

TRANS* KNOWLEDGE IN NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITIES

SABERES TRANS* EM UNIVERSIDADES NORDESTINAS

TRANS* CONOCIMIENTO EN UNIVERSIDADES DEL NORESTE

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ABSTRACT: The purpose of this text is to analyze how the presence of trans* teachers in universities generates questions and destabilization of gender norms, triggering negotiations regarding the discussions and experiences of gender and sexualities in the higher education curriculum. In this text, initial analyzes were produced from the interviews with two trans* professors in 2018. These teachers face daily questions about the abjection of their bodies and the production of discourses of abnormality that make the struggle for rights more difficult, because they are also questioned in society about their humanities. Because they are people who have historically occupied the margins of society, their presence as teachers in Higher Education cause of questions, strangeness, with the potential for change. Even with all the obstacles, these professors trigger new learning patterns, value affection and celebrate the difference, working on a curriculum produced in daily resistances, in micropolitics, deviating from the guidelines of the macropolitics of education that seeks to produce controlled subjectivities.

KEYWORDS: Curriculum. University education. Gender norms. Trans* Professors.

RESUMO: O objetivo desse artigo é analisar como a presença de professoras trans* nas universidades gera questionamentos e desestabilizações às normas de gênero, desencadeando negociações no que se refere às discussões e vivências de gênero e sexualidades no currículo do ensino superior. Nesse texto, foram produzidas análises iniciais a partir das entrevistas realizadas com duas professoras trans* em 2018. Essas professoras enfrentam diariamente questões sobre a abjeção de seus corpos e a produção dos discursos de anormalidade por serem pessoas que historicamente ocuparam as margens da sociedade e suas presenças enquanto professoras no Ensino Superior são causadoras de questionamentos, estranhamentos, com potencial para mudanças. Mesmo com todos os obstáculos, essas professoras desencadeiam novos padrões de aprendizagem, valorizam a afetividade e celebram a diferença, trabalhando num currículo produzido nas resistências diárias, na micropolítica, se desviando das diretrizes da macropolítica da educação que busca produzir subjetividades controladas.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Currículo. Ensino superior. Normas de gênero. Professoras trans*.

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RESUMEN: *El propósito de este texto es analizar cómo la presencia de docentes trans* en las universidades genera preguntas y desestabiliza las normas de género, desencadenando negociaciones sobre las discusiones y experiencias de género y sexualidades en el plan de estudios de educación superior. En este texto, se produjeron análisis iniciales de las entrevistas con dos maestros trans* en 2018. Estos maestros enfrentan preguntas diarias sobre la abyección de sus cuerpos y la producción de discursos de anormalidad que dificultan la lucha por los derechos, porque también son cuestionado en la sociedad sobre sus humanidades. Debido a que son personas que históricamente han ocupado los márgenes de la sociedad, su presencia como docentes en la Educación Superior son la causa de preguntas, extrañezas, con potencial de cambio. Incluso con todos los obstáculos, estos maestros desencadenan nuevos patrones de aprendizaje, valoran el afecto y celebran la diferencia, trabajando en un plan de estudios producido en resistencias diarias, en micropolítica, desviándose de las pautas de la macropolítica de la educación que busca producir subjetividades controladas.*

PALABRAS CLAVE: *Currículum. Enseñanza superior. Normas de género. Profesoras trans*.*

Introduction

Transvestites, trans* men and trans* women that we do not know at work, at school, at the market, in life, may have been, in other times, in other spaces, silenced, ridiculed, assaulted, murdered or suicided: if we are surprised by this relationship between absence and violence, part of our pain will notice how the genocides naturalize the inexistence of certain groups in certain spaces (VIVIANE V.³, 2017, p. 111, our translation).

When YOU (cis people) kill our flesh, our spirit is long dead (DAMASCENA, 2017, p. 58, our translation).

We started this article talking about absences, lack of representation, violence, death, pain, words and situations very familiar to trans*⁴ people (transvestites, transsexuals, transgender people). The simple presence of these people in a public space awakens looks, as their bodies problematize hegemonic rules of sexuality and gender, which is why they are daily prevented from being in common spaces such as the school, supermarkets, streets, public buildings in the light of the day. To despise the trans* person is commonplace in our reality, common, acceptable, and hir⁵ absence in any space is not even noticed because hir presence causes discomfort. How many of us can remember a trans* body in school? Whatever your role (teacher, director, cleaning man, coordinator, student) at the university! Therefore, the choice to study these bodies that question, bodies that, by simple presence, subvert the norms under which we are well accommodated.

³ Citation according to book chapter.

⁴ The asterisk is added to the end of the word transforming the term trans into an umbrella term.

⁵ In the translation of this article, following the authors in the original language, we use a non-sexist language (zie/hir/hirs) as a way of demarcating all possibilities of existence not only feminine and masculine and, mainly, not to privilege the universal masculine language.

