# Erased bodies in the university space: autoethnography as a form of visibility

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## Abstract

*It is commonplace to think that the university space is that of a docile body ideology for the reception of the diversity of bodies and that individuals who have been inserted and are maintained in this space are absent from symbolic violence. It is up to us to ask what are the mechanisms of this (in)visibilization perceived and experienced by us? Here we bring a study based on two autoethnographies of individuals who enter the university space and bring the memories of the collection of this symbolic violence in the attempt of intellectual performance in the world. Our autoethnographies were done separately and, later, read and discussed for analytical amplification. Thus, based on these two autoethnographies, we carried out the analysis that culminated in the reflection of three main axes: 1) experience and the impossibility of. The point that brings the reflection about our experience inside and in relation to the academic context and about the constant processes of (in)visibilization perceived and experienced by us; 2) Docile bodies, experiences, beings, and knowledge in which we reflect the violence of the university environments in an attempt to frame; and 3) For a democratic, critical, dissident and resistance education in which we seek the resumption of the idea of democratic educational possibilities as a starting point for the real autonomy of individuals. In*

*conclusion, we believe that the university space, with its main framework in rationality, can benefit from our critique for an exercise of self-criticism about bodies in dissidence and production of knowledge.*

**Keywords**: *LGBT+ at university; LGBT+ autoethnography; LGBT+ (in)visibility; LGBT autobiography; queer pedagogy*

## Introduction

We are all social beings. This is a phrase that, especially in recent times that has appeared almost as jargon. However, it is an established fact, not only from a common-sense perspective but also from an epistemological one. From this process of relationality, several other processes follow. If we assume a more "popular" position, we can remember Freud and his conceptualization of defense mechanisms - which would be reactive manifestations of the ego before the expression of other psychic instances, namely the id and the superego. The various branches of psychology point to nine, fifteen, and even eighteen different mechanisms. However, focusing on the orthodox Freudian theory and directing our analysis to the perspective of relationality. Thus, we bring the mechanism known as projection, by which people project something of themselves onto the external world. This is mainly onto other people that make up their social interaction and do not realize that the projected element is something of theirs that they consider undesirable and that. In essence, without their understanding it causes them discomfort in the other person.[1]

Heterotopia is a concept inaugurated by Michel Foucault, which will also hold its own in relational development. Although little known - precisely because it has been little brought into his works - heterotopia is a term that Foucault will use to

refer to a real place outside all other places. The word appears by agglutination from two other terms, heterotopia and utopia, and holds in itself meanings from its double origin, designating a space within human geography. It describes different - non-hegemonic - places that propose an idealism, a utopian vision. It is also in the Foucauldian heterotopia that the creation of spaces of care becomes possible, where another is constituted from my living, from my "being".[2]

Quite present in the contemporary social context for example, differentiation is one of those processes that occur widely in life and in society, however little publicized - or at least, recognized. Briefly speaking, differentiation will arise, according to Brah, from power relations, when difference, in its various aspects - experience, subjectivity, identity, and social relation - will depending on the context and on the relations in which they occur, be potentiated into diversity or based upon oppression, there will be differentiation[3]. Differentiation is the place where minority groups emerge, from where the precariousness of life emerges.[4]

Whether by projection, heterotopia, differentiation, or any other effect arising from sociability and relationality. Through interaction various phenomena occur, whether positive or limiting, and in which we can perceive different experiences, interpretations, reflections, and visibilizations between the "I" and the others. Faced with this scenario, and if we decide to take a slightly more critical political stance, we will also realize that processes of invisibility will arise. However, it is important to highlight that, although we have already brought the differentiation as a generator of social minorizations. As a result of marginalization and invisibilities of dissident beings of the hegemonic patterns, the (*in*)invisibility that we bring to the center of the discussion. Precisely, the one that makes use of quotation marks

to displace - and at the same moment mark - the prefix "in" as the one that can, or not, suggest a negation.

The (in)visibility today assumes different expressions acting through different markers in analyzing different points of view through power relations, and if mainly we attach to it the term "contemporary". Thus, as a contemporary technology of power which marks the need for a much more subtle approach to society. Especially, the one in which we are inserted in and proposes tensions in the field of the struggle between hegemonic and counter-reactive movements - invisibility now evolved to (in)visibility, which presents itself with a makeup that gives it airs of benefit or even of conquest, thus considering the struggle for rights demanded by identity agendas.

Proof of this, for example, is the movement of super inclusion, brought by Akotirene in his work on Intersectionality. The theory focuses on a universalist practice where differences are erased, and the propagated discourse is that which emanates the end of any inequalities. This is considered through the fact that "prejudice does not exist" and that "here we are all equal, there are no differences"[5]. We could, creating a parallel, say that such daily practice takes us back to the times of the ancient Roman Empire and the spectacles that took place inside the Coliseum. The population would remain loyal to the government and, essentially, inert.[6] We fought for decades in order to be recognized as dissident beings so that, at the peak of the process, when we began to believe that our agendas generated results, we were again (in)made visible - but now recognized as "diversity".

We started with Freud and here we bring him again to affirm that it was all this catharsis - or at least part of it. This united us in thought, reflection and restlessness, culminating in this autoethnographic study around our dissident, teaching, political, militant and research and identity (or not) and – "Deleuzianly" without commas. Hence, firming the infinite possibilities and potencies that inhabit our living[7] -, which at every moment encounter this hindrance, this barrier, this agency, this (*in*)possibility of being, this (*in*)visibility that does not include us. But one that integrates wanting us, however, to believe in a real inclusion, a scenario that we also contextualize around the territory currently occupied by us: the academy.

