NARRATIVES OF SUBJECTS WITH DISABILITIES AND SOCIAL ISOLATION IN PANDEMIC TIMES

NARRATIVAS DE SUJEITOS COM DEFICIENCIA E ISOLAMENTO SOCIAL EM TEMPOS DE PANDEMIA

NARRATIVAS DE SUJETOS CON DISCAPACIDAD Y AISLAMIENTO SOCIAL EN TIEMPOS DE PANDEMIA

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ABSTRACT: History in the 21st century has been going through the most diverse social, cultural and religious transformations, especially with regard to human behavior. The present reflection elucidates narratives of People with Disabilities in times of pandemic and social isolation caused by a worldwide phenomenon characterized as Corona Virus. The question that covered this investigation was: how is the social isolation of people with disabilities in pandemic times? The objectives were: to understand, through the narratives, how the daily life of People with Disabilities is going through pandemic times; identify in the narratives of these subjects, moments of anxiety, tension and emotional discomfort that are living in their social isolation; to analyze the narratives of four subjects who are experiencing social isolation in times of pandemic, caused by the proliferation of Covid-19 (Corona Virus Disease/Corona Virus Disease 2019). The chosen methodology was through written testimony, narrated by these subjects in their social isolation. The references used were about narratives, memories and (auto)biography that narrates their social behavior in times of pandemic. The final notes, of course, not conclusive made us realize that the subjects narrate in their testimonies a strong emotional stage, tensions and fear of this phenomenon that is frightening the planet.

KEYWORDS: Subjects with disabilities. Social isolation. Pandemic.

RESUMO*: A história no século XXI vem passando pelas mais diversas transformações sociais, culturais e religiosas, principalmente, no que concerne o comportamento humano. A presente reflexão elucida narrativas de Pessoas com Deficiência em tempos de pandemia e isolamento social causado por um fenômeno mundial caracterizado como Corona Vírus. A questão que suleou essa investigação foi: como está sendo o isolamento social das pessoas com deficiência em tempos de pandemia? Os objetivos foram: entender por meio das narrativas como está sendo o cotidiano das Pessoas com Deficiência em tempos de pandemia; identificar nas*

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narrativas desses sujeitos, momentos de ansiedade, tenção e desconforto emocional que estão vivendo em seu isolamento social; analisar as narrativas de quatro sujeitos que estão vivendo o isolamento social em tempos de pandemia, provocado pela proliferação do Covid-19 (Corona Virus Disease / Doença do Corona Vírus 2019). A metodologia escolhida foi por meio de depoimento escrito, narrado por esses sujeitos em seu isolamento social. Os referenciais utilizados versaram sobre narrativas, memorias e (auto)biografia que narra o comportamento social desses em tempos de pandemia. As notas finais, claro, não conclusivas nos fizeram perceber que os sujeitos narram em seus depoimentos forte estágio emocional, tensões e medo desse fenômeno que está assustando o planeta.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE*: Sujeitos com deficiência. Isolamento social. Pandemia.*

RESUMEN*: La historia del siglo XXI ha pasado por las más diversas transformaciones sociales, culturales y religiosas, especialmente en lo que respecta al comportamiento humano. La presente reflexión dilucida las narrativas de las personas con discapacidad en tiempos de pandemia y aislamiento social provocado por un fenómeno mundial caracterizado como el virus corona. La pregunta que cubrió esta investigación fue: ¿cómo es el aislamiento social de las personas con discapacidad en tiempos de pandemia? Los objetivos fueron: comprender, a través de las narrativas, cómo la vida cotidiana de las Personas con Discapacidad atraviesa tiempos de pandemia; identificar en las narrativas de estos sujetos, momentos de ansiedad, tensión y malestar emocional que están viviendo en su aislamiento social; Analizar las narrativas de cuatro sujetos que están experimentando aislamiento social en tiempos de pandemia, provocada por la proliferación de Covid-19 (Enfermedad por Virus Corona / Enfermedad por Virus Corona 2019). La metodología elegida fue a través del testimonio escrito, narrado por estos sujetos en su aislamiento social. Las referencias utilizadas fueron sobre narrativas, recuerdos y (auto) biografía que narran su comportamiento social en tiempos de pandemia. Las notas finales, por supuesto, no concluyentes nos hicieron darnos cuenta de que los sujetos narran en sus testimonios una fuerte etapa emocional, tensiones y miedos ante este fenómeno que atemoriza al planeta.*

PALABRAS CLAVE: *Sujetos con discapacidad. Aislamiento social. Pandemia.*

> *"O mundo não é mais o mesmo*
> *Em que eu nasci*
> *Mas eu continuo curando a tristeza*
> *Com a beleza de uma canção*
> *Por isso ainda canto o meu rock rool".*[4]
> Nando Reis (2018).

