“In the old days, women in architecture only (if) on top of the drawing board”*. Denial of women in the profession, objectification and sexualization of our bodies and sexual violence exercised over them, all in one sentence.

268 | After the collection and selection of these sexist comments was completed, we moved to the installation’s assembly phase. The testimonies materialized on Monday, March 2nd - the first day of FAUP’s Feminist Week. It was an event organized by the feminist circle in the week before Women’s Day. Recreating the installation of Coletivo Zaha, it was also decided to print one sentence per poster each in different colors. However, each color chosen corresponded to a category of offender / commenter: white for comments or situations involving teachers, pink for students and red to signal comments directed towards the feminist collective. We chose to hang the phrases in the garden space in front of the bar terrace using an improvised clothesline structure. This location proved to be strategic as it is where the student body gathers during breaks between classes. During the physical assembly of the installation, several female students joined the process initially taken only by members of the collective. The posters were attached to a transparent rope that, tied at the ends to trees in the garden, formed a line in front of the outdoor tables. The side of the posters that contained the messages was facing the street that skirts the perimeter of the college and with its back to the terrace of the bar. The colors of the posters and the way they were displayed gave the installation a festive and cheerful look, «deceiving» its visitors who later, seeing the phrases up close, were confronted with violent and graphic testimonies. This experience turned out to be a metaphor for the very experience of facing sexual discrimination and violence. Misogynistic comments are said as a joke but are actually violent ways of telling us what is the true place of women in the realm of architecture (*“above or under the drawing board”*). The installation referred to the image of clothes hanging on a clothesline, a view that satirized the patriarchal role of women in the home. All the phrases that were printed for the installation were published in full at FAUP’s feminist circle’s instagram page, as well as photographs and videos of the moment, thus expanding the scope of this action to the virtual universe. In the afternoon this space of the Faculty was full, the discussion generated was prolonged to the platforms and digital forums.

As for reactions, some teachers saw themselves in some of the comments exposed but confessed that they never saw them as a problem. Some female students became aware, for the first time, of what these comments imply. Some male students disregarded some of the complaints and found that many were not that significant, discrediting the seriousness of the shared experiences - which in itself is a sexist attitude. Another male student contacted us under the pretext of calling our attention, saying that the names of the authors of the comments should have been displayed on the posters themselves. During the Feminist Week, several female students and female teachers showed appreciation for the installation to members of the feminist circle.

Meanwhile, the feminist group’s instagram suffered an explosion of views and shares and an increase in followers. The message box filled with expressions of shock and non-compliance. FAUP students and alumni reached out to share their personal testimonies. Students from Brazilian architecture colleges contacted the us to say that after reading the reports



they no longer wanted to exchange at FAUP the following academic year. In these cases, it was explained that, in the view of the feminist circle's team, the sexual violence is universal to all faculties of architecture. The installation itself was replicated from an intervention made in Brazil. With this situation, it is clear that with the #AcordaFAUP initiative was possible to expose the Faculty's sexism so explicitly that there were consequences on the same day (future students consider canceling / changing exchanges).

Still on the reach that the initiative achieved, we received information that our installation and its testimonies ran through the studios in Porto, thus transcending the academic world and generating discussion, even in many architecture offices from this city.

An architecture student studying in the United States of America explained that if these situations happened there and were reported, the teacher or teachers involved would be fired. As the institutions are all private schools, they end up having a greater caution regarding their image. Knowledge of situations of abuse and harassment in the classroom are taken very seriously. In the North American context, the institution takes an active role in these situations. In the context of the UP and in Portugal in general, this does not happen. Abusive teachers are not duly held accountable or subject to disciplinary sanctions. In the Portuguese context, we have as an example of this, the case regarding professor and architect Tomás Taveira from FA-UTL (Wikipedia).

In addition to publicity on social networks, the installation was mentioned in a news item in the online news outlet Público with the title "For a feminist higher education" (Rosas, 2020).

The purpose of collecting testimonies and exposing them in an installation at the Faculty was accomplished considering the theme of sexual violence as an emergency. In our view, it was possible to create audiences and thus broaden the landscape of the discussion on higher education and the teaching of architecture, exposing how moral and sexual harassment is often used as a strategy of humiliation, of teaching and also of exclusion. However, and despite all the «momentum» we have achieved, the «aftermath» we had envisioned never came to pass because of the COVID-19 crisis. We had a plan inherent in this installation-demonstration. We knew the impact it was going to create. Due to the crisis that started, the build-up that had been achieved was lost, the online presence stagnated and our activities stopped, because they lacked physical space for action. If it weren't for the pandemic, a sequence of meetings would eventually have been scheduled. With the help of the Student Ombudsman, a new form would be produced through which we would obtain more testimonies and more details. Through this it would be possible to conceive a document that could be presented to the FAUP Directorate, with whom would be discussed a proposal for measures of change and transformation of the Faculty, that would help fight against all the problems and violence that the installation exposed and a consolidate support to students who are faced with these situations. It was decided not to do any of these actions in an online setting because it was felt that it would be hasty and that the potential of these limitations still had much to be explored.

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KNOWLEDGE AND SENSES OF ‘BEEN, BEING AND BECOMING’: CENTER OF CULTURE AND LGBT+ RECEPTION IN PETRÓPOLIS, RIO DE JANEIRO/BRAZIL¹

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ABSTRACT

Space (Hall, 1977; Bachelard, 1998; Soczka, 2005) and urban porosity (Jeudy, 2002) in the management of public policies in the population's living territories is a central theme, mainly when demarcated by the experiences of individuals' intersubjective approaches with them, with others and with ecological-natural universes. The constitution of the Brazilian historical process (Da Matta, 1991) operates a disconnect between the place that people occupy and their rights, installing exclusion and social inequalities (Rizzotti, Cordeiro and Pastor, 2017). In the local sphere, citizenship territoriality is not reduced to geographical space, it refers to the complexity of the psychosocial and cultural dynamics of relationships that establish new meanings of living in different spaces; considering the territories experienced favours creating possibilities for development, sustainability, resistance and resilience in view of the necessary changes to contain the effects of globalization and its forms of domination (Trindade de Almeida, Figueiredo and Trindade Jr, 2012). In the transdisciplinary perspective (Baêta, 1998), we developed two analysis both of the manifest knowledge and senses of the body (Basso and Pustilnik, 2000) seen through the prism of the identity dimensions of intrinsically ideological impregnations/fragmentations that surround the people of the LGBT+ movement (García and Inácio, 2019) as well as the spontaneous creative potential (Moreno, 1977) to which the architectural project of the Center for Culture and LGBT+ Reception of Petrópolis, Rio de Janeiro is inserted (Baptista e Igreja, 2019). We highlight that the following research objects are correlated: the context of the presence-belonging empowerment and inclusion examined from the perspective of humanistic leisure (Cuenca, 2000; Cuenca Cabeza, 2018) and in the wake of the derivations of aesthetic leisure (Arroyabe, 2010) and performance followed in mixologies (Vilaça, 2010) and tactility (Frampton, 1996) with regard to architecture (Ando, 2010) and the locus of contemporary culture of an anthropological nature (Laraia, 2007), tension and dilemma 'erudite-popular culture' (Baptista, 2014). The results of this investigation turn their attention first to the movements of potential development, which analyzed in the light of transpersonal psychology where the trajectory is experiential-cognitive, make it possible to overcome the barriers of unidimensional vision to intersexualities (Capra and Luisi, 2014); second, that suppressed expressions of the ego, the Essential Being/Self emerges, in which the body that brings the memories of positive or not lived experiences, appears, the path of unveiling the life drive in terms of thinking-feeling-acting (Azevedo, 2020); third, that beyond the limits of what they believe and understand in the physical-emotional-spiritual dynamics, comes the pain of the impregnations, separations and fragmentation to which they are being stereotyped and discriminated repeaters (Braden, 2008). The words of Bruckner (2009) can be used to conclude this exposition of arguments from the ongoing investigation at the center (...) [of the profound transformation of contemporary social life, of its values and meanings,] is not a new type of society, but a new type of individual, who cultivates neither the nostalgia for a golden past, nor the hope for a redeeming future, but who, having an 'inflexibility trained to see the realities of life', is able to respond 'to the demands of the day'. Undoubtedly, the current moment is crucial;

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However, what should perhaps be emphasized is that, unlike what was previously announced as a generalizable condition, after COVID19 the process of individualization/individuation of LGBT+ people will be more accessible to the attributes of meaning and dignity of their lives, as the psychosocial and cultural is a sounding board in which individuals read and interpret space in terms of their relationship with themselves, with others, with groups, with institutions and with the society in which they live.

KEYWORDS:

culture; citizenship; genre; sexuality; idleness.

Introduction

We live in a sabotaged and hybrid time where the crisis associated with the loss of meaning of existence is mixed with the subsequent weakening of social cohesion and the excessive privatization control of people; It is certainly a globally contextualized time in which the turn to the right in politics and social thought hardens, social, economic, cultural and political inequalities increase, racisms, xenophobia, feminicides and fundamentalism appear with new faces, although they maintain the same logic from the past, advocating the emergence of the Eurocentric illustrated-universal subject, who according to Curiel (2005, as quoted in Baptista, 2018, p. 215) align the need to give voice to those who were considered others and others from the colonial difference.

The Cartesian mind-spirit/body dichotomous view represents the human ontology in the immaterial-reason dimension dissociated from materiality-corporeal; according to the traditional Judeo-Christian and capitalist-colonial-patriarchal logic that legitimizes power in the civilization/nature division, It both disembodies the man/ white/heterosexual and produces a series of negatives or hypermaterialization of the man-woman/negrx/LGBTQI+ perceived only as 'only body'; it means that under the surface of different cultures interacting and mutually involved, multiple discursive inscriptions of the undeclared-formulated differences are implied by oppression, domination and appropriation resulting in perceptual distortions, from presenting full awareness of the diversity, pluralities and equity for the absence of them (oblivion due to the devaluation of the body that would organize the identities and social places of presence and belonging with the negation of non-binary-polarized-fixed-homogenized-linearized-predetermined sexual identities).

This work falls within the scope of intervention in the way of understanding the social-architectural dynamics of a LGBTQI+ Culture, Reception and Coexistence space first, through the affection-tact bias, incorporating the experiences of Be-Being Presence-Belonging to the manifestations of aesthetic leisure that in the process of subjectivation and liberation of LGBTQI+ bodies mediated by social, sexual and gender inclusion⁵ and as openness to the otherity⁶ that favors (a) amplification of emancipatory pathways through the understanding of

⁵ The bipartition of genders is not biological, but ideological. It fits into relations of inequality and hierarchies and is explained through oppression, domination and exploitation. So the difference is differentiation that highlights the cultural construction of sex and sexuality. Domestication of sexuality and the imposition of heterosexuality is assumed as a mandatory norm (Curiel, 2005, as quoted in Baptista, 2018, p. 223). "Sex by definition has always been gender", that is, not as the expression of an inner being or the interpretation of a sex, but as a gender (Butler, 2001b, p. 35).

⁶ Otherness of being double - simultaneously man *and* woman, male *and* female, male *and* female. The "divergent"



the complexities and displacements of societal and cultural formations⁷ and (b) ductilities multiple of subjectivities; and secondly, by the 'updating' of sexual identity in its diversity, plurality, equity and otherness, lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, '*queer*'⁸, intersex and more other embodiments of the homosexual experience.

Gender: Expressions of Resistance to Binary/Homogenized Conventional Sexual Structures

Since human experience builds time, it happens that in symbolic terms the 19th century had its epilogue marked by the 1st World War (1914-1918) with deaths, experiences of mourning and the significant ones about the war's destructive capacity, the limit for the century XX reached its peak through the highest technological progress in the service of approximation and interdependence that ended in exclusionary economic development, eco-environmental deterioration, innocent wars/deaths and misunderstanding of ideas and lives that have its outcome-limit in the social confinement of the pandemic (2020 -?) to invoke another idea of times-spaces that raise social-sexual cohesion in favor of⁹ socially constructed/adopted sex. In this dynamic, the 21st century prepares us not to break waters, which is like saying, without placing the 'normal', on the other side, claiming habitability/hospitality that ends hostility in a space-other-to-be? Will we understand that the world is one and the home of all? Put an end to "the normal" as proposed by J. Jack Halberstam (2020) we will follow the trend in the LGBTQI+ movements that has been in general, proudly claiming the being-different-and-separated from the margins as being, absolutely, a center- another-of-Being?

'Who does the world belong to, who counts as human and what lives count as lives?' The representations of these questions denounce not only the fabric between dominant se-

sex, however, is not allowed a place in the hegemonic community of the "normal". As Judith Butler recalls, sex is imposed by the "norm" of the heterosexual matrix that makes the subject intelligible in culture: male or female. The other side of this exclusive matrix is the non-subject: the homeless and the non-living - abjection (Butler, 1993, p. 2 and *passim*).

⁷ Currently, the most important political expressions such as categories of cultural, post-colonial, decolonial and subordinate studies come from the understanding of the social from the identity and recognition demands: sex, race, sexuality, ethnicity, etc., which allow a critical resistance and a greater protagonism of subjects from countries called Third World, who question the unique subject and the oppositions of tradition/modernity, civilization/periphery, globalization/localism, domination/dependence, placing at the center the importance of discourse in colonial representations, and gender, race, sexuality, to which are added the class, place and space that have been central categories in all these critical positions (Curiel, 2007).

⁸ We use "*queer*" (in quotes and in italics), because the term denotes a political picture rather than a gender identity or sexual behavior; this perspective that embraces the diversity, otherness, equity and plurality of gender and sexuality that seeks to transform, revise and revolutionize the terminological order, rather than assimilating it in an oppressive hetero-patriarchal-capitalist context. It is dissident terminology in relation to gender and sexualities (Muthien, 2013); it constitutes a rejection of the binary distinction between homo and heterosexual and, thus, a conceptualization of sexualities as non-essential and transitory (Jolly, 2000)

⁹ It denotes and connotes something natural and applies to divisions/distinctions of nature; it is simply a *marker* of the social division and serves to recognize/identify the dominant/dominated (Delphy, 2001, as quoted in Baptista, 2018, p. 205-206).



xuality, heterosexuality¹⁰ and heteronormative socio-political power¹¹, but also expresses a plot that weakens and discriminates against homosexual subjects and in perspective, calls into question the collusion between the domination of sex, the dismantling of identities and male hegemony. In response, Butler (2004, as quoted in Baptista, 2018, p. 22) provides us with the concept that sexual minorities are like a community, subject to violence, exposed to their possibilities and also to physical losses and vulnerabilities. Socially constituted bodies linked to others, at the risk of losing these connections and at risk of violence due to these manifestations; in this perspective, we would have the expressions/representations of 'Being in the World' lacking inclusive configurations.

Creating the perception of LGBTQI+ diversity, plurality, equity and otherness is to first base the expansion of the meanings of 'no exclusion' (which reduces the world instituted by violent hierarchization) so useful has been to capitalism/coloniality/ patriarchy (cf. Haraway, 1991, p. 129) and secondly, to favor sensations of senses as an ethical-citizen gesture calling for challenge, interrogation, transgression (which brings up the submerged, triggers the unknown and which explicitly revolutionizes) to transform the monolithism of normativities; in contrast, the exercise of all types of violence is based on the exclusion of interaction-cooperation between individuals; under the aegis of Hannah Arendt (1951, p. 84), the idea is formed that "living the world together essentially means that there is a world of things among those who have it in common, just as a table is placed among those who they sit around you", that is, depending on how it is used, a table can be a place of opposition or sharing approaches.

Given that public activism is growing in public spaces, generating visibility, the search for LGBTQI+ rights brings within it: responses to the social context explain the perspectives, identify allies and define activities and strategies in order to respond to the challenges and opportunities faced by movement¹² that emerges as popular challenges to the legality of participation¹³; sexual diversity, otherness, equity and plurality in LGBTQI+ contexts highlights the need to create transversal and intersectional policies based on struggles against different systems of domination and oppression, homophobia and mandatory heterosexuality and the new faces of capitalism/colonialism/patriarchy that always accompany Western interventions in the Global South (Rea, 2018). In order to achieve a new, distinct or semi-autonomous type of Presence¹⁴ and Belonging¹⁵ in the face of cultural recognition, the LGBTQI+ movement re-

¹⁰ It is not only fictionalized biological, but compulsory and permeates all the coloniality of the genre in a renewed and broad sense; It has been constantly perverse, violent and humiliating making animals and white women, re-producers of "race" and "class (middle or upper)" (Lugones, 2007, as quoted in Baptista, 2018, p. 260).

¹¹ It not only structures affective and sexual relationships in the private sphere, but also organizes power relationships in the State, in the family, in the economy, etc.

¹² The term has become so prevalent and so loosely used in today's discourse that it has almost become meaningless (Batiwala, 2002).

¹³ There is a constant tension between the "legality of participation" as defined and regulated by powerful institutions and individuals and the popular desires of the majority of the population, whose involvement with the governance of their societies is limited by the rules of participation (Rea, 2018, p. 37).

¹⁴ It represents the state of Being conscious, recognizing its experiential and experiential characteristics and enhancing the feeling of vitality and strength (Basso and Pustilnik, 2000) with a consequent overcoming of emotional conflicts; locates the ontological journey of Being through the 'attention', depending on the life drive through breathing and flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 2005) of active concentration, creation and absorption of experience.

¹⁵ It portrays the condition of Being in Being, manifesting their perception of affective sensitivity (Buber, 1995) awakens to the establishment and alignment of bonds of compassionate trust in the integration of meanings; locates the ontological journey through the path of 'intention', that is, harmony and awakening to the essence of the experience with others and the environmental-ecological environment.



signifies collective identities and examines 'how' people act together; according to the author, sexuality is the most controversial identity, since it is established in the heart of the principles of choice, which is, in turn, based on the foundation of freedom and as such, any limitation to the chosen predispositions-inclinations constitutes an attack on emancipatory ideas that in the choice-freedom nexus expectations of access, expression and enjoyment of rights are assumed.

Sexuality is not circumscribed as fixed, linearized, polarized and predetermined. The context of Life Sciences (neuroscience, quantum physics/chemistry, among others) that understands the 'totality of everything' that is found inside non-physical things and in the corporeal universe (completeness of consciousness - not mere appearance) neutralizes any discrimination of race, ideology, culture, sex, etc., showing that chromosomal hormones are fluid in nature and due to the individuals' choice of gender identity, it would never apply due to subjugation/divisions/dominations (DEP /Energética Dynamics of Psyche¹⁶); if we admit that like any other identity sexuality is not traced/delimited/separated by logocentrism¹⁷, it manifests itself in essence represented by an endless circumference/spiral ellipse/infinite oval highly dynamic and systemic differentiated from a matrix of conditions (Basso y Pustilnik, 2000; Muthien, 2013).

Post-Critical Look at the Dynamics of Culture and its Articulations of Body Senses Perceived as Presence-Belonging. Bodies function as a metaphor for a culture that is like a lens through which the person perceives the world and consequently his body; culture is a system of symbols and meanings of epistemological status in the form of 'programs' that govern behavior, relationships and ways of life. The broad understanding of the systemic view of life, from the holographic and informational point of view manifested in the body, requires a change of paradigms to a broad understanding of seeing oneself, of humanity as a Unit and connected to the planet and the universe.

Cultural heritage, developed over countless generations, has always conditioned the individual to react disparagingly in relation to the body postures of those who 'act¹⁸ outside the standards accepted by the majority of the community'; It is possible for human beings to awaken their creative potential, their qualities and overcome the limitations and discrimination of their body image, imposed on them and themselves and by culture, that is, to review their life history imprinted on their bodies, to redefine their standards of fixed/conditioning conducts, whether mental, emotional, limiting and keep flowing in the course of life and in carrying out their life task.

Neural Structures Distinct from what we thought Being-Having a Single Brain (Peirce, 2008a, as quoted in Azevedo, 2020, p. 70), according to Stanislav Grof (1931, as quoted in Basso and Pustilnik, 2000 p. 47), brain functions start in intrauterine life and leave profound marks in the understanding of psycho-spiritual processes developing completely after birth;

¹⁶ Initiative and multidimensional school based on the concepts, methodologies and experiences of science, such as Biology, Neuroscience, Quantum Physics and studies on Vibrational Energy Fields (Basso and Pustilnik, 2000, p. 7).