The problems that sustain this research will not be defined and presented expressly, as the orthodox academic precepts demand because we believe that we already have too many problems when we think about the possibility of living dissident. Our goal is to reflect on our experiences, and from there eternalize in words our political position of lives that will not be erased, of lives that will continue in the fight against our constant (*in*)visibilization. Whether in the academic field - like us - or in the most diverse social territories, as well as to make possible that this (re)existence arises in the living of diverse beings that have their potency devastated by the "*Cis*tem".[8]

## Methodology[9]

<u>Autoethnography in pairs as a methodology[10]</u>

The autoethnographic research process is based on the political exercise of the private "I" of the researcher in the transformation to an epistemological "I" in full dispute with hegemonic and dominant narratives in the fields of knowledge construction. This research movement is in the direction of building a counter-

hegemonic force of the crystallized speaking positions in the communities of knowledge production in the world.[11,12] The autoethnographic method emerges, therefore, in the field of anthropology, and has been consolidating since the mid-twentieth century in critical response to a structuralist form that eclipsed qualitative research in Europe and the USA. Ellis, Adams, and Bochner[13] report that it is in the 1970s that the first time the word autoethnography is mentioned in the anthropological field.

At the time, autoethnography is presented under two major pillars: first as a process and second as a product of an investigation. The authors define autoethnography as a form of research and writing in which there is an analysis of the researcher's personal experience (self) in conjunction with a systematic analysis (graph) of cultural experience (ethno). Qualitative research methodology means that the researcher places himself with her/his subjectivity and with his objectivation, at the center of the investigative process. This is done no longer as just an external agent who analyzes a research object from a distance, but as the object of research itself.

Here the option for "we" as the starting point of autoethnographic research follows the same logic with the addition of the argument, that in the face of the fragmentation of realities by neoliberal policies today and the physical estrangement of bodies and subjects by the pandemic of COVID-19. This becomes an imperative proposal for a coalition of bodies as proposed by Butler[14.] As argued by the first author of the study in Manzoni-de-Almeida[15,] as a way of resuming collective performances in public spaces, for example, the execution of research and publications. Thus, our option was to build a duo autoethnography in which our narratives, separately, when analyzed together would emerge points of

convergences and dialogues for the epistemological construction of our public research and manifestation proposal. The exercise of producing collective autoethnographies has already been documented[16,17,18,19] as political and scientific strategies for the formation of converging theoretical and social bodies.

Both authors are people from the LGBT+ community and professors, and university researchers. In this way, this condition of existence and of being thinking in the world helped in the formulation of the methodological structure of this research. Pithouse-Morgan[20] carried out a study demonstrating the importance of autoethnography in the university space as a way to change the productivism tendency that has taken the students' formations in the university to a proposal of generosity with creativity and a more generative formation of the students. Fox[21] brings out the discriminations, medical imputations, power relations and oppressive prejudices against LGBT+ people, including in the university space. Thus, here, we aggregate these two ways of existing and being in the world - LGBT+ and university space - as bases and starting points for our methodological construction.

As a methodological strategy, our study was structured in three stages. In the first stage, we held periodic meetings to define the theme in common with the two person-authors. In the research period, the first author is in self-definition / recognition[22] as male, white, cis-gender, homosexual, worker in the scientific-educational field in health, gender, and sexuality themes. The second author, in turn, identifies as a white person, an education worker and a researcher in the fields of education, genders, and sexualities, being in the process of fluidity and (*in*)definition of gender and sexuality.

The starting point agreed upon by both researchers as a research topic is about the performance of identity dissidents from hegemonic sexuality in university/academic environments in the face of the current discourse on diversities and inclusions of marginalized people. In the second stage, from the definition of this research theme, each researcher individually wrote their narrative for a period between fifteen-twenty days without mutual interference. Afterwards, the individual autoethnographies were read by the researchers and followed by meetings to define the convergent points in both autoethnographies for the construction of a third analysis. In the third stage of the research, after the identification of three points in common in both autoethnographies (i. docilization of bodies, beings, and knowledge; ii. experience and the impossibility of; iii. our defense of a democratic and critical education) we adhered to the theoretical referential crossing psychoanalysis and philosophy in alliance in our discussion proposal.

**Results**

Autoethnography 1: DMA

Getting into college was a challenge for me. I had witnessed, still as a teenager in the 90's, my father's attempt to get into a private university to study Law. He had taken the vestibular and got the approval, but he couldn't afford to enroll. I realized how frustrating the situation was for him. My father never told me directly how sad he was that he could not go to college. He expressed it by singing. He sang Martinho da Vila's song "O pequeno burguês"[23] (The Little Bourgeois [*our free translation*]) out loud over and over when he picked me up from class in the late afternoon. I didn't really understand why he had chosen to study law. He was an employee of the car industry in the ABC Paulista region of São Paulo and would have achieved much higher growth in the company if he had taken a more

technical course, for example, an engineering course. This is what I knew about university: to take a course to get a job. When I asked him why he had chosen Law, he answered: "I want to know more about our rights and help other colleagues with this. Years later he managed to study Business Administration with the help of the industry where he worked. Going to law school was not one of the industry's priorities for a metalworker. Years later I really understood what he wanted to tell me about law school, about having depth in knowing our rights that help us take our destiny into our own hands and not leave it in the hands of others, especially the elite. What my father, a man from the Northeast of Brazil and a survivor of drought and hunger, wanted to teach me deep down when I chose to study Law, about the importance of being a subject and no longer an object to anyone.