Initial Notes

From caves to stepping on the moon, from caravels to Titanic, from delta wings to supersonic, we had the most diverse moments of historical and social evolution in the planetary sphere.

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[4] The world is not the same anymore / In which I was born / But I keep healing sadness / With the beauty of a song / So I still sing my rock roll.

From the "good, perfect and normal" men in Sparta to the "free men" in Athens, from the triumvirate to slaves in ancient Rome, from European invasions to the resistance of the Yanomami Indians in the Amazon, we currently pass through the most varied stages of political transformation, social, cultural, and even religious, considering the attitudinal and behavioral actions of human beings for centuries.

From being thrown to the cliffs as a demonic work in Ancient Greece, to the (a)knowledge of disability in the 18th century, we have lived through the most varied stages of segregation, marginalization, and social exclusion in humanity over millennia. In view of the above, Correia (1999), narrates that, since ancient history, exclusion policies for children with disabilities have been registered. The author stresses that in Sparta, defective children were abandoned in the mountains. In turn, in Rome they were thrown into the rivers so as not to taint society.

Throughout history, there are traces of prejudices, stereotypes, discrimination, and stigmas against those people who escape the standards of "normality and perfection". These memories sound in our memory, here narrated by Souza (2007, p. 63) as:

> Memory is written in time, a time that allows displacement over experiences. Time and memory that enable connections with the memories and forgetfulness of oneself, places, people, family, school, and the existential dimensions of the narrator subject (our translation).

The author's words awaken us to the importance of narrating our experiences in times of social isolation, kept in memory and which may or may not be expressed in and during our personal trajectory.

There is a record in our memory narrated in this text excerpt that, for decades, the treatment of different, dissimilar, deviants have always been a perverse mark of society in the most diverse times. The proposed eugenics model is experienced in the writings of Bianchetti, (1995), when it was pointed out that in the Spartan society that valued war, dance, gymnastics, aesthetics, the perfection of the "strong and beautiful" body, was the great objective of a society which was called "healthy, normal, well built".

The social isolation imposed on People with Disabilities, obviously caused by segregation in ancient cultures, was due to the practices implemented, under the belief that the non-"perfect" needed to be eliminated because they were not divine work. This premise is narrated by Misés (1977, p. 14, our translation), when he pointed out that:

> We kill feral dogs and ferocious bulls, slaughter sick sheep, choke ill-constituted newborns; even if children are weak or abnormal, we drown them,

> it is not a matter of hatred, but of the reason that invites us to separate from the healthy parts those that can corrupt them. This stigmatizing treatment of People with Disabilities has been experienced for centuries by humanity with conservative habits, archaic customs and belief in perfection.

Over the centuries, the treatment for People with Disabilities remained an exclusion mark, considering that in the Medieval Era, these subjects were associated with the image of evil, acts of witchcraft, being persecuted, and subsequently killed, since they could not live-in society. In his writings Amaral (1990, p. 30-31, our translation), he narrates that at this time the policy of *avis-struthio* was applied, which means:

> Burying the head in the sand, isolating the stranger, the disabled, either actively creating places of confinement, or hoping that this uncomfortable being will be kind enough to become invisible to sensitive eyes, withdrawing its insignificance, modestly placing itself in its place, as far away from ordinary citizens as possible.

This social isolation, of course, to a lesser extent, that People with Disabilities are currently living in pandemic times can be metaphorized, considering that we are, in relation to the others, excluded/without access to the means of communication, advanced technologies and external information within reach of our eyes, the silence of our ears, or the physical limitations of our steps.

