

“About your pussy, answer...”: schools and subject constitution amidst power games¹

“Sobre a sua buceta, responda...”: escolas e constituição de sujeitos em meio a jogos de poder²

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Abstract:

What is the power of a question about sexuality in school? What are its effects on a teacher, on students, and on other people in the school community? These are some questions that guide this article interested in the relationships between the knowledges, their historical constitution in the construction of the sexuality, and the subjectivities. Not expected in a classroom, questions about the female genitalia extrapolated this space, enticing the thought about the effects of the deployment of sexuality on the subjects and its crisscrossing with the knowledge-power relationships. In this sense, working with the Foucauldian perspective of analysis, the concept of event is the focus of this article's problematization.

Keywords: gender, education, event

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Resumo:

O que pode uma pergunta sobre a sexualidade na escola? Quais os seus efeitos em uma professora, nos alunos e nas demais pessoas da comunidade escolar? Essas são algumas questões que norteiam este artigo interessado nas relações entre os saberes, sua constituição histórica na construção da sexualidade e as subjetividades. Não sendo esperadas em uma sala de aula, as perguntas sobre a genitália feminina extrapolarão este espaço, nos convidando a pensar os efeitos do dispositivo da sexualidade nos sujeitos e seus atravessamentos com as relações de saber-poder. Neste sentido, trabalhando com a perspectiva foucaultiana de análise, o conceito de acontecimento é o foco da problematização deste artigo.

Palavras-chave: gênero, educação, acontecimento

Introduction

We take, as the starting point for the writing and problematizations presented in this article, an event which happened in a classroom from a second-year high school course of a public school. The title of the article brings the question which was asked in this event: “About your pussy, answer...”. *Event* might be the Foucauldian concept which best describes what happened. By understanding the discursive event as an historical analysis of archeology, Michel Foucault (1981) provokes us to think:

Furthermore, if discursive events must be treated along the lines of homogenous series which, however, are discontinuous in relation to each other, what status must be given to this discontinuity? It is of course not a matter of the succession of instants in time, nor of the plurality of different thinking subjects. It is a question of caesurae which break up the instant and disperse the subject into a plurality of possible positions and functions. This kind of discontinuity strikes and invalidates the smallest units that were traditionally recognized and which are the hardest to contest: the instant and the subject. (p. 69)

The author is not referring to schools but is thinking about the discursive events and their relationships with the modes of subjectivation, with the different ways, moments, and spaces in which the processes of subject constitution take place. In this sense, the quotation above invites us to think about the breaks which disperse subjects and expose their positions in the schools. The event is a novelty, a rupture which evidences a certain discontinuity, while continuity can only be understood in relation to it, the rupture. There is a play between continuity and discontinuity which organizes the event. Events, by this definition, are possibilities present in our daily lives in the classroom since this place is the space for unpredictability. We can also affirm that what happened in this specific classroom only

became a relevant fact and, thus, the object of this article's analysis, because the teacher felt its power in the constitution of her own self, as a teacher and as a woman. More than that, because she also gave space for what was pertinent to the students, to the meaning this event offered to the themes these students must bring to school, i.e., knowledges which organize the spaces attributed to the male and female students, to the male and female teachers, and to the understanding of what school is.

The teacher tells that, when she arrived in the classroom, in her first workday after a license and after being absent from school to conclude her master's degree on discussions of gender and sexuality, she found the following written on the whiteboard:

About your pussy, answer:

1. How many hair strings does your pussy have?
2. Is your pussy tight? If so, justify your answer.
3. How old were you when you first got your pussy fucked?
4. What is the size of your pussy's lips?
5. Do you have a big clit?
6. Do you have a little pussy or a big pussy?
7. Do you lick the balls without drooling?
8. Can you swallow the whole cock?³

In a brief analysis, we can verify that it is a series of questions and interests regarding the female genitalia, popularly called "*buceta*" [pussy] in Portuguese. However, they expose more than just an interest about this part of the female body, developing into a will to knowledge which is directed to the sexuality of those to whom the questions are addressed. Questions who were waiting for the teacher to arrive. Which establish new relationships between knowledge, school, female and male students, female and male teachers. Which, paradoxically, make us think about the space of the teacher and of the woman and which, in the gender relations, also make us think about the space of men. Paradoxically because, while the teacher is taking the questions to herself, reinforcing her role as teacher, she is also moving

³ In this paper, we have translated all quotations from Portuguese into English.

away from it, reinforcing her role as women independently of her being a teacher. From this encounter between herself and the class, the boys and the girls, and the questions, the teacher recounts:

I confess I felt a little embarrassed, but I did not demonstrate. There was a mix of euphoria, tension, and curiosity. Boys and girls from other classes were entering the room to see the writings. Some girls kept asking me if I had read what was written and I told them yes, but we would need to have a discussion about the notes to unit I, since they had not had Portuguese and Literature classes. While I explained how the assessment would be performed, I tried to keep the class calm and asked a girl to copy everything that was written, for there would be also an activity which would be graded. Nobody assumed authorship of the text, and a group told me it was already there when they entered the class. They had not had a class in the first period because the teacher who was responsible for that class was absent. I also noticed that the girls who were demanding me to position myself expected the author to be discovered and punished. During the break, I exposed the contents in the teachers' room and told my colleagues about my attitude. Some of them tried deducing who the author was, but we only found out a couple of days later: a gay boy.

There is a history of sexuality organizing this action between the female and male students and the teacher. The effects of what was written, the effects of this novelty in the classroom, of this rupture, and, therefore, of this event, are indicative, at once, of a historical regularity which has conducted sexuality into the home, removing it from the public spaces, and of a radical break, which can only be understood as such because we “know” writings of this kind are not expected in the classroom. Moreover, this event informs us is that what is at play is the constitution of subjects amidst the power relations between the male and the female students and the teacher, between knowledges and action over oneself and over others. This article focuses on this meaning or this effect; hence, we proceed from two guiding investigative questions: What knowledge-power games are circulating in school and constituting subjects? What effects can a classroom event intertwined with questions of sexuality have over the acting teacher, over the female and the male students, and over the school community as a whole?

From this analytical focus, it is important to clarify our theoretical-methodological perspective, i.e., which theoretical framework we articulate to look at and problematize this event. Problematizing is, for us, a form of making research, a Foucauldian perspective of the world and of the means of the subjectivation of subjects. According to Foucault (1984b, p. 381) “the person asking the questions is merely exercising the right that has been given him: to remain unconvinced, to perceive a contradiction, to require more information, to emphasize

different postulates, to point out faulty reasoning”. Problematizing relates to the history of thought, to the relationship between morals, the subject’s search for truth, and the relationship with the other. Thought allows us to distance ourselves from the modes of acting and reacting, to take a step back and transforms into a problem something which had not called our attention anymore. This distancing action invites us to transform thought, action, and reality in objects of thought and of questioning: Why do we think what we think? Our forms of thinking and acting have a history and serve as evidence of a history of thought.

Event, power relations, and subjects

Our research is based on the principle that the questionnaire produced by the students titled “About your pussy, answer...” is a novelty. This understanding is confirmed by the teacher’s reaction and report. There is a degree of scare in this encounter, and the teacher tells us she felt an embarrassment: “*I confess I felt a little embarrassed, but I did not demonstrate. . . . Some girls kept asking me if I had read what was written and I told them yes, but we would need to have a discussion about the notes to unit I, since they had not Portuguese and Literature classes?*”. At the same time, she tries not to let herself be affected or demonstrate being affected to the female and male students, trying to reinstate the regularity which characterizes a classroom.

The present-day school is inheritor of the one founded in Modernity, which belongs to a broader project of construction of a disciplinary society (Foucault, 1987). Maintaining regularity is an exercise of this project. A disciplinarization project of bodies and of subjects, which constitutes us as female and male teachers, as female and male students. However, resistance and escapes are always possibilities to break with pretense regularity. A breaking can cause shaking, but it can also be a potentiality for the challenge of thinking about the diverse possibilities of reflection about women’s sexuality, as in the analyzed case. The questions written in the board invite us to think about how a legitimate place for bourgeoisie sexuality was constructed in these students and in society as a whole, which unfolds in the questioning of curricula and of curricular articulation with gender relations.

The “provocation” games, inciting a response to the questions, the fear of answering them, the need to position herself as a teacher—these elements which unfold from the questions reinforce what Foucault (1978) problematizes in *The history of sexuality I*, i.e., that we

are subjects constructed amidst the discursive strategies of the deployment of sexuality. But affirming this is not enough. The question seems to be: how do we deal with the deployment of sexuality when we are in the schools? In the case of this teacher, there was a concern not to demonstrate that the students' action had affected her, had moved her from her place. Perhaps, because intimacy is something which we learn as personal, as belonging to the private sphere, as something which we must not reveal and which may be used from an understanding of "aggression" or, in other circumstances, as a form of mockery. Speaking about it, asking about people's sexuality, is something we must avoid, at least publicly, especially in a relationship between the female and male students and the teacher inside a school.

