



Transgenderities in Performance: gender disobedience and anticoloniality in the performing arts

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ABSTRACT – Transgenderities in Performance: gender disobedience and anticoloniality in the performing arts – The article presents the scenic devices of transgender performativity in face of the practical and theoretical paths of anticolonial rupture of body norms. It is questioned here the extent to which gender disobedience is an essential factor in the struggle against the colonial project, highlighting how Eurocentrism and whiteness are amalgamated with the precepts of compulsory cisgenderity as body politics. Two performances are analyzed: *Tetagrafias* and *Tran(S)arau* (Coimbra/Portugal, 2015 to 2017). Therefore, the coercive aspects of cisnormativity are presented as hegemonic and colonial conception of corporeality, in scene and in daily life.

Keywords: **Transgenderities. Performance. Anticolonialities. Corporealities. Art and Gender Pedagogy.**

RÉSUMÉ – Transgénérités dans la Performance: la désobéissance de genre et les anticolonialités du spectacle vivant – L'article présente les dispositifs scéniques de la performativité transgenre face aux voies pratiques et théoriques de la rupture anticoloniale des normes corporelles. Le texte interroge la mesure dans laquelle la désobéissance de genre est un facteur essentiel de la lutte contre le projet colonial, en soulignant comment l'eurocentrisme et la blancheur sont fusionnés avec les préceptes de la cisgénérité compulsive en tant que corps politique. Sont analysées ici deux performances: *Tetagrafias* et *Tran(S)arau*, (Coimbra/Portugal, 2015 à 2017). Par conséquent, les aspects coercitifs de la cisnormativité sont présentés comme une conception hégémonique et coloniale de la corporalité, dans la scène et dans la vie quotidienne.

Mots-clés: **Transgénérités. Performances. Anticolonialités. Corporalités. Arts et Pédagogie de Genre.**

RESUMO – Transgeneridades em Performance: desobediências de gênero e anticolonialidades das artes cênicas – O artigo apresenta os dispositivos cênicos da performatividade transgênera em face aos percursos práticos e teóricos de ruptura anticolonial das normas do corpo. Interroga-se aqui a medida em que as desobediências de gênero são fator imprescindível na luta contra o projeto de poder colonial, destacando como o eurocentrismo e a branquitude estão amalgamados aos preceitos da cisgeneridade compulsória como política dos corpos. Trata-se aqui de duas performances: *Tetagrafias* e *Tran(S)arau* (Coimbra/Portugal, 2015 a 2017). Assim sendo, evidenciam-se os aspectos coercitivos da cisnormatividade como concepção hegemônica e colonial de corporeidade em cena e no cotidiano.

Palavras-chave: **Transgeneridades. Performance. Anticolonialidades. Corporalidades. Arte e Pedagogia de Gênero.**

Introduction

The art of performance has presented itself in the recent decades as a field for the elaboration of social complexities that jeopardize the daily political dangers themselves. In particular, bodily processes are at the epistemic epicenter of performative language, which has raised the presence studies to questions that update the repertoire of research in the performing arts in the direction of the *body's undisciplinarity* (Greiner, 2005; Katz; Greiner, 2015) and *undisciplined sub-methodologies* (Mombaça, 2016b).

The configurations of the scenic-everyday body defy colonial normative understandings (white and Eurocentric) that, when strained to gender processes, refer directly to the performative processes. “The performative body keeps oscillating between the scene and the non-scene, between art and non-art, and it is precisely in the paradoxical vibration that it is created and strengthened” (Fabião, 2013, p. 6). In this sense, transgender performativity (Leal, 2018), by unveiling the social codes of cisnormativity of the body, is associated with anticolonial struggle in its multiple interdependent spheres: political, economic, aesthetic, and pedagogical.

From a historical point of view, we perceive an epistemic turn in course in the 21st century in which transgenderities on the scene update the anthropophagic framework of the 20th century body. The games of strength between the colonial circuits of class and ethnic-racial domination, when put in tension with the hegemonies of compulsory cisgenderity in cultural production, instigate a new moment of composition of artistic resistance: *transpophagy*.

The text starts from the analysis of the work path and the poetic-political components of two performances: *Tetagrafias* (Dodi Leal, 2017) and *Tran(S)arau* (André Rosa, 2015 and 2016), both carried out within the PhD program in Artistic Studies at the Faculty of Arts and Humanities of Universidade de Coimbra, in the Theater and Performative Studies field.

Before bringing performance events to the writing, attention is paid to how theoretical and practical articulations should create broad and plurivocal methodological procedures for dealing with new materials and forms of knowledge for the context of performing arts research. In this

sense, the performative and pedagogical approaches to transgenderities raise investigative activity to a disruptive methodological acuity, in view of the non-conforming and disparate knowledge with canonical concepts of art and body research, which are historically associated with the dominant cisgenderity. When producing a critical study of practices and knowledge in performance and its political, educational, and cultural developments, three relevant aspects were shown, *a priori*, in this writing:

a) one refers to the dynamics of creation and making, linked to the weavings and the contributions and mapping of practices and discourses, and to the performance events themselves. It relates to the discursive structures (construction and selection of the components of the script for creating and executing the performances) and to the work platforms (*live* and/or technologically mediated). The spaces of the performance events and how the relationships between the performers and the participants take place;

b) the other one lies on the analysis, which corresponds to the theoretical and practical crossings in artistic production. In order to be able to circumscribe from where these reflections sprout and come from, critical analysis encompasses categories and concepts, but also forms of knowledge embodied into performance events that dance, transform and reinvent modes of subjectification;

c) and, at last, the documentation of the actions that constitute procedural files and traces in an attempt to re-elaborate, by the choices of the supports used, an extension of the recording and a reflection about the artistic artifacts devices themselves. The possibilities of the archives differ for each proposed and developed performance, since, by documenting them, the capture attempt itself expands its potential for (re)organization of the scene, generating new narratives and repertoires. For that, we used footage, photographs, reports and testimonies from the participants (public and artists involved), social networks, interviews and conversations, promotional materials and other means that are relevant to the constitution of the archives in process and repertoires of each performance event.