We intend in these words, lines, paragraphs, excerpts from texts, to briefly narrate how our social isolation is, our withdrawal, in short, our months of exclusion living today in a large, comfortable house, but surrounded by walls, prevented from moving freely in fear of this invisible enemy known as the New Corona Virus. We do this in the defense that “research carried out with subjects in a situation of exclusion must occur, mainly because they take their lives and their realities from anonymity” (ROCHA; REIS, 2020, p. 886, our translation).

We think it is necessary to point out that for Queiroz (1991, p. 19, our translation), narrative is: "The narrator's account of his existence through time, trying to reconstruct the events he experienced and transmit the experience he acquired". We witness in these reports our minutes, hours, days, weeks, months, that we are trying to live in and with the idea of social isolation, of course, necessary, but difficult to bear.

The question that covered this investigation was: how is the social isolation of People with Disabilities being in times of pandemic? In this sense, we intend to demonstrate what the daily life of People with Disabilities is like in times of pandemic, especially when, due to fear or precaution, we isolate ourselves, collect, limit ourselves to live in spaces without contact with the elderly, children, colleagues, schools, leisure, people.

The objectives in this investigative process were: to understand, through the written narratives, how the daily lives of People with Disabilities are going through pandemic times; identify in the narratives of these subjects, moments of anxiety, tension and emotional discomfort that they are living in their social isolation; to analyze the written narratives of four subjects who are experiencing social isolation in times of a pandemic, caused by the proliferation of Covid-19 (Corona Virus Disease/Coronavirus Disease 2019).

Our choice in this investigation was for qualitative research. In this sense, we use the narratives of subjects with disabilities to identify how they are experiencing social isolation in times of pandemic. In this way, we use the biographical approach as technique, here enunciated by Souza (2006, p. 39, our translation), emphasizing that "the biographical approach is both a method, because it achieved in its historical process a vast theoretical foundation, as well as technique, because it also enjoyed conflicts, consensus and theoretical-methodological implications on its use".

We used the lines written below to tell a little about the history of People with Disabilities in times of social isolation. We rely on Moita (1995, p. 113, our translation), expressing that in the "(Auto)biography, each person mobilizes their own knowledge, values, energies, to give shape to an identity of the self, in dialogue with the contexts lived by them". After all, “identity is not something immutable or external, which can be inherited or acquired. It is understood, historically, as a process under construction in a person's life” (SENA; ALBUQUERQUE, 2020, p. 1588, our translation). Hence, there is an urgent need to talk about us, about us, especially in times of social isolation to which we were subjected.

We think it is necessary to affirm that the (auto)biography narrated in these excerpts of text reflects the life of isolated People with Disabilities, collected in times of pandemic, without being able to move freely, go to the park, to work, to school to study.

In mentioning this autobiographical narrative, we support the written words of Bueno (2002, p. 20), when narrating that:

> autobiography is a social micro-correlation. He who narrates his life story always narrates to someone, that is, in the process of elaborating his narrative, there is always an attempt at communication, even with an imaginary interlocutor, as is often the case with intimate diaries.

Reflective Moments

For decades, we have struggled to get out of social isolation, from segregationist processes, from the marginalization that has excluded us for centuries. We went through institutionalization (APAES, Pestalozzi, IBC, INES, nursing homes, sanatoriums), among others that welcomed us, I do not know, out of pity, whose intention was to isolate, separate and segregate everyone who was different from the standards imposed by society.

From the 1960s in Brazil, we were "integrated into schools", of course, isolated, in separate rooms, far from the others that society erroneously calls "normal". When referring to inclusion, it is useful to point out that three decades have passed since managers, teachers and People with Disabilities are discussing inclusive processes, since in the Inclusion Era, the main intention is that society can adapt to receive us with quality in schools and in all social spaces.

The problem that we emphasized in this research concerns our social isolation, as well as, our coexistence in times of pandemic. In this sense, we will use (Auto)biography to tell our own story. For this, we use the memory shared by Halbwachs (1990), as something that is part of a social process in which individuals are not seen as isolated beings, they interact throughout their lives from determined social structures. Thus, we support Clandinin and Connelly (2011), by emphasizing that experiences are the stories that people live, and in telling these stories they reaffirm themselves. They change and create new stories.