As Foucault (1978) affirms, sexuality has been confined to the couple's bedroom, where it gains legitimacy; everything else has been reduced to silence and, as the author posits, "the rest had only to remain vague; proper demeanor avoided contact with other bodies, and verbal decency sanitized one's speech" (Foucault, 1978, p. 3). Intimacy belongs to the private sphere, it involves a sense of secrecy, it must be kept in secret and may only be revealed in situations constituted by trust. Sexuality has also been constructed in this perspective, since it is the place where our most intimate senses, desires, and emotions reside.

In the questions, the students have played with this relationship between the secret, the confession, and the revelation, which is part of the deployment of sexuality. The confession of secret and intimate desires is one of the techniques developed in the West to produce the subjects' "truth" (Foucault, 1978). "Among its many emblems, our society wears that of the talking sex. The sex which one catches unawares and questions, and which, restrained and loquacious at the same time, endlessly replies" (Foucault, 1978, p. 77). We are all entangled in this necessity to produce and tell the truth about ourselves and about others, in a game in which knowledge-power-pleasure is combined "with compulsion, and consent with inquisition" (Foucault, 1978, p. 77). In order to discuss this relationship between secret, truth, sexuality, confession, and revelation, Foucault (1978) provokes us:

For many years, we have all been living in the realm of Prince Mangogul: under the spell of an immense curiosity about sex, bent on questioning it, with an insatiable desire to hear it speak and be spoken about, quick to invent all sorts of magical rings that might force it to abandon its discretion. (p. 75)

Curiosity was transformed into the questionnaire “About your pussy, answer...”, which was sustained in the facial expressions, in the insistency in knowing whether the teacher had read the questions, forcing, at the same time, the revelation and the effort towards discretion. A process which constitutes the female and the male students, and which they operate as a deployment of sexuality. The woman is pressed to speak about her “pussy”, and this pressure is, in a certain way, the will to make their vaginas speak, since the questions put forward in the classroom were also pressing the other female students present. We can think that women and their vaginas are controlled by the will to truth and sexual pleasure of the one holding the power, which also constructs the place of men. Secret as the organization of a curiosity is one of the aspects of the gender relations, seeing bodies and desires as bearers of truths-secrets. We cannot affirm that curiosity belongs exclusively to the boys in relation to the girls’ bodies, but we can think about what actualization the classroom demands from the bodies which must speak.

In the years we have dedicated to studying school’s relationship with gender and sexuality, we have often heard from other teachers, both women and men, of their fear and insecurity regarding engaging these topics in the school. Teachers are afraid that, by focusing on these matters in their classes, they will have their own sexuality (and with it their desires and pleasures) exposed or questioned by students. Especially to women teachers, queries regarding whether the teacher masturbates, performs oral or anal sex, uses condoms, likes men or women, are often unpredictably raised, placing teachers in a “tight spot”.

Going back to the event analyzed in this text, the teacher tried to reinstate the regular pace of the class, despite the insistence of a female student in asking whether she had read the writings, almost demanding a positioning. The option of maintaining class regularity was taken by the mentioning of the subject Portuguese, activating something which belongs to the classroom as the space of an official curriculum determined by the teacher and not by the students. The content of the official curriculum becomes a place of comfort, security, and escape facing the instability and the “embarrassment” produced by the writing. The teacher’s feelings as a response to the students’ questions evidence that the curriculum which school composes is not something ready to be transmitted and followed, but the result of the social relations which organize society and school. The curriculum, thus, expresses choices and constructions of knowledge. When confronted by the questions, the teacher could have taken on the challenge of problematizing them in a society in which sexuality is taken as an

opportunity for aggression, as a result of gender relations which establish places for men and for women, which regard intimacy as something private; in other words, the teacher could have taken the students' interest as a curricular component. Another possibility would be to use the curriculum to not discuss the questions, arguing that the subjects of Portuguese and Literature do not predict discussions on sexuality. One way or another, the understating of curriculum which organized the action is that in which curriculum is comprehended as a construction and a selection of knowledges and practices produced in concrete contexts and in social, political and cultural, intellectual and pedagogical dynamics; knowledges and practices exposed to new dynamics and reinterpreted in each historical context (Moreira et al., 2007, p. 9).