¹⁷ Term coined by the German philosopher Ludwig Klages in the 1920s and refers to the tendency in Western thought to place logos (Greek word meaning word or reason) as the center of any text or speech. Jacques Derrida used the term to characterize much of Western thought since Plato: a constant search for «truth»; (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Logocentrismo>).

¹⁸ The *acting-out* or *acting-in* of life itself; action refers to acts of consciousness with a sense of cognitive knowledge, sensory perception and axiological narrative (Moreno, 1997, p. 34).



in the first trimester of pregnancy the reptilian nervous system begins, which at Levine's discretion (1999, as quoted in Azevedo, 2020 p. 67) will be the key to unlock the mysteries of traumatic situations and access healing resources through the sense-perceptual sensation and entrusted with the survival and maintenance of biological life throughout the existence of the being. The second trimester of pregnancy starts the functions of the limbic system, which according to Peirce (as quoted in Azevedo 2020, p. 67) will be responsible for the processing of emotions and the basis for all mother-baby, child-family, young-society bonds; thus, the way the Being is received/received will mark healthy, spontaneous or limited-restricted-threatening experiences for the rest of life.

The third trimester of pregnancy, a sensory-emotional phase initiates the functions of the neocortex system. Depending on this stage of development of existence, in the post-birth the baby's eye relationship with the mother/caregiver activates the 4th prefrontal brain called 'Angelic wolves' - exclusivity of humans, which shows the thirst for the inherent virtues of Being, the compassion and empathy; It is known that the lack of this link can cause damage to emotional intelligence and social relationships with tendencies to apathy, hopelessness, anguish and difficulty in controlling survival instincts. In the next great phase of evolution (04-07 years) contact with rules and roles, the Being requires psychosocial care and support, and if negative advances occur with regard to the acceptance of the body and/or suffer sanctions related to sexuality, they tend to leave marks on the adolescence stage, beginning of adulthood, where spontaneous manifestations of amorous-erotic interests of any nature arise, the crises inherent to the very ideology/meaning of life emerge, that is, what are the convictions/arguments in terms of sexuality.

The expectation of the felt sensation that introduces the perception of existence and temporality creates the anxieties-anxieties, impulses-impulses and the thinking/imaginary creators of the human being (Azevedo, 2020); in these spheres, the Being inscribes himself as a correspondent of the external world and of the intrinsic interrelationships constituted by the personality-individuality, since when he becomes aware of himself, of the manifest knowledge-senses of the body shaping his self-image and directing his interests towards approximation-relationships psychosocial character and the search for sexual partners. This moment in life acquires a peculiar relevance, since impregnations/fragmentations can occur as the freedom-choices of partners are not accepted-welcomed, delimiting from one side to the other, the ideological constitution of 'intimate-in-the-body'. 'and/or withdrawal in contact or engagement, adhering to struggles¹⁹ in the search for expressiveness-Presence/representativeness-Belonging²⁰ in view of sexuality, gender and other claims movements, such as class, racism, etc.

Overcoming in conscience the sensation of separation-discrimination of the body and turning attention on the corporeality awakens the Being to the potential of assuming himself as 'HE IS', an experiential-cognitive-integrating trajectory more attentive to multidimensionality; in recognizing the bodily resources overcoming the barriers of their free expression, whatever their image in terms of intersexualities resonates: first, in communion with the

¹⁹ Used to refer to the manifest tensions in navigating multiple identities, some policies, others seen as personal, some labeled as risky and in conflict (Rea, 2018, p. 31-32).

²⁰ As a duet, *Presença-Pertença* prepares the individual, through attention-intention for new experiences to foster the development and participation of integral Being-Being, resignifying identity transits, collective learning and psychosocial cohesion (Cubo, 2015).



creative-creative movements/flows of life; second, as a drive of the Being to represent a wavy current that generates sensations, desires and emotions; third, to subsidize the Essence/Self where the ego tends to vibrate in the frequency of feeling-thinking-acting (DEP/Energetic Dynamics of the Psyche²¹). Finally, the power to live in harmony and self-acceptance transcends the beliefs of separation/discriminatory sensations, expanding the personal-collective-social vision of connection to universal energies (Braden, 2008).

Man's Body is Necessary Because it is Able to Reveal the 'Invisible God' (Sathya Sai Baba, 2007, as quoted in Azevedo, 2020). The ontology of the body is imprinted with the unconscious and transcendent memories of the entire inheritance to which the Being evolutionarily lives in (i) material, (i) rational, (de) humanized, (de) embodied dimensions, etc., which can so much be valued when challenged in terms of sexual identity representations immersed in the expression of Presence and Belonging; thus, the erasures, omissions and silences of the body can be expressions-representations of resistance and/or resilience of confrontations (Garcia and Inácio, 2019).

Historically, since the influence of the Newtonian paradigm, there has been a tendency in the medical environment to separate mind-body, feelings from emotions-reason, ethics-science. Around 1930 a new way of thinking emerged - in terms of complexity, relationships and contexts, that is, the systemic view of the world with the perception that the essential properties of an organism are not the simple sum of its parts, but rather, its Totality as orderings organized 'between' the parties; as a result, we have any and every experience of Being since fertilization, receives a mnemonic imprint on the organism and impregnates the body cells (Azevedo, 2020). At David Bohm's discretion (1995, as quoted in Azevedo, 2020, p. 105) the structure of the universe contains an unlimited amount of information and that the human being is the bodily manifestation of that energy; thus, all matter is a form of energy that contains, in itself, (in) formations that shape the form. In short, the body is an informational system, a sensory instrument for representing experiences that is expressed in a timeless way. The sensation is the means by which we experience the totality of the experience and consciously perceiving the body, intensifies Its experience (Levine, 1999, as quoted in Azevedo, 2020 p. 57).

Nowadays, there have been advances towards the verification by the method of quantum physics that the Being lives immersed in informational auras of energy flows that vibrate independently of time and space and encompass the entire body system. A demonstration of the body's emanations that is manifested in the emotional-morphological field can be seen by analyzing the traces of cardiac memories observed by the energy of its electromagnetic field 'Torus' that expand from the heart like sparks; by the name 'Brain of the Cardiac' (Azevedo 2020) the energetic-informative flow as 'code of the heart' creates solutions in the form of insights, fruits of instinct and intuition of what It 'Is'; this systemic process of encompassing the being-being-becoming corresponds to the embodiment of consciousness in the

²¹ I work with movements of consciousness, breathing, body posture supported on the base/feet, activating the internal temperature circulation necessary to dissolve the informational blocks (impregnations) and, thus, offer vitality/joy/pleasure of living. The DEP methodology/Energetic Dynamics of the Psyche works the idea of transcendence by the (dis) involvement of the mind-body of being, on the one hand so far from Origin and on the other so close to It to open the portals of consciousness experiences, which goes beyond of the staff including them in such a way that the mind experiences contemplation and the body experiences the feelings felt both by pain due to the separation/discrimination from itself, and by gratitude for the essence of «It» (Basso and Pustilnik, 2000).



experience of Being LGBTQI+, not only through the perception of thoughts, words and actions, but through the sensation-felt body-mind-emotion-spirit (Basso and Pustilnik 2000). The being-in-the-world, according to Heidegger (1991) 'is one-with' us and others in which the body is the representation of the Encounter.

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The public spaces of Presence-existence and Belonging-coexistence are necessary from the propagation of the individual's rights to come and go; explicitly, the development of relationships occurs between bodies that meet and connect. The urban space is strongly linked to the cycles of discovery of the history of the Being of each one, as stated by Greenhalgh:

An important factor in the development of this homosexual subculture... was the appropriation of the urban space. [...] this issue concerns the connection between the occupation of public areas and the supposed traditional spheres of Brazilian social life, that is, the house and the street. [...] greater accessibility of men to the public aspect, the street, facilitated homosexual erotic encounters between them. However, the cultural stigmatization of this activity sometimes encouraged the creation of a "counter-home", a private space where men could interact freely and which served as an alternative to the traditional family. When bars identifiable as gay started to appear in the late 1950s and early 1960s in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, they began to function as spaces, located between the private (the house) and the public (the street), protecting its visitors from an aggressive and hostile city (Greenhalgh, 2010, p. 33-34).

Following this conception, the proposal 'Center for Culture and LGBT+ Reception: Petrópolis for All' is necessary in view of resistance and resilience in the form of culture, leisure, multidimensional and transdisciplinary (in) formation as a space in which lesbian, gay people, bisexuals, transsexuals, transvestites and intersex or not, can be-have expression-representation without fear, discrimination and violence.

The Architectural Project, which is no longer characterized only by the 'social', is transformed into the 'egalitarian', aiming to shelter, integrate and promote the person-community interrelationship. Its conceptual nature strongly connected between the existing construction since the 1970s in Petrópolis, RJ-Brazil has become today a space for history to be revisited and represented; one of the striking architectural features is reflected in its clean and rare lines, a harmonious form of implantation that transcends time and space, since the interaction of those who enjoy it internally and externally feel in a perfect state of contemplation, experience, collectivism, that is, of leisure experience.

In a way, architecture is linked to the experiences of Aesthetic Leisure²² in which the stimulus to Presence-existence and Belonging-coexistence enables the perception of 'affec-

²² Aesthetic Leisure provide enjoyable moments on occasions of great emotion. But, along with this, favoring the individual to go beyond himself, leading him to ask himself about his own human condition and to share aspirations, ideals, experiences and experiences; it means that when one enjoys the arts or architectural works, at the same time, the psyche develops in the different spheres that constitute the Being that is the key to human development: feeling, understanding and valuing (Arroyabe, 2010).



tionate-tactile' as an ethical-citizen value for the development of human capacities, improvement and enhancement of the community and corporate life; the aesthetic modality of leisure from the triple dimension of sensitivity, intelligence and conscience is an expression of affection: if we are attentive to the richness of the sensitive and to better enjoy the senses, we will be more delicate people with others (Arroyabe, 2010; Igreja, 2013). Being able to understand and share are, therefore, the manifestations of man's propensity to let himself be carried away by the compassion, humanity and tenderness that characterize affection; in this sense, the potential of artistic and architectural forms increases affection as an experience of Aesthetic Leisure.

The harmonious reading of the project is present in the historical respect of the existing house when the integration of the proposed architecture.



Image 01 and 02: Center for Culture and LGBTQ Reception: Petrópolis for all.
Source: Collection, Washington Baptista, 2019.

Art is an expression of a world, inner wealth and the vision of a person who is capable of expressing and representing it; the interest here-and-now is the ability of architecture to reveal the human soul, its concerns, problems, difficulties in relating to others, emotions, compassions and doubts, questions and questions about the world.

Conclusion

There is an increasing view that the defense of LGBTQI+ rights is more than just a fight for human rights, with Western involvement being easily denounced as a form of rejection for reasons of principle. Adopting and living any identity and lifestyle beyond those heteronormatives is a subversion to the capitalism-colonialism-patriarchy tripod and, consequently, both transcends the perceived polarities of the *status quo* and contributes to the transformation of society; analyzed as a construction and, therefore, challenging the static and linear positions «man» or «woman», gender emerges as an analytical category acquiring greater importance in the understanding of the social, in the identity claims and in the recognitions beyond the distinctions between sexual identity and sex allowing the greater protagonism of subjects and critical resistance to binarisms domination/dependence, civilization/savagery, tradition/modernity, development/underdevelopment, metropolis/periphery, globalization/localism (Curiel, 2005, as quoted in Baptista, 2018, p. 220) placing in center of narratives and discourses, the



representations of distinct identity markers in the face of different contexts related to cultural studies.

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AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF AFFECTIONS AND COGNITIONS: 'TO BE-TO FLOW' LGBTQI+¹

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ABSTRACT

In this article we discuss about the affective and cognitive perceptions of embodiment of consciousness based on research in the architectural project *Centro de Cultura e Acolhimento LGBTQI+* (LGBT+ Culture and Sheltering Center) in Petrópolis, Rio de Janeiro. The arguments being developed, privilege the notion that, a human being is a part of the whole, called by us 'Universe', a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts, and feelings as something separated from the rest — a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness. This illusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us from our personal desires and affection for a few people nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and nature as a whole in its beauty (Albert Einstein). The *Dinâmica Energética do Psiquismo (DEP)* (Energetic Dynamics of the Psyche) presumes that every human can awake to the potential 'Is', 'Become' and 'Flow' in this existence. Since a grounding of praxis referred to vibrational energy fields that resonate-impregnate space-time experiences experienced, we bring the conceptual basis of exist-resist LGBTQI+ as an 'updating' of sexual identity in their diversity, plurality, equity and otherness lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, "queer", intersex and many others incorporations of homosexual experience; these aspects combined, we consider that coexistence, in a broad vision of transit between the individual and the collective, is representative of the connections of To Be with the Universal Consciousness Matrix (Planck, 1944; Braden, 2008; Capra and Píer, 2014; Basso and Pustilnik, 2000; Azevedo, 2020) in which everyone exists, uniting the intrinsic-extrinsic worlds and archetype reflecting the creations. Specifically, the key to the mirror of relationships be in recognize the 'felt sensations' in relation to the others for what they are and not for what the environment conditions transform them (Braden, 2008); seeing the symmetry principle (Ramos, 2014) the contact between peoples, things and environments is evident by resonances or dissonances through the vibrations of the vibrational field (Basso and Pustilnik, 2000). In Quantum scope we deduce that the conceptions of resistance and resilience of the movements LGBTQI+ qualified as '*Efeito-não-Local*' (Non-local Effect) (Ramos, 2014) promote meetings and build favorable scenarios for realization of collective projects and personal dreams; these multidimensional representations favor the neurobiological interaction resulting in experiences in the ways of think-feel-interact of the LGBTQI+ senses, that describes Butler (2001b) as a way of relation witch not gender or sexuality are exactly a possession but a mode of dispossessed, a way to be to the other and in virtue of the other. In the multidimensional integration of the existential human trajectory that transcends the neurobiological experience, the 'gender-body' (Basso and Pustilnik, 2000) can be represents in transcultural and multidisciplinary studies, by unveiled knowledges from the Arts; in Architectural Space for interaction between formal-planned structures and informal self-generating networks in sense of to be LGBTQI+ can support through the auto poetics and autopoiesis (Capra and Píer, 2014) the idealization of edification project *Centro de Cultura e Acolhimento LGBTQI+* (LGBT+ Culture and Sheltering Center) in Petrópolis, Rio de Janeiro (Baptista and Igreja, 2019). So, this study represents the aesthetic idleness as an enjoyment of the arts making reality a satisfying experience (Arroyabe, 2010) and the the tactility of

¹ Paper presented during the 7th International Congress on Cultural Studies: Gender Performativities in Democracy Under Threat.

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architectural references as a subtle and clear spatial concentration with no intention to separate the interior and the exterior (Ando, 2010) that transpose vision barriers single-dimensions to intersexualities (Capra and Luisi, 2014) that basis the conquest of LGBTQI+ space.

KEYWORDS:

Gender; Sexuality; Equity-Otherness; Body-Consciousness-Manifestation; Art-Autobiography.

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Introduction

I'm just a musical prostitute (Fred Mercury). My mom said to me: 'You know sweetheart, one day you should settle down and marry a rich man'. I said: 'Mom, I'm a rich man' (Cher). I wish I hadn't renegaded my homosexuality for 40 years (L., 2019). I decided that this wouldn't be something which I would live shamed for the rest of my life (E.D., 2019).

Living together is our big challenge to understand that does not exists me and they but 'Us'. When we discover what space is made of, we will have taken a big step to understanding the relationship of human existence in the world; according to Planck (1944) the emanation of energies connects the 'intelligent matrix' all things to the fields of human emotions: the matter by itself does not exist, but it does originate-exists in virtue of force that makes the particles of atom vibrate to keep this extremally tiny system unified. Behind this potency exists a conscious and intelligent mind called the Matrix of Entire Matter (Planck, 1918 as quoted in Braden, 2008, p. 73) that sustains a universe inside-contiguous-enveloped in everything/every creatures, from grams until the stars, from earth until the cosmos; it is the representation of quantum reality⁵ according to which, in each creature exists as a big cluster of particles of '*Efeito-não-Local*' (Non-Local Effect).

In bridge-spaces metaphenomenal – quantum fields where circle forces, energies, process and (in)formation that truly 'decide' (*Matriz da Consciência Divina*) (Matrix of Divine Consciousness) what/which/how/why everything/everyone acts, and in relationships (Ramos, 2018) reveal the scenarios that according to Braden (2008) reframe the network of emotions-creations-actions from each to others (group), with the universe (collective) and with themselves (individual); examples that Surowieki (2006 as quoted in Ramos, 2018, p. 94) describes as increased of intellectual capacity that people obtain in decision-making and problem solving when they are gathered in a group and Deslauriens (2005 as quoted in Ramos, 2018, p. 100) qualify as a high frequency zone to indicate a kind of energetic space around people making them more creative. Consequently, the place-territory where people cohabit is an expression of deeper psychological conditions of each existence, that is, a particular point in space-time of coexistence; according to Ramos (2014) the basis of the Symmetry Principle reveals an infinite degree of freedom to the movements of people mobilizing their physical resources (attitudes/desires) and psychic (mental/spiritual). In distance

⁵ Based on a new physics, it is based on the philosophy of the primacy of consciousness, as opening a visionary window through which fresh winds pass, clarifying old questions (Goswami, 2015, p. 14).



it is also influenced by events, '*Efeito-não-Local*'⁶ (Non-Local-Effect) exchanging/assist itself, by a 'metapsychism' process: "normal" (intuitions) and paranormal (telepathy/clairvoyance).

This work inserts itself in the ambit of the discussion about the affective and cognitive perceptions of embodiment of consciousness based on the research of architectural project Centro de Cultura e Acolhimento LGBTQI+ (LGBTQI+ Culture and Sheltering Center) at Petrópolis, Rio de Janeiro by the biases of affectivity-tactility and aesthetic idleness, which in the process of subjectification of LGBTQI+ bodies they are mediated by the 'update' of sexual identity in their diversity, plurality, equity and otherness lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, "*queer*"⁷, intersex and more other incorporations of the homosexual experience. Since the place-environment is essentially physical-social-spiritual-cognitive-behavioral-cultural consolidated in domain of felt sensations (Heidegger 1991; Basso e Pustilnik, 2000) the *Centro de Cultura e Acolhimento LGBTQI+* (LGBTQI+ Culture and Sheltering Center) (Baptista and Igreja, 2019) is built from an egalitarian, inviting, harmonious and sustainable architecture in presence/belonging format as an experience of aesthetic⁸, idleness⁹ and tactility¹⁰ in architecture aimed at the spread of humanitarian resilience and cultural resistance.

Affections and Cognitions: 'Be-Flow' LGBTQI+

Feelings-thoughts-knowledges are often repressed/closeted especially when applied to growth and consolidation of the LGBTQI+ movement in civil Society, due to unworthy, ignored, discredited, slandered feelings disguised in tension, hostility, anger and fury; highly understandable scenario in reason of reflective strangeness and the reconnection to the materiality of verbal with expressions of subjectivities in choleric times of violence against everyone who diverges from the norms of living and the gender diversity. In abandonment situations, homophobia, aggression, public discrimination as well as the difficulty of professional rise threaten the biopsychosocial life of LGBTQI+ people that many times, for survival reasons, they remain in a stage of lethargy and isolation to incur the loss of part of themselves; according Haraway (2018, p. 8) it is increasingly evident that we need a 'difference'

⁶ The 'non-locality' is one of the quantum phenomena that represents a central role in the paradigm of reality; it means communication or influence of energies on the connections between creatures, things, and environments. The universe also called the manifest field is the multiplicity of forms and identities of consciousness and their interactions (Goswami, 2015, p. 65). Plato listed some of these contexts of the 'Non-Local Effect' manifestation in terms of creativity – good, beautiful and fair other ways to analyze this mental processing wefts beyond the Platonic paradigms, we use Jungian archetypes (Jung, 1971) as the *trickster* and the hero (perfect examples of people who experienced the non-local context, Buddha and Moses).