We started this article talking about absences, lack of representation, violence, death, pain, words, and situations very familiar to trans* people (transvestites, transsexuals, transgender people). The simple presence of these people in a public space awakens looks, as their bodies problematize hegemonic rules of sexuality and gender, which is why they are daily prevented from being in common spaces such as the school, supermarkets, streets, public buildings in the light of the day. To despise the trans* person is commonplace in our reality, common, acceptable, and his absence in any space is not even noticed because his presence causes discomfort. How many of us can remember a trans* body in school? Whatever your role (teacher, director, cleaning man, coordinator, student) at the university! Therefore, the choice to study these bodies that question, bodies that, by simple presence, subvert the norms under which we are well accommodated.

In our comfortable places of speech, because, unlike trans* people, our bodies are in accordance with the performance expected by society for the gender, being then seated in privileges and access to rights, because we never experience transphobia. However, because we are a black woman and a homosexual man, we belong to groups that are also historically subordinated, we can talk about our places, our limitations, based on our subjectivities, but we cannot limit ourselves to this, nor can we compare and hierarchize the sufferings, but we believe, as does Viviane V., author and transsexual scholar,

[...] that we should put aside our critical readings because 'there are people in worse situations than us', maybe on the contrary: these critical readings should become more potent from the empathetic and supportive interactions with whom we perceive to be in these worst situations - problematizing, even, the very idea of hierarchizing suffering, without that it means not looking at them critically, and intersectionally with other normative positions (VIVIANE V., 2015, p. 42, our translation).

As researchers, we can, like any other researcher, white, heterosexual, man, talk about anything, produce knowledge in the area in which I have authority, as well as trans* people. A text produced by links on the trans* issue will have a significant political weight, but links need not be limited to always producing knowledge in the area of gender and sexuality.

These “subjects of experience” (LARROSA, 2002), like us, like trans* teachers, are the ones who transform themselves, they are territories of passage. We are all subjects of the experience that occurs in the encounter, in the relationship between knowledge and human life, which makes sense in what happens to us, even if the events are unique and the individual experiences, the knowledge of the other changes us (LARROSA, 2002). To be touched by

experience is to talk about the trans* experience without necessarily having gone through it, for the sake of political conscience, for being touched by the pain of others (BENTO, 2008).

Especially in Brazil, the country that kills the most transvestites and transsexuals in the world (BENTO, 2017), where the first contact of a transvestite or transsexual with society is through violence, many, precociously from their very family, others at school and in other social institutions, which historically have been denying them space and visibility (BENEVIDES, 2018). The Northeast is the region of Brazil with the highest concentration of murders in 2018, with 59 cases out of a total of 163, according to the Dossier: murders and violence against Transvestites and Transsexuals in Brazil in 2018, organized by ANTRA (Brazilian National Association of Transvestites and Transsexuals) (BENEVIDES; NOGUEIRA, 2018).

Thus, this article presents the trans* universe (transsexuals, transvestites and transgenders) in university spaces, having as object the curriculum of educational spaces occupied by trans* teachers in northeastern universities, in order to unveil their sociability, resistance and subjection to the heterosexual norms, starting from their narratives and observing the spaces of interactions with students, as a way to contemplate the diversity present in education. Also focusing on the experiences of these trans* teachers who, despite the exclusions of which they are hostage daily, manage to survive in the center and not in the margins of society.

In this discussion, trans* people stand out for presenting the marks of disobedience to gender norms on their bodies. Gender is understood, as in Butler (2014), as the apparatus in which the production of the feminine and masculine materializes with physical and performative forms that it assumes, including also the permutations of gender that do not fit into the binarism (feminine-masculine) and understanding trans* bodies as expressions of identity which break the historical, social and cultural limits established for gender. Bodies that problematize male/female dysmorphism, heterosexuality and the idealizations of female and male instituted by gender norms that attribute humanity to bodies (BENTO, 2008).

In a large part of the literature on transgender people, one can find a history of rejection from both family, school and society, with prostitution as the main way out. However, this is not the only destiny of trans* people, some have conquered the possibility of living in the center, no longer on the margins of society. Somehow, they found mechanisms to overcome the entire potentially exclusionary social environment.

In recent research (REIDEL, 2013; FRANCO, 2014), it was found that the presence of trans* teachers in the classroom, in basic education, brings some panic to the school, as these bodies would be “unreliable” to serve as an example to children and young people, making

them unsuitable for the profession. It was also found that the trans* presence instigates productive debates with students, allowing dialogues without hiding their sexual and gender belonging.

The higher education universe is also an inhospitable environment for trans* students (DIAS; CARVALHO; OLIVEIRA, 2016; FRANCO, 2014), because, on their bodies, they are repeatedly imposed on the regulatory norms of gender, for carrying out gender swaps that do not fit female/male binarism. In reality, the school space, whether basic education or higher education, is a place so difficult for trans* people to endure that few are able to survive and surpass it. According to Andrade (2012), school remains a dream, and prostitution is a real experience. This is also why a large part of the research carried out with this public ends up referring to prostitution or, consequently, to health problems arising from the profession (BENEDETTI, 2005; PELÚCIO, 2009). It is not possible to deny the great contribution of works like these, but it is necessary that they address other areas of experience and survival of trans* people, under the risk of stigmatizing them and focusing on prostitution as the only possible territory of life to be inhabited by trans* people. Otherwise, there will be an immobilization of trans* identities that have gradually been inserted in different social and professional contexts, such as, for example, university teaching.