To go on explaining how the evaluation of the two subjects would happen is also a way to pause and think about what she would do with those happenings, about what attitude she would take when facing the unexpected. The relationship between newness and regularity which organizes the emergence and the operation of the students' and the teacher's actions can only be understood by its effects. The event invites us to question its origins, i.e., why is sexuality regarded as an instability point, used to destabilize? The classroom is a place of conflict and negotiation because it is crisscrossed by power relations. According to Foucault (1978), power relations are not in the individuals, but are understood as forces which are in the relations, which go from one pole to the other, and which comprise resistances. Power can be understood as a network of relationships in constant tension between knowledge and subjectivity, in constant activity. The classroom is marked by this constant tension and activity of the power and of the resistance relations, which transforms it into the space of the unpredictable and of the chance, which mark this confront and this pressure to speak of sexuality as something new, as a rupture, and, thus, as an event. "We must accept the introduction of the *aléa* as a category in the production of events. There once more we feel the absence of a theory enabling us to think the relations between chance and thought" (Foucault, 1981, p.69)

In the school context, we get used to the predictability of our plans, most of them rigid and closed around themselves, without realizing that the educational act is marked by instability and by the unexpected, and that pursuing control and a predetermined destination usually does not help us to question our own practices, to continuously deconstruct these practices, suspect them, deviating from what was thought at first to, thus, venturing, allow

ourselves to go adrift. According to Veiga-Neto (2011), we can learn from Foucault to endlessly question that which we think and write, i.e., to question ourselves. What is at play in the classroom relationships seems to be the constitution of the teacher and of his or her will to control.

If we rely on what is new, it can move us to look to the school context from another perspective, to change our paths, and also to strategically analyze the event to discuss what was previously unthinkable, what provoked a rupture to what was set. As Revel (2005) posits, based on Foucault, it is interesting for us to look for the traces of events and the interpretations we can derive from them. As the author proposes, contrary to the historical analyses, the Foucauldian archeological method seeks to reconstitute, behind the fact, a whole network of discourses, of powers, of strategies, and of practices (Revel, 2005, p. 13).

The event presented in this text broke the singularity of the classroom and created a disturbance for the teacher and for a number of the students. Moreover, it exceeded its own space, involving the students from other classes who would leave their rooms to see the writings.

This event can also be seen as an escape, an interruption in what was previously traced not only for the class itself, but for the so-called school daily life. This is why it generated such a significant repercussion in other spaces, entering even the teachers' room. The effects produced by the writings in the other teachers, after hearing about the event, was that they started speculating among themselves the authorship of the writings. Finding out who wrote the questions on the board mobilized a great deal of the people, including some of the class's students who, at first, also demanded some form of punishment for the author. These are evidences of how the event produced disturbances and movements in the school.

Sexuality in the classroom: what do we mean by it?

Sexuality has become something which each of us has and which we need or are educated (or pressured) to look for in ourselves, to confess our desires to “know” our “truths” directly connected to our sexual classifications. In his series of books *The history of sexuality*, Michel Foucault (1978, 1984a, 1985, 1988) defends the idea that sexuality is a historical construction which marks the human experience. Sexuality, in its historical origin, is

something individuals have. Different knowledges and institutions are called upon to produce knowledge about sexuality and, consequently, about subjects. Opposing the “repressive hypothesis” (Foucault, 1978) demonstrates how modern institutions organize the disciplinary society which constitutes us and charge a price for the benefits they offer—the price of control: over ourselves, over our impulses and desires, our emotions and revelations. Schools belong to this context, so they participate in the constitution of the disciplinary society. Even today, our schools are inheritors of this disciplinary society and actively take part in it, mostly in the constitution of docile, regulated, and controlled bodies and their actions. But this repression also allows room for resistances since power is also the place of production of pleasures.

Repression and pleasure are present in the organization of the analyzed event, in the students’ actions, and in the elaboration and direction of the questions to the teacher. We can think that this activity was only possible because it also deals with transgression, with pleasure, and with students’ power to bring sexuality into the debate, something which belongs to the individual, but must remain outside of the classroom. Sexuality is understood as an aspect of individuals’ intimate and private lives. Perhaps, when students propose these questions and ask whether the teacher had seen what was written, they are minimally trying to displace the teacher by introducing this “forbidden” and “repressed” theme in the school. We cannot affirm that those questions were directed to the teacher as a provocation. The teacher had just defended her master’s thesis about gender relations and sexuality and, thus, we can suppose that the questions were also a way to propose a discussion field, a curriculum. However, from our understandings of sexuality and of the places it must occupy, the teacher interpreted the questions as a provocation:

I had to improvise something, because I noticed that the intention of whoever wrote that and of whoever backed this person was to indeed provoke, flame the feelings of everyone, including me, a teacher, a woman. After we had agreed upon the grades, I told them I would include a research based on what was exposed there. Hence, I asked them to research about pornography based on the following questions: why do we feel the need to make use of pornography? Is there a specific place for us to make use of pornography? Does it appeal to the eyes and ears of all people? Can it disqualify anyone? In relation to the sentences written, can we think it configures gender violence?