In the midst of this, I already felt the sting of prejudice against my sexuality. I grew up in the '90s when I lived through my first experience of a pandemic: HIV/AIDS. Thanks to the tragedy of the media's malice, mainly the North American one and accelerated by the Brazilian one, the HIV virus and AIDS were associated with the "gay plague". The first cases of HIV/AIDS had been discovered in homosexual men and transmission through sexual routes was verified. Not long after, this view was reversed when science showed that it was not a disease linked to one sexual orientation as a risk practice, but that all individuals were susceptible and vulnerable to contamination. Too late, the stigma of the "gay plague" had already been spread and being gay was tied to having the disease. It was now two prejudices together that added up to a third: being from a socially and economically underprivileged class. Perhaps unconsciously, I added my father's lesson about the notion of "law" with that of knowing. When I became aware that I wanted to know more about the disease and free my loved ones from

the stigma, that's when I started to study biological sciences and immunology. But I was entering another field of extreme privilege: being a scientist in Brazil. You can't", "You can't do it", "You don't know English", "You don't have a good education", "You don't know anything", "You can't write", "You are not one of us". Some of the "incentives" of my teachers in the universities, that is, within the system, that I experienced and that I kept hearing along the way when I decided to study science in Brazil in the midst of public policies between 2003-2016, to encourage the formation and expansion of universities in the country.

Today, years later with a great journey within the university environment, I claim, in truth, the title of a writer much more than a professor and researcher. I believe much more in my power as a writer than perhaps as a teacher and researcher. When I present myself as a teacher I am immediately asked, "teacher of what?"; when I present myself as a researcher, the same sense of the question continues, "researcher of what?" When I present myself as a teacher, I am immediately asked "what teacher? When there is this direction, my interlocutor already places me within a delimited space and demands from me a performance within this perspective. If I fail to meet expectations, there is an estrangement. From my side, there is an even greater discomfort. When I define what I teach or research, I surrender myself to the logic of the market and become an object on offer. I teach and research this or that to be able to work within a restricted field of possibilities. To claim the position of the writer is to completely deny this logic of others' expectations and try to be palatable and accepted. The writer has no commitment to a line of logic or a theme or an area of knowledge. The writer wants to denounce, to call for protest, to take a stand, and this has no commitment to anyone but only to his or her freedom of expression. A writer wants to be the subject of

yes and not an object to meet a market or state demand. The writer's commitment is to political engagement.

It is about being a subject and no longer object that I set out to criticize the university institutions in Brazil. Back when I glimpsed, as a public-school student from the outskirts of the city of São Paulo, getting into college was to save me. First from the given oppression of being homosexual in Brazilian society. I believed that by holding a title and enjoying the university environment I would be safe from the prejudice that consumed me. Second, I heard, and it is a common speech among people of my social class, that getting into a university, and attending graduate school would help me "move up in life," and take me out of the condition of the periphery in which I lived. There are many points that we can glean from this ideology that university helps in social ascension. In a certain way, a university degree, in the great majority of developing countries, takes us out of a precarious condition X and takes us to a less precarious condition Y, but still precarious, because even if we have degrees. The elite will not allow bodies like mine to assume positions of power. On the other hand, the university, and consequently university life today in Brazil, is reduced to transforming subjects into objects. We get into a course because we want to "move up in life". We enter the university to equip ourselves, not with humanization, but with technical and scientific competencies and skills for the job market. The university, in its current configuration, is a factory of objects and not of subjects. How can we talk about diversity and inclusion in this scenario? This proposal is submerged in enabling extremely docile bodies with technical-scientific skills and competencies to perform as disposable and submissive objects in the logic of the market. Diversity and inclusion are not for subjects, but for trivialized objects.

Going to undergraduate and graduate school (master and doctorate) does not mean that we will reach positions of power within the university space itself. The university elites will not allow it. Bodies like mine are important to the Brazilian university machine, but to uncritical numbers on diversity and inclusion. When claiming to be in positions of power, for example as a tenured professor in universities, our bodies are quickly discarded with arguments that the proposals are not aligned with department and area X or Y. That we do not have the discourse aligned with area A or B that they are wanting, that there is not enough publication in area C or D, or that it does not fit in the elite political games that have inhabited university departments since the arrival of the royal family to Brazil. The positions of power are, and will always remain, available only to an academically nepotistic elite. Few bodies manage to break through this barrier and subvert this logic for numerous reasons. However, when we look with a magnifying glass a little closer, we can see that they are still seen as objects. That is, they have been molded to serve a market or state discourse, they are not yet subjected or not considered subjects. It is the logic that these subjects are with the "speech aligned" to a project I don't know what they call university, but it is to maintain the status quo of the body-making logic. The diversity and inclusion of divergent thoughts do not happen. The democratic and critical environment is left aside because everyone agrees. A healthy environment of ideas has to have tensions of discourses and circulation of divergent arguments for the real exercise of democracy and the construction of knowledge in the terrain of doubt and the commitment of political forces in favor of full citizenship for the flourishing of subjects and not objects. When my father told me that he wanted to study law because he wanted to know his rights, he was teaching me the true meaning of the university.