In the last few years, an increasing number of academic works with the theme of gender and sexualities are perceived, including addressing trans* people. One of the causes of increased interest in the theme is due, according to Bento (2014), to the increasing presence of trans* people at the university, in undergraduate, postgraduate courses or as professors.

The amount of research on the trans* universe in the area of education has recently increased, focusing mainly on research, mostly with students. It shows the difficulty found by trans* people in staying at school, as reported in the studies, but which have also shown the construction of strategies of resistance and curricular subversions to remain in school spaces, especially in more recent years, where they have achieved a greater schooling, which allowed the emergence of a few jobs that are already beginning to research trans* teachers, constituting a great differential, as it places the trans* person on the other side of educational activities.

This article was produced from the ongoing thesis using preliminary analyzes. Interviews with two trans* teachers from northeastern public universities, held in 2018 and 2019, were used. As a way of safeguarding identities, the teachers were given fictitious names of orixás, for being adept at religions of African origin, Oxum and Iansã.

Curriculum in the Teaching of Trans* People

One of the great contributions of this article is the discussion about the deconstruction of identities that imprison subjects in fixed patterns of existence, bringing the possibility that transgressions and deviations are viable and possible places to be. In this way, it is possible to reframe the curriculum as a space also for difference and to understand it as a producing part in this new process. (ULJENS, 2016; RUDD; GOODSON, 2016; FINO, 2016; KOVACS; TINOCA, 2017; MOREIRA; SILVA JÚNIOR, 2016; MORGADO, 2016; PACHECO; SOUSA, 2016; PEDRO, 2017; SOUSA, 2016).

Recognizing, then, that the school and other spaces dedicated to education can be a place of changes in the issues of body, gender and sexualities, and understanding its importance in this process, it is necessary to understand the importance of the curriculum in this process (PINTO; CARVALHO; RABAY, 2017; SILVA, 2017; VIEIRA; RAMALHO; VIEIRA, 2017).

In the post-critical perspective, it is possible to say that the curriculum implies a question of power, as it results from choices, and selecting is a form of power. It also implies a subjectivity issue, as it suggests a selection of knowledge to form the type of person that is considered ideal (SILVA, 2005). This selection of the type of ideal subjectivity denotes the power that circulates in curriculum issues, and it is precisely the power that will differentiate traditional, critical and post-critical curriculum theories. Traditional theories claim to be neutral theories, accept the status quo and dominant knowledge, focusing on technical issues. Critical and post-critical theories seek to know why the selection of one knowledge over another, the reason for a subjectivity model.

We then started to question the subjectivities of characters already very familiar as women, men, children, homosexuals, students and suspend the unhistorical naturalness doubting the certainties of the representation systems that define identity and difference. Nor do they put in place ideal and perfect models of “being”, nor immutable principles of what is right to do, “nor do they standardize human conduct, anchoring them in secure truths or rational grounds” (CORAZZA, 2001, p. 56, our translation). Thus, we started to find strangeness in the identities and practices that imprison us, to discover the processes of subjectification in the domain of knowledge-power.

The school, like other institutional spaces, produces a curriculum that reproduces the hegemonic values of society. Bento (2011) advises us to broaden our look at the way gender behaviors are sanctioned, about how truths are produced and what is silenced, about which

sexuality is produced as normal and how gender and sexuality are articulated to social reproduction. In this sense, we realize that this problem cannot be answered or solved within the school. There is a machinery to produce normal bodies that extrapolates the school space, "but which finds fertile ground for dissemination in this space" (BENTO, 2011, p. 556, our translation).

The production of knowledge and education are carried out in a heterosexist perspective, which presupposes heterosexuality for all, as well as being a "neutral and scientific" knowledge, that is, we must suspect that it was produced in a white, male, western, heterosexual and christian perspective. (MISKOLCI, 2015).

This whole process of producing heteronormatives ends up alienating trans people from school. Thus, we note a low education level of trans people, if among trans* people 21.5% declared that they only had elementary education, only 6.1% of homosexual men and 5.2% of homosexual women also did this. The relative low level of education of the trans* person is also revealed by the fact that they are the only 2 respondents who said they had no education. In addition, while 60.5% of homosexual men reported having higher education or postgraduate education, only 27.9% of trans* people did so. (CARRARA, 2006).

According to the Map of Transvestite and Transsexual Murders in Brazil in 2017, 13 years is the average age when transvestites and transsexuals are expelled from home by their parents. About 0.02% are in universities, 72% have not completed high school and 56% have not completed elementary school.

The education of trans* people, as shown in the surveys above, is always at a disadvantage. This seems to point to greater difficulties in maintaining regular education. Heteroterrorism (BENTO, 2011) seems to have a stronger impact on bodies that reject the gender imposed at birth and, therefore, present transgressive and unexpected performances for their bodies.