For this reflection, the documentary archives that refer to performance events are distributed throughout the text. Some photographs were selected as a performance strategy that intend to trigger the repertoires of the bodies

in performance, now, through writing. It was decided to move the files without necessarily reproducing a logical cause / effect of the performance events, as the assemblages occur through the crossing of knowledge embodied between the instances of creation, analysis, and documentation.

Hereupon, we propose a procedure called *choreorgy*¹, in which it was (re)staged perceptions and experiences of these performance events, since we consider them as contagion bubbles, which can infect, destroy and transmute the representation of a body-object policy, guided by hegemonic and normative parameters of knowledge.

In this perspective, the hues of analysis that shape the logical proposal of the research are sub-methodological and undisciplinary, since they promote to the text a break with the narrative linearity of the treated material and an integration of theory with practice as an epistemic vector for the study of anticolonialities transgenderities in performance.

However, before entering the specific context of the aforementioned productions, we list some vibrating points where we indicate the theoretical approaches to the contents of transgender performativity: on the one hand, cultural studies (from anthropophagy to transpophagy)² and, on the other hand, the clues of gender anticolonialities³ in the context of performance pedagogy⁴.

From anthropophagy (20th century) to *transpophagy* (21st century): notes

As a landmark of attention to the presence of transgender people in Brazilian artistic production, we recommend the *Manifesto Representatividade Trans, Já!* (Leal, 2018), launched in January 2018 by the National Movement of Trans Artists (MONART). In this document, Brazilian transgender artists of all languages (musical, theatrical, dance, performance, audiovisual, circus, etc.) offer the argument that the presence of trans people in artistic practice cannot be replaced or diminished by the dubious expressions and aesthetic research of cisgender people on transgender people. It is a position that finds resonance and continuity in the provocations and critical performance of transgender authors who have stood out in the last decades as thinkers of contemporary art and geopolitics (Preciado, 2015; 2018; 2019; 2019; Moira, 2016) and that gradually enter the academic field of the performing arts (Leal; Denny, 2018; Leal, 2019b).

The important repercussion of this manifesto in Brazil, which has led theatrical companies from all over the country to a more acute political-performative attention, puts in crisis the system of scenic representation based on the superficiality of *otherness* as a way of *mise-en-scène* of transgenderities. The complex political game established, in this sense, is currently in asymmetric unfolding: on the one hand, some cisgender people, who were previously involved in *trans fake* performances, are now impelled to the challenges of transforming themselves by shifting their interests from research / acting on cisgender performativity (on the scene and in everyday life) and, simultaneously, looking for ways of alliance and support of the transgender struggle; on the other hand, we still see a huge group of cisgender people who delegitimize the performative claims of transgender people using religious, political-party and even, amazingly, artistic excuses (Mombaça, 2016a).

Regarding the viscosity posed from this scenario, we try to understand that the paradigm shift in question takes into account the presence of transgender people at all levels of artistic creation (not just in acting), but is not restricted to this aspect. It should be noted that the current gender turn tends to promote an epistemic reconfiguration in the repertoires and theories of the scene. In other words, it is not just a matter of inserting trans people in the production and consumption circuits of the scene, but to verify the extent to which these production and reception networks are oxygenated and gain new meanings and new arrangements. In fact, the presence of transgender people in scenic processes promotes a turn in cultural studies, calling into question nuanced assumptions in the 20th century, especially the Oswaldian anthropophagy (Leal, 2018).

The premiere of the theatrical show *Manifesto Transpofágico*⁵ in the 6th edition of the MITsp – International Theater Festival of São Paulo, in March 2019, precisely offers the emphasis that we intend to parallel here. If the dictates of anthropophagy developed by Oswald de Andrade in the *Manifesto Antropófago* (Andrade, 2017) led to Latin American ways of resistance to North American domination from the reversal of the cultural referential, taking advantage of it, hybridizing it, mixing it, *transpophagy* leads to new modes of resistance that correspond more properly to the configurations of societies in the 21st century.

Thus, the elaboration put into play by the actress and playwright Renata Carvalho in *Manifesto Transpofágico* is in line with an anticolonial gender struggle in which the aim is not to depend on the hegemonic material to create from it. In transpohagy, it is not cannibalism that gives vector to the creation processes in performance: transgenderities question each body, each regionality (Mombaça, 2016b). In other words, while the dictates of colonial domination work in a fantasy with gender and ethnic-racial specificities (white and cisgender normativity), the anticolonial struggle led by transgenderities through the *transpophagous* perspective does without the cannibalism and leads us to the activity of creation of new imaginary, in which even cisgenderity is invited to transition gender.

In this same direction, we have Oswald's Shakespearean provocation: “*To be, or not to be, that is the question*”, from the first, to *Tupi or not tupi, that is the question*, from the second. In the direction of the 21st century transpohagy, Linn da Quebrada re-elaborates the question bringing new provocations, in her text entitled *To be or not to be? This should not be the question*.⁶, in which the singer and performer indicates not only a reconfiguration in the hegemonic parameters of what it means to be a transgender person (traditionally defined by medical-pathological knowledge), but points out to a renewal of the logic of knowledge about the body, about life and about the human/monster presence operated from transgenderities.