In the formative spaces, in which we are inserted, we live with differences. Through education we know the other, the different, the deviant in the school space. When referring to the memories, memories and testimonies expressed in these narratives, we support in Catroga (2001, p. 46, our translation), by pointing out that:

> Memory is, more than a mere record, it aims at a coherent narrative that, in retrospect, domestic or random, or casual, the perverse effects of the real past when it was present, acting as if, on the way, there were no black holes left by oblivion.

Traces of social exclusion that we have lived for three decades still remain in our memory. It hovers in our imaginary period of segregation that we have been affected by for years in philanthropic institutions. Today, in the middle of the 21st century, the 2020s, we speak little about exclusion/segregation/marginalization, however, we use these periods metaphorically when we are again driven to retreat into our homes, fearing this phenomenon. This memory that makes us live this social isolation again is remembered by Amado, (1995, p. 132, our translation), emphasizing that:

> memory makes experiences intelligible, giving them meanings. By bringing the past to the present, it recreates the past, while projecting the future; It is because of this capacity of memory to move freely between different times that the past truly becomes the past, and the future, the future.

Janaína Amado makes us reflect on the memories present in our memory, expressed in the narratives we make when we remember the past, live the present and even project the future, of course, inserted, but necessary to be programmed.

Dialogue with subjects with disabilities in times of pandemic

The present investigation was carried out with four subjects with disabilities in three regions of Brazil. Flor: 26 years old, single, graduating in pedagogy at a Federal Public University, congenitally deaf. Margarida: 41 years old, married, mother, psychologist, master's in education, teacher at a higher education institution, visually impaired. Rosa: 30 years old, married, mother, pedagogue, merchant, physically disabled. Lírio: 46 years old, married, father, graduated in Legal Sciences, Master's in Education, professor at a visually impaired Federal Institute of Education.

When addressing subjects with disabilities via e-mail, we asked them to narrate in writing how their period of social isolation is going in times of pandemic. We justify the use of this methodological procedure, considering the need to maintain isolation and care for the subjects involved in the research. For that, we sent them an Informed Consent Form (ICF), in which they authorized the publication of their narratives.

To preserve the identity of subjects with disabilities, we decided in common agreement, to name them with a plant pseudonym. Thus, the subjects were identified as: FLOR; MARGARIDA; ROSA; LÍRIO (Flower; Daisy; Rose; Lily).

The excerpts of texts below are excerpts narrated by the four subjects with disabilities who participated in the research. We emphasize that the narratives will be analyzed, considering their testimonies during their collection and social isolation in their homes.

In the words, lines, paragraphs, pages that follow, we use the narratives to talk briefly about the situation that People with Disabilities live in times of social isolation, especially when we refer to education, difference and disability. As visually impaired, we feel in our skin what the different/disabled are currently experiencing, especially when we are forced to retreat to our homes fearing this phenomenon called Corona Virus.

Narrating the history of People with Disabilities in times of social isolation, especially when referring to the pandemic, is not an easy task, not least because it has never been easy to live harmoniously with subjects who do not hear the effects of external sound to their ears; they do not see the display of images in front of them; they do not walk freely through the various spaces. In this tangled universe of relationships flanked by the subjective world of narratives, we support Benjamin (1994, p. 221, our translation), to say that:

> The narrator is among the masters and the wise. He knows how to give advice: not for some cases, like the proverb, but for many cases, like the wise, because he can use the collection of a lifetime, a life that does not only include his own experience, but largely the experience of others.

In this context, making use of the narratives in these registers means that lives, stories, reports, testimonies, need to be told, avoiding, therefore, falling as warned by Catroga (2001), "Into the black hole of oblivion".

Flor

Flor narrates in her writings that:

> *The daily life is complicated, a lot of time at home, eating too much, without exercising, without focus to study, there are days, there are days that are quiet, there are days that are not like that (I keep on going). Thus, in these few lines I tell how my period of social isolation is going on in times of pandemic, since it is very bad, with few leisure options, as well as falling into the forgetfulness of a busy life with many tasks to do in the midst of so many complexities of uncertainty, I look for prayers and believe that better days will come.*
>
> *I seek to unravel the mysteries that life offers us, it is observed that the daily life is complicated, for having to spend a lot of time at home, making unnecessary snacks as well as not doing physical activities, causing physical and emotional discomfort. There are successions of fear, anxieties, uncertainties and weaknesses. In the face of everything, I completely lose myself in my thoughts and I wonder how small and fragile we are in the face of a pandemic, I keep imagining that days and months went by in isolation and I realized that I'm losing the regularity of day-to-day activities like the focus on my studies* (our translation).