⁷ We use "*queer*" (in quotation marks and in italics), because the term denotes a political picture rather than a gender identity or sexual behavior; this perspective that embraces the diversity, otherness, equity and plurality of gender and sexuality that seeks to transform, revise and revolutionize the terminological order, more than assimilating it in an oppressive hetero-patriarchal-capitalist context. It is dissident terminology in relation to gender and sexualities (Muthiem, 2013); constitutes a rejection of the binary distinction between homo and heterosexual, and a conceptualization of sexualities as non-essential and transitory (Jolly, 2000).

⁸ Sensitivity-intelligence- consciousness tripod as the key to human development in terms of the felt sensations: understanding, appreciation and sharing.

⁹ The idleness as a complete experience, united their ability in validating the concrete experiences that translate itself into motivation, aspirations-desires, and enthusiasm for something (Cuenca, 2000).

¹⁰ Designates the perception of the internal and external environment as bodily felt sensations of comfort: touch (thermal), hearing (acoustic) and vision (landscape).



theory whose paradigms, geometries and logics break with binarism, dialectics and models of nature/culture of any kind.

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I keep flowing lovely and compassionate, even if the world outside remains the same! Academic studies about body are relatively recent. In a way, with big influence of patriarchal ideology in a religious view that has always supported and continues to support the separation of the body-soul, nature-reason and reason-emotion to found the sexual binarism; Foucault (1992 as quoted in Garcia and Inácio, 2019) helped us think about western sexualities through the analysis of the discourse of Christian morals that separate the body from the soul, the reason from instinct and the consciousness from pulse, and stimulated important debates by feminist thinkers ([cf. Fraser, 1989; Butler, 1993; Bordo, 1993, 2003; Grosz, 1994] as quoted in Garcia and Inácio, 2019) by inciting resignifying women's bodies and the construction of their subjectivity. According to Elizabeth Grosz (2000 as quoted in Garcia and Inácio, 2019) women are in a way more biological-embodied and more natural than men; this preconceived idea leaned to seeing them commanded by emotions, incompetent in reasoning and justified the need to control them – duo to their biology and sexuality.

¹¹ Initiatory and multidimensional school based on the concepts, methodologies and experiences of the sciences, such as Biology, Neuroscience, Quantum Physics and studies on Vibrational Energy Fields through theoretical-experiential and methodological resources exercises the reception of consciousness in the body, called felt-sensations; based on eastern-western philosophical traditions and neuroscience and quantum physics tools, develops research and interventions with groups providing techniques to expand the states of personal-collective consciousness (Basso and Pustilnik, 2000).

¹² Discourses that root the way of manifesting yourself and us as possibilities of being. And what as be sane? Normality and standardization, proclaimed. Sexual and identity transit as escapes from the processes of speculation of the body and contemporary identities. Institutionalized ways of being and not being (Garcia and Inácio, 2019, p. 19).



Bodies¹³ function as a metaphor of a culture and for some groups, end up being persistently regulated, watched, made vulnerable and raped physically and psychologically. Isabel Caldeira (2019 as quoted in Garcia and Inácio, 2019, p. 223) builds the following questions: what results from the experience to the LGBTQI+ people's lives? How do they lead their own lives? How do they submit themselves or resist? How could they find themselves deserving of all that or detest themselves and feel incapable or even objects? Seeking to discuss these questions we start from the dynamic principles of Love's Hidden Symmetry¹⁴ (Hellinger, 1998), '*Efeito-não-local*'¹⁵ (Non-Local-Effect) (Ramos, 2014; Goswami, 2015) and of Causality¹⁶ assuming that the solidarity-support between the collective-movements-groups LGBTQI+ have a connection with synchronicity, in other words, manifest kinship with symmetric-systemic meanings, 'non-places and casualties, for the relating dimension between all leads to the presence-belonging¹⁷'; first of all we assume that each person who compose these scenarios, 'update' the sexual identity in diversity, plurality, equity and otherness of their lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, "*queer*", intersex and many other incorporations of homosexual living experience, accessing affections and cognitions (memories, feelings and varieties/complexities of biopsychosocial that define their daily existence (Socsa, 2005); after that, we consider that any change that happens in the individual reverberates into the collective and vice-versa, admitting the multidimensional state of body-mind-emotion-spirit that constitutes the '*Unidade na Totalidade*' (Unity in Totality) (Basso e Pustilnik, 2000).

The kingdom is in its core and exterior (...) Nothing that is hidden will abstain from manifesting itself *Words of Jesus, written by Dídimo Judas Tomé* Nag Hammadi Library (as quoted in Braden, 2008, p. 169)

The LGBTQI+ historical assignment is to bring forward in themselves and others the consciousness and individual and collective-movements expressiveness; on one hand, the affection and legality of being able to come and go without persecution on the other, the experience in the cities as self-poetic webs in the communication process', values and beliefs sharing in common meaning contexts. Through these perspectives, 'update' identities as

¹³ Each person has a supporting vibrating field in their physical corporeality that they may attract as well be attracted to resonances and dissonances to other personal fields, things and situations, depending on their consciousness status (Basso e Pustilnik, 2000). Each Being carries within a subjective load as a creating force: a vibrating unique quality, a Gift-Purpose in themselves ready to reveal (Azevedo, 2000).

¹⁴ We've advanced when we leave what must be left behind. We achieve life's goal when we understand that what existed before was a mere preparation for what comes afterwards. (Hellinger, 1998).

¹⁵ Interconnections/inter-relations and distant things/happenings mutually influence each other. Everything-one (people, things, environment, nature, etc.) are fields 'attracted' by resonance and dissonance through Quantic Field vibrations (Basso e Pustilnik, 2000).

¹⁶ Occurrence when the motive-reason is not present.

¹⁷ As a duet, Presence-belonging prepares the individual, through the attention-intention to new experiences of promotion of development and participation of whole presence-belonging respectively giving new meaning to traffic of identities, the collective learning and psychosocial cohesion (Cubo, 2015). I work with consciousness movement, breathing, body posture supported on a base-feet activating the internal temperature circulation needed to dissolve the informative blocks (impregnations) and, that way, offer vitality/happiness/joy to live. The DEP/Dinâmica Energica do Psiquismo (Psyche Energetic Dynamic) methodology Works with the idea of transcending through development of body-mind of the individual, on one hand so far from the Origin and by another so close to Her to open portals of consciousness experiences, that go beyond the personal including itself in such a way, that the mind experiments the contemplation and the body experiences felt sensations not only of pain for separation/discrimination of the self, but also of the gratitude for the essence of 'Is' (Basso e Pustilnik, 2000).



members of this expectation, trust, and loyalty web, continuously maintained and renegotiated (Capra e Luisi, 2014).

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288 | The house shelters and protects the dreamer (...) it's one of the biggest integration forces for the thoughts, memories and dreams of men; it holds men through the storms of the sky and life (...) the body is the soul (Bachelard 1993, p.26).

The house space is like air that breaths itself. In contact with different systems, we become aware of diverse modalities of special ordination that emerge to the senses, in a non-solid way; when setting territory, it's necessary to explain how the associations happen and how they are legitimized by the community as a whole (Da Matta, 1991). Following this conception, the 'Centro de Cultura e Acolhimento LGBTQ: Petrópolis para Todos' (LGBT+ Culture and Sheltering Center: Petrópolis for Everyone) makes itself necessary duo to the resistance and resilience in the shape of culture, aesthetic idleness, multidimensional transdisciplinary (in)formation as a space in which lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, transvestite and intersex or not people, may be-have expression-representation without fear, discrimination, and violence. The architectural project, that ceases to be characterized by the 'social' and transmutes to the 'equalitarian', objecting shelter, integrate, and promote the person-community relationship. Its conceptual nature strongly connected between the existing construction since the 1970's in Petrópolis¹⁸, RJ-Brasil converts into the current days in space that history be revised and represented; one that the strongest architectural traces reflects in its clean and rare lines, an harmonious form of implantation that transcends time and space, since the interaction of those who enjoy internal-externally feel in perfect state of contemplation, life experience, collectiveness, that is, of aesthetic idleness experience.

The objective of the 'Centro de Cultura e Acolhimento LGBTQ: Petrópolis para Todos' (LGBT+ Culture and Sheltering Center: Petrópolis for Everyone) house is to be an equipment that not only shelters vulnerable people, but to integrate the community-movement LGBTQI+ without isolating the space from the reality in which it's implemented, creating stimulation to the conviviality of all; clearly, the project inserts itself in the affectivities place:

We've created the affectionate hypothesis: in case we're people who mind the wealth of the sensitiveness and then we get to enjoy our senses better, we'll also be more delicate people and sensitive towards others. The capacity of understanding and sharing with others is, therefore, the manifest of men's propensity to let themselves go by the compassion affections, humanity and tenderness, that forms the affection (Igreja, 2013, p. 84).

In the urban scene the presence-belonging to a place concept, is formulated from inside out aligned to moments and bonds that integrate and involve affections, cognitions, practices/actions, specificities, tangibility, different authors (LGBTQI+ as a collective and cultures in the felt sensations sphere: think-feel-act) and time-space aspects.

¹⁸ Petrópolis was the first city from Rio de Janeiro to receive and shelter the Imperial Family (1808); besides the architectural Portuguese traces, it has the habitant's lifestyle. Petrópolis is a research field (Baptista e Igreja, 2019) seeking to capture this rejection sensation and a bad interpreter of the consolidates of current bodies.



The harmonious reading of the project¹⁹ makes itself present in the historical respect to the existing house as the integration of the proposed architecture.



Image 01: 'Centro de Cultura e Acolhimento LGBTQI+: Petrópolis Para Todos' (Culture and Sheltering LGBTQI+ Center: Petrópolis for Everyone). Source: Collection (Baptista and Igreja, 2019).



Image 02: 'Centro de Cultura e Acolhimento LGBTQI+: Petrópolis para Todos' (Culture and Sheltering LGBTQI+ Center: Petrópolis for Everyone). Source: Collection (Baptista and Igreja, 2019).

Following the scholar studies of the architect Tadao Ando²⁰ (2010) we've created to 'Centro de Cultura e Acolhimento LGBTQI+: Petrópolis para Todos' (Culture and Sheltering LGBTQI+ Center: Petrópolis for Everyone), a very clear and subtle proposal of space concentration, without the intention of setting apart the interior and exterior; tactility is the term that defines the manifesting essence in the elaboration and architectural reception 'felt' by the observer: visual-acoustic-thermal 'comfort' and we've used them as critical aesthetic analysis from contemporary concepts of affection in architecture.

Aesthetic idleness in architecture

Arroyabe (2010) reveals the key-idea that by enjoying the arts people will be more willing to achieve delight; the expression 'enjoyment of the arts' intends to make a reality the satisfactory experience through aesthetic education and knowledge, that is, when we shelter an artistic work in our intimacy it lives and recreates itself. (Igreja 2013) when referring to the enjoyment of the arts brings an also original contribution of the inserting of the affection²¹ concept to the critic architectural analysis,

The Works of art quality has a personal value when it moves us, makes us vibrate and we open up to it; that way we welcome it in many ways because we are different, we have distinct expectations and they 'affect' us in many different ways (Igreja, 2013, p.44).

¹⁹ Theoretical research and practice in the shape of a thesis confirmed in the architectural scope, that utilizes the critical analysis of beauty aesthetic concepts methodology, functionality, tectonic, semiotics, and affection (Igreja, 2013; Baptista, 2019).

²⁰ Frampton (1996) presents the architect and essayist Tadao Ando's enlightens: "the tactility of the work transcends the initial perception of its geometrical order; modern architecture tends to alter itself according to the region in which it sets its roots and meanwhile the methodology opens towards universality".

²¹ Intricate ethic value there's the development of human capacities to perfect themselves and, also, potentialize community life and coexistence with others.



The aesthetic idleness experiences give us pleasurable moments in moments of great emotion; along with it, help us go further beyond ourselves, make us question our own human condition and share with other people our aspirations, ideals, and other concerns with our existence. That way, the architecture²² has an expression in the artistic universe when it makes possible for people and societies to have a vision of their own expression and in a more understanding way when it reveals the soul of a people. The term immersion balances and harmonizes the contemplation and participation sensations in a sense that doesn't consume the piece, but enjoys with the object; referring to the project 'Centro de Cultura e Acolhimento LGBT+: Petrópolis para Todos' (LGBT+ Culture and Sheltering Center: Petrópolis for Everyone), (Baptista e Igreja, 2019) the triple dimension, sensitivity, intelligence, and consciousness (Arroyabe, 2010) gains depth through the affection's quality (Igreja, 2013).

Conclusions

The potential of architectural shapes increases the affection as an aesthetic idleness experience; the complementary concept of affection is formed as an applicable intervention to the art fields and now, also to architecture.

That way as well, the human potential that moves, shelters, dignifies, and rescues the self-esteem, preserves the individuality since the diversity, plurality, equity, and otherness of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, "*queer*", intersex, and many other incorporations of homosexual experience in terms of talents-gifts, aptitudes, knowledges, competences, and abilities in search to accept themselves as they are 'to be sane' and respect themselves for their choices-expressions; and, defends the collective-movements since the solidarity, cooperation, and sensitivity in terms of creation-creative, far beyond of 'egoic' preference-choices. In a nutshell, the LGBTQI+ universe is made by the multiple shapes and identities and their interactions and shelters,

In the houses there are people. And they are so different from the people who live in our houses inside. (...) A window or a sheet is not enough, or pretty furniture, it takes people to make a house breath. Aaaahhhh, make the house, when sees the people get in. The mother doesn't need to be quiet and shorty, she may walk and run outside as working, and the father may stay busy taking care of dinner. (...) Aaaahhhh, make the house, when sees the people get in. And the father may be different and the mother different from other mothers and fathers that you know furthermore. Or there may only be a father or mother, or two mothers, or two fathers, in the house where you are. Or you could even live with your grandparents, the uncles, or more friends, all this may be, and all is good, as long as one listens to the house breathing. Aaaahhhh, make the house, when feels the people stay! (Amaral, 2012, p.27).

Given the rising nascent moment to lesbian, gays, transsexual, "*queer*", intersex rights, claiming their place in public spaces and becoming at each moment more visible, the next

²² The interest there and now isn't the history, nor the styles or influences of an author over the other, it is, the capacity of architectural art to make us enjoy with its experience appreciation; that means that when we enjoy the artistic or architectural pieces, we develop psych in the different scopes that constitute human being, the sensitivity, the intelligence, and the consciousness.



stage demands attention to their freedom to be, as Human Rights. This activism must respond to social context, explain the perspectives, identify allies, and define activities and strategies as the goal to respond to challenges and to the opportunities faced by the movement. In the self-biography of affections and cognitions: 'To be-to flow' LGBTQI+ are built over the pillars of gender-body of the 'Centro de Cultura e Acolhimento LGBTQI+': Petrópolis para Todos' (LGBT+ Culture and Sheltering Center: Petrópolis for Everyone), a space of conviviality's and experiences.

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WOMEN IN MUSIC - GENDER SIGNS IN MUSIC VIDEOS¹

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ABSTRACT

In the context of the thematics of gender and performance, we present a comparative analysis on the levels of performance, literary message and stereotypes of race and gender, between a music video registered in the current world music tops and the first music video ever to be made, with jazz music and musicians - Saint Louis Blues, of 1929. Based on Cultural Studies theories, we intend to articulate themes from the Cultural Industries and the gender and performance studies, with specific regard to subjectivation processes.

KEYWORDS:

Gender; Performance; Cultural Industries; Music Video.

Introduction

In this work we make a comparative exercise between the first music video in history, performed by a black woman, Bessie Smith, great icon of the American Blues, of 1929 and a music video of Adele, of 2011. We start from the semiotic analysis of music videos and some conclusions already verified by us in previous studies that, as a rule, the message transmitted in the lyrics of the song does not correspond to the visual imagery narrative of the same video clip. We understand, then, that there is a need to give greater importance to the lyrics of the song, that is, to the message conveyed. Thus, we resume a model of a study already published - "A Rehab da Palavra" (Alves Pereira, 2013), where we defined the three components of a music video, in order to understand the importance of the message in the transmitted word. Because this article is included in a broader study where we make use of Stuart Hall's "Encoding and Decoding" technique, as a way of trying to understand the subjects' subjectivation processes when viewing music videos, we return to some concepts by Lacan, which are important to us, just to work on gender issues, with a focus on performative bodies, but also to open new paths for future investigations. Lacan defends that the spoken language, with its discursive structure, pre-exists the subject, its birth, and its psychic constitution. The subject only has access to himself in a symbolic order that receives him in the form of language in which the determination of the signifier makes the subject count as divided by his own discourse. What we intend, in the development of our investigation, is to establish a homology between Lacan's Borromean knot and the video clip.

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Communication and video clip

Reflecting on the impact of the messages conveyed in the video clips under analysis, we intend to understand how the subjectivations are presented, namely with regard to the concepts of gender and race, in the chosen examples. The choice was made because both music videos were carried out by female singers, and both had a body that came out of the standard imposed by the current society, trying to understand what may have changed between the edition of the first music video and the second, especially in terms served messages.

Music videos are an extremely accessible vehicle today and the music is no longer separated from the image they convey. The imagery in the musical communication of the video clip has been the target of great exploration by the Cultural and Creative Industries, promoting music as a more salable product and easily accessible to anyone. We question, however, to what extent this type of communication provides moments of leisure and personal growth, something to be expected in an art form, or whether, on the contrary, it is something intoxicating that dulls knowledge and negatively conditions the development of the critical sense of autonomy and freedom (Alves Pereira, 2016). We consider communication as a privileged vehicle for thoughts, emotions and experiences, which imply sharing, giving and acceptance. We will deepen this thematic from the analysis and comparison of the video clips: "Rolling in the Deep", by Adele and, "St. Louis Blues", by Bessie Smith.

Throughout life, human beings develop their communication skills. In this way, they evolve and build their own identity as a human being. When we talk about communication, we are referring to the ability to use symbolic systems, which allow the sharing of information between people, which presupposes processing interactions between two or more beings, through a symbolic code.

Given this reality, we cannot help wondering about the extent to which this type of communication can be considered interaction between subjects, or simply a unilateral transmission of something, whose perception of the receiver is disconnected from the transmitter.

With technological progress and, consequently, of digital art, the video clip has undergone a constant evolution, through the diverse transformations of conception, directing and production. In this context, the video clip is a musical vehicle, creator of new trends, in the various aspects of the cultural industry, of which clothing fashion is an example, and also a model of behaviors and attitudes, stimulating the public to act in accordance with their idols and favorite bands. The growing phenomenon of the video clip was promoted by the intention of being used as a marketing strategy, allowing the recording industry to promote the band and, above all, increase the sales of its products - CDs, DVDs and merchandising. Therefore, regardless of the aesthetic evolution of the video clip, it is clear that it is funded by the recording industry, with the goal of marketing specific songs and CDs.

We perceive in this way, that the image becomes inseparable from music and that, with the appearance of the Internet, and the existence of sites such as Youtube, Vimeo, Facebook and others, the image, and consequently the video clip, becomes essential for an industry in full decline, as is the music industry. With this inclusion of online platforms, the video clip brings yet another massification dynamic, being almost disconnected from television.

We can also highlight the fact that we are dealing with a hybrid product, which combines several techniques, which include cinema, television and advertising. The idea of consump-



tion in the video clip is so ingrained that the images that integrate it are built according to fast, if not instant, consumption. The construction of this narrative is also characterized by a notion of rhythm, which is characterized by its capacity for impregnation. The pace will then be a determining factor in the video clip concept. The way in which the images and the narrative are adapted to the rhythm, or vice versa, and the short duration of the narrated image brings up a sense of discontinuity, which can be translated into a non-harmonious product.

We think, therefore, that this disharmony existent in the video clip may promote a sterile reality, with fluctuating values and principles, being part of an intoxicating product around which the world moves.

However, according to Stuart Hall (1973), in his essay, «Encoding and Decoding», for there to be communication, it is not enough to have a sender and a receiver. For him, this is not a simple process, but a complex one with many variations. In effect, Hall proposes a semiotic approach that starts from an epistemological reading of the communication process, which goes beyond the simple idea of absolute manipulation of the receiver in the context of Cultural Industries. This new model of communication not only presupposes a sender and a receiver, but also advocates models for understanding communication phenomena, as introduces external factors that influence both the sender and the receiver.

With this, communication is not limited to the transmission of information. It appears as a social process that involves the switching of information through the encoding of messages and has as premise the rejection of the passive participation of the recipient, thus allowing the sharing of experiences.