In the reports of Megg Rayara Gomes de Oliveira (2017), a black transvestite, who brings in her book "*O diabo em forma de gente: (r)existências de gays afeminados, viados e bichas pretas na educação*" (The devil in the form of people: (r)existences of effeminate gays, fags and black fags in education), the account of her academic life, as a black fag, she warns that it is not any homosexual who is the victim of discrimination, but almost always those who have effeminate ways, who have peripheral masculinities. She also tells of the difficulties to complete Basic Education:

I grew up hearing from many adults that school did not fill anyone's belly. That I should get a job to support myself and help with household expenses. From the age of 14, I started to take responsibility for enrolling in school and to do what I could to get school supplies. At 17, I started studying at night and tried to reconcile school and work. Only at the age of 19 did I had access to formal work with a formal contract and regular salary. [...] Between leaving and returning from school, I managed to “finish my studies” at the age of 21. I became the first person in the family to accomplish this feat (OLIVEIRA, 2017, p. 215-216, our translation).

This report by Megg reminds us of the difficulties encountered by a large part of the Brazilian black population, who study in schools of poorer quality, with a higher failure rate and school delay, as she makes clear in the book, aggravated by her deviant sexuality. She reports that being able to take a higher education course was beyond expectations for her reality and made the course with the least competition possible, public and with evening classes. During her teaching internship, she envisioned the possibility of returning to the classroom, now as a teacher. “Going back to school represented a reckoning with the past. I was not as vulnerable as I was in childhood and adolescence. The black flag migrated from the dark corners of the school, from the back of the classroom to the teacher's table” (OLIVEIRA 2017, p. 217, our translation). Megg, upon becoming a teacher, now sees the possibility of positively interfering in the lives of black students and fagots.

Megg reveals that the school has changed very little and continues to reproduce racist and homophobic discourses, demonstrating how inadequate the presence of these bodies in the school space is.

Homophobic and racist speeches are renewed and are on the agenda of a school. The gender identity and sexual orientation of the teachers are in the sights of countless normatizing and normalizing processes. Teaching practice is treated as exclusivity for white heterosexual cis people (OLIVEIRA, 2017, p. 225, our translation).

And in recent years, we have seen an increase in the acceptance of homophobic discourses in various institutions, but mainly in schools. In Brazil, in recent years, we have experienced a major attack on studies, policies and measures aimed at equality and freedom of genders and sexuality, which have been arbitrarily called “gender ideology”⁶. There is an

⁶ It is a phrase forged to operate as a political weapon, as a rhetorical, metadiscursive, parodic and reactionary device. A device that, on the one hand, acts to contain or cancel the critical and emancipatory potential of feminism and gender studies and to delegitimize actors and claims based on them. On the other hand, it gives rise to the valuation, accumulation and recovery of social and political capital by the traditionalist and ultra-conservative sectors - especially the ecclesiastical field, interested in maintaining and expanding its influence, including in themes and spaces that are not strictly religious or that, in secular societies, should not be religious, like education and public health (JUNQUEIRA, 2017, p. 56, our translation).

invasion, mainly in the internet media, of videos, comments, messages in an aggressive tone that are generally against the guidelines of the LGBTQI⁷ population, in the justification of valuing the traditional family.

An example of this setback that we have been experiencing was the removal of references to the term “gender” from the final text of the National Education Plan - PNE -, based on the pressure from religious and conservative sectors of society against the “gender ideology” that they refuse to think of gender relations and sexuality outside the religious framework, as well as the election of several parliamentarians and the President of the Republic himself supporting these guidelines.

Adriana Lohanna's account brings some similarities to that of Megg because she also, only in the majority, assumed her transsexuality, experiencing homophobia strongly in the school environment of basic education, always referring to the school as a “hell”, experiencing naturalized violence against your body. When she came into her transsexuality, as an adult, she suffered transphobia at university.

Lohanna told us that she felt like an “extraterrestrial” being at the university, at the beginning of her formation in Social Work. She sat in the first front seat, in the corner of the room, waiting for the prejudice, because “everyone left their classrooms to be able to see the animal, the tranny, the transvestite, the foreign body that was at the university” (LOHANNA), also reverberating living together in her own classroom. When doing group work, the students got together and she was always alone, because nobody wanted to join that “strange” being (DIAS; CARVALHO; OLIVEIRA, 2016, p. 150, our translation).

On her return to school, as a teacher of basic education, she realized that little changed in relation to homo/transphobia when she experienced a case in which the school administration penalized the student x victim of transphobic aggression, for coming to school with a wig and lipstick, in the place of the aggressor, who was not even taken to the direction. But now she stands with the Board in favor of the battered student and talks about the importance of discussing gender and sexuality at school and the need for the teacher to have a broad education also in these issues (DIAS; CARVALHO; OLIVEIRA, 2016; SILVA; LEME; JAEHN, 2019).

In this article, it was also important to note how much the label of a transsexual person disturbs, since, upon discovering her transsexual status, the school soon tried to remove her from school with a transfer to a distant school. Moving her away from her class in the middle of the school year, “She senses that her body is not even perceived as “trans*”, so it would not

⁷ Lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transvestites and transsexuals, queers and intersexuals.

be the body that creates the strangeness, but the word transsexual and the political label of the transsexual person” (DIAS; CARVALHO; OLIVEIRA, 2016, p. 155, our translation).