The students brought some research about the topic in general and, after we read all the papers, we had a debate on the topic. Some girls told the class they felt assaulted by the writings. I asked why then they had not erased the sentences and, while they did not answer this directly, they affirmed they felt intimidated by several of her classmates; they could, with

this attitude, become vulnerable to threats and cursing. That is why they did not call on anyone from the principal's office. Others affirmed they felt so ashamed that they did not want to touch "that". I highlighted that, at that moment, I was not interested in knowing who had written the questions on the board, but it was necessary for us to think about matters related to the feminine, although I had some suspects.

A question which comes from this discussion is: what effects have those questions produced in the teacher? While she regarded them as a "provocation", she also noticed the power and confrontation play which was established: *"the intention of whoever wrote that and of whoever backed this person was to indeed provoke, flame the feelings of everyone, including me, a teacher, a woman"*. For the teacher, the questionnaire written on the board could also be seen as something which placed in check her own place as a teacher, because by identifying herself as a woman she, somehow, admits feeling disturbed by the questions, something which is also related to the very construction of women in our society.

In western society, women's sexuality, throughout time, has been tied to the desires of the heterosexual man. Beauvoir (1967) affirmed that women, be them wives or lovers, were generally frustrated regarding their sexual and emotional experiences because their lives were subordinated to the interests and desires of men, since they were taught to be passive and to subjugate themselves to men. It was for men to take the initiative in relationships (in dating and even in marriage); sexual pleasure was strictly tied to men's climax, while women were not allowed to manifest their desires; women's virginity was an intrinsic condition for them to be considered decent; men had more freedom to leave the houses, to have fun, even of the sexual and amorous kind, differently from women; and, moreover, many men made use of violence to sustain their hegemonic place.

It is not random that the female genitalia was used by the students in the questions proposed. We could imagine the effects of those questions if they expressed a "curiosity" regarding the male genitalia. What belongs to men and what belongs to women in relation to intimacy and to sexuality? It is possible to affirm that the men would not feel assaulted had they found something similar on the board regarding their own genitalia?

Beauvoir (1967) posits that the woman felt passive, especially regarding the sexual relationship, because she thought herself, beforehand, as the domain of the man, as submissive to him. However, this does not mean, according to this author, that the woman cannot contest these places and construct a relationship as an exchange, without these hierarchic, delimited places.

Nowadays we can identify a change in this picture painted by Beauvoir, a result of the feminist struggle which has problematized heteronormative culture as constitutive of unequal gender and sexuality relations. Women have taken on different places; thus, they are now more able to face situations as the one encountered by the teacher in her classroom in a more purposeful manner. How the teacher behaved, asking students to think about the event based on knowledge, is an invitation for them to associate the history of thought with our actions and our forms of thinking and acting. The questions from the students and those written on the board established a homogeneous view of women and forgot that it is impossible to talk about a typical model of women.

Rich (1980) broadens this analysis of women's sexuality and makes a strong criticism to feminists due to their focusing only on the matter of gender relations. Addressing women involves diversity, and it is not possible to speak of the woman as a homogenous category, as if a typical woman existed. In this diversity, we often disregard the effects of compulsory heterosexuality in the production of a fixed place for women and of the naturalization of certain questions such as women's intrinsic and mandatory sexual and emotional desire for men. When we do this, we place lesbians in a position of being deviant, undesirable, and invisible.

Beyond denying women the experience of their sexuality, according to Rich (1980), the heteronormative masculine perspective forces women to the male sexuality

by means of rape (including marital rape) and wife beating; father-daughter, brother-sister incest; the socialization of women to feel that male sexual "drive" amounts to a right; idealization of heterosexual romance in art, literature, media, advertising, etc.; child marriage; arranged marriage; prostitution; the harem; psychoanalytic doctrines of frigidity and vaginal orgasm; pornographic depictions of women responding pleasurably to sexual violence and humiliation (a subliminal message being that sadistic heterosexuality is more "normal" than sensuality between women). (p. 638-639)

This might be one of the most disturbing questions when we discuss women's sexuality, because it problematizes the essentialization of the male desires by means of the aggression to women. However, this does not mean women cannot question and subvert this.

Foucault (2015) affirms that the feminist movement created a strategic inversion of the power relations between the genders, based on the sexuality which sought to colonize women, problematizing it and producing other truths about women's sexuality. Considering

this and going back to the analyzed event, is it possible to look at the writings on the board and, through them, construct other truths about the pussy, producing new effects in the gender relations which escape even the sexist heterocentric perspective?