In short, this encoding / decoding model has brought us active receivers. The insertion of the socio-cultural context in decoding by either the sender, thus corroborating with the introduction of the concept of signifier by Lacan, but, and above all, the receiver, influences the production and appropriation of a set of codes when receiving messages. However, according to Hall, the coding promoted by the issuer is designed with a view to the persuasion and seduction of the receivers, even though they may develop opposite readings, that is, explain their own comments and considerations regarding the issues conveyed in a different direction. The one in which the codification was produced, thus exposing the subject's social and cultural context. We write and speak from a particular place and time, from a specific history and culture. We then understand that coding is not only part of the communication process, but also initiates it; this is understood as a moment of construction of the message to be conveyed, and it is elaborated through the receiver.

Genre in music videos

When we refer to gender, we are talking about roles, stereotypes, values and models that are nothing more than social representations that determine discrimination and unbalanced power relations between human beings of different sexes. The concept of gender is, therefore, built according to the various socio-cultural dimensions, structured through a set of beliefs and understandings, which define social behaviors, both for men and women.

The conceptualization of gender by young people is not formed solely and exclusively in adolescence. The entire family and social context that surrounds them, since childhood, will contribute, positively or negatively, to their shaping, also with regard to their gender



conceptions. In any case, acknowledging and knowing how to deal with this problem also contributes to the development of a gender identity, which includes growth, development and an adequate sociability. Paralleling Lacan's theory, we verify how important the signifier is in the construction of the subjectivity of the individual.

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In this interaction of young people with the gender issue, it is equally important that they understand and distinguish the differences between gender and sex. In other words, when we talk about sex we refer to biological issues and when we talk about gender, we refer to the group to which common characteristics are attributed, with regard to the different roles that society assigns to men and women, because "one is not born a woman, one becomes a woman" (Beauvoir, 1967, p.9).

Today we observe the existence of a greater collective conscience in the sense of not attributing man-woman dichotomy to gender issues, but of transmitting values that should be common to human beings, regardless of their biological sex. We are, therefore, in the presence of a significant evolution of concepts and mentalities. Therefore, it is expected that, when new technologies emerge, due to their social and cultural impact, they contribute positively to the construction of each young person's own identity, which is not always the case when observing the narratives of the video clips.

If we consider that the media today are responsible for an immense volume of symbolic and material exchanges in global dimensions, a new set of problems opens up for education, in a social dynamic that requires not only urgent measures on the part of educational institutions policies, but also a more accurate reflection on the relationship between education and culture (Fischer, 1999).

However, contrary to what would be expected, these new forms of identity creation - in which the speeches conveyed by the media contain an enormous effect of transmitting the truth - are certainly "interacting" in a negative way, in an unaccompanied construction of the identity of the young (with some exceptions). We can therefore conclude that any media space, easily accessible to young people, be it TV, radio, or the Internet, with its multiple music portals, can be considered as an educational space and, as such, should be subject to regulation and inspection by educational agents.

Bridging the gender issue and the focus of this article, in previously analyzed video clips, we can witness a social construction based on symbols of gender abuse and violence, such as, for example, the constant appeal to eroticism and also to the immediate satisfaction of the male being, through the exaggerated, almost unique use of images representing the woman's body, completely exposed, as if it were a bibelô or trophy. Female bodies are hypersexualized compared to male bodies.

Now, if we think that many teenagers have unlimited access to this type of content in their daily lives, it is not surprising that their perception of sex and gender is completely adulterated and biased. Consequently, a pertinent question arises, which has to do with the formation of young people, that is, when they see themselves in those idols, and when they want to immolate them, it may happen that young people enter a process of metamorphosis, whose foundation be it sexuality and sex.



The song in the music video

The song exists with lyrics and music, but a video clip always has the addition of the image and that image may or may not bring more information. In previous studies, we noticed a tendency for the visual message to bring noise and even misrepresentation of the written message, causing some difficulty in decoding the message transmitted in the video clip, as we verified through a focus group and questionnaire to subjects of high media exposure age, namely, to this type of content (Alves Pereira & Baptista, 2018).

Adele stands out from many international singers today by escaping the stereotype of today's ideal woman - of small stature and, above all, thin, which the fashion industry tries to impose on pop idols. If we look at the message of the lyrics, in the music video *Rolling in the Deep*, Adele is angry that their love relationship is over. She is quite disgusted and even announces revenge and the existence of scars at the same time that she suggests that, now, she is 'coming out of the darkness'. Taking into account these general features of the message brought by the lyrics, we observed that the message brought by the main image of the video clip is completely distorted. There is a bias which is revealed by the following: Adele remains from beginning to end of the video clip confined to a chair, with her legs in the same position. We believe that this happens in the unfolding of the video clip due to the fact that the singer does not have the physical profile of beauty imposed by society and, in turn, imposed by the record industry.

Although the execution of the video clip has been very well accomplished, and there are elements that can demonstrate an attitude of anger, such as the example of the crockery to be broken, it is clear the prejudice with respect to the socially imposed icons and that is inevitably related to gender issues, represented by a hurt woman, yet maintaining a dignified posture and destined to suffer.

In this way, it subliminally transmits to young people the idealization of a being that does not exist, that is, an Adele who is highly enraged with regard to the message of the letter, but who remains calm, «dignified» and «in pose», completely contained, from the beginning to the end of the video clip, denouncing the ineffectiveness of the word before the image, which, in this case, is relevant since, by the song's lyrics, a liberating and affirming cry of a woman can be discerned.

On the contrary, the singer Bessie Smith represents, in the video clip, the character portrayed in the song's lyrics, of a woman left by her lover because of another woman, more urban and sophisticated, in a situation in which the love relationship ended. With regard to music, at the time of making the Bessie Smith music video, there were no technological resources, so it was made with a live orchestra and with a choir and instrumentalists to intervene in the actions / image of the music video. While, in the case of Adele, the only one appearing is herself, with an image of the drummer for a few seconds of the video clip, given that all the music is pre-produced for the shoot.

Regarding the image, Bessie Smith also presents a body outside the thinness standards of current western society. But, while Bessie Smith's posture is that of someone intoxicated, without total mastery of her faculties, Adele's is always a dignified posture, always appearing seated with great elegance in an old chair. Bessie Smith is leaning against a drinking counter. We emphasize the static bodies, always contained and partially hidden - both women are



contained in their bodies. Although the songs are different, the music would be enough incentive for dance and movement, however, both singers are standing still - something that is not necessarily observed with male protagonists, even exhibiting corpulence, as the Rap and Hip-Hop singers are examples.

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Continuing the analysis of the elements of the video clips, in Bessie Smith's, the choir members are all thin and, all the participants are sitting at the coffee table, smoking, something that implies an urban environment, of freedom of expression, meeting the image of the woman by whom she was left, portrayed in the lyrics. At Adele's, the other participants are also thin. The warrior / dancer in black, appears with a wide range of movements, contrasting with the still image of the singer.

The singers never appear in full body in the video clip, and Bessie Smith always appears in profile - camouflaging the black features of the nose and mouth. All of Adele's music videos made so far are made without showing her body, but only the face which, curiously, has fine features and light eyes and hair, perfectly fitting the stereotype of the ideal white woman.

The video clip as a Borromean knot

Reflecting on the question of the message conveyed from the perspective of the Lacanian theory, we realize that words can be something that determines our reality, since the word, shaped by a discursive structure, pre-exists the subject and its constitution (Lacan, 1988, p. 105). The subject is inscribed in the universal movement of a discourse in the form of his own name. In this sense, language is constitutive of both the subject and culture (Vygotsky, 1987, p. 48). Considering that the constant visualization of these video clips happens mainly by young people, in an active process of subjectification, the importance of the lyrics and the word is reiterated.

In the development of his theory, Lacan demonstrates that language is determinant of the subject's own condition: "the subject is spoken even before birth, therefore, the child before being born already exists as an element of language" (May, 2010, p 260). In this way, we are the product of the signifiers - of what exists around us even before we exist (Lacan, 2007).

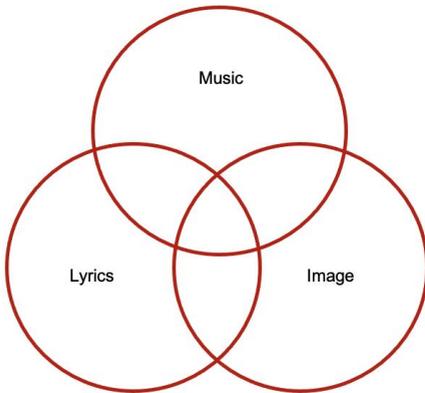
On the other hand, the word acquires meaning due to its acoustic component (Saussure, 2008), which, in the context of a video clip, increases the importance of the word. In addition, for a body to be constituted and subjectified, it is necessary that the subject recognizes himself in an image (Lacan, 2007). That is, when we view the video clip, we recognize ourselves in that image - we identify ourselves with the other and with their signifiers - those that society "imposes" on us. This means that the decoding of what is being seen will have infinite interpretations, depending on each subject, which will interfere in the critical reason and in the subjectification processes of each one.

In an innovative perspective, Lacan concludes that Man is "sick" by the signifier and the signifiers, that is, it is only through the spoken (sonorous) word that the subject can come to ascend to a singular truth (May, 2010, p.265).

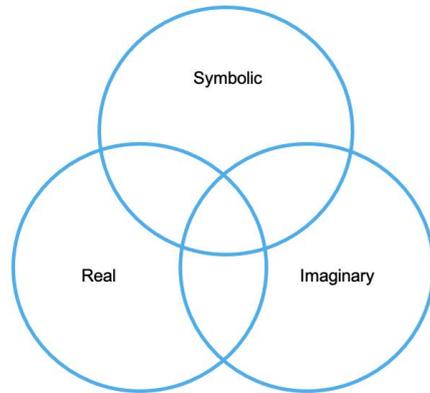
It is important to speak of Lacan's three basic concepts, which are the real, the symbolic and the imaginary, represented by the acronym RSI.



We can establish a parallel between the video clip, constituted by the three components of lyrics, music and image, and Lacan's theory about the subjectivation of the subject, because the structure of the video clip will be very similar to the structure of the simple Borromean Knot. Observe the images:



The integrating parts of the video clip
Image taken from the paper "A Rehab da Palavra" (2013)



Simple Borromean Knot
Image made from Lacan's Seminaire 23 (2007)

The two structures are identical in terms of functioning and while they are in their basic formation. That is, each component can exist individually, both in the Borromean knot and in the video clip. When the Borromean knot falls apart, the circumferences that make it up remain intact. As in the video clip, where the lyrics exist separately from the music, where the music can exist separately from the lyrics and the image, and where the image exists separately from all the others. That is, each component exists individually. Lacan attributes the symbolic, the imaginary and the real to each of the constituent circumferences of the Borromean knot, functioning as a unit and as a tool only when the three are intertwined. The same is true of the video clip, ceasing to be so if the three components do not co-exist.

We intend to develop this homology between the structure of the video clip and the Borromean knot of Lacan's RSI, in future works. We found it pertinent, however, to point it out now. At issue in this article, as well as in other developed ones, are the subjectivation processes of the individual who consumes video clips and the importance of signifiers around gender and race issues. It is of utmost importance to have an active critical view when decoding messages from content such as video clips, so that subjectivation processes can occur without any numbness.

In conclusion, as in the Borromean knot, in its most elaborated form, where there are loopholes and place for other details that will make the application of the Real, the Symbolic and the Imaginary (RSI) different for each individual, we believe that this also happens in the structure of the video clip, and we propose to deepen this homology in our investigation and demonstrate it in the future.

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GENDER PERFORMATIVITIES IN THE SCHOOL CONTEXT: THE CURRICULUM IN DIALOGUE WITH STUDENT EXPERIENCES WITH LEISURE¹

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ABSTRACT

Studying youth, their cultures and dilemmas in the school context is to question aspects related to this group that, even when they are not neglected by the curriculum, end up in conflict with school culture in a more general way. We also highlight that the school is considered by young people as an important space for their training, protection and socialization; but, on the other hand, it is also pointed out as a place of dissatisfaction and exclusion. In this context, the school curriculum stands out as an important artifact in the production of subjectivities, as young people experience school curricula in a large part of their time, and these curricula teach, among other things, ways of being and living in the world. The school curriculum, in contemporary times, is crossed by speeches that circulate in other cultural artifacts. In this sense, we ask ourselves: what are the experiences with/in leisure in the school context? How do these experiences with/in leisure dialogue with school curricula? From Foucault's contributions, we understand that the experience is organized not based on an identity principle, where a unity, a unity is presupposed, but, rather, based on a transformation principle, a mode of action in which the subject it is conceived in becoming, being, in itself, the knot of multiple relations. The experience, therefore, can be treated from this definition: it is something that transforms the subject. It is precisely the conception of experience as a kind of metamorphosis, as a transformation in the relationship with things, with others, with oneself and with the truth. In this context, the present work presents an excerpt from the doctoral research that analyzed the dialogues between the leisure experience of the young students in the *Ensino Médio Integrado do Instituto Federal de Educação de Minas Gerais – Campus Ouro Branco* (Integrated High School of the Federal Institute of Education of Minas Gerais - Ouro Branco Campus) and the curriculum of this institution. Therefore, it aims to analyze the identity appropriations performed in the school's leisure spaces. Therefore, we seek to analyze the speeches of the young students participating in the youth collectives organized in the institution based on thematic conversation circles. For such problematization, we seek theoretical support in Cultural Studies and in post-critical curriculum theories. These theorizations corroborate the understanding of the school curriculum as a teaching machine that articulates and disputes space in the production of meanings and truths in the cultural dimensions to be disseminated and preserved and in the formation of people. In this perspective, the curriculum is a discourse produced by relations of knowledge-power, which has productive effects on what you say. The student narratives and practices, procedures, techniques and exercises in the curriculum intersect, cross each other. This crossing, with the assemblies it provides, the disputes it establishes as well as the meanings it engenders, directly interested this study. Considering the context of the institution studied, a school of professional and technological education, we are faced with four ridiculous youth groups, with different characteristics, which were and are being consolidated as spaces for the identity construction of these young students in the school space. In addition, we identified that collectives give new meaning to school spaces for their leisure experiences and identity performances. Despite the specificities of each group, it is the relations of gender and sexuality that cross each other, highlighting, even, the tensions between the groups, and configuring the

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leisure of these young students as a place of resistance. The dialogue with these youth collectives contributed to the reflections on the (re) production of social stigmas in the school space and in the context of leisure, and on the urgency of (re) thinking curricula in the face of planning resistance strategies in school daily life. attempt to demystify the naturalization and normatization of the supposed superiority and supremacy of heteronorms.

KEYWORDS:

Curriculum; Leisure; School; Genre; Youths.

Introduction

Dialogues with Cultural Studies have enabled us to unravel and point out previously unknown paths and others that, even though aware of their existence, we did not recognize potency. When looking for other possibilities of doing research, we understand that the struggle to define what scientific research is and the ways to do it is, in the last analysis, the effort to acquire epistemological and political power over others. What does not differ from the problematization that we propose in this investigation: the experience of young students with leisure in the school curriculum.

Studying youth⁴, their cultures and their dilemmas in the school context is to question aspects related to this group that, even when they are not neglected by the curriculum, end up in conflict with school culture in a more general way. We emphasize that youth tends to be built by political, academic, media and corporate discourses in a spectacular and scandalous way, with fears and pleasures for massive audiences (Freire Filho, 2006). Thus, when problematizing youth experiences with leisure in the school curriculum, we seek to provide a listening space for a minority that has not had the possibility to represent themselves in the institutions of the so-called adult world. Sodr  (2005) returns to the notion of minority as those social sectors that are prevented from having an active voice in decision-making bodies in public life, given the impossibility of speaking, and in relation to youths, those who do not have access to full speech. And imagine when it comes to the school curriculum?!

Thus, writing about a curriculum is to emphasize the importance that this artifact assumes in educational proposals, in the lives of many of us, in the increasingly wide theoretical and thematic multiplicity of its study and research territory, it is to say about its potency. During this journey, we asked ourselves: what connections could there be between a technological professional education curriculum, and the "life of those people who deal with it, of those who pursue it" (Para so, 2010a, p. 11), in this case the/young students and leisure?

We emphasize that in the school curriculum, not only so-called scientific truths are distributed, but a multiplicity of discourses from different fields is disseminated and made available, amidst relations of power-knowledge, subject positions that invite teachers and students to certain ways of experiencing the school, thinking the world, governing oneself, constituting oneself. Such modes are operationalized in order to impress marks on architectures, genders, sexualities, bodies, as well as in the ways of dealing with leisure. These marks are cultural constructions that, in the investigated curriculum, take on normative, biopolitical

⁴ The term "youths" was chosen because it understands that, in view of geographical, social, educational, ethnic, gender, sexuality, and class diversity, it is not possible to think of a single youth, especially considering all the social disparities in Brazil.



and micropolitical contours when articulated with pedagogical, religious, identity, social movements and professional education discourses. Thus, more than reflecting on the young people's own motivations and activities, we seek to trace and understand the dense web of interests and discourses that are going through.

In this context, this work presents an excerpt of the doctoral research that analyzed the dialogues between the leisure experience of young students in *Ensino Médio Integrado do Instituto Federal de Educação de Minas Gerais – Campus Ouro Branco* (Integrated High School at the Federal Institute of Education of Minas Gerais - Ouro Branco Campus) and the curriculum of this institution. Therefore, it aims to analyze the identity appropriations performed in the school's leisure spaces. Therefore, we seek to analyze the speeches of the young students participating in the youth collectives organized in the institution based on thematic conversation circles. For such problematization, we seek theoretical support in Cultural Studies and in post-critical curriculum theories.

These theorizations corroborate the understanding of the school curriculum as a teaching machine that articulates and disputes space in the production of meanings and truths in the cultural dimensions to be disseminated and preserved and in the formation of people. In this perspective, the curriculum is a discourse produced by relations of knowledge-power, which has productive effects on what you say. The student narratives and practices, procedures, techniques and exercises in the curriculum intersect, cross each other. This crossing, with the assemblies it provides, the disputes it establishes as well as the meanings it engenders, directly interested this study.

The school context, curriculum and youth

We understand that the curriculum “embodies social relations, forms of knowledge, knowledge-power and as a territory for compositions and experiments; territory in which we play a significant part of the games of our lives” (Paraíso, 2006, p. 1), and is configured as a space for territorialization and deterritorialization, “where the struggles around different meanings about the social world are concentrated and unfold. and about the political” (Silva, 2006, p. 99). Therefore, the need to cross it, and think about it from other possibilities.

We know well the words that weigh on the curricular artifacts, words “of ordering, of organization, of sequencing, of structuring, of framing, of division, of classification” (Paraíso, 2010a, p. 12). To deal with a curriculum is to deal with the institution of limits, with the demarcation of borders, with the desire to fabricate subjectivities, train bodies and gestures, interdict, allow or incite. Curricula want to situate, implant, locate, map, describe, name, order, arrange. Several curricula arise in the daily lives of our lives, because a curriculum “circulates, travels, moves, crosses several spaces; it moves, it unfolds” (Paraíso, 2010a, p. 12).

After all, as Paraíso (2010a, p. 16) points out, “what is at stake in a curriculum is the constitution of ways of life, to the point that many people's lives depend on the curriculum”. Thus, the perspective of this work is that which is conventionally called in the curricular field post-critical theories. They have demonstrated, since the mid-1990s, that what a curriculum invests primarily in is life (Corazza, 2001; Silva, 2006; 2007; Paraíso, 2004a; 2004b; 2010a). And, in this study, the lives of young students of Integrated High School in a School of Professional Technological Education.



When considering the pulse of a curriculum and what it puts at stake, we ask: what is desired by the curriculum of the IFMG - Ouro Branco Campus with regard to leisure? Are there possibilities for dialogue with youth cultures? Which existences are succumbed to the curriculum desired by Technological Professional Education?

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This investigative experience aroused some concerns in the face of the situation we are faced with: double day of classes/subjects of the young students (full time), a large number of subjects taken throughout the year (average of 17 subjects), and the age group of young students (15 to 19 years). Tavares (2018) in her research identified how leisure is institutionalized in the IFMG documents. Based on the analysis of the IFMG Statute (Resolution No. 036 of April 26, 2012), the Institutional Development Plan (PDI) 2014 - 2018, Normative Instruction No. 01/2016 and Ordinance No. 0451 of March 24, 2015, all legal provisions of the IFMG in the scope of sport and leisure, it was possible to identify the development of actions, work perspectives and goals to be achieved in the scope of leisure.