Autoethnography 2: WRP

If I had to define the experience of being in academia in one word, it would be *tension*. To have arrived in this space, to have occupied it as a student, a teacher, and a researcher is, in itself, the demonstration of an act of resistance. I constantly subverted the social standards that "insisted" on telling me what I could or should do, and which path to follow. These standards were extremely complex to perceive, considering the fact that they acted most of the time in very subtle ways.

I remember when I was around ten, or eleven years old, and dreamed of going to college to study performing arts. The stage, since I was seven years old, occupied a large part of my being. There I surrendered, I allowed myself, I enjoyed myself, and I experienced. Why not follow a life path, "for life" - here a subtlety that is instilled in us, from a very early age, by the dominant logic of the market, which states that we must choose an eternal profession. That is the one that gives me the most pleasure? At the same moment that I imagined this future, I heard: "But think about it, there is no money in theater", or "Oh, but where are you going to get a job with that?

And maybe you are also wondering what I am getting at with all this talk about theater and the market, what is the relationship between this issue and the question of my body as a dissident in the academy. The subtlety that the hegemonic logic, that the devices of knowledge and power - as described by Foucault[24] - use, uses to act on our desires, on our flight in search of potency, is the same one that operates in us about the choice of our futures. Realize: possibly if I were a person who obeys the standard, the situation would be different; being a cis woman who wanted to pursue an artistic career, maybe I would be supported because I would not have this need. This compulsion to occupy a commanding space in a society

that demands money, which demands professional success, having the possibility of making this choice a hobby. Being a *cis*-hetero man, maybe I wouldn't even have stopped to think about the possibility of choosing it, because men don't do things like that, and those who do, also suffer in the process, because there is a will, a desire, and a need to deny in order to fulfill the assumptions of masculinity.

But I was a deer child, who stayed in this space, in this environment [and it is exactly here, perhaps, that the great experience that is stolen from us lies. Given the fact that they demand a decision, and the need for a definition. Why can't my pleasure, my desire, my power be in the (*in*) definition?] It is "normal" for a gay boy to want to do theater. But we must remember that this boy is a man and that the fact that he is gay is a detail that should not override his social and professional life. He has to look for something that will give him financial possibilities. Destiny mapped out, created, defined - [maybe this is why we don't find so many gays in leadership positions in organizations, and so many cisgender men experiencing theater]. I could even do theater, as long as I complied with the rules.

And so, I had to go on deciding, all the while growing up, and with each decision, I faced the same standards, the same impossibilities. I subverted when I majored in gender and diversity studies - "What's the point of this?", "What's the point of this?". Even inside the course, there was a lot of resistance, especially when I wanted to deviate even from what was already considered dissident and brought the issue of religion as a constituent of human integrality to my research. Many people were against the theme, considering the fact that this was a course related to education. Sexuality and faith confession are subjective aspects and, as such, constituents of our formation, which will inevitably be present in the educational field.

I subverted the moment I entered a predominantly male space - the Technology Center - which housed the graduate program I was part of and, given this fact, I faced much greater resistance. To talk about human integrality, well-being, differences, and diversities as being as important as or more important than the development of frameworks that would enable the achievement of maximum organizational efficiency, andconsequently, productivity and profit, was unthinkable. To do research including "my beings", to write bringing my "self(s)" to the center of the process? That was a space that reproduced, *ipsis litteris*, the cartesian and eurocentered academic precepts. Even in the face of such assumptions, I reflect on its structure, which seems to me to be organized in order to prevent any flow of human potentialities that are of unique intensity. As much as it is a graduate program where knowledge was considered the cornerstone and, consequently, tacit knowledge was also considered. There was a process of refinement of this knowledge, that is, not all tacit knowledge became accepted, discernible and e, cognizable. It was only considered so if it had the endorsement. From whom? From the teachers - mostly heterosexual white men - from the coordination, from the evaluation instruments, always focused on the increase of the evaluation indexes. We look at the outside and forget about the inside. It was not allowed methodologically. Addressing social culture, places of power, feminist movements, and sexual dissent were all proposals that were averse to the program and should not be guided there. I proved otherwise. I stood up for my research, for criticism, for low academia, and I got to the end. I was so successful that I was invited to structure and integrate a new discipline. Will it be?

The doubt is not about the institutional aspect itself - at least not what I intend, at this moment, to problematize and discuss - but about the social locus created with all these advances. The discourse on diversity, on the inclusion of differences, has

grown enormously within that space. Teachers, collaborators, students, graduates, whether through virtual activities, discussions in WhatsApp groups, research topics, among others, all of them discussed this "innovative" theme that "is here to stay". This was the great "mark" of inclusion in the program. Is it?

When we are abject bodies that (over)live by subversion, we have almost the obligation to be, at every moment, marking our presence, and questioning the normalizations. Furthermore, tensing the discussions, questioning the discourses that, even in front of our presence, deny us. Jokes, jokes, the non-existence of affirmative action, or, what is even worse, the judgment that they are unnecessary because they put us at an "advantage". In this "new inclusion", we can be there, as long as we are silent, as long as we keep our posture, as long as we behave, as long as this, as long as that. There is a constant prerequisite for us to be.