Gender anticolonialities and the performance pedagogy

The intertwining of a social theory of the scene, crossed by theories and practices of gender disobedience, necessarily requests a position regarding the fractures and colonial differences that act in a *body-politics of knowledge* (Fanon, 1968; Anzaldúa, 1987).

María Lugones (2014), Argentine feminist philosopher and cultural critic, in *Rumo a um feminismo descolonial*, elucidates the character of humiliation and expropriation that the colonized subjects go through when subjected to the labeling practices that dismantle their forms of live and make their bodies monstrous and misfit:

When using the term *coloniality*⁷, my intention is to name not only a classification of peoples in terms of coloniality of power and gender, but also

the process of active reduction of people, the dehumanization that makes them apt for classification, the process of subjectification and the drive to make the colonized less than human beings (Lugones, 2014, p. 939).

It turns out that gender and all issues involving sexual identities are intrinsic to the colonial/modern cis-hetero-capitalist project, understanding that sexual production, resources, and markets are not based only on anatomical differences. In the second half of the 21st century, many feminist studies and gender dissidence theories/practices have thought and surpassed an essentialist view of sexuality, making the dimensions of the division of labor and markets to be among the many normative social and political conditions of the construction of sexual and sexual identities of the genders. This is intensified by intersections with other social oppressions and domination of the bodies, such as racism and social, epistemic, linguistic, and spiritual inequalities.

In an analysis of performance events, we are interested in how the imaginary, bodily practices and representations operate mutations and interventions in bodies, in acts that produce effects of strangeness, inferiority and monstrosity, questioning the *normal* and its standardization, when it comes to the rights of non-hegemonic groups. And when speaking of non-hegemonic groups, we refer to political flows that are on the margins of social and cultural standards, established by a racist, cisgender and classist normative ideology. And by breaking with a logic associated with capital, such groups break with a plan to control desire and bodies (Rosa, 2019).

Hija de Perra (2015), a Chilean transvestite, scenic artist and social activist for the rights of non-hegemonic social groups, makes it explicit by political and conceptual agendas how we (still) accept the rhetoric and conceptualizations coming from the knowledge production markets of the global North, without even asking how these tensions occur, much less talking and questioning the premises that make them unifying movements of such diverse and multiple desires:

Today I speak geographically located in the South, but often it seems that I validate my speech as I was speaking from the North, as following a thought that guides the dominator's matrix. I refer to this as how the new knowledge of gender suddenly accumulates in our territorial limits and frames us with new labels to encourage and understand the exercise of existence and its

sexual differences. Thus, nowadays those from the north indicate a new reading to understand what already existed in our lands...

Yes! The culture of the gayness has always existed within our territories, but it had not been focused under a view that united these facts as a matter of struggle in the manner of a troop or a movement towards the historical path of new sexual identities and their implicit sociocultural manifestations (Perra, 2015, p. 2).

Perra disputes the place of speaking⁸ and listening of theories that try to name something that is already happening in its multiplicities, and the attempt to box experiences and ways of existing within such theorizations that could encompass or even reduce them. Artistic-educational artifacts are not outside the gear imposed by the colonial/modern power matrix. The most diverse events, actions and phenomena that can be framed and recognized as performance art also undergo processes of subordination, since the references that authorize such framing are built from the geopolitical positions of a global cultural and economic production, earning for legitimacy of belonging, innovation, authorship and place of speech.

How to enable participatory practices such as performance to interact and intervene in the artistic-educational political agendas of gender-based anticolonial disobediences that circulate and produce border knowledge in Latin America?

The performances have manipulated and expanded the embodiment, causing us to question the limits of the body and the traditional forms of embodiment, inviting us to reformulate the places of *presence* and the *ephemeral*. Everything that is understood as the body and how this body knows and situates itself is not simply an instrument of something foreign to it, but an *active*, epistemological, political, and aesthetic *intelligence*.

In relation to performances as complex systems of transmission and production of embodied knowledge, we can, for example, think and examine various ways in which marginalized and subordinate social groupings organize themselves in food, sexual, spiritual or political terms. We can also think how technology brought other ways of getting to know each other, including reorganizing the very defining status of writing in a body that is resized by digital media.

Diana Taylor, a Mexican/Canadian theorist and Professor of performance studies and founding director of the Hemispheric Institute of

Performance and Politics of the Americas, pays attention to some relevant questions about embodied knowledge⁹ in the Americas:

Circulation in the Americas includes military trafficking of people, weapons, drugs, 'intelligence', and technical knowledge. It includes cultural industries: television, cinema, music. It also includes practices associated with languages, religious practices, food, style, and embodied performances. If, however, we reorient the models as we have traditionally studied memory and cultural identity in the Americas, with disciplinary emphasis and literary and historical documents, to look through the lens of performatized, embodied behaviors, what would we know now that we do not know? Whose struggles, memories and stories would become visible? What tensions could be shown by behaviors in performance that would not be recognized in texts and documents? (Taylor, 2013, p. 20).

The production in performance art and its studies are, above all, a geopolitical issue, in which the absorption and belittling strategies act, negotiating the local non-western cultural production, to encompass it in complex systems of constitution of global artistic markets. We aim at a journey of a possible *border epistemology*¹⁰, in performance and pedagogy (Rosa, 2018).

Elyse Lamm Pineau (2010), a North American Professor and theorist of performance studies for education, criticizes in *Nos cruzamentos entre a performance e a pedagogia: uma revisão prospectiva* the mechanistic view that art education has become in the search for techniques that validate the artistic creations, mapping the conceptual and practical contributions of *Pedagogy for Liberation*¹¹ and Critical Pedagogy, through methodologies and theories that use performance pedagogy and performative writing as a poetic possibility of research and access – ethically and politically – to repertoires in art and education.

