



# Narratives of subversion and resistance: Looking at travestilities through materialist discourse analysis

Wesley Felipe Andrade Assis<sup>1</sup>, Márcia Fonseca de Amorim<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Master's student of Language at the Federal University of Lavras (Universidade Federal de Lavras – UFLA)

<sup>2</sup> PhD in Linguistics and professor of Linguistics in the Department of Language Studies (Departamento de Estudos da Linguagem – DEL) at UFLA.

Received: 03 May 2024; Received in revised form: 05 Jun 2024; Accepted: 13 Jun 2024; Available online: 21 Jun, 2024

©2024 The Author(s). Published by Infogain Publication. This is an open-access article under the CC BY license

(<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

**Abstract**— *This study discusses the subject's view of him- or herself. Specifically, it examines the gaze of subjects who call themselves transvestites, who are treated in this study as subjects, with a focus on their social-discursive construction from the perspective of the self. In other words, we seek to understand how these subjects constitute themselves as beings in the world through materialist discourse analysis. Additionally, we seek to bring elements of the social universe of transvestites from the narratives produced by them, aiming to understand how the coloniality of gender acts on their constitution and to consider the appointments and procedures of exclusion narrated in their experiences. We used the following to support the proposed reflections: studies by Pêcheux (1995, 2014) and Orlandi (2012) on subject-discourse-ideology; Foucault's concept of discursive formation and the will to truth (1996, 2008); Butler's (2021) work on hate speech; and Butler's (2003), Bento's (2011), Jesus' (2012), Louro's (1997), Nascimento's (2021) and Vergueiro's (2012) examinations of gender and sexuality. This study provides a better understanding of how transvestites constitute themselves as subjects in society due to the subversion of gender coloniality, the acts of violence they face, and the social erasure they suffer because they do not adapt to a crystallized imaginary of the body.*



**Keywords**— *Gender, narratives of the self, transvestility.*

## I. INITIAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study aims to promote an analysis of the social representation that subjects who call themselves transvestites construct of themselves based on the narratives they produce. The term “transvestite” is frequently used in Brazil, historically stigmatized, and used to designate a Latin and feminine identity, as it has no translation into other languages. In his studies on transvestites, Jesus (2012) states that people belonging to this group do not cross-dress in the sense of dressing to look like someone else; many transvestites have a transsexual identity, and the most respectful way of treating them as a transvestite involves acknowledging their femininity.

To meet the objective of this study, we chose discourse analysis (DA), which has a materialist nature, because this

theoretical proposal addresses the subject-history-ideology relationship. In the field of discourse analysis, elements of psychoanalysis, linguistics and historical Marxism are articulated, so its knowledge is dialogued with the social sciences and the philosophy of language. In this field, “the aim is to understand language making sense, while symbolic work, part of the general social work, constitutive of man and his history” (Orlandi, 2012, p. 15). The study proposal includes qualitative research so that the researcher can obtain an interpretive understanding based on the following methodological procedures: (i) structured interviews with transvestites and (ii) analysis of the transvestites' narratives based on the theoretical assumptions of materialist discourse analysis.

## II. A BRIEF PRESENTATION OF MATERIALIST DISCOURSE THEORY

As its name suggests, discourse analysis focuses on discourse, and although this does not specifically include language and grammar, these issues are addressed in related studies. According to this theoretical perspective, discourse is a sociohistorical object, defined as the effect of meaning of the actions that subjects promote in different language practices and the principle of human existence (Orlandi, 2012).

According to Orlandi (2012), in discourse analysis, language is not addressed as an abstract system but rather with (relatively autonomous) language and its exteriority, that is, with the conditions of production of the discourses propagated by the subjects in society. Discourse analysis addresses “the language-discourse-ideology relationship” (Orlandi, 2012, p. 17). From this perspective, language is treated as the specific materiality of discourse and thus is essentially ideological. Discourse, in turn, is the specific materiality of ideology.

The production conditions of a given saying involve the subjects who interact in a given situation, the social representations that are attributed to them, the interaction situation itself, what is said and the memory evoked by the saying. According to Courtine (2016, p. 20), “the notion of conditions of discourse production regulates, in AD, the relationship between the linguistic materiality of a discursive sequence and the historical conditions”.