It is important to realize that the situation of homo/transphobia is also repeated in universities, presenting themselves as environments that produce and reproduce practices that establish heterosexuality as the only legitimate possibility of normal sexuality and the students' framing in the dominant gender norms (DIAS; CARVALHO; OLIVEIRA, 2016; FRANCO, 2014).

In the research carried out with trans* teachers in Basic Education, Franco (2014) found that the presence of these teachers provoked questions about gender norms and the hegemonic principles of heteronorm, intentionally or not, since it is “a generifying body (trans*) in the classroom, that is, one who, even in front of the other and without saying a word, is able to introduce the sexual understanding of oneself” (WAGNER, 2017, p. 61, our translation).

In Franco's research (2014), it was clear that the fact that they are trans* teachers triggered discussions about gender and sexualities, because their bodies carry marks that highlight the possibility of gender construction. Speaking of your research that was carried out in Basic Education, in this research, in a Higher Education environment, we can also raise the same question.

In this regard, Iansã, a professor at a public university, believes that her presence in the classroom already makes a difference, since it already represents what she calls “collective transgression”, that contact with this experience would deconstruct and denaturalize the assumptions they carry, building new concepts of body, person, humanity, gender and other issues, even though she does not focus on gender issues in the classroom, as it is not her central content, although it crosses the discipline in different ways. However, she comments that she does perceive some strange looks,

Especially because they do not expect that this person who was not designated socio-culturally, is not symbolized to be in that place teaching, producing knowledge and doing the education process, especially in the health field where they understand that the body is vagina and penis, what defines the body is vagina and penis which is this binary view (IANSÃ, 2018, our translation).

It would be as if these looks were reminding her of her place of “non-humanity”, of abjection, a threat to the good social functioning of the university, but that they did not come to confront her. She adds that, in the classroom, she has not encountered resistance, she always participates in the proposed activities, she has not imposed barriers and she has not felt discriminated against at any time. I also believe that these looks already bring the first signs of

questioning the gender norms, of problematization and strangeness of this body occupying a space that is historically and socially occupied by “normal” bodies.

However, as we have already seen, the university environment is not exempt from transphobia, at least in the relationship between students. Does the hierarchical relationship (teacher/student) prevent the demonstration of prejudice? Since there are dissertations such as those by Delphino Scote (2017) and Santos (2018) that bring reports of trans* students who suffered transphobias in universities by other students:

The reports on prejudice within the university context are less incisive than those existing in primary and secondary schooling, but they exist, and both are related, since my interlocutors showed the fear that the university would reproduce the same prejudices and exclusions that felt in the school phase (DELPHINO SCOTE, 2017, p. 139, our translation).

When I walk inside the UFS, they point at me, they laugh at me, there were people who said that there is no place for me, that the trans and transvestite place is on the street, prostituting themselves, so for me this is very strong, very sad because we know, there is no such thing as you being trans and not going, of course there is that most of them are on the street prostituting themselves, but we have to occupy here too to show them that we also have the right to occupy that space (VINY *apud* SANTOS, 2017, p. 46, our translation).

Iansã herself tells us about a case of transphobia suffered by a trans* student at the university where she works. She says that the student was asked by her teacher if, during the internship, she would attend the patients dressed like that and presenting herself as a woman, a fact that led the student to “give up” the course. Just as there are several other trans* people who are expelled from formal education by the disrespects to their identity, in this case, coming from a person in a higher position than hers.

A fact that should lead us to question whether there was really no transphobia with the teachers, of his/her students, due to the relationship of respect generated by the hierarchy. If that position, teacher, and student, does generate a relationship in which, in these cases, openness to the discussion of gender can make all the difference. So, wouldn't just the presence of a trans* body bring the necessary understanding about the naturalization of gender inequalities? Generating questions and destabilizing gender norms, if so, shouldn't it also occur in the presence of the bodies of trans* students from undergraduate programs? Was there anything more in this relationship?

In our society, knowledge is an instrument to legitimize the power of those who “hold it”, that is, the student/teacher relationship is regulated by this relationship, in which the knowledge of the teacher is prioritized over knowledge of the student, who gives some

privileges to the teacher. However, we have already seen that, in the case of the teachers in this research, they have a relationship of joint production of knowledge with students. A concern to produce a space for discussion and, at the same time, that all diversities are welcomed.

For Platero and Langarita (2016), only the presence of a LGBT teacher is not enough to establish transformative pedagogies. It would be necessary for the teacher to carry out a reflective and critical exercise on sexual diversity and gender identity, but they add that their presence is important because they offer other references for students who do not identify with the hegemonic pattern. And if the presence of the trans* body does not in itself cause major changes, it is at least a cause for questioning, strangeness, with the potential for change. In this regard, Berenice Bento, in an interview with *Revista Coletiva*, Dias and Bento (2016), believes that the trans* presence is a micro-resistance with the potential to change mentality and culture, because the fact of realizing that a trans* person is occupying a place, never before imagined, puts in check normative stereotypes that always try to position them in subordination.

Franco (2014) concludes in the thesis that the presence of trans* teachers in school, since they are considered people who should be on the margins of society, destabilizes the hegemonic norms of gender and sexuality. From this perspective, it is clear that both Oxum and Iansã brought questions to the universities in which they teach, because their bodies also caused diverse strangeness, either with students, when they asked about if they should use the feminine to refer to the teacher, when they asked for explanations about her gender; either with teachers, when they try to delegitimize their presence at the university, or when they offer support and partnership in the face of their transition.