Thinking about these legal milestones, we return to Corazza (2006, p. 24) who points to an “artistar in education and curriculum”, to the need to invent other lifestyles for a curriculum, to recompose a curriculum with other elements and characters. And what we seek is based on an invincible desire to “research not to reproduce what they can already see, but to make visible what they cannot see” (Deleuze, 2006, p. 39). Always resuming that a curriculum “informs, teaches, forms, produces, evaluates, suggests, prescribes, categorizes” (Paraíso, 2010a, p. 11).

Therefore, when writing this curriculum, it is necessary to do it with those who compose it, in this case, youths. And considering them as well as considering their cultures and their dilemmas is also to question some aspects related to this group and that, even when they are not neglected by the “adult-centered” curriculum, they end up in conflict with school culture in a more general way. Knowledge, content, language, curricular culture are produced by adults and adults and intended for them. In this perspective, the school ends up not valuing the tastes and experiences of young people. The adult-centric view of youth promotes distortions in the perception of the reality of this period of human development. When considering youth as a sociological category, we will notice that adult-centric views contribute to the construction of stigmas about young people.

Thus, students are daily having to (con) graduate with curriculum, whether physical, disciplinary or symbolic, with which they do not identify. These same students end up subjecting themselves to speeches of autonomy, which is not autonomous; diversity, which still watches over and punishes girls for behavior and dress, and condemns deviant sexual orientations; and the obligation to “pass the ENEM” (National High School Exam which allows students to apply for several universities), either by pressure from parents or by the guarantee of maintaining the institution in the “top” ranking.

But what about these youths? And these young students, how are they?

These young people are (re) inventing themselves, after all, if the speeches exist, even if they are not institutionalized, they open up possibilities for other practices. It is in this same school space that they and they organize themselves, whether through the Student Union, collectives or independent movements, establish their guidelines and make their debut in the school space; it is also in this place that they organize events and establish contact networks; they carry out research and extension projects, or start as supporting actors supported by the teachers; and that they also “skip class”, to do what they want and give a



new meaning to this space called school; this is where they install a router to be able to share the internet with the entire room, even if it is to stick to the test or browse Facebook; and it is also here that they organize raffles, make «kitties» to buy percussion and sports material to use in the intervals with the creation of projects. Finally, it is here, in this space called school, that they reinvent themselves. And it is in reinvention that issues of gender and sexuality take the stage and come into expression. We are interested in reinventing ourselves.

Gender and school: performing possibilities

There is no other way to unlearn if you don't let go and forget all the practices that have taught us and continue to teach how to divide and inherit. It is necessary to mobilize another thought to subvert this logic of the curriculum that focuses so much on teaching and finds little on learning (Paraíso, 2016a). The collectives invite us to start this journey from the detachment ... And from their demands, negotiations and renegotiations, I think that the first step is to deconstruct the genre itself as a category. In this invitation, we understand that we are being invited to "undo the gender" (Butler, 2006) - to find ways out, produce "performance subversions" and escape the curricular practices that regulate, hierarchize and classify bodies and genders in schools.

By undoing gender in the curriculum, we seek open bodies. Open is interwoven with the idea of undoing, deconstructing and dismantling all forms of curricula, all the reasoning that divides and confines, all the truths that imprison differences. «The difference is this difference that will cause profound osmosis» (Gil, 2002, p. 217). For this task, it is necessary to "tirelessly undo the selves and their assumptions; (...) to release the pre-personal singularities that they contain and repress" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1997, p. 134). Unlearning, undoing, messing up.

When revisiting the leisure experiences of collectives crossed by the scenery of a school characterized by the acceptance of diversity, a school called "gayzista", we understand that what is in dispute in this territory are the representations of gender and sexuality. The young people of the collectives express their discomfort, affinities, potentialities based on the identity appropriations that perform in the leisure spaces of the campus. And it is here, when performing, that they outline possibilities for a curriculum to escape from reasoning and ways of seeing the world and to be in the world in a divided and at the same time hierarchical and exclusionary way, and to open bodies to learn, producing escapes to these thoughts products (Paraíso, 2016).

The collective is a dimension that, responding for the co-engineering of what is called individual and social, comes to denounce the inadequacy of that binomial, heir to an epistemological tradition of sociological and psychological studies of modernity: in effect, both the individual and the social they are crossed by that same dimension of the collective, which is defined as impersonal (that is, situated beyond and below the staff); by extension, what is taken as individual or social is the representation of the mixture of flows and lines of more or less territorialized segmentation (Rocha, 2007).

Thus, in order to continue the journey initiated by the proposition of gender deconstruction, it was necessary to understand how the agency of youth collectives, to then operate with the processes of (de) subjectivation, unlearning and, then, "live as close to the unlivable as possible" (Foucault, 1998). This living closer to the unlivable proposed by Foucault, is the



experience. “What is required is maximum intensity and, at the same time, maximum impossibility” (Foucault, 1998, p. 43). And for the collectives, it is the experience with leisure that opened their bodies to learn it, producing escapes from the generated thoughts.

The collective leisure experiences as an event express the transmutations of a cartography that made writing a fluid material, allowing itself to be enveloped by the powerful forces of leisure. Together with collectives, we do not seek what is meant by a curriculum, but what we want to do, what we want and dream of and from the leisure experiences that we can create in a curriculum.

The crossings of representations of gender and sexuality in the context of the campus even permeate the processes of choosing these/these young students with the choice and construction of the institution’s identity, and with what worries them and motivates them to remain in this institution’s space, the that permeates the school curriculum itself, although not in a manner intended by the institution itself.

The school curricula, in addition to teaching about gender, operate, in the most different teachings, with generalized thoughts and reasoning that attribute different capacities to boys and girls, to men and women; charge “appropriate conduct” to their sex and “confine” certain/students to an understanding of themselves as lacking, problematic and outside the rule (Paraíso, 2016a). Although it is not the “teaching machine” dimension of the curriculum that makes it a space for struggle and experimentation, it is through this dimension that it becomes a genderified text par excellence; a text that teaches “stable concepts of sex, gender and sexuality” (Louro, 2001, p. 67) to ensure the production of a specific type of subject, dividing, hierarchizing and “confining”.

But what about the in-between achieved by collectives through leisure experiences?

This in-between is in the performance processes that leisure experiences make possible for these young students. The Latin origin of the performance is the word *formare*, which reaches us as “form, shape, create”, due to its connection with creating, its use in the field of arts is quite broad and significant. And here, as previously mentioned, collectives articulate this capacity for creation to enhance their leisure experiences.

It is the gender performance, as proposed by Butler (2003), that interests us. It is the performance that allows us to produce escapes in the curriculum and learn to create non-gendered curriculum practices. The author refers to gender not as a noun, not as a sense behind being, but as a performatively produced effect. This effect is linked to the idea of meaning as a “movement of signification”, in which identity is replaced by identification, a notion closer to process, movement, a permanent becoming that never occurs completely. It is from this process of identification and continuous differentiation that Butler invites us to think and learn, in the name of recognizing an alterity, an openness in relation to differences. For the author, identity is performatively constituted, even when we think of it in relation to the affirmation of identity categories in politics.

Butler (2003) will think of the genre as performance, a type of performance that can be given in any body, therefore disconnected from the idea that each body would correspond to only one genre. In this perspective, the proposal is to rethink the body no longer as a natural fact, but as a “politically regulated surface”. For the author, gender should not be constructed as a stable identity or a locus of action from which various acts arise; instead, gender is an identity tenuously constituted in time, instituted in an external space through a stylized repetition



of acts. The effect of gender is produced by the stylization of the body and should, therefore, be understood as the common way in which gestures, movements and body styles of various types constitute the illusion of a self permanently marked by gender (Butler, 2003, p. 200).

The reinvention that collectives propose to the school curriculum questions the whole of a system of gendered thinking, and they do so through performance acts, which make us rethink the curriculum based on the plurality, the existence of these others. What we seek to say is that by performing other identities, these collectives make us learn that they are possible in the school space and that they already exist there, and make the school happen. And yet, they are saying, in fact, they are shouting that the power of learning is in recognizing differences. For that, it is necessary to denaturalize the natural saying and understand the standardization processes.

The proposal is to discuss the body not as natural, but as as cultural as gender, in such a way as to problematize the limits of gender and take the link between sex and gender as cultural. With the proposition of gender as a performance, the author seeks to question the metaphysical weight of (gender) identity. In this sense, it also proposes to question the weight of other identities. Thus, the performative acts expressed by the collectives challenge the logic of “or this or that”, and dialogue with what Butler (2003, p. 199) points out

Thus, it is not a question of establishing a new place, but of accepting to remain in the swing and not succumbing to this “methodological convenience” that again stabilizes, even if elsewhere, what could be oscillating in the proposition “neither female/nor male”. New identities, however diverse and multiple they may be, are fixations that eliminate the contingent character of gender performance as thought out.

When thinking of gender as performative, Butler indicates that there is no essence or identity in body signs, and proposes to think about three contingent dimensions of corporeality: anatomical sex, that given by biology; gender identity, as a social construction; and gender performance, being the element of the performative, that which disturbs the binary associations sex/gender, sex/performance, gender/performance, and points to the imitative character of all gender (Rodrigues, 2012).

The contingent dimension of the genre as a performance suggests the need for repetition which, while reenacting a set of meanings already socially established, is also, each time, a new performance experience or what the author calls “Stylized repetition of acts” (Butler, 2003, p. 200).

We articulate the author’s thinking with the expressions of the collectives, with the questioning of the norms that they propose. It is from the identity appropriations performed in the leisure experiences that the collectives end up operating with a deconstruction not for a liberation from these norms, but for a form of subversion that is elaborated in the very act of meeting these norms. Performatized identity appropriations indicate that identities do not precede the exercise of the norm, but it is this exercise that ends up creating identities. The repetition of norms is always accompanied by the possibility of subverting them (Le Blanc, 2011).

Thus, from the collective agency studied, we question the paradox of the need to fix the subjects in categories from which they intended to free them, fixing the identity category «woman», the gay, lesbian, bisexual, pansexual, transsexual identity categories, but the fixation from any identity category, including Christian, and consequently, youth and student categories.



Based on this problematization, enhanced by experiences with leisure, we propose to look at the curriculum without the straitjacket of the “unit”, but with other concrete actions, which Butler (2003) calls provisional units, which can arise from the constitution of identities that come to life and dissolve. Like Silva (2017), we believe that leisure activities have the power to enhance school relationships, both in the school context and in its relationship with the community, in the configuration of the school space as a place for the formation of new imaginary and convincing subjects to other possible models of society. Schools are privileged spaces to imagine other possibilities and other more just and humane social models, reflect on them and strive for them to materialize.

Final considerations

In this curriculum, which is performative, subversive, agency, we left the curriculum-performance territory designed by and for Vocational and Technological Education and walked towards another land, another territory, which, like “the border”, can be inhabited by conflicts and clashes, but it is also inhabited by difference, by encounter and, above all, by the possibility of “undoing gender”, deranging its divisions and disallowing the rules that regulate and hierarchize. And by undoing gender, we undo other norms that fix subjects in identity.

Among the cartographic dialogues, we highlight the need to understand the sociability created by young people inside and outside schools, it is essential to apprehend their cultural worlds, both for understanding who these young subjects are as well as for the reflection and elaboration of educational policies, curricula and school organization. Especially in times when the school has been so questioned and has been losing its centrality in the cultural legitimation of the students.

In this perspective, the essential is precisely in these “experiences” that are made, and from them to think/elaborate what fits and we can do. And when looking for the dialogues of the curriculum with the experiences with leisure, the school is expressed as the place of the experience; dialogues are held/traced at/with the school. If the young students have attributed the sense of leisure to re-signifying school free time, even if not expected, we need to understand the power of this re-signification. And it is here that we think about leisure, in the intertwining with the school universe, provoking and articulating relations with the educational processes and youth cultures.

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CURRICULUM AND GENDER: CONSTRUCTION OF YOUTH MASCULINITIES IN THE SCHOOL CONTEXT¹

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ABSTRACT

By striving to be, by law, the instrument by which the subjects can have access to any type of discourse, education, and in this case, the school, prints marks of what it allows and what it prevents, marking its lines/limits by distances, oppositions and social struggles. Thus, the entire educational system is a political way of maintaining or modifying the appropriation of the speeches, with the knowledge and powers that they contain. It is also reinforced that youth, as a phase and condition, is characterized by intense anatomical, physiological, psychological and social transformations. Young people build their identity, discovering and experiencing what it is to be and feel young, in the midst of social, geographical, cultural demands and several new experiences in relation to gender and sexuality. In this sense, talking about masculinities permeates urgent issues that our society needs to address, such as, for example, the way in which the social construction of masculinities has conditioned the school path of young people. The school institution is structured on hierarchical bases of power, a place where young people relate daily, where identities, notably gender, are built, reinforced and sedimented. In this sense, this work presents an excerpt from the research carried out in a school of professional and technological education that proposes to analyze the construction about masculinities in the discourse of young students of Integrated High School, identifying the way they interpret, contest and/or negotiate the values of hegemonic masculinity. Thus, we seek to discuss the construction of masculinities and their relationship with the school context in the speeches present in the first narratives of young students. These narratives, by ordering and assigning meanings to events, allow narrators to assign meanings to their experiences, constituting themselves as a privileged discursive form for understanding the subjects' interpretations about themselves and about the construction of their masculinities, in a possible self-invention. Approaching the most critical formulations of Feminist Studies and Cultural Studies; we understand the subjects as having plural, multiple identities; identities that change, that are not fixed or permanent, that can even be contradictory. Therefore, we seek support in post-critical theories in the area of Education, specifically in the discussion of the curriculum, which has 'power' as the central issue. Thus, destabilizing the notion of curriculum as knowledge selected from a broader culture to be taught to all, and considering curriculum policy as a process of invention of the curriculum itself, a process of invention of the subject. It is emphasized that the constructions about masculinities are related to the life experiences of young people, and dialogue and active participation by educators is essential. With regard to gender relations, the school faces an enormous challenge. The construction of masculinities in youth encompasses a series of symbolic spaces that mediate man's identity formation under culturally and socially defined molds, attributions and functions. Considering this aspect and school

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context, the development of studies directed to the way understandings related to masculinities are established and valued and how they can impact help in the design of educational policies and in the way of organizing space and daily life in school. We understand the importance of the school in recovering these “roles”, “norms”, “codes of meanings”, considering the school context as the locus in which these bodies will be configured.

Keywords:

Gender; Masculinities; Curriculum; School; Identity Appropriations.

Introduction

Young people, in their diversity, are increasingly crossing their walls, bringing their experiences and new challenges. Among them, a central issue becomes the transformations that have been occurring in the ways these young people constituted themselves as students. Such a statement may be surprising, since there is a tendency towards the naturalization of the category “student”, as if it were a given, universal reality, immediately identified with a condition of minority, whether of the child or the young person, marked by an asymmetrical relationship with the adult world (Dayrell, 2007).

It is also reinforced that youth, as a phase, is characterized by intense anatomical, physiological, psychological and social transformations, adolescents build their identity, discovering and experiencing what it is to be and feel adolescent, in addition to encountering several new experiences in relation to sexuality. This process, socially and culturally contextualized, is influenced by the establishment of social relations, based on gender relations that have been built since childhood (Foucault, 2009; Altmann, Mariano & Uchoga, 2012).

Thus, the word “gender”, since the 1980s, has been recurrent in a good number of researches, essays, reviews, texts produced by several authors linked to the area of physical education, sports and leisure. The term is crossed by several looks, which gives the field studies that point to different perspectives (Goellner, 2004). One of its aspects is the statement that it is not only (biological) sex that establishes differences between men and women, but also social, historical, and cultural aspects. Studies guided by this perspective denaturalize what is commonly considered “natural” and, therefore, they become controversial, annoy, make us think, and in this way, invoke epistemological changes.

When it comes to the gender/sexuality relationship, we cannot ignore the countless concerns that permeate reflections about the experience of these sexualities, especially when the focus is on homosexuality. This element, still in a very subtle way, has been representing the focus of study by academics from different areas, aware of the need to expand the concepts, values and attitudes that permeate it.

In this context, we emphasize the importance of the role of the school in the educational process, because in the face of this situation of exclusion, the school ends up collaborating in some way with this sad reality, not acting, in most cases, as an intermediary to transform it. The school, in fact, should be an environment of construction and reflection and, above all, an environment of collectivization of these reflections, where the passive acceptance of exclusion values such as gender and sexuality needs to be overcome (Campos *et al.*, 2008).

Masschelein e Simons (2015) emphasize that although the school is not a separate element from society, nor is it immune to the social inequalities produced by it, the school has



developed throughout its history a series of specific practices that, in a way, contribute to the democratization of knowledge. Demo (1999) reinforces this perspective by emphasizing that the subjects, inserted in a certain socio-cultural time and space, reconstruct, in a participatory way, the knowledge about something that already exists, through sharing, reading, research, debate and elaboration. Thus, the school space is configured, in fact, as a privileged space for the introduction, organization and deepening of knowledge accumulated in life situations.

However, Arroyo (2007) emphasizes that the Brazilian basic school is experiencing an identity crisis, because, throughout its history, it has assumed a propaedeutic character; always working to meet a specific objective, such as, for example, eradicating illiteracy, preparing citizens for the Republic, preparing for employment, etc. Despite this, the author considers that the main function of the school is to guarantee the training of young people, expanding their cultural universes; its reflective capacity; their ethical, aesthetic and identity knowledge. The basic school is a human right to knowledge.

In this context, considering such unequal patterns of power, work, income, and knowledge, how are masculinities and femininities constructed in the school environment? What curricula recognize this diversity?

In this sense, this work presents an excerpt from the research carried out in a school of professional and technological education that proposes to analyze the construction about masculinities in the discourse of young students of Integrated High School, identifying the way they interpret, contest and/or negotiate the values of hegemonic masculinity. Thus, we seek to discuss the construction of masculinities and their relationship with the school context in the speeches present in the first narratives of young students. These narratives, by ordering and assigning meanings to events, allow narrators to assign meanings to their experiences, constituting themselves as a privileged discursive form for understanding the subjects' interpretations about themselves and about the construction of their masculinities, in a possible self-invention.

A look at the construction of masculinities at school

Claims, criticisms, debates and problematizations promoted and conquered by social movements that deal with issues of genders, races/ethnicity and sexualities have been dealt, during the last decades in Brazil and in the world, mainly coming from feminist groups, gay movements, lesbians and, more recently, through queer policies and theories, which started to contemplate people who did not feel inserted and welcomed by these groups and movements. Boris (2011), points out that this context promoted the manifestation of concerns regarding the norms given until then, such as, for example, patriarchy, mandatory heteronormativity and so many other forms of control and power that de-potentialize and exclude a certain portion of the population (women, gays, lesbians, transvestites, transsexuals, among others).

However, such actions questioned with greater incidence the social condition of women, the issues of sexual and race identities, and the dominant paradigm of white and heterosexual men remained at a higher level, in a protective and comprehensive neutrality where no problems were recognized.



Approaching the most critical formulations of Feminist Studies and Cultural Studies; we understand the subjects as having plural, multiple identities; identities that change, that are not fixed or permanent, that can even be contradictory. As a consequence of this relationship, we observed that sexual identities are constituted through the ways in which individuals experience their sexuality, with partners of the same sex, of the opposite sex, of both sexes or without partners; in the same way, the subjects also identify themselves socially and historically, as male and female and thus build their gender identities (Louro, 2001). Evidently, these identities are interrelated, but they are not the same and are part of a dynamic of historical construction.

The idea of masculinity rests on the necessary repression of feminine aspects - the subject's bisexual potential - and introduces conflict in the opposition of masculine and feminine (Scott, 1990). If, on the one hand, the feminine is the greatest threat to the heterosexuality of men; on the other hand, masculinity is forbidden to women, because women in the place of men is the "world upside down", the corrupted order, the outraged nature (Filho, 2005). We can analyze in this way that homosexual men have their sex downgraded, being placed below other men; and lesbian women, in turn, usurp a power that does not belong to them, and which they cannot even use, since they are devoid of the consummation of masculinity (Filho, 2005).