In our analysis, we think that narrating social isolation, the daily life of people with disabilities in times of pandemic, means that we are living in a prison situation, as we fear leaving home to go to the market, the pharmacy, the square, to the parks, in short, to take care of our commitments in a safe way, because, we are afraid of this invisible enemy that the world is talking about: the New Corona Virus. In this sense, we were led to isolate, collect, segregate, in short, live in a daily life conceptualized by Certeau (1994, p. 31, our translation), as:

> [...] the daily life is what ties us intimately from the inside. This 'memory world' should not be forgotten, according to Béguy's expression. They are the world we deeply love, olfactory memory, memory of childhood places, memories of the body, childhood gestures, pleasures.

In this perspective, we became imprisoned, not for the lack of freedom, but for a pandemic condition that has been plaguing the planet in 2020.

Flor, keep on narrating:

> *I had anxiety and panic attacks, after the pandemic worsened and increased. My daily life was no longer so easy, as I was diagnosed with an anxiety and panic crisis, as I now realize that I am suffering from the televised news and social networks, I confess that the unpredictability of the present and future times, cause a significant increase in the crises that were mentioned earlier* (our translation).

Our interviewee narrates her daily life, mentioning the moments of anguish, tension and discomfort she is experiencing in these new times, to which we were forced to submit.

Another important aspect that deserves mention:

> *I am medicated, I use continuous medication, sometimes I can't control myself with so much bad news, when I feel sad, I try to think that I can do something good for my deaf colleagues. Hence the idea of making informative videos about the New Corona Virus arose* (our translation).

Flor seeks in her narrative to comfort herself in the face of the scenario we are living in, for example, making videos and sharing with her deaf colleagues who are in the same condition as her.

"*Our daily lives are tense, we only stay at home, taking care of cleaning, taking care of studies, of course, little, not much. The life of the deaf is marked by changes in their daily lives*" (our translation). In her narrative, Flor pointed out that if it were not for social networks, the lives of deaf individuals would be very difficult. Our interviewee points out in her testimony the importance of technologies, characterized by Radabaugh (1988): historically, the term assistive technology appeared for the first time in 1988 in the United States, as a legal term approved by the American legislation aiming to guarantee the rights of People with Disabilities.

Flor continues:

> *at the moment, we can say that the social networks that the deaf use serve to improve our daily lives, as we can communicate with other colleagues, deaf and listeners. This form of interaction and communication between the deaf community brings us closer, even when we are far away.*
>
> *thankfully there are cell phones, notebook computers, several applications that allow us to stay at home, isolated, imprisoned, unable to go out, hug our friends, go for a walk, go to school to study. We understand that we are experiencing a new experience, because the danger of the New Corona Virus makes us fearful, afraid that this virus could contaminate our family and the people we like* (our translation).

In his narrative, Flor emphasizes:

> *The inhabitants of the planet share this experience, use social networks to communicate, as there are technologies and applications that allow dialogue between colleagues, teachers and Libras interpreter to help us. As deaf, I don't know if I can say that I feel privileged or disadvantaged. In this direction, I seek to appropriate this knowledge by evaluating that social networks bring us together so I can say that we have always been together virtually, although separated, isolated, at home, without being able to meet. This is my routine, my isolation in this daily life.*

Margarida

Margarida, begins her narrative by pointing out that her biggest challenge is:

> *During this period of social distance resulting from the New Corona Virus pandemic, as a blind person, my biggest challenge has been trying to keep up with the various movements caused by the social crisis that the world has been going through in recent months* (our translation).

In her narrative, Margarida, she reported that she has encountered many challenges in the face of the world crisis that was installed on the planet with the outbreak of the pandemic around the world.

In her report, our interviewee, emphasizes that: "*The changes that the planet has been going through have shown to be strongly present due to the proposal of countless lives. In my view, the reflections raised have proved to be instigating and even necessary for human empowerment in different aspects*" (our translation). In her written testimony, Margarida emphasizes that the content of livestreams has contributed to some extent to alleviate the emotional stage that we are living in times of pandemic.