The encounter between performance and pedagogy, in some way, is already problematized in Paulo Freire's proposal for the ethical responsibility of Pedagogy for Liberation. This is where he thinks about educational work in a participatory way, in which the identities of educators are in contagion and construction with the identities and life conditions of their students, in a process that criticizes and destabilizes knowledge hierarchies, discussing social inequalities and oppressions of

body control, especially when it proposes that literacy processes occur through the political context itself and cultural aspects of the students.

Pineau (2010, p. 97) claims that “[...] performance reframes the entire educational enterprise as a mutable and continuous set of narrators, stories and performances, more than the simple and linear accumulation of specific and isolated disciplinary skills”. Educational processes begin to discuss how historically constructed practices and phenomena lead to oppression and subordination of bodies that transit through pedagogical scenes.

Charles Garoian (2003), North American visual artist and educator, descendant of Romanians, in *Performance artística como pedagogia da resistência*, discusses how an artistic performance touches personal memories and cultural histories in opposition to official and *monumental* histories, causing a rupture of the past, through new representations, images, ideas and actions relevant to the life of each participant in the performance event. In such a way, the author “[...] invokes an opposition practice similar to the way in which the *performance* of personal memory and critical cultural history breaks the petrified forms of monumental and archaeological culture, which I consider as an essential characteristic of artistic *performance* as pedagogy” (Garoian, 2003, p. 63).

This results in redesigning and scribbling new routes to re-present personal memories as a strong process of imagination and recreation of ideas, worldviews, ways of existing, worlds, and utopias. The liminal space of performance pedagogy makes it possible to face the hegemonic contents of the school curriculum, and the construction of artistic events is challenged by the multiple positions and cultural perspectives. Garoian argues that “[...] pedagogy as an artistic *performance* allows this space where participants learn to break with the universality of historicism, insinuating their memories and cultural histories as significant contents in the teaching of the arts” (Garoian, 2003, p. 61).

There are always transgressions, since the performance pedagogy asks participants to intervene to modify and alter the social construction of their lives, in combating oppression and forms of subordination of bodies: sexual, racial, age, classist, etc. In this pedagogical approach, the body is still a way of intervening, acting and creating critical practices for the recognition of subjectivities, using anticolonial physical and conceptual routes and gender

disobediences, “[...] to expose cultural history and memory of the body and examine and criticize the alienating circumstances of colonialism, globalization, expatriation, immigration and diaspora” (Garoian, 2003, p. 61). This shows how the performance pedagogy repositions the discourses of Critical Pedagogy and artistic practices that allow and foster the “persistence, resistance and survival of subjectivities” (Garoian, 2003, p. 61).

A pedagogy in art that brings to the scene theories and practices that discuss cultural policies and the politics of differences. Performance pedagogy is one of the possibilities of meeting/confronting knowledge embodied in artistic events, displacing the *phallogocentrism*¹² that presents itself and tries to deceive us as the only way of creation, analysis and criticism in art, but that camouflages and guides submissions and hierarchies through cultural and geopolitical differences.

***Tetagrafias*: reconfigurations of transgenderities based on the visuality of corporealities**

Tetagrafias, developed in Coimbra, Portugal, in December 2017, synthesizes the problematization of medical knowledge about body modification as a fundamental concept of transgenerity and, at the same time, the reconfiguration of the staging language that gives treatment to work. As a research support, the performance outlines the receptive aspects of interactivity and collaborative production more explicitly within the artwork. The very notion of artwork is called into question not only when the creation process is shared, but mainly when the development of research takes place in immersion, not from aesthetic formality, but from social processes. Where language is not supposed to be investigated, aesthetics came about with its greatest strength, outlined with social gender traits. As a result of amalgamation between immersion in transgender, as a psychosocial process, and the poetic equations of theatricality, there is the trans body itself, which, at the same time that it is resized, resizes what is meant by theater from the most visceral concerns that outline the art of performance:

[...] the work of some groups escapes the relatively safe domain of the finished 'artwork' to invade territories of a political, anthropological, ethical,

and religious nature through field researches that, apparently, leave both language investigations and explicit militancy in the background. In fact, the processes themselves unfold into recurrent mechanisms of direct intervention in reality and function as micro creations within a larger work project. These interventions deviate from what is considered the most genuine intention of theatrical creation – the production of dramaturgy and a show – and signal the multiplication of unorthodox creative practices, whose potential for involvement in the territory of social experience tends to overcome strength of aesthetic experimentation (Fernandes, 2013, p. 411).

The use of photographic language in the performance aimed to question the gender visibility at the center of the palpable dialogue with the reception. In this sense, the visual apparatus of the body was the way to highlight its gender processes, taking the focus away from sexual practices and, consequently, from transsexuality itself. *Transgenderity is visual!* The scenic poetics of being trans has the potential to resize the hegemonic perspectives that recur in a society in which cisgender performance is naturalized and the social and subjective processes of transgenderities are reduced to bodily modification.

The social potency of the theater manifests itself in its fullness when the poetic experience of the spectator, in his/her relationship with the artistic object, is placed in collision with the aesthetic and historical perspectives that condition his/her perception, performing his/her understanding of the world, giving feedback on his/her behavior, his/her way of feeling, thinking and acting in everyday life (Desgranges, 2012, p. 45).

During exam periods, such as on the occasion of *Tetagrafias*, *Café Teatro* is full of students from the University of Coimbra, most of them from Law school, who usually meet to study in groups. Now, acting in this geography of the teats [*tetas*, in Portuguese] is clearly a matter of acting in the geopolitics of teats. Just as geography and geopolitics are interdependent, so are *tetagrafias* and *tetapolíticas* (Image 1). What we sought with the spelling of *tetas* was to give the visual dimension of gender in space politics.