This binary relationship of gender and world identifies the masculine and the feminine as opposing terms, which, although complementary, can coexist with each other, but never in each other. Sexual and affective practices and behaviors that do not obey the dual distinction are taken as deviation and perversion, and this is socially understood in a negative way, generating discrimination and prejudice. In this way, we understand that subjectivities were produced and these permeated everyday life and what we currently understand by concepts and experiences such as: feelings, desires, passions, conjugal lives, pleasures, sexes, bodies, genders, sexual orientations, social role constructions, identities, stigmas, prejudices, differentiations (questions about vulnerabilities to gender violence).

Such productions permeate several social instances, including the school context, and at this point, Louro (2001) points out that the school space produces female and male subjects, and since its creation it is a space designed to impress distinction, an example of which is the separation between genders. The author emphasizes how certain subjects at school become a context for the elaboration of gender identities, building masculinities and femininities from participation in generalized activities. We highlight here the importance of the school in recovering these "roles", "rules", "codes of meanings", considering the school context the locus in which these bodies will be configured.

Therefore, gender and sexuality issues also emerge in training, looking for pedagogical alternatives for the school that would make possible changes in the power relations between the sexes in the practice of sports, physical activities and other content during classes, deconstructing binarism about male and female bodies, their possibilities of action and their potential (Souza & Altmann, 1999; Altmann, 2002).

With regard specifically to masculinities, there is a need for a new look. Connell (1995, 2001) made an important contribution to the knowledge of masculinities in the sociological field, defending the existence of different forms of being a man that are historically, socially and culturally constructed, that is, masculinity is the way that each society interprets and



uses male (and also female) bodies. The author also introduces the concept of hegemonic masculinity, defined as the reference masculinity that has, over time, maintained male domination, occupying a dominant position in a certain time and place.

Willis (1991), incorporating into Cultural Studies, brings another look at masculinities and the way the school contributes to the reproduction of social inequalities. In his study of working-class boys, the author examines how these boys develop resistance strategies towards school, as a way of affirming their class identity as male members.

Specifically, in relation to men, according to Gomes (2008, p. 70), masculinity can be understood

[...] As a symbolic space that serves to structure the identity of being a man, modeling attitudes, behaviors, and emotions to be adopted. [...] Masculinity - situated within the scope of gender - represents a set of attributes, values, functions, and behaviors that a man is expected to have in each culture.

Thus, the denaturalization of sexualities and genders is important for the production of subjectivities and the emancipation of individualities that are dominated. These problematizations started with Rubin's (1975) critique of the sex/gender system, based on the dichotomy between nature (sex) and culture (gender), however, the first notion is only complemented by the second. Thus, genders are the clothes that are placed on the hanger (sex), that is, they are applications of meanings that each society imposes on biological sexes. With this, the sex/gender system reflects the formation of women (or more specifically the stereotypes of what it is to be a woman - delicate, educated, passive, home caregiver, among other attributes); and men (manly, fearless, active, independent and provider, among other predicates).

Such productions of subjectivities are controlled and established through regimes of binary and universal truths and end up imprisoning bodies in mere identities. In this crossing, we seek support in Cultural Studies and Post-Critical Curriculum Theories, corroborating the understanding of the school curriculum as a teaching machine "that articulates and disputes with other teaching machines in the production of meanings and truths, in the senses to be fixed and taught, in the cultural dimensions to be disseminated and preserved and in the training of people" (Paraíso, 2010, p. 37).

In this perspective, the curriculum is a discourse produced by relations of knowledge-power, which has productive effects on what you say. The student narratives and practices, procedures, techniques, and exercises in the curriculum intersect, cross each other. This crossing, with the assemblies it provides, the disputes it establishes as well as the meanings it engenders, which directly interests this research.

And what do the narratives tell us?

"Every day seemed similar. (...) They demanded a body pattern, behaviors, and tastes from me. (...) I was different and I fought not to be, I fought to be what I was not, because it was wrong to be me or, at least, that was what violence told me" (Narrative 01).



It is important to consider that masculinity cannot be understood from a single perspective, as the concepts related to it are related to different social, economic, generational and cultural dimensions historically contextualized, which justifies the use of the term “masculinities” for encompass this plurality (Separavich & Canesqui, 2013).

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However, Connel e Messerchmidt (2013) point out that there are models of masculinity that acquire greater social legitimacy, being characterized as hegemonic and guiding values, behaviors, and attitudes. Thus, in our culture, in general, the constructions about being a man are sustained by the antagonism to being a woman, and in discourses that delimit the male universe to characteristics such as virility, heterosexuality, strength, source of material support and family morality and unlimited sexuality experience. The constructed narratives bring these reflexes.

“It was the same violence that plagued me and the same concerns arising from them and those that manifested themselves against others in the main environments in which I lived and lived: the **school** and my home (emphasis added). But who am I?”, I asked myself. It was the boy who did not like soccer, who learned to hate his own skinny body, who talked to groups of boys like me and, occasionally, others of a female majority and ... who liked men and women colleagues ”(Narrative 1).

Silva (2016) points out that the school is still considered by young people as an important space for their training, protection, and socialization. But that, on the other hand, the school is also seen as a place of dissatisfaction and exclusion. According to the author, one of the factors that causes this scenario is the difficulty of young people in reconciling and producing meanings between the cultural knowledge produced in other spaces of daily life and the knowledge of universal culture, transmitted by the school.

“Affected mainly in the school environment, the violence that I suffered and that many suffered - and we continue to suffer today - are far from being restricted to it. Others like me, most of them, inserted in this structure, will remain in their same positions. We will only be able to get rid of these so many chains, heavy and painful, by breaking with the material conditions that structure them and, later, overcoming the superstructure that originated from it, thus building a society free of hegemonic and dominant masculinities”(Narrative 1).

“The school, my first place of social formation, teaches and reinforces the idea of patriarchal masculinity, where boys are always seen as intelligent, adventurous, sporting and since we are little we are already encouraged as future sexual predators. This generates us, children and young people who do not fit the straight man, we feel segregated.” (Narrative 2).

When we think about the construction of masculinities in the school context, another obstacle is the limit to participation in the school culture, preventing their opinions and actions from being accepted and respected at school. It is necessary that the school starts to consider the young person in a positive perspective, valuing their potential in the necessary interventions, in a more democratic model of school.

“At school, a place where sex and gender education should be learned, little is explained and is only in the implication. It does not teach about who is outside the standard. Generified



sports, division between male and female friendships, (...), all this contributes to patriarchal masculinity” (Narrative 2).

“Often - and even today - I went back to the past to remember and rethink these relationships. In the first grade of school, the barriers between female and male groups were well defined. These were divided between those who were close to norms, or fully representing them, and others, which varied. The first, hegemonic, subjugated the second through physical and / or verbal and, consequently, psychological violence, with hegemonic masculinity being an objective that must be achieved by all of them, because it confers domination, which in turn confers security”(Narrative 1).

“In the distance, in the subjugated groups, I observed the dominant and envied those who belonged to him. Now and then - in some periods, routinely - I found myself reproducing their behaviors, especially those related to the violence they committed, but against others considered “abnormal” and against “aberrations” like me. It destroyed me, but if I did not call my colleague, relative or friend “fag”, I would be. If I did not exclude them, I would be excluded. It was a refuge, an eternal search for the interruption of suffering. Apparently, it is a path without good alternatives, especially for children, who, when they were so young, already encountered these oppressive currents with which they were forced to deal” (Narrative 1).

The school curriculum, in contemporary times, is crossed by many other speeches that circulate in various cultural artifacts. We emphasize that diverse cultural spaces and artifacts are involved both in the ways people think and act about themselves and the world around them, as well as in the choices they make and the ways in which they organize their lives. To this end, pedagogies are also practiced by newspapers, TV programs, advertising pieces, films, magazines, websites, and countless other artifacts that cross contemporary life. Giroux & McLaren (1995, p. 144) emphasize that “there is pedagogy in any place where knowledge is produced, in any place where there is the possibility of translating experience and building truths”, and this is no different for actions carried out inside or outside the school, organized institutionally, by teachers, by students, or not.

If, on the one hand, there is a need to study other cultural artifacts in the educational field, on the other, Santos (2007) argues that the curriculum field, under the influence of Cultural Studies, has discussed little about school curriculum issues in the latter years. In the words of the author, the school has become “a subject without great academic appeal, when the experiences outside it seem more vibrant, which has been attracting the interest of a considerable number of intellectuals in their own education” (Santos, 2007, p. 294). However, it is worth highlighting the importance of a new look at the school, re-signifying its space, (de) constructing practices and (re) elaborating educational concepts, mainly regarding technological professional education.

Considerations

The construction of masculinities in youth encompasses a series of symbolic spaces that mediate man’s identity formation under culturally and socially defined molds, attributions,



and functions. Considering this aspect and school context, the development of studies directed to the way understandings related to masculinities are established and valued and how they can impact help in the design of educational policies and in the way of organizing space and daily life in school. This is the contribution expected by this project.

318 | We emphasize that the constructions about masculinities are related to the life experiences of young people, and the dialogue and active participation of educators is essential. Regarding gender relations, the school faces an enormous challenge. The construction of masculinities in youth encompasses a series of symbolic spaces that mediate man's identity formation under culturally and socially defined molds, attributions, and functions. Considering this aspect and school context, the development of studies directed to the way understandings related to masculinities are established and valued and how they can impact help in the design of educational policies and in the way of organizing space and daily life in school. We understand the importance of the school in recovering these "roles", "rules", "codes of meanings", considering the school context as the locus in which these bodies will be configured.

We emphasize here the importance of community-school integration in the construction of a plural environment, seeking to lead the community to reflect on the silenced masculinities in the school environment, in contrast to the hegemonic masculinity and its impacts on youth subjectivities. In this sense, the actions of this investigation seek to build education as a practice of freedom and not as an instrument that reinforces domination, giving voice to subjects who have been treated for a long time as passive, allowing their expression and liberation through art and research.

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POWER DISCOURSES IN TRAVEL BLOGS BY FEMALE AUTHORS¹

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ABSTRACT

Travel blogs are a multifaceted tool that intersect and influence different subject dimensions - whether personal, professional, or even economic. This article aims to explore and understand the power discourses of women in travel blogs that travelled to Madeira, Portugal. When placed and questioned in the light of Cultural Studies, the blogs show a clear and obvious theoretical link with the categories of gender and exoticism. This brief study proposes an exploration and analysis of posts, dated 2007 to 2020, about 66 women's trips to Madeira, in 65 blogs. Through the qualitative analysis of these discourses, it was possible to identify discourses of power, naturalization phenomena and processes of multiple colonization, based on different power hierarchies, regarding the self and heterorepresentations (Other-woman↔Other-Madeira) present in these discourses by women that travel.

KEYWORDS:

Travel; Blogs; Gender; Madeira; Exoticism; Intersectionality

Travel Blogs: from traditional journal writing to new information technologies

At the end of the 20th century and at the dawn of the 21st century, with the creation and expansion of various blogging platforms, the need arises to look at these technological means as objects from which it is possible to extract data, pose questions and produce science. With most of the existing studies on the blogosphere focusing on sociolinguistic aspects, it is our goal to study this communication platform as a technological extension that assembles and collects countless discourses. Just as with traditional travel diaries, these discourses in the technological universe reflect and reinforce positions which reveal power relations and determine the sedimentation and naturalization of hegemonic conceptions regarding gender and the exoticification of the Other. This brief study intends to go beyond sociolinguistic study – which, as far as blogs are concerned, encourages the study of descriptive, statistical elements or even algorithms developed by linguistic computational systems (such as, for example, Gender Genie). In these cases, certain semantic fields are attributed to the female and male genders, without politically questioning socially constructed gender

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representations or even reinforcing such stereotyped positions of strength and power in the subjects' daily lives.

An approach based on discourses of power in blogs by female authors benefits from an analysis rooted in the concept of intersectionality. There is a set of variables and dimensions traversing discourses and their authors which, as a whole, reflect how they self-represent and exotify the Other. These travellers are not just women, but amass a set of information (travel modalities - solo, couple, family/friends - age, education, motherhood, degree of exoticism and blog sponsorship) that will help determine not only the degree of oppression of which they are victims, but also the degree of exotification revealed by their discourses about the Other.

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Intersectionality: Undoing the Oppression Matrioska

Intersectionality as a theoretical paradigm was first coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989. It arose from a legal context, within a framework of analysis for issues involving exclusion and, therefore, racial discrimination in antidiscrimination laws in the USA. Despite its origins, intersectional study is transversally suited to the study of various forms of violence that affect subjects at large, thus challenging "the conceptual limitations of isolated analysis" (Crenshaw, 2019, p.55) which tend to cover up and generalize several degrees of oppression.

According to Crenshaw and Brah, "any analysis that does not take intersectionality into account will be insufficient to address the particular way in which [Black] women are subordinate" (Crenshaw, 2019, p.55), therefore "the transversal formations of gender, class, race, ethnicity, sexuality and so on, cannot be understood without reference to each other" (Brah, 2019, p.42). Systems of domination, exploitation and oppression that structure and strengthen the typically neoliberal, patriarchal, and phallogocentric capitalist system are (re)produced at the intersection and articulation of various categories. In our analysis, we came across results pointing to the relevance of the intersectionality paradigm, both in understanding and reflecting on the self-representations of these women travellers, and on the heterorepresentations they produce about the island of Madeira, which revolve around categories like gender and exoticism.

From the Other to the Other

Thinking about gender relations and the exotification of the Other necessarily implies thinking about power relations. In the 21st century, we are still faced with a robust and inflexible binary gender representation and performance (Butler, 2004), supported by static, conservative and hegemonic concepts about femininity and masculinity.

As far as travel blogs are concerned, gender roles and social norms continue to be based on a hegemonic binary structure (female and male) and to be culturally naturalized and socially constructed - configuring, as will be hereafter detailed, a few distinctions and similarities about the expectations that fall into the gender category. Power dynamics add to the complexity of self-representations by these women. In addition to being travellers, they carry the burden of a female social role that is expected by society, but, above all and all too frequently, is passively and successively promoted and legitimated by these women themselves.



Thus, women are framed, with their consent (Bourdieu, 1999; hooks, 2018), in a social and identity role that crystallizes them in power frameworks which are previously determined and regulatory of their sexuality (Butler, 1990, 1993, 2004) and body. However, addressing the gender category also allows us to recognize representations that act as mechanisms of counter-hegemony and resistance to the impositions of a typically patriarchal and phallogocentric structure, even if represented in a single travel modality.

The consequences of the self-representations of these women will produce fundamental aspects for our analysis in relation to gender and the exoticization of the Other-place. Furthermore, these self-representations will promote a reflection regarding the position of the women at the core of the dynamics or 'policies of domination' of a system that is patriarchal, phallogocentric and capitalist, as an agent that receives and emits naturalising and exotifying power discourses (hooks, 2018) about oneself and the Other. For Stuart Hall, travel literature was one of the first vehicles for the spread of power discourses that contributed to the creation of a fixed and exotic identity of the Other, reinforcing the existence of poles of power between the East and the West (Hall, 1996 ; Said, 1990).

We find the same device of symbolic power in travel blogs when they represent an exotified form of Madeira and/or its inhabitants. Thinking about the Other requires a reflection that, from the travel diaries, emerges directly from the mentalities and behaviours permeating authorial identity - often, if not always, a product of the discourses and relations of power to which the authors are exposed.

In the case of island territories such as Madeira, imagery representation is commonly articulated with the idea of isolation and authenticity (MacCannell, 1976; Baldacchino, 2006). The conception of "island" traditionally revolves around the creation of a locus imbued with a certain mysticism and imaginary populated by ideas of being remote, virgin, and pure, and often related to "exoticism or even [a] paradisiacal ideal" (Silva, 2013). With the development and growth of organized travel and mass tourism in the mid-twentieth century and the subsequent commercialization of tourism, island regions - often economically dependent on tourism - are associated with and sold by the market as exotic places to escape to and explore.

According to Hall (1992, 1997), Spivak (2010) and Fanon (1967), an exotic vision of the Other always composes a reducing, polarized, essentialist, stereotyped and precarious perspective and reveals a positioning of power and superiority towards the Other that is demeaning and simplifying of their existence and culture. Exotifying conceptions emerge from circulating power; they mark, fixate, classify and produce the Other through forms of symbolic violence that keep them in a hierarchical position of subordination (Hall, 1996; Foucault, 1998, 2006). Saidian discussion is in close correlation with the Foucaultian theory of power/knowledge –in this particular case, that is to say that discourse produces practices of representation of supposed knowledge about the Other and restricts them to a demeaning representation within polarized power operations (Said, 1990; Hall, 1996; Foucault, 2006). In fact, according to Said's (1990) and Hall's (1996) perspectives, the power relations from which oppression and exotification emerge are built around binary poles of oppositions such as East/West, female/male and colonizer/colonized, among others. Neocolonialist, capitalist and patriarchal oppressions fall upon these Others (woman & Madeira) that we have analyzed.



Methodology

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In order to carry out this exploratory empirical analysis, we resorted to qualitative analysis (Bardin, 2007; Guerra, 2010) of blog posts about travels by Portuguese and foreign women to the island of Madeira as well as of each author's biographical sections. The blog selection was conducted through a Google search of relevant keywords in two languages (Portuguese and English). This was necessary to comprehensively incorporate the maximum possible results per page and guarantee a diversity of foreign writers, with blogs written in English, given the possibility of significant number of blogs by Portuguese authors. The selected keywords were: "blogue viagem + Ilha da Madeira"; "diário de viagem + Ilha da Madeira"; "viagem + Ilha da Madeira"; "travel blog + Madeira Island"; "travel diary + Madeira Island".

Blogs were selected from a maximum of 13 pages of search results on all selected keywords, which allowed us to collect data from 65 travel or travel-including blogs (authored by 66 women). The collected data allowed us to reach theoretical and empirical saturation (Schnapper, 2000; Guerra, 2010), both in each author's self-representation profile and in the countless posts describing the trip to Madeira Island and that allow us, in articulation, to explore the categories of gender and exoticism and the associated discourses. The 65 blogs were divided into 3 travel modalities (Table 1).

Even though Madeira Island was exotified in every blog under analysis, we were able to discern greater or lesser degrees of exotification. In this study, for the "Exotization" (E) variable, a higher degree of exotization should be understood as blogs indicating: the existence of more tourist circuits, greater consumerism, the presence of exotic designations and/or descriptions of the island and/or an exotifying representation of its population. A lesser degree of exotification is hereby understood by: the presence of fewer tourist circuits, less consumerism, absence of exotic designations and/or descriptions of the island and/or an exotifying representation of its population. Regarding the "Sponsorship" (S) variable, a higher degree of sponsorship is conceived as blogs that reveal the presence of: offers or discounts on the trip and/or stay on the island of Madeira; partnerships or affiliation links with hotels, restaurants or other company platforms. Lesser degree of sponsorship should thus be understood as blogs not mentioning: offers or discounts on the trip and/or stay on the island of Madeira; partnerships or affiliation links with hotels, restaurants or other company platforms. Content analysis was subsequently conducted on posts related to the trips made to Madeira, which was essentially a cross-analysis between the variables "Exotization" (E) and "Sponsorship" (S).

Gender & Exoticism: from private/public to mercantilist invasion

Once the collected data were arranged by travel modality and nationality, we were able to verify a predominance of non-Portuguese blogs (38) compared to those by Portuguese authors (28). This configuration confirms that detachment or a homogenizing view of the destination promotes writing in travel blogs; it is also the reason why there are no posts about travels to the interior of Madeira Island written by people from Madeira. It should also be noted that most of the existing blogs pertain to the couple travel modality (26), whereas the family and/or friends modality comprised the fewest blogs (17).



Table 1. Travel modalities and nationality

Nationality	Travel modality			
	Solo	Couple	Family/Friends	Total
Portuguese	12	8	8	28
Non Portuguese	11	18	9	38
Total	23	26	17	66

By organizing our variables (Table 2) and observing the age average () for each travel modality, we found that solo trips are made by younger women (28-30 years old). This is also the category with the highest number of educated women. The data also shows that women in the Couple and with Family and/or Friends travel modalities have a more conservative public discourse and are older when compared to solo travellers, as pointed out by Valaja (2018). Results are in line with existing literature, which indicates that young people are more likely to start solo trips than older people, since solo travellers have traits that define them as individualistic and active, and consider the trip as a fundamental part of their lives (Wu et al., 2011; Valaja, 2018).