Whether intentionally or not, the questions arise and trigger destabilization of previous knowledge guided by the hegemonic discourse of the heteronorm, because trans* bodies bear the mark of the evident construction of genres, destabilizing the preconceived ideas about the naturalization of genres. Since, in social life, most of us obey the standards, we adhere to the “hegemonic identity marketing” (FURLANI, 2009, p. 321) of the subjects considered normal. So, people who rise up and resist these impositions, show the possibility of escaping regulation. Trans* experiences at the university are produced in the abjection, in the territory of disgust, of abnormality, as they put cis production in check, as a disturbance of the “natural” order. The presence of the trans* body brings an important political demarcation in spaces that are not considered "common" for links, therefore, the importance of increasingly occupying the market, the school, clubs, universities, nightclubs; in short, to see hir occupying the city during the day and not just in the dark corners, where society thinks he belongs.

About these stereotypes, Oxum adds that he faces other pressures in his academic career, such as the pressure to research and work with the content of gender and sexuality because of his trans* performance. The two teachers have in common the fact that the gender crosses their research and disciplines in a very conscious way, but it is not enough to be the central point, as they explain:

I have always researched biology teaching, but I bring a place of speech that will question gender positions, that will question dichotomies, but I do not want to be defined as a gender researcher, this is kind of denying the whole story I have been building as a researcher in the field of Biology teaching, so, although she touch the theme, I think, but there's even pressure, I even joke that, in the past, trans women had to be prostitutes, now they have to be gender researchers, (laughs), I say "my research is self-knowledge in science teaching", I think that through the look of self-knowledge I can think of diversity, be it gender, race, or different ways of thinking about socializing (OXUM, 2018, our translation).*

I do not talk about gender, my main object of study is comprehensive care, when I started to study gender, sexuality and race and the issues of racism, to be able to teach my classes because in this subject, Health, Care and Quality of Life has in the menu a demand for an approach to this theme, so that is when I started to immerse myself to be able to deal with the discipline's approach and then I started to realize the importance (IANSÃ, 2018, our translation).

Oxum stresses that her position as a subject made it possible to perceive gender as an important study marker in her area, as it crosses the major theme of her research, as well as other categories of analysis such as race. Iansã realized the need to know and study gender in order to teach an undergraduate course, but Oxum makes clear her displeasure with the imposition of stereotypes in the academy, such as the obligation to study gender because she is a trans* person.

Jesus (2017) corroborates Oxum's statement when stating that there is a whole production, in addition to the gender theme, which is ignored and adds that there is also transphobia in relation to the content produced by trans* people in the academy, "it is normal for people not being interested, not reading, or when they do, they repeat our thoughts and contributions, but they do not even mention our names", so their productions and those of other colleagues are commonly invisible in the academy.

The teachers claim that gender is not the main content nor is the subject of their research. However, this discussion has an important role in their practices, as they recognize the importance of the theme both for their lives and for the teaching activity.

*[...] the experience as a teacher gave me, for example, reading George Canguilhem, *The Normal and the Pathological*, I deconstructed a series of assumptions about what was normal, because until then I also thought that I was pathological, these theoretical immersions of knowledge in the field of interdisciplinarity helped me a lot, in this sense, to strengthen me and to find some of them and to make this decision of my identity construction, from me, from my experience of what I did (IANSÃ, 2018, our translation).*

Based on this new knowledge, she started to interpret herself in a different way and it is important to highlight that it was her teaching practice that gave her a new meaning in her experiences. It also motivated her to create a Gender and Sexuality Studies Laboratory and to bring the positive experiences of this group to the classroom. Oxum also comments that her personal processes (studies, therapies, etc.) helped her in the classroom, including welcoming students, addressing issues such as gender and race and how to make her classes a welcoming space. Both make their classes spaces for collective discussion, for deconstructing the dominant education “which presents heterosexuality as a hegemonic, compulsory and indisputable identity” (FURLANI, 2009, p. 320, our translation).

Trans knowledge at the university

These teachers built methodologies in a different way, concerned with the way they teach, how their students understand the content, but not only that, concerned that they themselves produce meanings in learning, concerned with the way that the resources used “touch and mark the subjects of education” (FURLANI, 2009, p. 321, our translation). About her methodologies, Iansã states:

[...] I can say that my methodologies have always been a little different from the traditional models for approaching content and themes, I have always tried to bring art to problematize health care issues and that I think that is already a way of thinking outside the cisgenerity system, because thinking that the system is very standardized, very capitalist [...] (IANSÃ, 2019, our translation).

Their methodologies are looking for critical interventions, an “attempt to demonstrate how the production of normality is intentional, historical, political and, therefore, unstable, contingent and changeable” (FURLANI, 2009, p. 316, our translation). In this regard, Oxum adds:

To educate is not only to propose content: The problem is the colonizing look that we impose on the educational process [...] education is a process of socialization, but within a parameter, it is to bring the values of society, but we need to break with that, I think education is helping people to meet, to find

their specificities, and to make their specificities their truths, their paths, their strengths (OXUM, 2018, our translation).