Narrating the moment of catastrophe as we are living on the planet is certainly bad for all people. When referring to People with Disabilities, these difficulties are widening more and more. This is true, for example, in relation to the narratives of (deaf people who have difficulties in written communication and oral expression; subjects with physical disabilities with limitations to move around in different spaces; People with visual impairments who use their hands to touch and recognize the spaces around you).

The narratives of these subjects make us realize that for them, the difficulties are even greater, considering that the world around us is not inclusive. In view of the above, we support Marquesin and Ferragut, (2009, p. 27, our translation), to narrate the stories of these subjects. In this sense, they point out: "Narration is the act of telling stories; it is a formative process; it conveys values and advice and has sequentiality as its main characteristic". Sequentiality that moves us and requires strength to keep us steady.

Margarida, expresses that livestreams, if on the one hand:

> *contribute to my personal and professional development, at various times, when accompanying them, I clearly perceive the lack of resources that would make them more accessible to blind people, considering that these technologies are not yet accessible to all people those with visual impairment. One factor that reinforces my conception and that has been presented very often during my experiences as an expectant of several proposed livestreams, is the absence of description of images displayed during the approaches, which makes it difficult and sometimes even impossible to understand certain themes* (our translation).

Margarida is fiercely critical of the technologies used, which are widely disseminated in times of pandemic. She emphasizes in her testimony that the technologies are not accessible to all people, especially for visually impaired subjects, almost without this right, with independence and autonomy.

Our interviewee's complaint would be easily solved if the websites, blogs, Facebook, Twitter, used audio description, described here by Vilaronga (2010) as: audio description is a technological resource aimed at Visually Impaired People that allows equal opportunities, as well as access to the world of images and the elimination of communication barriers.

> *On the other hand, I believe that among the various learnings with which we have been surprised daily during this period of intense reflections, the problem presented, if passed on, may contribute to social transformation. In the sense that true inclusion is configured through awareness regarding the need that, regardless of whether they have a disability or not, individuals are seen in their differences, as well as in their real needs and potential* (our translation).

Margarida, in her narrative, reveals that this period has, on the one hand, served to deepen our reflections in view of the scenario that was designed this year. On the other hand, we have the clarity that given the possibilities that the pandemic does not choose color, race, religious creed, nations, homeland, countries, we are sure that we are not free from this catastrophe that has been plaguing the planet.

Rosa

Rosa, opens her narrative stating that it is not easy to live in:

> *The world we are living in today is not easy, even more, for a person with a physical disability who has difficulty getting around. These excerpts from the*

> *text, come in the form of a narrative of how my experience is facing these problems, in which the whole world is living, a pandemic due to the Covid-19 virus* (our translation).

In her narrative, Rosa, is frightened by the pandemic. In that sense, she points out:

> *At first I thought that maybe it was not all that people were talking about, since it was a reality distant from mine, after all the virus was in China, that at the end of 2019, I made so many plans, I idealized a better year in 2020, if I knew that the world would get into all this difficulty I would have asked for 2019 to start again. Well the year started and with it the virus was growing all over the world, and then it arrived in our country, I remained hopeful after all we had examples of how to proceed in the face of this disease, having as example other countries, sweet mistake* (our translation).

In his testimony she highlights that with:

> *the health crisis, the political crisis, faced with this context and with the numbers of cases raised came to quarantine and the prohibition to leave the house freely, a blow to me since I felt trapped inside the house without being able to go where I want because I have anxiety and with this isolation without being able to leave the house, the anxiety intensified, the concern with my parents who are already elderly and live far away, and with this impotence of not having a safe protection against this disease, they are making me have crises of deep sadness, and exacerbated nervousness, as a person who depends on others to do something inside the house and even outside it and not being able to do it the way I would like are affecting me emotionally, to not freak out I'm leaning on my Faith in Christ, I'm taking the opportunity to do something I wanted to do for a long time, read the whole Bible, reading has always done me good, I'm combining the useful with the pleasant!* (our translation).