Image 1 – Dodi Leal – *Tetagrafias*, Teatro Acadêmico Gil Vicente – Coimbra (2017).
Photo: Daniela Proença.

Perceiving the relationality of digital images of teats was a way not only to question the transgenerality of each person (all are trans in action or in potential!): the question was to poetically unravel the mechanisms of action on body modification in order to democratize this knowledge and friction it with each subjectivity. The implicit question of the performance conception was: what happens if we provoke the dominant bodies to review each other? The framework in which the intervention took place was represented by a portion of the Portuguese population, but which also included immigrants/students from Brazil and some African countries colonized by Portugal.

The digitality of the teats put to the handling intermediated by the performance is an actual demonstration of the bigger framework in which new technologies constantly remake the scope of the processes of artistic making in contemporary times. The hybridization of languages inherent to the current time of media convergence, in turn, bears an incredible resemblance to trans bodies: if on the one hand creative projects today are increasingly done to belong to the intersection of different languages (and not only one or the other), trans bodies are not satisfied to belong to one or the other space; in the condition of trans bodies, we are the result of the hybrid occupation of multiple social spaces.

The displacement of the breasts, visually composing areas distinct from their traditional locations, gives materiality to a counter sexual operation of the body's digitality¹³. Here, the hegemonic notion of

transsexuality is put in check that to be trans it is necessary to carry out some type of bodily modification. Transgenderity says about subjective and social processes and its expression is fundamentally visual.

Let's look at two examples in which the breasts are arranged in the genital region (Image 2) and at the knee (Image 3), realizing that, in these configurations, the light and shadow interpenetrate between the image originally photographed in relation to the photo of the photo, taken later.

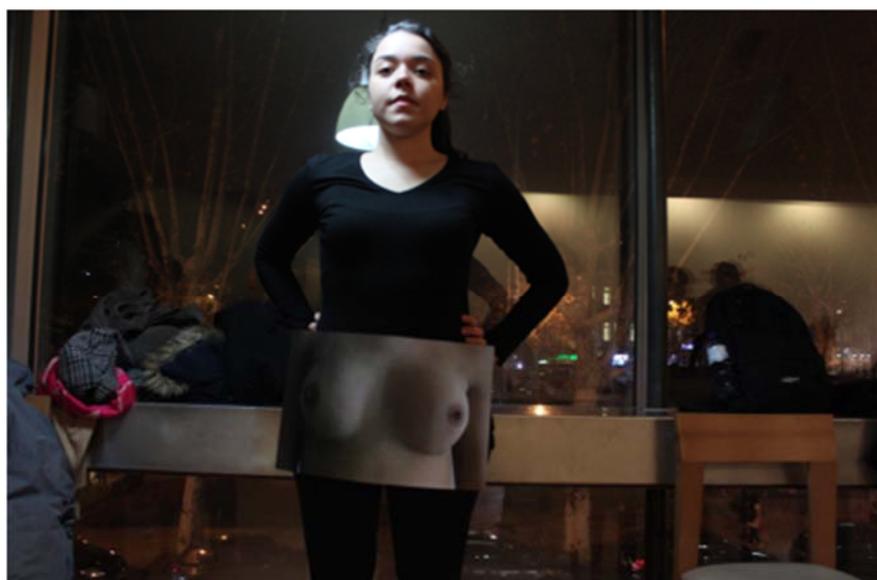


Image 2 – Participating Audience – *Tetagrafias*, Teatro Acadêmico Gil Vicente – Coimbra (2017).
Photo: Daniela Proença.



Image 3 – Participating Audience – *Tetagrafias*, Teatro Acadêmico Gil Vicente – Coimbra (2017).
Photo: Daniela Proença.

The presence of screens today is another example that the tension they establish with the body are, in themselves, body shapes. The photos used in the *Tetagrafias* performance themselves function as screens, reconfiguring the participants' bodies in the multiple positions in which they are placed, inciting re-readings of themselves and others as corporeality in space, social positioning, etc. The conceptual expansion of transgenerity that we investigated here, which broadens the transsexual scope of medicine, occurs at the step of understanding the poetic multiplicity of new technologies on the scene, in our bodies and in our bodies on the scene.

From the archives and traces: *Tran(S)arau* in conviviality practices

Tran(S)arau, developed in Coimbra, Portugal, in 2015 and 2016, was characterized as a space that brings together different aesthetic propositions – between *live* and technologically mediated – bringing together diverse supports and work platforms for the circulation of production in performance, among which live performance, video performance, photo performance and sound performances stand out and mix.

As an integral part of research on performance and pedagogy, *Tran(S)arau* erupted from encounters and confrontations with cultural and conceptual productions that mobilized gender disobediences and anticolonial epistemic disobediences in the interstices of the constitution of subjectivities and their representations. It was a ritual of passage and agglutination, in which the bodies were in continuous transition in their provisional and temporary conditions. It wished the festive reception of artistic dissident theories and practices, regarding the displacements that operate in the construction of gender identities intertwined by colonialities in colonial fractures and differences: a space where performances, sketches, music, videos, debates, readings, photographs, dances, rituals, and other propositions can occur and mix in an orgy of aesthetics and knowledge.

Organized and promoted by the *Movimento Sem Prega*, and for being configured as a nomadic space for cultural creation, and able to be held in any space that shelters it, *Tran(S)arau* took place in two editions, both in Coimbra, in different spaces. The first edition took place at the Ateneu de Coimbra, on October 29, 2015, and had the motto *Tran(S)arau: um desfile de nossas aberrações* (Image 4; Image 5; Image 6). The Ateneu is a space of

great importance in Coimbra, as it represents the fight against repressive forms and totalitarian forces during the Portuguese dictatorship, which fell on April 25, 1974. Communist-oriented – it is worth mentioning that its members belong to several generations –, the social and cultural activities that are carried out there take place under the aegis of a political thought defined by a traditional Marxist left.