Anchored in the studies by Pêcheux, Orlandi (2012, p. 17) argues that “there is no discourse without a subject and there is no subject without ideology”, since language only makes sense through the interpellation of the subject to a given ideology.

To explain the notion of ideology, Pêcheux (1995) cites two propositions that support Althusser's thesis: (i) there is only practice through and under an ideology, and (ii) there is only ideology by the subject and for subjects. The indefinite article that is used in the first proposition refers to the thought about the “differentiated” plurality of ideology. The second proposition refers to the category of subject, which is constituted only in and by ideology.

Ideology is the condition for the constitution of the subject and the senses in the world. In materialist discourse studies, the individual is interpellated, by ideology, into a subject to utter ideas and meanings. Ideology functions in the subjects' unconscious, being responsible for their interpretations and the way they read gestures in a given time and a given discursive situation. In this proposal, the subject is simultaneously free and subjected to ideology: he or she utters a given saying because he or she submits

him- or herself to the language and the historicity inherent to the discursive practices.

According to Pêcheux (1995, p. 160), ideology “provides evidence by which 'everyone knows' what a soldier, a worker, a boss, a factory is [...], evidence that makes a word or a statement 'they mean what they truly say’”. Therefore, the evidence camouflages, through a possible transparency of language, the material character of the meaning, the words and the utterances. The author defines this material character of meaning by its constitutive dependence on the complex whole of ideological formations.

The author defends the thesis that the meaning of a word/expression does not exist “in itself”. The meaning will be determined by the subjects' ideological positions, which are situated in a sociohistorical process in which a particular word/expression is produced. Thus, words/expressions change their meaning according to their positions, or rather, through the ideological formations of a given subject who utters them.

For discourse analysis, language is opaque, incomplete and subject to misunderstanding, and as such, the discourse and the subject are being constructed by history. Thus, the meanings of discourses are found not only in them, in the intentions (conditioned on ideology) of the subject, but also in the relations with exteriority (history). As Orlandi (2012, p. 25) argued, “language only makes sense because it is inscribed in history”.

Extending this discussion, memory – an uncontrollable part of the subject in the production of discourse – is treated as interdiscourse, that is, what has already been said and “forgotten”. Interdiscourse, which is also called discursive memory, is “the discursive knowledge that makes possible all saying that is at the base of the sayable, supporting each word” (Orlandi, 2012, p. 31). Thus, this set of discourses made and already forgotten reinforces the idea that saying is not the property of a specific subject since discourses only make sense because they already make sense (Orlandi, 2012).

According to Orlandi, all sayings uttered in all circumstances of interaction are found at the confluence of two axes: “that of memory (constitution) and that of actuality (formulation)”. Based on this game, the senses are (re)constructed. Language results from the tension between the same and different paraphrastic and polysemic processes, respectively. These refer to creativity and rupture, the displacement of meanings, as different discourses and meanings are produced in this process. The former, on the other hand, involves productivity because saying is maintained and is the return of what has already been said; rather, it is the rescue of interdiscourse.

However, as Orlandi (2012) notes, the aforementioned processes are not independent because, through repetition (productivity), the new (creativity) process is always imminent.

In this field, it is necessary to understand what constitutes meaning since it does not exist in isolation but is determined by the ideological positions put into play in the sociohistorical process in which words are produced (Orlandi, 2012, p. 42). Therefore, meaning is made not only by the speaker's intentions and by memory but also by discursive formations, which determine what can and should be said. The meaning – ideological effect – demands of the discursive formations for its construction.

Pêcheux (2014) argues that the effects of meaning are constituted through the relationships within a given discursive formation. Given this, the discursive formations comprise two points: (i) the words do not have meaning in themselves, so the meanings will be derived according to the discursive formations in which these words are inscribed; and (ii) the same words can have different meanings in different discursive formations.

When addressing discursive formation, Foucault (2008, p. 43, author's emphasis) states that,

In the case where it is possible to describe, among a certain number of utterances, such a system of dispersion, and in the case where among objects, the types of utterances, the concepts, the thematic choices, it is possible to define a regularity (an order, correlations, positions and functionings, transformations), we will say, by convention, that it is a *discursive formation*.

Thus, historical conditions are necessary to be able to say something about a given object of discourse, so a particular idea cannot be discussed in a different historical time. Therefore, the object does not preexist itself; it exists under conditions or complex relationships; that is, its existence occurs under discursive formations.