Rosa, presents fear, anxiety and tension when expressing:

> *The social isolation we were subjected to prevented us being able to leave the house, not being able to see people, talking to a more distant friend personally is something unbearable for me, I am a person who needs to be with people, socialize, maybe because of years of my life at home without much social contact, you want to know the truth, this whole situation and this anxiety that I am going through in this quarantine I am reliving feelings that I lived in my childhood that I thought were overcome, but with a stressful situation they came back with renewed strength, even stronger than before, now I will have to have the strength to overcome this difficulty that in the face of others that the sick people are going through is small* (our translation).

The era we are living in has taken away the right to come and go for all people. Even though I'm not trapped, seized of freedom, we are advised to stay at home, to isolate ourselves, to withdraw with a common fear: the virus that has been plaguing the planet in recent months. In relation to People with Disabilities, this isolation seems to become even more pronounced, since we are less involved with the world wide web, we watch few films, we use less the cell phone on Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, we read less books, whose access for these subjects is more restricted.

In this narrative, the interviewee reveals that:

> *the lesson I learn from this whole situation is that we have to give more value to the simple things in life, it is not a material good that matters most, but the social relationships we live in, it is embracing, being with those we love and that every second matter in our life* (our translation).

In her written testimony, Rosa emphasizes that:

> *When this alleviates, as we will never return to normal, never again, I want to say everything that I didn't said, closely, eye to eye, from now on I want everyone to rethink my actions and see that what matters most is not the material good, but the good we do to others, happiness and love* (our translation).

Lírio

The subject begins his narrative, stating that:

> *the year 2020, started full of many expectations, dreams and personal, social and professional achievements. A new phenomenon has abruptly changed this expectation, since the disease's transmission capacity has posed physical and emotional challenges for the population, especially people with visual impairments.*

Thus, society, through measures of isolation, quarantine and social distance, proposes that people in a state of vulnerability stay away from social life. The person with disability expresses in his narrative the moments of uncertainty that we are living in times of pandemic, especially considering that he is visually impaired. Fear, insecurity, inability to react to the effects of the pandemic are present in the subject's written narrative, not only in relation to those who have disabilities, but also others who are in the risk group.

In our analysis, it is useful to note that the National Health Council (BRASIL, 2020) issued on 30 April 2020, Recommendation No. 31, measures with complementary emergency recommendations with the objective of guaranteeing the rights and social protection of People with Disabilities in the context of Covid-19, specifically postulating the rights regarding the care of People with Disabilities and rare diseases, which includes people with autism spectrum disorder.

> *Although a considerable number of People with Disabilities belong to the group at high risk for the New Corona Virus - due to the pre-existing diseases - the government has done little to provide the necessary guidance and support during the current pandemic.*

Lírio criticizes the public authorities when mentioning the few actions taken to subjects with disabilities, especially in relation to the protection of those subjects who are most vulnerable.

In his narrative, Lírio criticizes the current governmental system stating:

> *It is a fact that People with Disabilities in our country face greater difficulty in accessing health care due to the difficulty of mobility, lack of autonomy, inaccessibility of public transport and inaccessibility of information, among other attitudinal and physical barriers* (our translation).

In this narrative, Lírio criticizes public institutions, observing how badly they take care of their citizens, especially those who are at risk.

The social isolation caused by the pandemic, to which we were subjected has caused us astonishment, fear, insecurity, considering that even with freedom, we are trapped, prevented from moving freely, such as going to school, the club, the square, to the woods.

Lírio presents some difficulties of People with Disabilities, in the sense of moving around in social spaces that are not inclusive, stating that:

> *Containment measures, such as social distance and personal isolation, may be impossible for those who need the support of touch, the cane to get around. These obstacles that hinder the autonomy and independence of the Visually Impaired Person, have forced subjects with disabilities to be quarantined, isolated and distanced from people, including loved ones and family members. As for work, we seek to make our activities functional through remote services to avoid the maximum agglomerations, despite the lack of accessibility in these tools proposed for the development of our employment functions* (our translation).

The subject in his testimony weaves fierce criticisms of public management, denouncing its absence in protecting the most vulnerable, such as: subjects with visual impairment, who use their hands to recognize the spaces around them; deaf people, who do lip reading, but must wear protective masks; and individuals with physical disabilities, who use their hands to drive crutches and wheelchairs.