Regarding the “Motherhood” (M) variable, most travellers do not have children, so this dimension, as expected, is only referenced in the Couple and Family and/or Friends travel modalities. In the Solo modality, data related to “Motherhood” reveal a tendency to deviate from a cisheteronormative, conservative and patriarchal agenda. Data revealed by the variable become more interesting and pertinent when crossed with the Education and Age variables, indicating a lesser interest in motherhood by young, educated women who travel solo.

The data that emerge from the “Exotization” and “Sponsorship” variables is significant and relevant. We observed a deep articulation between these two variables, insofar as they express a relationship of dependence; that is, blogs and posts with a higher degree of sponsorship also reveal a greater degree of exotification towards Madeira Island and/or its inhabitants. Interestingly, these variables are more expressive in blogs of non-Portuguese authorship (N-PT). It is evident from these data that the greater the distance from the destination, the greater the exposure of the traveller to the political-ideological and mercantilist tourism strategies, thus favouring the existence of exotifying discourses about the Other, which is consistent with the existing literature (Silveira, 2019; Silva, 2013).

Table 2. Articulation of variables with travel modalities

Travel modality	Solo		Couple		Family/Friends	
	PT	N-PT	PT	N-PT	PT	N-PT
(I) Age	28	30	38	36	32	37
(F) Education	+	+	-	-	-	-
(M) Motherhood	-	-	-	-	+	+
(E) Exotization	-	+	-	+	-	+
(P) Sponsorship	-	+	-	+	-	+

From a perspective of representations framed in gender issues, by obtaining data from the biographical sections of each blog, the focus is on how travellers self-represent and cha-



racterize themselves in the public domain. We created three narrative dimensions, each corresponding to a travel modality. In the narrative “Independence and Adventure”, for the Solo modality (Table 3), we observed that women self-identify or self-represent as “enthusiasts”, “nervous”, “adventurers”, “dreamers”, “free”, “independent”, “extroverted”, “explorers”, “avid” and “defiant”. These women find motivational factors in their solo travel, such as freedom, empowering performance, relaxation, the possibility of independence, personal growth, self-esteem, a challenging step from their comfort zone (historical *locus* to which woman was relegated), enriching performance and intensity.

Solo travellers reveal, through these characteristics, a gender performance that differs from the naturalized and conservative representation of women (Beauvoir, 1967; Irigaray, 1976). A woman traveling solo is frequently also a source of perplexity and questionings. Our data is consistent with previous studies indicating that women who travel solo are usually questioned about this solo performance, and the association of female travel with fear, risk and beauty as a factor that legitimizes sexual attacks is evident (Silva, 2017). The constant perplexity about the mobility of women’s bodies is fruit of the social representation of femininity which, in turn, is based on the stereotypical construction of a fragility and vulnerability reserved for the female universe, thus relegating women, in the game of distribution of power and domination, to an inferiorizing position (Beauvoir, 1967).

Indeed, travelers value independence, the intensity of solo travel, the feeling of power and control and the new and distinct possibilities of choices and ways of life that reject a conservative and traditional matrix, as indicated in studies by Heimtun & Abelsen (2014).

Table 3. Narrative and Self-identification in Solo Travel Modality

Travel Modality	Solo
Narrative	Independence & Adventure
Self-identification	Nervous Enthusiast Adventurer Dreamer Independent Extroverted Avid Explorer Defiant
Example	<p>(...) this blog was born from the desire to live an unusual life, full of freedom, independence, creativity, adventurous and exciting (Martina, DAW)</p> <p>Most people think solo traveling is lonely and scary and that people who travel solo are sad and lonely (...) traveling means freedom, adventure, intensity, without distractions (...) to travel solo is to be strong and independent (...) I feel pressure when I’m asked “how is it that a beautiful, blond, blue-eyed girl is alone?”; “How can you travel solo without a boyfriend?”; «Why are you not accompanied?» And I answer: “As if it were mandatory in life to have a partner”. People who travel solo are not lonely people, they are just structured people capable of advancing independent projects and adventures (Joëlle, WW)</p>

Contrary to what happens in the solo travel modality, in the Couple and Family and/or Friends modalities we find consistent self-representations, which legitimize and reinforce the normative standard of woman. In the Couple travel modality (Table 4), which narrative is “Passion and Adventure”, a few of the travellers self-identify as “passionate”, “introverted” and “super-organized”, in addition to a couple of references to the importance of “family”. Although we did find self-representations transversal to all modalities, such as the “Exploradora” profile (Carvalho, 2019), the truth is that the most conservative and cisheteronormative views prevail in these modalities.



Table 4. Narrative and Self-identification in Couple Travel Modality

Travel Modality	Couple
Narrative	Passion & Adventure
Self-identification	In love Family Intrepid Explorer Introverted Super-organized Dreamy Adventurer Not adventurous
Example	
During trips, it is up to [Marina] to prepare: from researching destinations to planning routes, to the tetrism of packing (...) it is up to [João] to manage the budget and take (and in most cases, reorganize) the planned routes. After all, his sense of direction serves us both. Marina & João, LRATB	
He is the official driver, not least because he's the only one who drives (...) he is the drone pilot (...) and he helps in all the logistical studies needed to organize the itinerary, especially when there is a road trip involved, and he's the one who takes Lily's photos (...) [She is] Not a backpacker, not adventurous, very fussy (Lily & Júlio, APV)	
(...) I am an introvert (...) Writing is a way to share my experiences around the world in more detail (Sofia & Paulo, VAS)	

Data seems to indicate strong gendering of the trip, insofar as it shows the existence of power performances that reinforce social roles and functions and constitute representations that legitimize a social function or binary social role that conserves and crystallizes, in each element of the couple, the patriarchal and conservative model of performing the feminine/masculine. There are women travellers, in this modality, who are in charge of tasks, within the travel preparation process, traditionally delegated to the traditional female universe: from theoretical planning of the trip, blog writing (a task performed single-handedly by all, without exception, thanks to the democratization of writing and travel) to clothes management and packing. In essence, women are relegated to a particular *locus* of domination that appears in the private sphere. Bourdieu describes it as “places of elaboration and imposition of domination principles that are exercised within the most private universe” (1999, p. 4).

Men are responsible for budget management, execution, image production, operating and accessing technological functions – a predominantly male field, and even the reorganization of routes previously designed by women, because, according to one of the travellers, “after all, his sense of direction serves us both”(Marina & João, LRATB). “Man is Subject, the Absolute; She is the Other” (Beauvoir, 1967, p. 10) in the public ↔ private spheres. We believe the assignment of technical and technological tasks gives men the power of decision and management of the trip, endowing and empowering them with a symbolic and non-symbolic force from which women do not benefit: the praxis of power.

In the Family and/or Friends modality (Table 5), and within the “Family & Home” narrative, data indicates that women tend to base their self-identification on family (with and without children) and friends, but essentially on traditional social roles; that is, on the articulation of their existence with the function of motherhood within a socially pre-determined heteronormative system. It should be noted that personal fulfilment is linked to motherhood and heterosexual marriage as socially favourable performances. In the wake of Irigaray (1993) and Foucault (1998, 2006, 2009), sexuality begins to define the female subject within a network of coercive norms and power relations that impose, under a dynamics of disciplinary biopower and docilization of bodies and minds, a certain social order and female heterosexualist political performance (Butler, 1990).



Table 5. Narrative and Self-identification in Family and/or Friends Travel Modality

Travel Modality	Family and/or Friends
Narrative	Family & Home
Self-identification	Mother Wife Family Professional Fighter Accomplished Active Leader Sedentary Dreamer Curious Explorer
Example	
	Mariana, 32 years old, Mother of two sets of twins (...) fighter, who reinvents herself with the tricks of life (...) I try to make my family happy! (Mariana, AP)
	Hello, my name is Corina, mother of twins, wife (Corina, PA)
	I am Troy's wife and mother to our little woman, Mackenzie (Shelley, W&L)
	Simon likes the trips a lot more when he is the driver and the roads become bumpy (...) Simon produces videos and photos for the blog and is also in charge of managing our Twitter and Instagram accounts (Nina, NT)

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Regarding the “Exotization” and “Sponsorship” variables, we observed that sponsored blogs show the highest degree of island exotification. Interestingly, the degree of exotification is greater in blogs by non-Portuguese authors in all travel modalities, which leads us to believe that the greater the author’s detachment, the greater the tendency to write and exotify the Other. This analysis dynamic frames our understanding of gender as a target of socially constructed power discourses, not only about the Other-woman, but also about the Other-place.

Besides their role as recipients – who also contribute to the rigid maintenance of a patriarchal structure, women are (re)producers of an oppressive male system that exotifies them as an Other (Irigaray, 1976; Beauvoir, 1967) and renders them capable of orientalizing the Other. Alongside these women (the Other-woman) who experience domination by a male and conservative structure and economy, the Other-Madeiran and the Other-place are also “devices of power” (Baptista, 2005).

The factors leading to the exotification of the island and/or its inhabitants do not lie exclusively with these women as agents performing socially constructed roles. In this case, as evidenced by data, technologies (dissemination capacity, blog promotion, social networks) also contribute to the seizing of these means of communication, formerly means of resistance to the mainstream, by the tourist market (Volo, 2013), which promotes the exotification of the island and its inhabitants.

Concerning the framework of power discourses by travellers who exotify the island and/or its inhabitants, we produced a set of narrative categories that emerge predominantly from non-Portuguese blog posts, namely: “Paradise”, “Discoveries”, “Folklore” and “Authenticity” (Table 6).



Table 6. Narratives present in the Exoticism category

Narrative	Example
Exotic Paradise	This guide will inspire you to embark on your own exotic expedition to this paradisiacal Portuguese island (Danielle, TH)
	If you are English and looking to visit an exotic place, like Hawaii, but lack the economic means, visit Madeira (Lucy, FAL)
	Thus I travelled to the enchanted island (Maria, MSV)
	Hidden European Hawaii (Tara, WIT)
	Nicknamed “Pearl of the Atlantic” (Débora, VC)
	(...) Madeira was fantastic and we recommend it to those who enjoy nature, to experience the exotic and good food (Nina, NT)
	If Africa and Europe had an affair, the fruit of their love would be something like Madeira (Eulanda, HDYTI)
	The island is (...) considered as the “Hawaii of Europe” (Paulina, POTR)
	Known as “The Floating Garden of the Atlantic”, the island has numerous gardens and parks (Marlise, MR)
Discoveries	I come to Madeira in an attempt to ascertain the nationality of this, undoubtedly, great navigator (...) On board this simulation of Santa Maria (...) Captain and sailors dress the part (...) they're serious about their role of pretending to discover new worlds (Maria, MSV)
Folclore	 <p>Source: Snow's Travels</p>
Authenticity	(...) [Madeira] has managed to keep its authenticity (...) places like this are increasingly scarce, so we hope that [Achadas da Cruz] is able to escape mass tourism and keeps its authenticity (Jürga, FS)
	I too surrendered to the pearl of the Atlantic, although a slight sadness invaded me in view of the degree of urbanization that I found (...) it is arrogant to expect such a beautiful island (...) promoted among tourists, to remain untouched since Zarco, Vaz Teixeira and Perestrelo discovered it, in the 15th century. But the truth is that I didn't expect it to be so modern (Ruthia, BDM)
	Madeira is not a tourist destination with sandy beaches. (...) it's better that it stays that way (...) keep this little gem hidden (...) tourists don't pay attention to this place, which is great, because I hope this place can keep its wild and rustic look, its pristine nature and doesn't fall victim to mass tourism (Corina, PA)

Data points to the existence of exotifying narratives transversal to all travellers, such as the “Paradise” and “Authenticity” categories. As mentioned at the beginning of this study, the idea of isolation of island territories is closely linked to that of authenticity. For Richard Butler (1993), Aitchison (2001) and Silva (2013) the conception of islands as places where



purity, the primitive, ancestry, the paradisiacal ideal and authenticity are kept and preserved, in their geographical marginality and since the beginning of time, subside in the mystical imagination and in the cultural representations of places, stimulated and communicated by tourist industry structures.

Faced with this scenario of rescue and exposure of exotic elements, we should note that this island mysticism signals a sort of creation of a heterotopic narrative (Foucault, 1984) explored and financed by tourism marketing (Aitchison, 2001), wherein the Other is objectified and instrumentalized, in a permanent and continuous exercise of political-ideological power within the mercantilist and capitalist game (Caton & Santos, 2008). Thus, at the heart of this exotic scenario there lies a focus on an alleged and artificially natural and authentic “essence”. In fact, Stuart Hall states that the naturalization process, in this case of the exotic, “consists of a representative strategy created to fix the difference (...) and ensure discursive or ideological closure” (1997, p.245).

Advertising campaigns by public and private institutions (endogenous and exogenous), which encouraged tourist demand on the island from the 1980s onward, and regional folk songs, are mechanisms that promoted, and still promote, exotifying island narratives by exploring the representation of paradise. Phrases and slogans like “Madeira is a garden”, “Tropical Garden. Turismo de Portugal”, “Madeira, Pearl of the Atlantic”, along with the promotion of Madeira as a nature destination, contribute to intensify the exotification and orientalizacion of the island as a paradisiacal destination. In this particular case, the concept of authenticity with which these travellers operate is not based on a referential framework or on the values of a given culture, but on a concept of “authenticity” explored and exalted by tourism that equates, in a reductive way, authentic to wild, rustic, untouched, pure, natural and virginal (Silva, 2013).

Also under the scope of the exotification of Madeira Island are the references, both in report and in photographic material, to the narratives of “Discoveries” and “Folklore”. In this context, Madeira is associated, in a sort of nostalgic romanticism, with the Discoveries and intensely represented, in a reductive way, through regional folklore. This is mainly due to commodification of folkloric phenomena, exotification of culture (Moassab, 2012) and crystallization and subsequent essentialization of the Other (Hall, 1992 & 1997; Spivak, 2010; Bhabha, 1998). According to Bhabha, the Other in these cases is “an object of desire and scorn, an articulation of difference [imagined and pre-conceived], contained within the fantasy of the origin of identity” (1998, p.106).

For Boorstin (1964), Turner & Ash (1975) and Aitchison (2001), tourists do not perform the experience of rescuing the promised “authenticity”, but are placed in contexts of pseudo-events created by the tourist industry. Capitalist and neoliberal, the industry homogenizes, resorting to marketization and production of an artificial difference, and contributes to the consumption and (re)production of the exotic Other. In this mercantilist plot that summons travellers to the simulation and reproduction of exotic scenarios of imperialist discovery, tourism establishes a kind of modern, neo-colonialist orientalism that serves both the market and unbridled capitalism.

Madeira is thus positioned on the colonial and imperial route, which is marked by the exaltation of discourse referring to the age of the Discoveries - recovered and reactivated by the tourist industry that invites travellers to explore and discover. According to MacCannell



(1976), the exotic is a resource to stimulate tourism or a fundamental element in the mechanisms of staging and manufacturing the authentic within a tourism and economic microcosm. In this case, our travellers report and are led to believe, on several occasions, that “Madeira needs to be explored” (Corina, PA) and discovered (Jürga, FS), as it has not yet been “properly explored” (Rosy, RM).

The perspective from which the place is viewed encodes performances that do not correspond to reality, but assume a merely representative and denotative function. Photographic representations, for example, serve the commercialization of a destination, assuming a representative, economic, exotic and fanciful function. Consequently, many of the discourses reproduced in relation to the image of the Other are in close connection with the forms of representation and power relations linked to colonialism, imperialism and Orientalism – practices and discourses that permeated Western culture in the mid 19th and early 20th centuries in a hegemonic way.

Madeira is not, in fact, a Portuguese colony, despite the incongruous and unconscious insistence of countless speeches that position the island in this historic place, but a “colony” at the service and strongly dependent on the tourist industry, engaging in colonialist speeches, accepting, creating, and reproducing mechanisms we consider exotifying and self-exotifying. Madeirans are, therefore, dimensioned in a microcosm of tourist service and dressed in traditional costumes that crystallize and propagate them in a fantastical way and as subordinates (Spivak, 2010). Madeirans are placed within a dynamic of subservience, solely linked to the stereotype that fixates them to servility and hospitality.

When represented photographically, Madeirans are only registered wearing the “traditional” costume or costumes that refer to the historical period of the Discoveries. These costumes integrate a process we consider predatory and self-exotifying, insofar as it is geared towards those “avid for the exotic” (Silveira, 2019, p.19). It is through costume and historical reenactments for the tourist industry that exotic self-representation mechanisms are triggered. This is ultimately a necessary predatory process, fed and stimulated by the institutional system (Moassab, 2012), which leads Madeirans themselves to self-exotification, resorting to a self-representation based on tradition and natural beauty that represents and discloses the Other-Self as a fixed and essentialist “identity” enclosed in symbol costumes, the false idea of “authenticity”, and markedly touristic activities and places.

On the other hand, and unlike the Portuguese, non-Portuguese travellers, not having the geographical and cultural proximity that Portuguese travellers enjoy, do not refer to any perspective within the “Discoveries” narrative. Instead, they establish a comparison with their travel worldview or concrete knowledge, initiating processes of comparison between Madeira and Hawaii, for example. Subject interpretations are determined by their knowledge of the world and their spatial-temporal context. Therefore, when they are finally confronted with the Other, the Other’s image has already been deformed, pre-built or stereotyped by culturally constructed representations (Todorov, 1995; Baptista, 2003). These narratives introduce Madeira into a comparative framework in which these authors not only Europeanize Hawaii, in a polarization of power and superiority, but also the African continent within an exotic dynamic.

María Lugones considers it impossible to study gender without considering other dimensions that contribute to symbolic and non-symbolic violence, add complexity to the for-



mation of gender and cooperate in the construction of power discourses within a capitalist and colonial matrix:

Understanding the relationship between the birth of the colonial/modern gender system and the birth of global colonial capitalism – considering the centrality of coloniality of power to this global power system – means to understand the current organization of life in a new way (2018, pp. 239-240).

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Closing remarks

Discourse on the Other is rarely devoid of discourse on the self (woman) and self-representation. In accordance with existing literature, our data reveals that solo trips are made by younger, educated women who do not fit into the typical female social role. In contrast, women travellers in the Couple and Family and/or Friends modalities were shown to possess a deep acceptance of a heterosexual and patriarchal matrix, as evidenced by the role assumed by the male figures who accompany them and the family nucleus where they assume the role of mothers. In addition, we have observed that blogs with a higher degree of sponsorship are also the ones that most exotify Madeira Island and/or Madeirans. Thus, it is undeniable that these platforms have been seized and marketed by the tourist industry, combined with acceptance and active participation by the Other in its own self-exotification.

Firstly evidenced in this hierarchy of relationships are discourses of power and self-representation that place women as inferior to men. Women who travel to Madeira, in the Couple and Family and/or Friends modalities, are active participants in their own oppression, reiterating classic, binary, traditional and conservative female roles. They also contribute, through their blogs, to exotify the Other, in a perfect symbiosis of symbolic violence and projection of social standards sustained by representation and (re)production of the Other-woman and the Other-folk.

Then, there is a second level of expression of power discourses in relation to the interiorization and (re)production of exotic representations of the Other. They emerge from the tourist industry and from capitalist and neoliberal models that permeate the travellers' daily lives. The view of the Other-place is thus promoted by tourist commercialization, which seizes the place of speech through sponsorship and plants, through the voice of the Other-woman, unifying and naturalizing discourses that fixate and crystallize the Other, maintaining the island as a distant and exotic Other. The perspectives and frameworks we have studied – gender and exoticism, interact discursively in the construction of narratives of self and heterorepresentation, girding and reducing these Others, both the women and Madeira/Madeirans, to devices of power within a technological extension of consumption (Baptista, 2005) that determines their role and relevance in the world. Can these subordinates speak?

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POSSIBLE PERFORMATIVITIES IN THE CAPITALIST AND ULTRALIBERAL ECONOMY¹

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ABSTRACT

Women live in a permanent intersection, felt and lived, albeit not always consciously, between the economy, democracy and their condition.