Image 4 – André Rosa in *Queerz – Tran(S)arau* (First Edition), Ateneu – Coimbra (2015).
Photo: Daniela Proença.

The person responsible for the cultural sector of the Ateneu, when accepting the proposal of *Tran(S)arau*, should not have realized about which bodies – live and in virtualities – would pass through there. So, just a few minutes from the start of the event, when watching the videos, photos and misshapen subjectivities of those required by the cisnormativity parading through the Ateneu, (Image 5; Image 6), the person responsible for *promoting cultural activities* gave us an advice: the images made during *Tran(S)arau* should be authorized by the space for its display on social networks.

Such *advice* bases the social project, both from the traditional left and from the conservative right, in the praising of an identity policy, a condition that generates a univocal and fixed subjectivity. It becomes pertinent to question the guidelines assumed by the spaces that aggregate and foster cultural activities, having the prerogative to set the circulation of

bodies, artifacts, collections, and documentation, and how these archives operate around artistic practices that emerge from the articulations between the poetic and the political.



Image 5 – Priscilla Davanzo in *Pour être une séductrice*, *Tran(S)arau* (First Edition), Ateneu – Coimbra (2015).
Photo: Daniela Proença.



Image 6 – Stefani Duvet in *Dublagem*, *Tran(S)arau* (First Edition), Ateneu – Coimbra (2015).
Photo: Daniela Proença.

The second edition took place in the *Real República Prá-kys-Tão*, on May 26, 2016, with the following denomination: *Tran(S)arau: do pulso à virilha*, and brought other understandings of the works and propositions that circulated through the different environments da Casa da Nau – as the 15th century building is also known –, one of the 28 existing student houses in Coimbra.

The students residence *Real República Prá-kys-Tão* has in its history the production of cultural events accessible to the community and with an interest in promoting debates involving political, social, and poetic issues. This configuration associated, on the one hand, with the organization's desire for *Tran(S)arau* to happen and, on the other, with the acceptance of what this event allows in discussions and experiences by the members of that students residence, provided quite a special moment (Image 7; Image 8; Image 9). The power of this encounter and proposition has always been, and still is, the sharing of experiences of aesthetic and life dimensions, and how this generates shifts in our perceptions and senses in the creation of worlds.



Image 7 – Participating Audience – *Tran(S)arau* (Second Edition), *Real República Prá-kys-Tão* – Coimbra (2016).
Photo: Daniela Proença.



Image 8 – Participating Audience – *Tran(S)arau* – Second Edition, *Real República Prá-kys-Tão* – Coimbra (2016).
Photo: Daniela Proença.

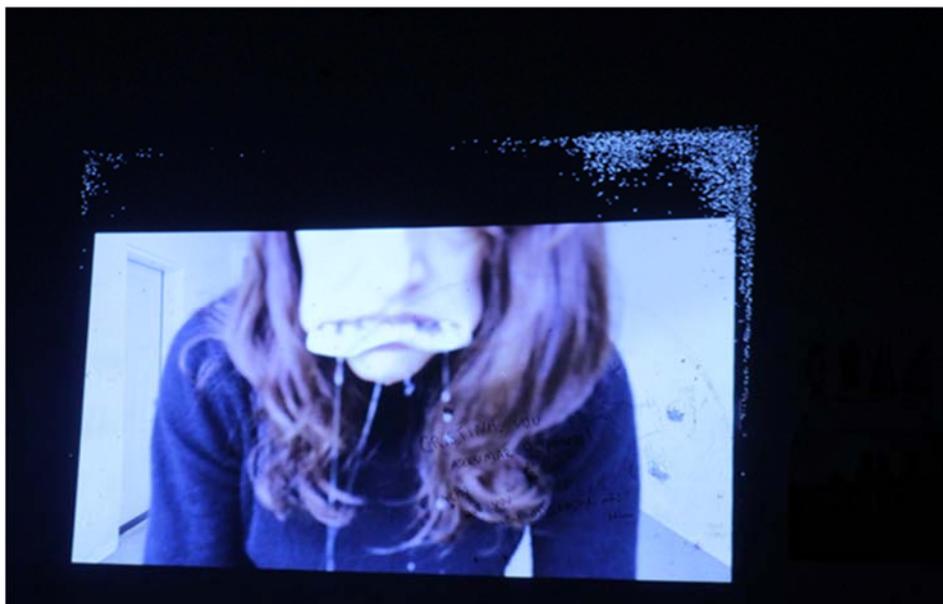


Image 9 – Gislaïne Costa in *Pelecúla* – *Tran(S)arau* (Second Edition), *Real República Prá-kys-Tão* – Coimbra (2016).
Photo: Daniela Proença.

Transgenderities and epistemic appropriations of capitalism

We have sought to develop a reflection of transgenderities in performance by discussing more carefully the realization of two artistic actions in interface with the nuances of gender anticolonialities. A transpophagic approach, located at the present time, leads us, finally, to a

reflection on the sophisticated ways of silencing and objectifying transgenderities from the cannibalisms of knowledge and how such modes of appropriation occur with the overestimation of performativity, when convenient or with certain social/aesthetic limits.

According to Leal and Denny (2018), in contemporary times, the co-optations of transgenderities through neoliberal thinking and practices take place differently between the center and the periphery of the art markets. This process is also varied between the center and the periphery of the academic institutions of theatricality in the country. The exchange values of transgender performance are intimately intertwined in the choices of art curators and in the choices of academic editors and programs research and graduate studies. There are few structural measures to reverse compulsory cisgenderity, such as public arts policy, in educational institutions or in the processes of creation/circulation/documentation. In Brazil 2019, curatorship, publishing and teaching in the arts is mostly cisgender¹⁴.