Given that we understand some of the relevant categories of AD for this study, the next section addresses language as a procedure of exclusion and addresses the issue of gender.

### III. LANGUAGE AS A FORM OF EXCLUSION

Subjects are formed in and by language, and the constitutive power of language preexists and preserves all the acts that subjects attribute to it. In her studies on insult, Butler (2021) notes that, unlike language, it takes a specific proportion in time. The author states that one of the first forms of linguistic insult that is understood is to be called a name and adds that not all denominations to which

the subjects are designated are insulting since such invocations may also be one of the constitutions that take a certain subject to be constituted in language. This exemplification of the constitution of the subject has been defended in materialist discourse studies as interpellation, as discussed above.

Butler (2021, sp.) ponders that “if to be called is to be addressed, the offensive denomination risks introducing into the discourse a subject who will use language to counter the offensive denomination”. That is, the insulting name, in addition to immobilizing or repressing a particular subject, can also produce other possibilities of speech acts, such as, for example, a subject's unpredictable response.

In this sense, the author uses the words of Richard Delgado and Mari Matsuda to say that “words hurt”. From this perspective, certain words and certain callings threaten the physique because, by the various denominations, the body can be protected as well as injured.

Language supports the body but can also threaten its presence at the same time (Butler, 2021). In view of this, the author argues that the ways in which language can violently threaten subjects may be linked to a need that every individual has for an interpellative/constitutive call of the Other. Using the studies by Toni Morrison, Butler (2021) argues that oppressive language is not a simple representation of violence but rather of violence because language puts its particular mode of aggression into action. The philosopher also adds that the purpose of the violence of language is to capture that which is not named (the “ineffable”) to destroy it and then continue its living functioning.

However, oppressive language can be fruitful or flawed (Butler, 2021). Every language act is vulnerable to failure; therefore, according to the philosopher, it is necessary to explore this vulnerability to face it. However, the abusive speech act does not cease to be an abusive speech act if it fails. Moreover, for the injury to be fruitful, Butler (2021) considers that the speech act needs certain conditions and certain places of power so that its meaning effects are materialized. This issue will be addressed more specifically later in the analysis.

From this same perspective of eliminating the unnamed (the “ineffable”), Foucault (1996, p. 8-9) argues that “in every society the production of discourse is at the same time controlled, selected, organized and redistributed by a certain number of different groups”. procedures”. Thus, the author presents some procedures for discourse exclusion that include the opposition of true and false.

The procedure of opposition between the true and the false is historically constituted by the will to knowledge. In this

procedure, true speech, which is characterized by being the one that pronounced and granted justice, the one that was said by someone in law in a specific ritual, “is no longer the precious and desirable speech, since it is no longer the speech linked to the exercise of power” (Foucault, 1996, p. 15). Therefore, starting from this opposition, from the Platonic division, the will to truth occupies a place in history.

Like other systems of exclusion, the will to truth is based on institutional support and is accompanied by sets of practices in society. However, according to Foucault (1996, p. 20), it is also driven by the way in which knowledge is presented to the people. Furthermore, the will to truth exerts a kind of pressure and power of imposition on the subjects’ discourses, but “only a universal truth appears to our eyes”. The objective of this will to truth is the destruction and erasure of what is not yet in the field of truth, of what is unnameable for the sayings that occupy the space of truth.

Butler (2003) argues that the construction of the subject is linked to procedures of legitimation and exclusion and argues that feminist criticism needs to include an understanding of how the category of woman is constituted and dominated by the very structures that seek their own emancipation. In this sense, there is a political problem that the feminist movement faces in a possible statement that the term “women” means only a single identity. The representation of “women” (in plural) was transfigured as a problematic point, a factor of anxiety, as stated by Butler (2003, p. 20):

If one 'is' a woman, this is certainly not all that one is; the term cannot be exhaustive, not because the predefined gender traits of the 'person' transcend the specific paraphernalia of its gender but because gender has not always been constituted in a coherent or consistent manner in different historical contexts and because gender establishes intersections with racial, class, ethnic, sexual and regional modalities of discursively constituted identities.