Over time, the economy has become increasingly complex and, in order to meet social needs, it grew into a system with its own principles and objectives. Most countries follow and share the capitalist system, which coupled itself with patriarchy during its process of formation and development, adopting it as one of its determining pillars. As a result, all capitalist activity aims to perpetuate inequality between women and men, since this inequality contributes to labor exploitation and the oppression of women.

Gender inequality, in turn, is a persistent threat to democracy, placing it in a state of imbalance and disharmony – which also poses a real danger to humanity.

In this context: - Could the ultra-liberal capitalist action of the economy result in or deepen discrimination, female poverty and subordination? - What performances (of resistance or others) can women take on?

This paper discusses the themes of power, domination and forms of counter-hegemonic struggle and resistance, in an intersection of sex and class that highlights the contrast between political-legislative discourses and the practices that reality exposes and reveals. This is followed by a qualitative approach based on documentary research and its respective hermeneutic analysis, from the perspective of Cultural Studies and supported by Cultural Studies scholars, particularly those dedicated to gender studies, in order to be useful and effective.

KEYWORDS:

Women; Economy; Democracy; Equality.

Introduction

Economy has a decisive influence on social and human relations. In the globalized world we live in, capitalism in its ultra- or hyper-liberal form presides over social reality - everything is determined by the markets and according to them. In capitalism, wealth is appropriated by only a few and the goal of profit is constant.

In the diverse communities that make up planetary society, the role played by women, so often essential to the progress and achievements of Humanity, is secondary, invisible and ignored, pushing them to the peripheries of power. Female discrimination and poverty are, therefore, a constant, and the very existence of these realities allows for the profit that is in-

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tended under capitalism.

In turn, most of the world population yearns to live in democracy. Even though it is an imperfect form of societal organization, nevertheless democracy allows a more harmonious relationship between the members that make up the diverse communities of the whole that is Humanity. There are several types of democracy. However, there is a common thread within this diversity – each human being, in their individuality, will contribute, directly or indirectly, to the pursuit of the common and general interests of their community, that converge in the fulfillment of the interests of humanity itself. These interests are not merely objective, but are also of a spiritual or visionary nature. Presiding over a democracy are values and principles that are universally accepted and have, in fact, been reduced to writing as diplomas of a legal nature (Universal Declaration of Human Rights) and conclusions of international thematic conferences (World Conferences on Women), of which we highlight the Fourth World Conference on Women - Beijing 1995, which saw the approval of the Beijing Platform for Action.

The intersection of the three aspects indicated above - Economy, Democracy, the Female condition - raises several questions to be analyzed, even if not exhaustively, such as whether female discrimination, poverty and subordination risk and negate Democracy and what performances (of resistance or others) women can take on.

With such a desideratum, it is appropriate to address the themes of power, domination and counter-hegemonic and resistant forms of struggle, at the intersection of sex and class, highlighting the contrast of political-legislative discourses and the practices that reality exposes and reveals.

I – The important relation between democracy and economy

Democracy is the form of government perceived by each and most individuals as beneficial to their social life, which is to be lived in common. The very etymological meaning of the word leads us to an idea of useful participation by each for the common good. For imagination, it will suffice for us to compare democracy with a musical orchestra, to get hold of its sense and meaning – through diversity, respect for each individual identity and intervening in the common piece, the balanced and harmonious product in everyone's interest, for their satisfaction, is achieved and materialized.

In order to be happy, individuals need to fulfill their personal needs, not only those of basic survival, but the so-called spiritual needs as well. In the search for need fulfillment, exchanges of goods and services are generated, which throughout history have become increasingly complex and diversified. Now, all of the inherent process and the products that are object of exchange are included in the ruling sphere of a people or country and constitute the science we call Economics. Rosa Luxemburg, in *Introduction to Political Economy / I*, gives us a clear idea of what political economy is:

Any people constantly creates, through their own work, a number of things necessary for life – food, clothing, houses, household items, ornaments, weapons, etc., – as well as materials and tools necessary for the production of these things. The way a people performs all these works, how they distribute products to all of their members, how they consume and produce them again in the eternal circular movement of life, all of this constitutes the



economy of the people in question, that is, its “political economy”(Luxembourg, 1975-1926, p. 14).

II – The capitalist system – effects on the female condition

Century-old economic relations for the exchange of goods and services grew and increased their importance, giving rise to economic complexity and the consequential and inevitable edification of an economic system. Currently, most countries worldwide have adopted the capitalist system, whose goal is for those who own capital, that is, the capitalists, to gain a profit and accumulate wealth. We make this statement on the basis that capital, along with labor and natural factors (also called land), are essential to the production process.

From the Luxemburg’s perspective of economy, referred to above, it follows that most, if not all, manifestations socially expressed by communities or institutions signal the economy of a certain people. Consequently, all social and human relations are directly or indirectly influenced by the economy. Thus, it also represents a considerable and fundamental element of power, since “‘truth’ is circularly linked to systems of power, which produce and support it, and to effects of power that are induced by it and reproduce it” (Foucault, 1979, p.14).

As in other manifestations by humans and society, economic and power relations underwent marked changes with the World Wars that occurred in the 20th century. The reality of these historical facts, namely that of World War II, which took place between 1939 and 1945, had important effects on women’s History and lives.

In fact, for a long period in humanity, women were socially considered to be incapable, ever requiring male tutoring (father or husband) and, therefore, as men’s objects and property, whose primary function was to procreate and satisfy male wishes and desires, owing obedience and entire submission to man, as Simone de Beauvoir brilliantly describes and analyzes in her work.

Nevertheless, by adopting performative attitudes and drawing potentialities from their invisibility, women were slowly able to develop their social role under new guises, such as those of educator and caregiver, remaining in a non-autonomous or independent position, but demonstrating that “they resist the adequacy of the whole definition” (Irigaray, 2018-1974, p. 64).

Now, with the needs that emerged during the World Wars of the 20th century, in particular World War II, it was necessary to resort to female intervention and labor beyond the family and private sphere, performing relevant functions in communications, as informants or spies, as military liaisons, as nurses or as doctors. Mady Segal (1995) points out situations of female conscription:

The situations during World War II of both conscription and military service in Germany and the United Kingdom provide interesting examples of the social construction of women’s military roles. (...) In the United States, large numbers of women served during World War II and, in fact, women served in all specialties except direct combat. Women were employed as parachute riggers, airplane mechanics, and gunnery instructors (Segal, 1995, p. 760)

The reality that was felt and lived then, which women took as an opportunity for their visibility and recognition, made their abilities and potentialities - in which they believed and took as fact - clear and noticeable. Socially, it became impossible to continue to advocate women’s inferiority towards men, and the countries said to be more civilized, ruled according



to male thinking, felt compelled to change legislation, consecrating in Law the equality of women and men. All of this shows that female inferiority is a purely social construction, for and in which their desires and needs are ignored and neglected (Simone de Beauvoir).

However, several decades later, the knowledge acquired in living life exposes the fact that in practice, there is no equality between women and men. As bell hooks states: "Contemporary feminist thinkers (...) suggest that status differentiation between women and men is overall an indication that patriarchal domination over the planet is the root of the problem" (hooks, 2018, 1989, p. 167). Such is the meaning of men's thinking of supremacy over women. As hegemonic thinking, it prevailed by existing so firmly, constantly and repeatedly, that only the cruel reality of war could open the doors to its denaturalization.

As it happened, right after World War II, the globalization phenomenon came into being and began to spread through the massive use of technology, in every available moment. As Fernando Soler observes, "We are all subjected to globalization, everyone and everything is globalized" (p.2), where online has become an obsession and is widely used by movements with anti-gender stances, which use the repetition of phrases and ideas (mixing true and false) that, with the lightness and fluidity of current thinking (Bauman, 2011), creates or magnifies hegemonic anti-feminist and misogynist thinking.

Meanwhile, the new modus vivendi of emotional dependence on the computer and the mobile phone, in a real blindness over the virtual, with the increasing usage of apps requiring geo-location, prevent the exercise of fundamental rights, in particular the right to dignity, equality and difference, affecting individual and collective freedoms as well. (Universal Declaration of Human Rights).

Knowledge of the respective algorithm belongs but to a few, the powerful ones, which prevents any control by those who use the internet, social networks, or apps with geo-location (Flusser, 1985).

Now, in the current world, capitalists are the powerful ones, since we live in historical times where the essential aspect of wealth is the instrument of money, which determines intense consumption not only for the use and fulfillment of needs, but also for the satisfaction of those who purchase, through the very act of consuming. Wealth accumulation - capitalism in the ultra liberal phase of financial capitalism - in a light, imperceptible way, but one that is always obscure and disguised, is reaching the soul of Democracy, threatening and endangering it - creating an increasing gap in wealth distribution, with many poor and very few rich. It also removes meaning from the fundamental weapon in the struggle for better living conditions, that is, freedom itself. On the other hand, it instills fear in people, particularly women, intensely influenced by traditions and religiosity, in such a way that the requirements for participation and active citizenship, inherent to Democracy, are called into question.

III – Economy, Patriarchy, and the Female condition

The system⁴ has profit gain and wealth accumulation as its rationale. In order to fulfill this goal, capitalists will necessarily appropriate part of the wealth created by those who provide the labor. Thus, as a rule, the lower the wages, the higher the profits and the accu-

⁴ Whenever we employ the word 'system', with no other identifying elements, we are referring to the capitalist system.



mulation of wealth.

For its purpose, capitalism chose patriarchy as an ideological pillar of the system itself. Given its nature, there were and are good reasons for this. In contrast to the dominant role, in the conjugal and family relationship, that is assumed by men in the patriarchy, women live a life of oppression, because they depend on their fathers or husbands, without a will of their own, offering their labor, commitment and dedication with nothing in return; that is, without having anything they want and deserve, as a right. And, as a consequence of this way of thinking: “women are, traditionally, use value for men, exchange value among men. Therefore, merchandise” (Irigary, 2018 (1974), p 69).

In a patriarchal reality, the system manages to take advantage of free female labor, since maintenance and renewal of the workforce are seen as free tasks, because non-reproductive labor (domestic, carried out within the family, use value only) and reproductive labor (carried out outside the family, in public space and with exchange value) are seen as separate. Thus, it turns out that all non-reproductive labor is a cost. This is a cost of the system itself, one the system does not accept, but rather claims to be a cost that is the responsibility of individuals, family, and women. As it is their cost, the system does not accept it. In fact, the workforce is only renewed and maintained, either by motherhood or the simple acts of feeding, clothing, hygiene and cleaning, etc., with the effort of individuals, particularly women, disregarding and ignoring that it is society and economy themselves, taken as a whole, that need constant renewal of the workforce and the renewal of generations and their maintenance towards reproductive labor. Consequently, because it also benefits reproductive labor, allowing it to be fully carried out, non-reproductive labor cannot be exclusively taken as a family responsibility (Cakardic, 2020).

Through patriarchal thinking, absorbed by capitalism, non-reproductive labor is reversed as normal or natural in its gratuity and family responsibility. Hence, the rights obtained by women can only result from their struggle, resistance and perseverance. If, by any chance, rights are attributed to women by the system and by power, it will be in order to fulfill designs of capitalism itself, in order to prevent further progress in the female condition. In this case, the system prefers to receive these rights as an integral part of its ideology, so as to shape and control them. That is, apparently with rights. However, this configuration is only superficial, since its existence serves the purposes of patriarchal thinking placed at the service of capitalism (at any level of capitalism, including what is currently experienced - neo-liberalism with an eminently financial character). As a result, it produces “compatible neoliberal female subjectivities” (Elias, 2013, n/p.), and hides essential elements of the female condition, presenting, instead,

Simplistic representations of women’s contribution to economic competitiveness [that] disguise the dual burden and gender structures of socio-economic inequality (...) [constructing] a gender agenda that is deeply compatible with the policies and practices of neoliberalism (Elias, 2013, n/p.).

The thing is, women’s labor is not limited to the family or private sphere. Since the 19th century, women also take part in reproductive labor, although in a position of strong dependence. However: they perform all kinds of labor, even the most difficult and painful; they make decisions when allowed or when they deem it necessary for their survival and that of



their close ones; they supervise the work of others.

Nevertheless, in addition to the invisibility of their labor and the lack of social recognition, women who work outside of the home, as a rule, earn less than men. There were times when the difference was 50%. It is currently lower, although in smaller percentages. Whenever there is a loss of job posts, women are the first to become unemployed. The odds of finding a job are lower for women. Precarious work affects them intensively. Women are overrepresented in educational and care functions, as well as in informal activities, but they are in a position of little or no representation in the so-called advanced training functions, that is, of accentuated power. Thus, in times of crisis, female poverty increases with each passing day and women remain in a state of poverty. It is known that the effects of the 2008 crisis had a different impact on women and men, and were much more serious for the former (UNDP-UN, 2019; ILO, 2019).

However, even though they do not verbalize and assume it, capitalists recognize that women have great skills and are equal to men in knowledge and know-how. Women are disciplined and obedient to rules and very loyal, ready to make sacrifices for the well-being of their loved ones and their communities, while also accepting hard work with resignation.

These characteristics are not positively valued. On the contrary, they are associated, by hegemonic (male) thinking, to the idea that women are naturally weaker, with a delicate constitution and temperament.

And, for this reason, they are penalized in times of crisis, just as they are in their child-bearing years, when faced with the possibility of motherhood. In fact, the valorization of women is seen by the powerful classes and by those who share the dominant thinking, as a mere reproductive device to the women and men of tomorrow, that are needed by the system and must be healthy, because that is what matters in the creation of wealth.

Consequently, capitalism has kept the essential traits of patriarchy, which stands as one of its pillars and thereby obtains benefits: by creating a division between women and men, conferring them a power - a micro power operating at the extremities - that keeps them from revolt and demands for a better life and the valorization of labor and the Human Being; by reverting to the family the obligation to renew and maintain the workforce, necessary to create wealth for free, relieving itself from a cost the system would have to assume, since generation renewal and workforce maintenance is socially indispensable.

When this obligation is transferred to women, who take on housework and family care, while simultaneously performing reproductive labor in the public space, society overloads women in their working hours. This circumstance prevents them: from exercising rights; from considering and analyzing, reflecting on the life they lead; from establishing the strategies they consider useful in their complaints; from assuming the most appropriate performances to be adopted; from socially participating and intervening.

These reasons form the basis of what is justly stated - women suffer the most from economic crises and conflicts. Effects of these two realities, offensive to the human condition, are diverse between women and men, proving to be tougher and more intense for women (UNDP-UN, 2019).

Now, it is known and generally assumed that the transformations produced by globalization bring about political, cultural and technological changes, largely under the influence of the fourth power - the media (also global). As a result, "this global change is not just an external phenomenon, on the contrary, it influences aspects of the subjects' intimacy, mo-



difying their lives and way of being” (Vieira, 2005, p. 3).

Regarding the female condition, it could be said that this change does not occur or that only a superficial and innocuous change does occur. With the globalization phenomenon, combined with the interests of the system itself, an aggravation in the real and practical inequality between women and men is confirmed. This situation even contradicts the broad coverage of equality in terms of legislation and political speeches, taking the Declarations of the UN and other internationally recognized institutions as a reference.

IV – Possible performativities for women post-Covid

The pandemic originated by the coronavirus caused numerous changes to the routines of people and companies, as well as a significant reduction in production and access to consumables, which is at the origin of the serious economic and social crisis that has already started, but has no end in sight. Because of the economic and social crisis, that affects all countries, efforts are being made, strategies are being established and partnerships are being created. National Governments, as well as many States, jointly, in partnerships or coalitions, take the measures they believe may cancel the Pandemic’s negative effects.

As emerges from what has already been said, women are the most vulnerable beings, those who suffer the most from poverty and do not have free access to the means and opportunities that allow their elevation to equality in real and practical life, as valid beings of Humanity.

This requires designing a strategy and implementing public measures, that are not merely temporary or transitory, aimed exclusively and consequently at the problems of women. From what is already known, there are no public measures that, in an integrated way, face the diverse problems of women and contribute to their significant reduction, always seeking to eliminate inequalities.

The European Union, for example, only established violence against women (mainly in the dimension of domestic violence) as a measure to support women and contribute to gender equality. There are other institutions and states (e. g. on the American continent) exclusively focused on minimum economic sustenance for women. According to UN WOMEN and UNDP (2020), when presenting results of the analysis of pandemic effects in the document “Covid-19 Global Gender Response Tracker”, they argue that women’s needs have been neglected, both in terms of social support and regarding employment. It is also reported that only 12% of the countries on the planet have approved measures in three areas - social security, support for care and unpaid work and measures that guarantee women’s economic security. Countries that do not indicate any measure in relation to women number 20%. These institutions, in the recommendations they have issued, emphasize that the measures to be adopted and aimed at gender issues need adequate funding to last in the long term, so that their results can be effective.

Hence, in view of the position taken by States and Institutions in their Strategic Plans to combat the crisis created by Covid 19, by continuously keeping women invisible and denying them their due appreciation, not only do they preserve gender inequality, but also threaten democracy by facilitating imbalance in social relations, which thus become disharmonious. As Maria Manuel Baptista says:



That is why we need to restate that ‘the king is naked’, i.e., that gender (which refers to socio-cultural performativity elements and not to nature or biological determinants) denaturalizes, and, on the same breath, it challenges the social division of labor based on a sexual hierarchy (Baptista, 2019, p. 14).

340 | Women are going through a very difficult time for their condition. However, if adversity is a black cloud, they can creatively convert it into opportunities. With originality and determination, both in individual and collective performances, women will take important steps in their affirmation and empowerment. Seconding Christine Delphy’s words,

In order to know reality and, therefore, be able to change it eventually, it is necessary to abandon certainties and accept temporary anguish, of an increased uncertainty about the world; that courage to face the unknown is the condition of imagination and that the ability to imagine another world is an essential element of the scientific process: it is indispensable for the analysis of the present moment (Delphy, 2018, 2001, p. 198).

In the “analysis of the present moment”, in the strategy chosen to combat inequality and discrimination, consideration of the complex, heavy and harsh female condition is an indispensable foundation to egalitarian construction. As it happens: “if you insistently ask them what they think about, they can only answer: nothing. Everything. Therefore, what they desire is precisely nothing, and everything at the same time” (Irigary, 2018, 1974, p. 67).

Listening to women and knowing the problems they feel and experience is elementary. Meeting their needs, fulfilling them, is fundamental. It cannot be forgotten that, in the action of complaining and in the fight for rights, women guide their commitment and determination in democratic participation to solve the issues afflicting them. This is because, “the subject of feminism is produced by the performativity of a declaration of independence, forced to assert itself as previously given, in a statement that places women’s identity and/or solidarity as natural, historical, social, psychological” (Spivak, 2018, 2010, p. 106).

And, simultaneously, there will be a concern to “critically explore men’s issues to map feminist strategies for the transformation of masculinity” (hooks, 2019, 1989 p. 174), because

Becoming aware that there is a pair, that the pair is what makes this work (...) The pair as a place, a space of war in culture, but also as a place, a demanding space, requiring a complete transformation of the relationship with one another.” (Cixous, 2018,200, p. 76).

In the journey of resistance and opposition to the forces threatening Democracy, which always seek to annul and eradicate the rights of women and subject them to a condition of acute oppression and exploitation that “women must overcome, in the world and in their own hearts” (Beauvoir, 2018,2001, p. 59), the adversity they face daily.

V – In conclusion

Through adopting strategies and performativities of resistance (for which there are no pre-determined ‘recipes’, as their adoption depends on the specific context), women can



overcome the obstacles that are always put in their way. Such strategies and performativities must be profiled so that, in contrast, the requirements that allow a sincere and loyal equality between women and men are produced.

Believing in themselves, using determination as a weapon, aiming at constant autonomy and deserved independence - these are the garments women will have to drape over the strategies and performativities they want to assume.

It will not be easy, but guided by the motto – ‘if one does not win, one does not lose, but learns instead’ - women are achieving equality and contributing, with their actions, to reinforce Democracy and ward off the threats hanging over it.

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Only freedom, defended by democratic systems, however imperfect it may still be, can be the field from which all human beings can be fulfilled and express themselves more fully, tolerantly and happily in each dimension. An attack on democracy brings with it an attack on the plurality and freedom of different gender expressions, different bodies, different ways of living and of expressing one's sexuality.

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