Do you realize the power that emerges from within me the moment I see my name as a guest lecturer in a graduate course? Teaching is what fulfills me, it is the space that provokes me the most. The classroom is a perverse environment, in the sense of the possibility of a completely useless construction of knowledge. That is, one that has no obligation to serve a system, to train in the technical field. This is my classroom, a "*de-curriculated*, "*de-tecnicized*", "*undisciplined*" classroom. And when I am allowed to occupy this space, it is this counter-hegemonic classroom that I want to constitute. Accordingly, this is the classroom I want to build, where what I say is not considered as correct, or as reality. On the contrary! That it be questioned, debated, and refuted, but that all of this be critically conscious. And if the consciousness is critical, there is permissiveness for debate, there is the possibility to analyze the constructions, the structures, and the norms. Is it?

I imagined that all those people who were willing to occupy that new space would be there because they really believed in a new way of articulating relationships and understanding dissent. But... people want to talk about diversity, as long as it does not affect their lives. People are willing to "accept" or "tolerate" differences - yes, these are the verbs, leaving a mark of superiority - as long as it does not interfere with their private lives. People believe that inclusion can raise levels of creativity, belonging, and commitment, among many others, and that all of this can generate better results in the professional sphere, as long as an "adequate" (what would be adequate?) posture is maintained. People are completely open to discussing issues related to dissidence, as long as they are not mixed with politics and religion [here understood as social policy and religious denomination, but as someone who represents a collectivity that for centuries has been oppressed by governmental policies, currently partisan, and by several churches. I ask: wouldn't it be my right - if it is my right - to discuss these spaces of power that abnormalize, pathologize, demonize us?)

When I encounter this situation, I return to the limit to the margin. My desiring body pulsates in the desire to break, constantly with everything that wants to define me. It exists as matter, but it acquires different meanings every day, with every affection. It took more than thirty years for me to allow myself the exercise of experiencing, for me to understand that it is in the vacuum, in the complexity, in the impossibility, where perhaps my places, my spaces are. And this is the body that is in the academy, that wants the academy, that desires the academy. But this is also the body that wants to enjoy this power in research, that no longer allows the space to tell it how to act but wants to transform the space around it and present it with new possibilities.

It is this body that speaks to you that wants to, once again. And that it can, as long as... once again, I am framed, manipulated, trained. Either I behave and continue to live in the academic environment, following all its standards, or I "deviate", and am invited to leave. All this, very subtly. Again, my living is strained. Maybe I should have done theater...

**Data analysis and discussion**

Experiencing and the impossibility of…

Through this article, we aim to produce reflections about our experience within and in relation to the academic context and about the constant processes of (*in*)visibilization perceived and experienced by us. If reflecting on our experiences is what we want, we believe, then, that our starting point should be the conceptualization - not in a Cartesian sense of the term, but of what we understand as being - of experience.

If we start from an assumption of the lexicon of a language, the experience will be defined as a certain fact that occurs in our lives and of which we keep memories. However, if we tangent our analysis to a philosophical interpretation, and here we anchor in Larrosa[25], the experience becomes a certain phenomenon that, when it occurs, "affects us" and, consequently, "transforms us". The meaning of the word affection, within the understanding proposed by Larrosa, is of extreme importance.

The affection is found in Spinoza[26] as a dynamic process, - and therefore, relational which depends on the meeting of bodies.  And that when active - the instant in which the mind starts to interpret the affects in order to perceive itself as an internal cause of them, characterizing the affects as effect[27] - become essential components for the human powers to be expanded. When we analyze WRP's

account, "I remember when I was around ten, eleven years old, and I dreamed of going to college for performing arts. The stage, since I was seven years old, occupied a large part of my being. There I gave up on myself, I allowed myself, I delighted in it, I experienced it," we can conclude that experimentation and, going beyond that, the experimentation of "itself" emerges as an exercise in the search for potency.[28]

Spinozian potency is reflected upon, debated, and analyzed by Deleuze from the very beginning of his work. According to the author, the power of "being" is potency, but this "being" here is no longer understood as consciousness - as suggested by Descartes' logic, - but as a body that goes beyond the essentialism of consciousness and is in constant displacement. One that must be understood cartographically, given its incessant interaction with other bodies, other possibilities of being and, consequently, with other powers, which affect and (*re*)affect each other. This power is born from what Spinoza will name positive affections.[29]

If on the one hand we have the experience as a possibility of potency, on the other hand, we have the impossibility of experiencing, the negation of experience, coming from various social fields, especially those that, currently, we consider as hegemonic or oppressive.[30] Making experiences impossible consists of the full exercise of denying, of not allowing.

> To do research including "my beings," to write bringing my "self(s)" to the center of the process? It was not allowed methodologically. To approach social culture, places of power, feminist movements, sexual dissidences were all averse proposals to the program, and should not be guided there (WRP).

Potency, in this other territory, obeying the agency - be they corporal machinic (bodies, spaces, affections, power) or collective of enunciation (expression, discourses, knowledge)[31]. This will also be observed, however from optics inaugurated by Nietzsche and Foucault. For the former, potency is linked to "a dynamic model of forces, in which there is an interplay between active and reactive forces".[32] Foucault, in turn, will link potency to power, "no longer understanding it as a substance, but as practices, relations, and strategies".[33] Thus, potency, now in the obedience of agency and in the impossibility of positive affections, will no longer find its creative power, which is produced by experience and of which it is also a producer.