This is because learning is something that escapes us, a process that we have no control over, despite our pretension, “[...] you never know in advance how someone will learn - what loves make someone good in Latin, through which meetings you become a philosopher, in which dictionaries you learn to think” (DELEUZE *apud* GALLO, 2002, p. 174, our translation). The teacher proposes to escape from the content methodology and not only be tied to the course plans proposed for the discipline, as she understands the educational process as something bigger that includes the student in full.

During the interview, the teacher also makes it clear that, in her process of personal growth and discovery, she built a path that helped her to establish methodological paths that help her to better access her students.

[...] these days I even had some very pleasant moments in the Didactics classes, that they are doing 5-minute seminars, they have to teach a 5-minute class, on the theme they wanted, which was to relax a little bit, it was at the beginning of the course and such and then one of the students said: “my class is about what it means to be a poc”, because poc is fag poc, that fag that is more loose, then I said like that, good having a class with a student who feels comfortable bringing this theme and it was 5 minutes of class and that student spent 2 minutes crying, 2 minutes crying and that seemed natural to me, to the colleagues, to him, so that emotion flowed, nobody was policing themselves, nobody was embarrassed, it's an emotion, which is part of that human being, that he doesn't have to be ashamed of it, he has to put it out, then after he spent the 2 minutes crying, he said what he wanted to say, gave his message, we closed it, then at the end we had all the time to rescue these issues and to talk about it, it was super beautiful (OXUM, 2018, our translation).

The teacher values her students' individual experiences, understanding and respecting their feelings and affection. She works, respects and values knowledge that has always been excluded from the academy, in a different posture than traditionally found in the academy, markedly content driven and indifferent to the students' personal issues. Note that the issues of gender and sexuality end up appearing in her classes in a natural way, because, in addition to her presence, as trans* person, she also presents an opening for the theme.

[...] Today, in my classes, so today I know what to do with the student's feeling in the classroom, that my technical formation had taught me to help the student to build a methodology, a teaching strategy, only I didn't looked at this student I looked at methodology and teaching strategy, when I started looking at myself in a deeper way, in a more structured way and with the experience of the therapeutic process, with the experience of self-knowledge courses I can already use these tools with students, I did several formation in the area of coach, various formations in the area of holistic therapy, various

formations, in short, in these fields in the area of self-knowledge that help me to dialogue with the human being in a more fulfilling way when in class, I think that makes all the difference in the teaching process itself (OXUM, 2018, our translation).

We can see that, in these experiences, the teachers seek a broader sense of education, not only learning the content of the subjects, but an exchange of experiences, a joint construction of knowledge and the valorization of the complete human being, together with their experiences, feelings, morality, that contemplates all its subjectivity. We see that, in these curricula, understanding curriculum just like Corazza (2002) and Silva (2005), with the objective of building subjectivities with a critical view of knowledge, the power relations between teacher and student shift as the learning needs shift.

Oxum also says that there are very conservative evangelical students, but that they are respected in the classroom, in their beliefs and also respect, the respect is mutual.

[...] as soon as that story about the future president's speech about the school without a party came out, I had a class with the group of Didactics of that semester, then one of the students stayed at the end and said: "beware, some people here are not open-minded, and this story of the school with no party for the student to film the class, be careful that he doesn't harm you", but I said to him "boy this person you are talking about is one of the people, he does have his blocks, but he is one of the people who opens up the most in the classroom, he is one of the people who is most present in the activities, so I am not afraid of what this student can do, you know?" because I think that when we give space to others to position themselves, these things do not happen, I may be mistaken, but, I do not want to be naive in that sense, but I have positioned myself that way in my classes, giving this space for us to change, regardless of the diversity that is there (OXUM, 2018, our translation).

This could be one of the reasons why the teachers did not suffer transphobia on the part of students, due to their postures, sensitivity, structure and preparation for the classroom, the result of their personal process of self-knowledge, reframing their experiences from contact with texts on gender and sexuality. A curriculum produced in daily resistance, in micropolitics, deviating from the guidelines of the macropolitics of education that seeks to produce controlled subjectivities, to manufacture individuals in series. "Policies, parameters and guidelines for higher education are always telling us what to teach, who to teach, why to teach" (GALLO, 2002, p. 174, our translation).

Teachers put into practice what Silvio Gallo (2002) calls minor education, not minor in value, but that occurs in the classroom's micro-relationships, a micro-policy, a "revolt against the instituted flows, resistance to the imposed policies [...]. Classroom as a space from which we outline our strategies, we establish our activism" (GALLO, 2002, p. 173, our translation),

in addition to macro educational policies, producing a singular curriculum, a curriculum of difference. These micro-resistances have an influence on social macro-relations. Thus, Oxum, in valuing when the student brings his experiences as a “fag poc” as content to the classroom, is subverting the guidelines of the macro policy that contributes to the biopolitical project of body control education, making the cisheterosexual pedagogical process work, which is silent about marginal subjectivities. Minor education is the escape from these instituted norms. However, with this, there no intention to establish new educational models, to propose herself as an example, nor to impose solutions, but to make connections visible, “make rhizome with students” (GALLO, 2002, p. 175, our translation), between students and with teachers who want this partnership.