This question does not have an easy answer, because, beyond what has already been discussed, there is still a significant vigilance over the sexuality of women who are teachers, especially regarding basic education. Louro (1997) points out that the identity construction of female teachers is produced by the denial of their sexuality. Even though this reasoning has been modified with refusals to this discursive production of identities, we still experience remains of the idea of the female teacher as a “spinster” and an “auntie”. There is also a strict control over the clothes and the ideal or desirable behavior for women, which includes discretion regarding personal life. This has strengthened the identity representation of female teachers as asexual. Thus, it is not easy to resist to this production, and the strategies are not visible, despite being present.

In this direction, we also question how the female students reacted to the writings. Some regarded them as a form of violence. The teacher asked them why they did not erase the board, or why they did not call on someone from the principal’s office and, as reported, some students felt intimidated by their peers and were afraid they would be insulted or threatened. There are clues that the female students did not feel impelled to position themselves in the classroom or in the school nor to question when they felt assaulted. Perhaps we should also consider this construction of femininity and masculinity which still produces the man as the one with a voice, the one who speaks, and the woman as the listener, the one who is and remains silenced.

In this game of power relations crisscrossing knowledge, the teacher tried to remain in her place as a teacher. She affirms she had to “improvise”, since what happened was a rupture, a discontinuity, an event in the Foucauldian sense. Improvising meant remaining in the teacher position, reinstating continuity, and, ultimately, transforming the event into a didactic activity. The teacher took the students’ “provocation” and gave a didactic function to the confrontation: “*I told them I would include a research based on what was exposed there*”. By proposing this activity, she names the set of five questions: pornography. Somehow, the questions posed on the board, for the teacher, configured a possibility of pornography. But how can we think

pornography? What discourses about pornography capture us or the teacher and the other students?

We understand there is an instability in the concepts of pornography and, thus, in the several interpretations of it that are possible. One of the concepts brought by Moraes and Lapeiz (1985) is that pornography is related to the obscene, to the indecorous, i.e., to what is exposed but should be hidden. Pornography, in this sense, is characterized by the scandal, violating the prevailing morals. This is directly related to the effects produced by the writings on the board. These are questions which should not be visible, which should be hidden. The words used—*buceta* [pussy], *pinguelão* [big clit] e *cacete* [cock]—in the questions exposed on the board, by themselves, are seen as something not to be uttered, as the unspeakable; words regarded as (in)decent.

Maio (2011) performed a research with family members and teachers from different regions of Brazil to identify the different names given to the genital organs and to some sexual practices. Regarding the vulva, she affirms that one of the first names used by the colonizer when they entered the Brazilian territory was “*vergonhas*” [embarrassments], associating this idea of the female genitalia as something to be ashamed of. In Maio’s investigation, the external female genitalia was one of the words with more names, including “*buceta*” [pussy], and the researcher affirms that this is probably due to all the prohibition and all the censorship which the terminology exerts over female sexual repression (Maio, 2011, p. 104).

In the writings analyzed in this article, the question about the pussy and the ones about how oral sex is performed in men are read without modesty, this is why some girls felt embarrassed by the sentences and did not feel encouraged to touch the board. The construction of shame is by means of the exposition of questions which, at first, should remain private. Furthermore, depending on how a woman answers those questions, she could be placed in certain roles from the sexual perspective, some of which are socially desirable, others which are not; she could be named *donzela* [maiden], *recatada* [modest], *piriguete* [hoe], or even *puta* [whore]. She would be exposed.

These analyses allow us to think the place of pornography in a more current context, even because, from literary texts to cinema, pornography has been narrated. According to Duarte and Rohden (2016, p. 720), pornography is one of the key pieces of the composition of the sexual scripts of the modern individual and is the first source of information about

sexuality for millions of people. These authors also indicate that although pornography has been produced as something obscene and sexology as knowledge, both are intertwined, since a sex scene, such as masturbation or intercourse, depending on how it is interpreted, can be understood as pornographic or as scientific. As Duarte and Rohden (2016, p. 732) posit it, pornography and sexology are cultural and political disputes surrounding sex and, furthermore, they are markedly pedagogical, since their efforts are centered in establishing normalcy parameters and in making known the appearance of sexual desire, of orgasm, and of bodies (evidently emphasizing genitals).

This does not mean it is not possible to problematize pornography, especially when we discuss the pornographic market, which has certain economic interests with the commercialization of videos and photos. Rich (1980) is one of the authors who question traditional market pornography, since, according to her, in these images we find a valuing of a sadism in which women are produced as objects or sexual commodities aimed at serving men's erotic fantasies, reinforcing the discourse of women feeling more pleasure when sex is violent. Also according to this author, this production of sex as violence is associated to the thought that, during the sexual intercourse, force is generally taken as something instinctive and intrinsic to sex. By seeing pornography from this perspective, there is no other option but to censor it and to fight against it. However, we pose the question: is it possible to interpret pornography differently? Can women subvert and transgress this pornographic logic which places them as objects of male desire and pleasure, often associated to violence? These questions remain and destabilize our thoughts.