And in our teaching experience, which agency directly interferes with the impossibility of the generation of our power? Would it be the forces or the power that are placed in the terrain of experience, making it impossible? We believe in the intrinsic relationship between both, given the fact that they are regulatory devices that operate in the social context and about which we can propose different readings, from the materialist to the critical or post-critical. From here we will follow, also assuming a political mark, by those that propose this expansion of the social coercive force field: our bodies are docilized, making our experiences impossible and our beings and pieces of knowledge (in)visible.

Docilization of bodies, experiences, beings, and knowledge
The concept of docilization appears in Foucault linked to his genealogy of power and, as a result, to discipline, which emerges as:

> (...) a technique of power that implies perpetual and constant surveillance of individuals. It is not enough to look at them sometimes or to see if what they have done is according

to the rule. It is necessary to watch them during the entire time of the activity of subjecting them to a perpetual pyramid of looks. This is how in the army there appear systems of grades that go without interruption from the chief general to the tiniest soldier, as well as systems of inspection, searches, parades, parades, etc., that allow each individual to be permanently observed (Foucault 2010, p. 106).

The permanence of the process allows discipline to achieve its main goal: to docilize beings, and subjects. The word - docile - makes use of a poetic license coming from common sense: to sweeten life, make it easier, more malleable, flexible. This is what is expected, or rather, what is demanded from the individuals, making them viable in the prevailing economic and social system. By becoming docile, a body can be perfected, given the expectation that bodies should become productive and ready to breed. In such improvements, performativity of the bodies is required, to which limits, obligations, and prohibitions are imposed.[34] Candiotto goes deeper into the Foucauldian view, by stating that docilization manufactures individuals "by using as a platform a political anatomy of the body [through which] it aimed at the constitution of an embodiment, of a docilized subjectivity".[35]

From this biologics' scope, we can highlight:

(...) the stigma of the "gay plague" had already been spread and being homosexual was linked to having the disease. They were now two prejudices together that were added to a third: being from a social class underprivileged socioeconomically (DMA).

The story relates to the history of the LGBTIAP+ and queer movement - when it was not even named that - and its close relationship with the outbreak of the HIV and AIDS pandemic. The moment was used in a distorted way, linking the issue of the disease to only and exclusively to all people dissenting from the *cis-*

heteronormative binary standard. A fact that was later reviewed, considering the scientific research that pointed as causes of contamination, among other factors, the unprotected sexual intercourse, which does not perceive the different possibilities of performances. However, it is undeniable that at that moment science was used as a device of control, regulation and docilization of beings.[36]

On the other hand, we can shift our analysis no longer to the question of the anatomy of bodies, but to the anatomy of institutions, and of the spaces and places where power operates in an institutionalized way. When we consider DMA's statement: "the university, and consequently university life today in Brazil, is reduced to transforming subjects into objects", we can see this institutional embodiment of power in the school environment, which by objectifying the subjects, docilizes them.

But what are the practices assumed in this environment? In reality, when we understand that power is not something concrete, but a phenomenon present and dependent on relations with a systemic character[37]. Moreover, we must pay attention to its procedural aspect, and very close as to that of a production line. Thus, the power that is in the university depends. previously on the power that is in the high school, the elementary school, the kindergarten, the family, the church, the State, and so on. Another aspect intrinsically linked to education is its technical, work-oriented perspective:

> It is "normal" for a gay boy to want to do theater. But we must remember that this boy is a man and that the fact that he is gay is a detail that should not override his social and professional life (WRP).

> (...) maybe that is why we don't find so many gays in leadership positions in organizations and so many cisgender men experiencing theater (WRP).

> And so, I had to keep deciding, all the way through my growth, and with each decision, I faced the same patterns, the same impossibilities (WRP).

> That's what I knew about university: take a course to get a job (DMA).

If we look at the evolution and innovation of power, contemporary technologies no longer require the use of explicit, physical violence. The new mechanisms are close to Bourdieu's[38] theory, when the author introduces the term "symbolic violence. Most of the time, the violence process - the docilization - occurs in an almost imperceptible way, or even, and what is worse, it suggests that it is not something negative bad. But gives the sensation of being something beneficial to the experiences, highlighting "[the] subtlety that the hegemonic logic uses to act on our desires (WRP)", precisely because it places itself as an "informal element that passes between the forms of knowledge, or under them".[39]

Returning to power in Foucault, such notion of positivity is extremely understandable, for

> (…) What makes power maintain itself, that it is accepted, is simply that it does not weigh only as a force that says no, but that, in fact, circulates, produces things, induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse; it must be considered more as a productive network that crosses the entire social body than as a negative instance that has the function of repressing (Foucault 2010, p.8).

Thus, breaking with common sense that power is always placed in a bad way, we must sharpen our senses so that it becomes observable where we least expect it. Bending over the current phenomenon of discussions around the inclusion of diversities in the most varied spaces, power says that "we can be there, as long as we are silent, as long as we keep our posture, as long as we behave, as long as this, as long as that. There is a constant prerequisite for us to be" (WRP).