However, in these crossings, Oxum also tells us that she went through problems and disappointments after her transition, when she observed a different treatment on the part of her students because they saw her as a woman.

[...] Then I realized that the fact that they saw me as a woman made me be run over more easily and they made decisions the way they thought, when I realized it I said, wow how frustrating and I understood how this building of women as being to be run over is a horrible thing in our society, which was something I didn't know, which was very aggressive for me, then I brought it to the class: “I always worked with this discipline, I never had these problems, the only difference since then is the fact that now I introduce myself as a woman, is the group so sexist for these things to continue?” (OXUM, 2018, our translation).

In other passages, Oxum also tells of the difference in treatment when she started to present herself as a woman, the oppression she started to feel, the devaluation of her opinion and feeling that her speech was constantly run over. She began to feel the oppression of sexism that she previously did not realize existed about women.

With this passage, we realized that gender relations were built in our society, in which the masculine principle is the measure of things (BOURDIEU, 2014), and that the biological was taken as a starting point for socialization, and “the woman she was socially covered with fragility and dependence, perceived and constituted as fragile, women needed to be protected and controlled” (LOURO, 2004a, p. 454, our translation). Since her main function was motherhood and caring for the home, the professions which became feminized, like the Teaching and Nursing, started to have feminine characteristics such as submission, selflessness, availability, humility and sacrifice.

Hence, several other stereotypes arise, such as the idea that female teachers would be “nice” and male teachers would be more rigorous. The understanding of how women have

occupied classrooms over the years has been permeated by gender relations, with spaces provided for men and women. “Discourses charged with feeling about genders explained (explain) how women and men constituted (constitute) their subjectivities” (LOURO, 2004b, p. 478, our translation). Such gender representations help to perpetuate rigid ideas and attitudes about the sexes, but which have been undergoing transformations in Western societies and becoming more flexible and teachers have been constituting themselves by transforming or rejecting such representations, just like Oxum, by rejecting, questioning and reflecting with her students about this difference in treatment based on gender.

Another issue that deserves to be remembered is the fear in the criticisms made about the presence of diversity and difference in education, for a fear that the people who support diversity and difference will want to replace the white, cis/hetero, patriarchal, western knowledge dictatorship by another dictatorship. Although, according to Hooks (2017), in every transition period there are mistakes, confusions,

If we are afraid of being wrong, of making mistakes, if we are constantly evaluating ourselves, we will never transform the academy into a culturally different place, where both academics and what they study encompass all dimensions of this difference. (HOOKS, 2017, p. 49, our translation).

In postmodernity, characters that transgress gender and sexuality are very emblematic, but do not pose themselves as a new ideal of subjects. They do not want to establish a project to be followed, nor to produce themselves as a reference. The visibility and materiality of these subjects highlights the invented, cultural and unstable character of identities (LOURO, 2015, LYRA STRAPASSON, 2009).

Given this reality, their bodies are constantly monitored and in constant need to demonstrate that they are competent, to compensate for their trans* status, showing too much knowledge in their areas. They exercise a pedagogy “that is constantly monitored in voice, competence and body” (REIDEL, 2013, p. 103, our translation). In this regard, Oxum (2019) clarifies that she did not perceive these control and surveillance mechanisms among her peers during graduation, but that, in postgraduate school, where she is also a professor at this same university, whenever she gets involved in heated debates, some colleagues call her by the masculine as a form of retaliation, a way to silence her voice, as if to show her that her body does not fit in that space, even though they always apologizes for the form of treatment.

In view of the discussions held so far, signs of destabilization, gender and sexuality negotiations, new methodologies, partnerships, possibilities for the circulation of new discourses, were present in the narratives of the two trans professors from northeastern

universities. Despite the obstacles faced in their career as teachers, both bring experiences of success and professional recognition. In these curricula, we find spaces built for clashes and debates on the order of gender and sexuality with possibilities for building respect for differences. (DIAS; MENEZES, 2017; DIAS *et al.* 2017; DIAS, 2014).

Final considerations

In these considerations, which are still far from final, we bring a little of the initial questions. From the constant contact with oppression, understanding and perceiving the suffering of racial, sexist and homophobic prejudice. But one of the things learned in the short time spent with these teachers, whether in literature, in person, or virtually, is to know the place of the cis subject and understand the importance of representativeness in the academy.

Thus, it was discussed here not about trans* teachers, but with trans* teachers about the curriculum of their universities, about overcoming the homogeneous view of their existence, always trying not to steal the protagonism of their experiences, without underestimating what they talk about themselves and their teaching.

It is also important to make it clear that there is no intention in this work to speak of a model of trans* teacher, as we have clearly seen that there are factors that unite them, of course, but each has built their subjectivities, individualities from their experiences that are unique. The panorama is already starting to change, even if slowly, trans* people are beginning to appear as potent, transgressive subjects, despite the environment still adverse to the difference that is the school/university. Therefore, the importance of studies in which subordinates appear as protagonists and not as victims of their stories.

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