The pulverized and still local interest in giving space for the study of transgenderities is poorly accompanied by effective measures of protagonism, such as quotas for trans people in public teaching competitions and in graduate programs.

Among the archives and repertoires of *Tetagrafias'* convivialities, and in the two editions of *Tran(S)arau*, we were able to expand the theoretical and practical *corpus* to rethink and reactivate the aesthetic and life dimensions of transgenderities based on a directly associated role. We thus rewrote our narratives and the histories of bodies in performance in diverse contexts, through contagion with forms of plural knowledge – and no longer just under the subjection of a linear and official history of the arts and bodies, given by compulsory cisgenderity – in the relationships that these archives and repertoires make possible in those who access it and in the very act of inventorying artistic practices.

With the proliferation of the various facets that the art of performance has gained over the past five decades, it is essential to discuss the processes of co-optation of alternative forms of construction, knowledge relations and worldviews that the multiple events/actions/performances require and dynamize, activating modes of subjectivation and cultural memories that neoliberalism – the version of the current financial capitalism –, instead of

rejecting or banishing, began to assimilate. The notion of *diversity* tends exactly to a sophisticated form of capitalist appropriation, based on the circuits that were conventionally called *pink money*.

So, how to rethink the conditions of performance art as a space for transgressing the norms established by the same market that seduced it? How to escape the transformation of artistic actions and subjectivity policies into exchange values and access to global cultural capitalism? How do *Tetagrafias* and *Tran(S)arau* operate in these transactions and transitions, through the parade of archives and repertoires of disobedient bodies of gender in performance?

Corporealities on the scene against compulsory cisgenderity

Here are just a few reflections on transgenerity in performance, taking as reference two artworks. We aim to highlight here how the presence of transgender people in performance art is moving towards redefining and expanding the *epistemes* of art and academia. With transgender people playing a leading role in the circulation of art productions, both in the center and on the periphery, we are faced with the journey of subversion of knowledge linked to compulsory cisgenderity and we begin to review the practices among the politic and poetic repertoires.

The path of transgenderities in art of performance is that of repositioning struggles for recognition and social improvements, aiming at flexible subjectivities faced in their sexual, racial, bodily disabilities, social classes, age groups, etc., and in their rights and ways of existing. In this sense, the concepts discussed here, such as *transpophagy*, performance pedagogy and border epistemology, gave indications of how transgenderities draw anticolonial aspects for the current performance production. We consider that the epistemic proposal of *undisciplined submethodologies* and of the *body's undisciplinarity* arranged the topics drawn in the works in a non-linear and, at the same time, critical and substantial narrative in order to link the theory-practice relationship.

The transgender corporeality in the scene raises the field of theatrical and performative studies to an agenda of fight against compulsory cisgenderity, of all. How to create a space that is guided by an ethics that reaffirms life, building territorial urgencies, even if nomads, in which we

can access and reactivate the forces of the presence of gender disobediences in the population level?

Notes

- ¹ Choreurgy refers to the methodological procedures invented by the Professor, artist and researcher André Rosa (2017) in his PhD dissertation, *corpvs sem pregas: performance, pedagogy and anticolonial sexual dissidences*: for an analysis of performance materials found in the relationship with choreography the mixture of theoretical and practical corpus in discontinuities. By collapsing its contours and frameworks, in the intertwining of concepts, devices and practices in pedagogy and performance, an analytical and historical intervention is desired, which also considers the embodied knowledge that constitutes each performance event.
- ² Transpohagy is a concept developed by Renata Carvalho (Leal; Denny, 2018), and deals with the reinvention of the theoretical and artistic framework of the anthropophagy of modern Brazilian art in the 20th century, from a transgender view. In this sense, the struggle of transgender people in the performing arts promotes an epistemic revision of the artistic project of Brazilian modernity, which was hegemonically based on the paradigms of compulsory cisgenderity. This text develops some aspects of transpohagy establishing lines of force between disobedience of gender and the anticolonialities of performing arts. One of these aspects deals with the non-dependence on colonial paradigms as a source of refusal in artistic creation.
- ³ And to make even more evident the multiplicity of voices in the speeches and acts that were opened by the politics of what we can call postcolonial, we share the position of Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui (2010), Bolivian sociologist and Professor, in *The Protosí Principle: Another View of Totality*, in the use of the *anticolonial* and in the refusal of the terms *decolonial* and *deconstruction*. This is so precisely because it is opposed to any category that tries to fix in a single analytical movement the diverse anticolonial situations, reiterating that there is no way to access outside such contingents, nor does it exempt itself from a discursive position vis-à-vis the colonial power matrix. Ramón Grosfoguel (2009), Puerto Rican sociologist and Professor, in *To decolonize Political Economy Studies and Post-Colonial Studies: transmodernity, border thinking and global coloniality*, argues that capitalism would be one part of the power matrix that started to operate in the colonial / modern world system. The Americas

have been invaded by a power structure much wider and much more complex than the paradigms of political economy can explain and suggest through an analysis of the colonial world system. In this encounter and confrontation of alterities, Tupinambás, Kaiowás, Patajós etc. they saw landing and imposing, by the processes that would be established with the colonization, multiple hierarchies of oppression that intertwine, even though they are often treated and forged in independent ways.