The prerequisites imposed are guarantees that our bodies, despite being deviant from the norm, maintain a certain level of adequacy to a posture: "people believe that inclusion can raise levels of creativity, belonging, commitment, and so many others and that all of this can generate better results in the professional realm, as long as one maintains a 'proper' posture" (WRP). The adequacy will be orchestrated by disciplining, and ensuring that the smallest details are observed, and consequently manipulated through an unrestricted political investment. Thus, being the first step so that, little by little, the entire social body can be dominated.[40] As distant as it may seem such a perspective - especially when considering the subtlety of the exercise of power - we can prove it when we reflect on WRP's statements: "more than once I am framed, manipulated, trained. Either I behave and continue to live the academic environment, following all its standards, or I 'deviate', and am invited to withdraw".

Wouldn't power, acting through docilization, leave any kind of breaches? In one of his most famous works, *Discipline and Punish: Birth of Prison,* Michel Foucault[41] proposes a cadence of the activity of docilization and states that the process takes place in three steps. The first of these consists of the architecture of a hierarchy that enables the total surveillance of the bodies, culminating in submission to superiors and exclusion of any kind of act that dismantles the order. Subsequently,

there is a protocol of sanctions and reprimands - which will be designed by each society and culture according to their specificities - aimed at correcting and punishing those who try to subvert. Third and finally, what Foucault[42] called "the examination" is set up, which translates into a controlling mechanism that classifies, punishes, and corrects, bringing together all disciplinary techniques.

"'You can't', 'You won't make it', 'You don't know English', 'You don't have a good education', 'You don't know anything', 'You don't know how to write', 'You are not one of us'" (DMA), are all expressions that also represent ways in which power acts in order to docilized and this exclusion then places one in a position where domination and enslavement become inevitable. We are lives rendered incapable from the moment we begin to express ourselves through language, and as a result we gain meanings[43,] before the "social standards that 'stubbornly' told me what I could or should do, which way to go" (WRP).

Finally, and perhaps already realized, we must emphasize the most expressive character of power, and therefore the cruelest: it is not macro, "it is said to be microphysical. It is force, and relation of force, not form".[44] Its microscopic structure forces us to "be at every moment, marking our presence, problematizing the normalizations, tensing the discussions, questioning the discourses that, even in front of our presence, deny us" (WRP), as we are deviant, wandering, and unmanageable bodies.

For a democratic and critical education that is dissident and of resistance.
When we perceive ourselves as dissident bodies and teachers and researchers and writers and militants, there are innumerable motivations that make us militate in favor of emancipatory education.

First of all, we must consider the historical processes of knowledge construction. When we go back to Aristotle's philosophy, we will notice that one of his greatest contributions in the field of metaphysics is related to the binarism created through the division between body and soul. Which influence innumerous social circles, whether epistemological (scientific) or even religious. The fact is that such division was introjected in our subjective constructions and is still a present mark in contemporaneity.[45]

In education, this logic has a considerable presence. Following hooks[46], we should think about how much students notice the figure of teachers as thinking minds who have the power to transmit knowledge. From this perspective, teaching and learning relationships are enclosed in the sign "mind". Like the author, we question: where are our bodies located in the educational process? Are they not present? Do they not occupy a symbolic and geographical space within the classrooms? And, if so, aren't our bodies also carriers of knowledge?

Adding to this question, we perceive that "we enter university to equip ourselves, not with humanization, but with technical and scientific skills and abilities for the job market" (DMA), that "we enter a course because we want to 'move up in life'" (DMA), besides understanding "university, with the configuration it presents today, as a factory of objects and not subjects" (DMA). All these passages are based on pragmatic empiricism, at the moment that we have a considerable teaching trajectory. As much as we have broken, throughout history, with numerous paradigms that have been placed in the field of education, we observe the advance of technicism, especially when considering the perspective of dialectical historical materialism.[47]

Education, whether formal, non-formal or informal, is a field crossed by the mechanisms of power and regulation, considering two main facts: 1. it is a social field, of social relations and, therefore, a political field, and; 2. it deals directly with issues of subjectivity[48], or, using the readings of Foucault, subjectivation[49]. This is a phenomenon that begins with the question of subjectivity, which "[...] *is not amenable to totalization or centralization in the individual*" and "[which] is essentially fabricated and modeled in the register of the social".[50] There are numerous components that are present in the question of human subjectivity - values, beliefs, cultures, signs - that are constantly producing and reproducing the affections in relationships.

Subjectivation begins when, in contact with the social, human subjectivities participate in a constant exchange with countless devices, such as institutions, science, media, and the market, structures that have a secular occupation in human history. This is given their reinvention practices so that they remain always solid. In these processes, such devices count on subjective issues, becoming intrinsic to human living. From these new flows, people mold themselves, there is a subjectivation of the practices of the self when there is no longer an external interference for certain choices to be made, but the instant that these choices are made in a "natural" way.[51]

> (...) When claiming to be in positions of power, for example, as a tenured professor in universities, our bodies are quickly discarded with arguments that the proposals are not aligned with the department and area X or Y, that we do not have the discourse aligned with area A or B that they are wanting, that there is not enough publication in area C or D or even that it does not fit in the elite political games that inhabit university departments since the arrival of the royal family to Brazil (DMA).