In other words, the notion of gender cannot be separated or divided from cultural and political intersections – spaces in which gender is performed and perpetuated. From this perspective, Louro (1997) argues that different markers, such as class, gender and race, cannot be characterized as independent because the violence that each marking suffers is embedded within another marking. Vergueiro (2012) also claims that markers such as those mentioned and those of nationality, sexuality, religiosity and educational level influence the composition of the subjectivities of these bodies.

According to Nascimento (2021, p. 21), the category “women” (used to reinforce the different social, personal and collective experiences that the term “woman” is able to incorporate) and the category “femininities” (used to “understand the ways in which subjects within feminism dialog with what the social imaginary determines as 'feminine', and which, based on this cultural script, produces cocreations and subversions” (Nascimento, 2021, p. 20)) should be able to encompass the experiences of trans women and transvestites. However, in feminism, the author states that discourses that aim at sexual differentiation through anatomical aspects are propagated.

In the history of gender and sexuality, transgender people are situated in places where they do not exist. Nascimento (2021, p. 35) characterizes trans women and transvestites as foreigners to their gender in this situation in her questions:

Do all women experience *otherness*, that is, the *other* way of being, in the same way? Situating historically and within social and power relations, as Foucault (2003) teaches us, would not the white, cis, heterosexual, middle-class, Christian, thin and without disabilities woman be the *Other* for the white, cis, heterosexual, middle-class, Christian, thin and without disabilities? If the woman, in the aforementioned markers, is the *Other* of the White Man in the aforementioned manners, what social places do the other subjects and other subjects occupy within the social hierarchies? (author’s emphasis).

The notion of otherness is not static and can be understood through other experiences, such as those of transsexual women and transvestites. For Nascimento (2021), the otherness of trans women and transvestites is beyond because they are characterized as a different image of what is given as man and woman in a society. The author classifies trans women and transvestites as the Other of the Other and argues that this is one of the reasons that such subjects are not recognized and represented in feminist struggles.

In contrast, the adhesion of trans women and transvestites to feminism can occur when it is understood, in society, that transvestitism is a gender of its own that goes beyond a binary gender—male and female. According to Nascimento (2021), many transvestites and transsexuals feel like women, but some transvestites do not consider themselves women because they understand themselves as a third gender; thus, they do not understand themselves as either men or women.

By distancing themselves from the binary (male or female), transsexual women and transvestites experience different forms of violence. Bento (2011) says that the

idealized forms of gender generate hierarchies and exclusions and that the attempt to disregard the presence of other gender performances that distance themselves from the binary and heterosexual makes different subjects feel abnormal and out of place. Nascimento (2021) also argues that people who call themselves trans and transvestites occupy a nonplace compared to the normative gender. This occurs because these bodies do not correspond to the—biological—truth imposed by the “cis” theme. Therefore, the experiences of otherness that trans people and transvestites experience “remove them from a condition of human intelligibility imposed by cis bodies, which have privileges in gender coloniality” (Nascimento, 2021, p. 40). Regarding this gender coloniality, Vergueiro (2012) argues that when cisgenderism is defined as an expression of gender that is legitimized by dominant cisgender norms, it contributes to a possible decolonization of gender. For the author, the objective of using the concept of cisgenderism as an analytical category is to “disauthorize discourses and practices that naturalize the cisgender norm, understanding transgender and noncisgender individualities, therefore, as marginal positions and resistance to cisgender colonial domination” (Vergueiro, 2012, np).

Following these discussions, the next section addresses the analysis of two excerpts of self-narratives made by two transvestites in light of the materialist theory.

#### IV. TRANSVESTITES IN NARRATIVES

This study aims to analyse excerpts from two narratives of subjects who called themselves transvestites based on the theoretical assumptions of materialist discourse analysis. For this study, two excerpts of the testimonies of two transvestites whose pseudonyms (chosen by them) are Raissa Raiana and Mirela were used. The excerpts used in the analysis were chosen because they narrate how transvestites see themselves as social subjects from the perspective of themselves and, in a way, of the other towards themselves.

For the development of the research corpus, the transvestites were asked to make a narrative of their experience and of their construction as a subject, based on the following questions: Considering that every subject constructs a representation of him- or herself and of others, what representation do you build of yourself? What is it like to be a transvestite in a society as complex as ours? Tell us a little about your experiences.

We examine the excerpts to discuss how Raissa Raiana and Mirela construct a representation of their group in social practices, the acts of violence that they faced, and

the social erasure that they suffered because they did not adapt to a crystallized imaginary of the body.