Gender violence

Another understanding generated by this event is the crisscrossing of gender relations. In the class scheduled for the presentation of the research made by the students, a discussion was opened regarding the sentences and the collected data. The teacher recounts the following in relation to this moment:

Talking to everyone, I asked them if they had thought at any moment if the sentences could be considered gender violence. Regarding this aspect, I explained them that the sentences were not only a form of transgression, or a form of referring to the female public of only that specific space, but they reached out to all women, such as the female members of those

students' own families. Thus, I added that it would be interesting to think that, usually, the approximation to the feminine makes a person a possible target of violence. This is a fact when we consider effeminate boys, transgender women and transvestites, rapist men who, when arrested, are presented by police officers to other inmates to be used as "girls". I also took the chance to talk about Renato, a participant in my research who, when he was still a child, had to jump over the school's walls or be last one to leave, and never ventured to cross the main gate so as not to be assaulted by his classmates. The reason for all this aggression was that Renato escaped the hegemonic performance of the male gender. Some students admitted they had not thought about it this way, but some of the girls affirmed that the female gender is a target for discriminatory actions and words in our society, which leads to a subordination in relation to the male gender. This is so true, some girls confirmed, that we end up naturalizing men's cheating while we are surprised by women's cheating in heterosexual relationships. Other topics were raised, such as jokes about women driving cars and other vehicles, the demand for a beauty standard, and domestic service.

In relation to the fragment above, we propose taking the perspective of the young men who wrote the sentences on the board. When the student exposed the questions, he brought to surface several matters relating to gender inequality, since he, a man, placed in evidence queries regarding the pussy, a sexual body part of women, and not queries directed to the body of other men. About this event, the teacher mentions that she asked the class whether anyone considered the sentences on the board a form of gender related violence. Moreover, she asked whether those questions could refer to the other women who are part of their lives but were not present there, in that space. This thought means realizing that the manifested violence was broadened to reach also the bodies of all women, since gender violence has been thought on a historical basis in which women were not recognized in their bodily autonomy, since only one gender existed: the male. From this period, we have inherited the gender hierarchy which has produced the discourse that women are fragile and, as a consequence of this characteristic, that women need to remain submissive to men, be it in the familial space or not.

Next, the teacher continued provoking the class, by saying that "*it would be interesting to think that, usually, the approximation to the feminine makes a person a possible target of violence*". By uttering this sentence she positions gender violence beyond the gender/sex tied to the genitalia, exemplifying this with the discrimination suffered by effeminate men, by transgender women, and by transvestites, including in this group pedophile and rapist men when their bodies are violated in prisons as punishment and they become other inmates' "girls". Provoking the students in this direction, the teacher intends to establish a greater understanding of the meanings attributed to the bodies through their performances which escape the hegemonic gender models and, because of this, are even more marginalized.

Understanding gender violence, according to the teacher's perception when she mentions this topic, alerts the class that there are many violent situations related to gender other than physical aggression, such as the symbolic ones expressed in gestures, looks, and language, as had happened in the classroom. The teacher evidences, with this thought, that gender violence is a phenomenon which covers several meanings and articulates multiple aspects: the psychological, the moral, and the physical (Bandeira, 2014). It is, therefore, persistent and it unfolds from the familial context to the interpersonal relationships in public spaces, such as the workplace, schools, and streets. According to Bandeira (2014, p. 460), gender violence aims to establish a hierarchy to gender relations and, thus, its manifestations are ways to establish a relationship of submission or of power, frequently implying situations of fear, isolation, dependency, and intimidation for women. The author affirms gender violence is considered an action which involves real or symbolic violence by someone aiming to submit the body and the mind of a person to the will and freedom of another.

In the classroom event herein discussed, a gay boy, someone who is also a subjugated individual in a heteronormative society, places himself, at that moment, in the position of a heterosexual men who carries the hegemonic model of masculinity, disregarding the other subjectivities which produce him and not reflecting, at first, about what consequences his actions would incur for the women who were present. In his action, he does not see himself as someone who is also subjugated for not corresponding to the heterosexual model imposed by sexual norms. Without considering his social place in the classroom, he assaults, through language, other people who are also subjugated in the hegemonic society.