- ⁴ In *Exercises for Rebel Artists: Radical Performance Pedagogy*, Guillermo Gómez-Peña and Roberto Sifuentes (2011) put into question something fundamental to think about possible performance pedagogies, since there is no possibility to group or reduce the various proposals and procedures of work and creation in a single direction and methodology. Due to this diffuse and pluriversal character of the conditions that lead artists to produce and question themselves about the nomadic condition of performance, it is clear that their potential in the pedagogical sphere lies in what the action involves as a group of people to question epistemic, political, cultural, racial, sexual, spiritual, gender issues, etc., in ways to intervene, resist, (re)exist and (re)live, establishing guidelines for action jointly. The classroom, the show, the action on the street, the social movements, the rehearsal room are constituted and constitute these tensions, and, for this very reason, they become propitious spaces for pedagogical agencies.
- ⁵ Creation, dramaturgy and interpretation: Renata Carvalho (Leal, 2019a).
- ⁶ “To be trans for me is to break free. It is not being an actor or actress: it is being atrocious. It’s going after. Be ahead. It is facing. It is acting on itself. It is taking risks. It is the gift of doubting life. To be trans is to have breasts. It is also not having it. Being trans is genius, not genital. It’s not about dick or pussy. It’s about a full body. It is to reinvent yourself and create on your own existence. Being trans is confusing, it’s blurring the boundaries, it’s a draft. Being trans is poetry. It is to assume yourself as a body. Go beyond. Be creation and creator. The doctor and the monster. Being trans is divine. It is not the work of God, but of *selves*. Of all the selves that make me up. It is not a work of the darkness. It is a work of the transness. Being trans is an act of courage. It is a battlefield. To be trans is to surrender. It is not giving up on yourself. Which can sometimes be lonely. But I have found myself in other solitudes. And I have realized that I am not alone. We are not. I am, *I soul* trans. And I celebrate my existence. I celebrate our lives, our achievements. If I

were not trans, I would like to be” (*To be or not to be: that should not be the question*, written by Linn da Quebrada and presented in Leal, 2017, p. 15).

- ⁷ The first point is the difference between colonialism and coloniality. Colonialism is linked to the economic and political-administrative process of control and domination of a people, while coloniality refers to a system of classification and subjugation, which was, *a priori*, by racialization and capital. Aníbal Quijano (2002), Peruvian sociologist and political theorist, in *Colonialidade, poder, globalização e democracia*, proposes a conceptualization that, at this moment, helps to understand the pattern of colonial / modern power: “Coloniality of power is a concept that gives account of one of the founding elements of the current pattern of power, the basic and universal social classification of the planet’s population around the idea of ‘race’. This idea and the social classification based on it (or ‘racist’) originated 500 years ago along with America, Europe and capitalism. They are the most profound and lasting expression of colonial domination and were imposed on the entire population of the planet in the course of the expansion of European colonialism. Since then, in the current world pattern of power, they permeate each and every area of social existence and constitute the most profound and effective form of social, material and intersubjective domination, and are therefore, the most universal intersubjective basis of political domination within the current standard of power” (Quijano, 2002, p. 1).
- ⁸ According to Djamila Ribeiro (2017), place of speech refers to the claim to protagonism in the context of disputing political narratives of creation. In the case of transgenderities in the performing arts, we associate here the notion of place of speech with the breakdown of guardianship as a vehicle for the transmission of artistic and theoretical creations performed by trans people. Perra’s (2015) sense is that transgender people are fully capable of carrying out their work in all positions, without exception. Trans people do not need to be tutored by cisgender people: in artistic creation, on stage and in production; and in theory, in the epistemic elaboration of their own knowledge, as well as publishing, organizing, and editing their own content.
- ⁹ The author, in *The Archive and the Repertory: performance and cultural memory in the Americas* (2003), understands performances – both artistically constructed and those that are part of cultural, social, economic and political processes – as spaces for the transmission of knowledge and access to social memories; as embodied practices knowledge that show the excesses and

overflows of bodies, and take positions in the dynamics of cultural identities of literate, semi-literate and digital societies. The embodied knowledge is beyond the culture of writing, which has become the evaluator of any existence and ways of conceiving and organizing life.

- ¹⁰ *Border epistemology* is one of the subalterns' critical responses to the colonial / modernity project, an alternative to combat fundamentalist actions, which still maintains as a premise the recognition of a single epistemic path for access to knowledge, for through universalization as a producer of truth. Guided by the positions taken by several authors, such as Gloria Anzaldúa, *border epistemology* elaborates a conceptual and practical redefinition of the emancipatory rhetorics of modernity, now, through the experiences, cosmovisions and knowledge of the subordinates. It is a critical perspective on nationalisms, colonialisms and fundamentalisms, whether hegemonic or peripheral.
- ¹¹ Pedagogy for liberation is part of Paulo Freire's educational postulates and presupposes a critical education about class structures towards a social transformation of the categories of oppressed and oppressor.
- ¹² We refer to the neologism originating from the *Deconstruction* developed by Jacques Derrida, which deals with male privileges in the construction of knowledge and meanings, establishing the presence of *Logos* or Reason as a common origin to all knowledge, through the tradition of western thought.
- ¹³ The handling of photographs in the performance makes a practical reading of the conceptual avenues of the counter-sexualities developed by Preciado (2015) and Leal and Denny (2018). Given that the visual disposition of photographic images is structured in the digital language, the counter-sexuality exercised in the relationship with the performance audience supports a composition in which the digitality of the image is strained with the concreteness of the body visualities that support the photographs.
- ¹⁴ We emphasize that Professor Dodi Leal, creator of *Tetagrafias*, is the first and still the only trans person to be part of effective teaching of arts in higher education of a public university in Brazil, and perhaps in the world, of all times. Dodi has been working since October 2018 on the Arts of the Body in Scene at Universidade Federal do Sul da Bahia, in Porto Seguro.

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