The visually impaired subject is insecure about the fear of Covid-19 contamination. Thus, he emphasizes: "*Furthermore, fear and insecurity permeate us, as we are aware of our vulnerabilities, we always seek to follow the protocol guidelines of the World Health Organization*" (our translation). The narrative of the subject with disabilities, while recognizing the WHO guidelines regarding the care with the New Corona Virus, says that People with Disabilities are still less protected than the others, since the spaces where we circulate are not accessible.

Regarding remote work, Lírio reveals the difficulty, as well as the insecurity, of these individuals with disabilities in relation to the digital platforms made available to exercise employment activities. When referring to visually impaired teachers, they face the same dilemma, giving classes in a totally virtual environment, given the inaccessibility of the systems, the lack of guidance on equipment that best meet the requirements for the filming of these classes, necessary structure as the webcam with automatic focus, among others necessary for these people to effectively have equal opportunities.

> *On the streets, the displacement of Visually Impaired People has become as risky as the disease itself, since people are now afraid to assist in crossing avenues, which represent a danger, since cities do not have sound signals. In these days when the mask has become a new normal, the vulnerability of visually impaired people is even more evident. When relating to the other, notably a stranger, these people do not know if they are using the accessory, if it is effective for their protection and the protection of the person who is using it* (our translation).

In his narrative, Lírio fears the virus, because it is not possible to know if the people around him are wearing protective equipment.

Lírio, in his testimony, makes several criticisms of the public power, highlighting its lack of commitment to the citizens. In this sense, he expresses:

> *In the relation to companies, notably public service concessionaires, there is little commitment, unwillingness, the absence of an institutional policy with these citizens. However, Visually Impaired People have felt the full weight of an absence of public policies aimed at effectively giving equal opportunity to these citizens. For this to happen, it is necessary that all people with or without disabilities mobilize, exert pressure on our constituted authorities, demonstrate to society that the main barrier to be removed is within each of its components* (our translation).

In a sociological perspective, we must emphasize that the daily routine, social isolation, the withdrawal at home that we are currently living in pandemic times, sometimes cause us a certain fear, considering that as human beings we were constituted to live in a group, interacting, dialoguing, communicating with our family, close friends, co-workers, in short, maintaining social coexistence.

Final Notes

The forced daily life that we are living in pandemic times, social isolation at home, the possibility to touch hands with the people we like, admire, love. The affectionate kiss on the face of those beings around us, the abstinence from the warm embrace at the moment of the encounter, [...] made us dive into a cold, different, very strange world, flanked by (Un)certainties; (Mis)trust; Hope(lessness).

As far as People with Disabilities are concerned, the phenomenon of social isolation seems to frighten us even more. This fear occurs, for example, in relation to subjects with visual impairment, considering that the knowledge of the spaces around us occurs through touch with the hands, since the world around us is not inclusive. When referring to deaf people who communicate only through lip reading, the masks put an end to their communication with listeners, or even with deaf colleagues.

With regard to subjects with physical disabilities, fear is also present, since they are supported by handrails, the subway bench, the collective armchair, doors, door handles... to move around in social spaces that are not inclusive. The fear of contaminating ourselves and others certainly contributes to our social isolation becoming even more pronounced. Although veiled, this fear is also registered because there are processes of discrimination among people, stereotypes and stigmas that are afraid of being infected.

In the planetary scenario, the strange situation that now draws bothers us, since in all times and spaces we encounter masked people, with faces, mouths, covered noses. We can no longer "see" the smile on our lips at the moment of (re)encounter, the cheerful countenance at dusk, the sparkle in our eyes at dawn.

Masks created barriers, walls, isolations between us and others; have moved us away from the people we like, admire and even love; the fear of this dreaded virus isolated us, made us colder; the need for social isolation has made us more individualistic, perhaps selfish.

When referring to Visually Impaired People, who by the way are the three authors of this manuscript, we are dressed literally by two masks. One because we are (un)provided with the imagery of the objects that hover in front of us. The other because the masks prevented us from approaching those we love in different times, such as children in orphanages, incarcerated people, participation in religious temples and elderly people in shelters.

Anyway, we are living in a "New Age", in the same time spaces, however, separated, isolated, distant from those we like, admire, even love. The year 2020 is making us different with strange behaviors, I don't know, more selfish, of course, not because we want to, but because the situation that is now being drawn on the planet has led us to this.

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