The girls who were outraged by the sentences on the board transferred to the teacher the intention to manifest against the attitude of their classmate. In the episode, they searched for the support of someone similar to them in relation to sex/gender but, also, different from them, a person with enough authority to stop the violence. They expected and desired the teacher to take the initiative of defending them, while the teacher would also be defending herself since she was a woman as well and, by defending all women, she would be resisting the power strategies exerted by the boy. The power relation present in the event makes us consider what Foucault (1980) declares when he writes:

What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it doesn't only weigh on us as a force that says no, but that it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse. It needs to be considered as a productive network which runs through the whole social body, much more than as a negative instance whose function is repression. (p. 119)

By writing the sentences on the board, the gay boy disturbed all the people in the classroom and provoked reactions such as laughter, disapproval expressions from those who did not support the act, and visits from other class's students. His deed also produced other effects, such as the girls' reaction who asked the teacher to act in response, the teacher's own reaction when she solicited the research, and, lastly, the production of this text. However, there are other situations which must be observed.

We must consider the introductory sentence of the list and the first few questions. Until the sixth sentence, the boy is referring to any woman, independently of sexual orientation; the target for these questions might be a lesbian, a bisexual, or a transgender woman. However, these possibilities are refused in the last two questions: "7. Do you lick the balls without drooling? 8. Can you swallow the whole cock?". In this pair, the woman is understood only in a heterosexual relationship with a man, and not with another woman, closing the possibilities for other affective/sexual relationships between women. In these two questions we find the stronger emergence of a phallogocentric language, since the boy's utterances reveal a discourse which exalts masculinity and places women as subordinate to men's desires—and to a specific model of being a man., more than that, to the desires of a specific model of being a man. Thus, he perhaps sought to reinforce his own masculinity to the present audience, or he sought to generalize such aspects through the sentences to other men. He did not know, however, that there are many forms of masculinity and femininity, or that the way he evidenced masculinity is already considered uncertain and subjacent, as Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) indicate:

The concept of masculinity is criticized for being framed within a heteronormative conception of gender that essentializes male-female difference and ignores differences and exclusion within gender categories. The concept of masculinity is said to rest logically on a dichotomization of sex (biological) versus gender (cultural). (p. 836)

In the analyzed context, we can identify something paradoxical in the boy when he makes this heteronormative concept of masculinity emerge, since the boy himself is part of a subaltern masculinity in relation to compulsory masculinity due to his own sexual orientation.

By transposing his thoughts to writing, he does not consider his position as a homosexual individuals and, at the same time, he essentializes sexual differences, dislocating him from the place which escapes heterosexuality, since the discourse present in the writings is articulated to biological sex and negates the concepts of gender as cultural construction.

In this text, this has been our central argument, that is, the defense of the idea that gender relations and the discursive understandings of sexuality result from historical and cultural constructions defining what we know and who we are. We defend that words and people have a history and that the place for problematizations lies precisely in recovering these historical discontinuities so we can question ourselves about the history of thought in our constitution.

It is important to notice that the analyzed event only shaped itself by means of the teacher's action when she was surprised by the effects of the questions over herself, over her students, and over the school. What the event established in the school is something new in that context. While the questions and their unfolding reveal all the power of articulation surrounding sexuality in our society, they also highlight the role of school in a control society. There is a certain potentiality in the event, which made the teacher comprehend the power relation which organized the understandings and the actions from its starting point to its development.

The way the student structured the questionnaire is also part of the logic of power to question the school. The writing is formatted according to the standards/models of the questions the students receive in examinations and/or in exercises to assess their knowledge of the school subjects, and not in the structure of a discussion about a theme. Even in the way he provokes/asks/questions, the student is based on the structure of control. The teacher "breaks" this structure by proposing a discussion, a research, etc. She takes over the writings on the board, from this perspective, also in relation to its form.

The potentiality of the event lies in the possibility of using it to place under suspicion our forms of thinking and being in the world, which mark our relationships with sexuality, with our desires and bodies, with the others, with knowledges, with the places we occupy, and with schools. However, we can also find challenges therein.

The first challenge is comprehending the students' interest in the discussion of sexuality, even if it can be misunderstood, as intending to "provoke" or to "assault". What

the students are revealing is that if the school does not initiate the discussion, they will. Another challenge relates to the curriculum, making it necessary for the school to be able to handle the unpredictability which marks the curriculum without resorting to discipline and punishment. And, lastly, we identify the challenge of thinking about individuals in their relationships with knowledge and in the power relations which define our positions at school. Retrieving the Foucauldian question “how did I become who I am?”, in this sense, cannot mean the preservation of ourselves, but the transformation of our and of others’ selves by means of the problematization of the knowledge-power-being relation.

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