The term used by DMA, "claim", represents this tension to which we propose ourselves in relation to the processes of subjectivation in the field of education. Hence, perceiving this regulatory power emanating from educational institutions for our bodies to "behave" in certain ways or adopt specific values. If "there is on one side of the questioner a demand that I define myself by what I teach or research [and] [when there is this direction my interlocutor already places me within a delimited space and immediately demands me a performance within this perspective" (DMA). Consequently, the mechanisms of subjectivation that intend to "produce" us in certain ways, making us docile and useful.[52]

Here our speech goes beyond the experience of the "I", but also speaks of our perceptions about the peer corps who share the school environment with us, as well as those who are dedicated to other levels and formats of education. As a space for the maintenance of hegemonic systems[53], "we can think of it as a privileged agent of biopower, control and normalization"[54]. Therefore, it affects all subjectivities existing there[55] in order to obey the white-*cis*-heteronormative-corporal/functional precepts. We encounter these aspects in several spaces, whether physical, in management, in relationships, in pedagogical plans, in curricula, among others.[56,57]

On the contrary, we believe that

> (…) our classroom is a 'de-curriculated', de-technicized', 'undisciplined' classroom. And when we are enabled to occupy that space, that is the classroom that we wish to build, where what we say is not considered as correct, as reality. On the contrary! That it be inquired, debated, refuted, but that all of that be critically conscious. And if the consciousness is critical, there is permissiveness for debate, there is the possibility to analyze the constructions, the structures, the norms (…) (WRP).

To defend this position is not, as the orthodox systems of education try to discredit us[58], to defend disorder, shambles. (*In*)disciplinary is not to empty the social contracts that regulate any group activity but to destabilize the term "discipline." Which is widely used in the educational context and linked to rigidity, production scales, and the disciplining of bodies.[59] Proof of this is the desire that we are rebutted in our arguments promoting a critical and autonomous knowledge construction, contributing to the democratic architecture of society[60]. But still not yet visualized in our experiences when considering that "the democratic and critical environment, most of the time, is left aside because everyone agrees" (DMA).

Finally, "(...) the importance of being subjects and no longer objects of anyone" (DMA) is the voice that screams in our fight, as we defend a humanized education. Not a shallow or universalistic humanization that denies the existing differences[61], regardless of the categories of analysis. But a humanization - and consequently an education - that realizes our fundamental rights. Which assures the dignity of the human being, expressed in the Magna Carta of our country, because we believe in the power of education. Wherefore, regret the fact that "(...) that the socializing character of the school, which is informal in the experience that one lives in it, of formation or deformation, is neglected".[62] Finally, we are bodies that, through our (re)existence, defend the right to "be," regardless of what it is.

**Final considerations**

Based on the (*in*)visibility of our bodies, we carried out a dialog about the relations that are present in the university space and that generate symbolic violence with important references from psychoanalysis and philosophy. Such crossing of concrete experiences with theory led us to construct three propositional discussion

axes with the objective of proposing ways of reflection about what our bodies represent in these environments. We believe that the university space, with its main framework in rationality can benefit from our criticism for an exercise of self-criticism about bodies in dissidence and production of knowledge.

## Acknowledgements

**Notes**

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[1] Freud 1996.
[2] Foucault 2013.
[3] Brah 2006.
[4] Butler 2015.
[5] Akotirene 2020.
[6] Soares Filho 2010.
[7] Deleuze 2018.
[8] "*Cis*tem" is a term used in the sense of "system", but operating that the System as a norm is imperative by *cis*-heteronormative bodies. See in De Oliveira 2018.
[9] An important point to be clarified as methodology is our choice of writing in the English language which is linked to a wider range of readers around the world.
[10] Both authors contributed equally to the development of the research and the writing of the article.
[11] Adams/ Jones/ Elis 2015.
[12] Sikes 2021.
[13] Ellis/ Adams/ Bochner 2011.
[14] Butler 2018.
[15] Manzoni-de-Almeida 2021.
[16] Chang/ Ngunjiri/ Hernandéz 2012.
[17] Carless/ Douglas 2021.
[18] Chang 2021.
[19] Moreira/ Diversi 2021.
[20] Pithouse-Morgan 2021.
[21] Fox 2021.
[22] Nascimento 2021.
[23] To listen to Martinho da Vila's song. See in: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XdO_WA9rTLk.
[24] Foucault 2013.
[25] Larrosa 2021.
[26] Spinoza 2009.
[27] Chauí 2011.
[28] Deleuze 1997.

[29] Hur 2016.
[30] Larrosa 2019.
[31] Hur 2016.
[32] Hur 2016, p. 228.
[33] Hur 2016, p. 228.
[34] Foucault 2010.
[35] Candiotto 2012, p. 20.
[36] Simões 2018.
[37] Almeida 2019.
[38] Bourdieu 2014.
[39] Deleuze 2018, p. 112.
[40] Foucault 2010.
[41] Foucault 2010.
[42] Foucault 2012.
[43] hooks 2017.
[44] Deleuze 2008, p. 112.
[45] Lapolli/ Paranhos/ Willerding 2022.
[46] hooks 2017.
[47] Alves 2010.
[48] Seidmann 2015.
[49] Foucault 1982.
[50] Guattari/ Rolnik 1996, p. 31.
[51] Foucault 1982.
[52] Fernandes/ Barbosa 2016.
[53] Ribeiro/ Catrinck/ Magalhães 2021.
[54] Nardi 2008, p. 16.
[55] Louro 2004.
[56] Louro 2004.
[57] Silva 2016.
[58] hooks 2017.
[59] Foucault 2010.
[60] Freire 1996.
[61] Akotirene, 2020.
[62] Freire 1996, p. 23.

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