In addition, the proposal of the NURC Project (Norma Urbana Culta) was used in this study to transcribe the interviews since, in addition to documenting and studying the educated spoken norm, this project helps the analyst examine the effects of meanings that can be constructed from each interview. These effects can be examined through either the pauses given by the interviewee during her speeches or the stronger tonality used to utter a particular word, and this approach is helpful for transcribing speech in a more academic format.

In this clipping 1, Raissa Raiana, a young transvestite, narrates the difficulty of representing the transsexual and transvestite category because she does not suffer or have experiences that are experienced by other people who recognize themselves as transsexual women and/or transvestites:

##### Cutout 1: Raissa Raiana

(...) because we are few bodies and because some of these bodies either use or are in spaces that are not constructed... thought out or reflected on to receive us... then... we automatically begin to have a political representation in these spaces... as if we represent the whole... and this representation is not an optional representation... it is a compulsory representation... not everyone wants to be representing the trans community... . sometimes... they just want to be living her life... (...) my pains as a trans person may be different from that of another trans person because of the other aspects... I'm black... I'm trans... I'm poor... a combo of complete vulnerability ((laughed) )... but... there are other white UPPER middle class trans people... and... then... I do not represent these people... they went through another type of training reality... which is not MINE... (...) we also have to understand that this representation that we have... a lot of times... it speaks a lot to the media in my... in my head... so... at least about a representation that we have of trans people in the media... now... that we are having representation of trans people in roles... how should I say... in social media... more realistic... . whether through TV series... such as... for example... *POSE* and everything else... Liniker... who is... for example... a singer... has these issues.. So... but... for a long time... it was linked in the social imaginary... as a whole or was it just representing that... the position of trans people as prostitutes... right? while subjects who were not worthy of trust and subjects mocked... such as... for example... the caricature they had of Vera Verão... is a clear example of what we had in the Brazilian media... the entire

construction of trans identity within Brazil... (...) and these roles... they are only being redone now... this representation... both mine and the collective's... now... with the election of Erika Hilton... with the election of Duda Salabert ... with Gabriela Lohan acting in Globo's seven o'clock soap opera... and now that these roles are being changed... right? and having a demystification... I think it would be the word... of what it is to be trans and how these people... they can and should be present in everyday life... in everyday life... (...) I was already called a whore of Babylon in the market by a lady I had never seen in my life before... she simply felt comfortable calling me a whore of Babylon... I went to investigate later because I I'm not a very religious person... I was... I was a little happy... well... right? by which it means the expression of a woman who did not adapt to the current standards of the time... and was fucked for all patriarchy... machismo and custom and religion... so... I think that is the kind of thing she wanted me to do. offend... but in the end it was not that much of an offense... I was a little happy with what the expression itself meant... although she did it consciously with the intention of offending me...

Raissa Raiana states that because other people in the community do not occupy the same space as her (due to the marginalization that these bodies suffer), she feels an obligation to occupy a political position of compulsory representation even though she does not speak for all women, whether cisgender or transsexuals or transvestites. Notably, the demands of a middle-class white transsexual woman are different from the demands of a peripheral white transsexual woman.

Nascimento (2021), taking up the studies of Beauvoir, who states that women are marked by the Other and, therefore, occupy a hierarchy of submission to that Other, questions whether all women experience otherness in the same way and argues that they do not. On the one hand, a black woman does not have a relationship of reciprocity with a white or black man. On the other hand, transsexual women and/or transvestites are not considered to have a reciprocal relationship with cisgender women and men. Thus, Nascimento (2021) criticizes this thesis by Beauvoir because it does not present intersections.

Nascimento (2021) also argues that there are different otherities; that is, otherness is not only for women; it is also for black men, even those who benefit from sexist and patriarchal society, who suffer racial violence, for example. Therefore, the idea of the Other is not fixed; because it is mutable, it moves.

In her narration, Raissa Raiana, says that she may suffer different pains than other trans people and transvestites because of these intersections. In this case, Raissa Raiana is the Other of the Other of the Other, that is, she is the Other of the cisgender woman, who is the Other of the cisgender man, because her image is far from what is normatively imposed in a society that prioritizes the binary of men and women.

The interviewee also compares her experience with that of white upper-middle-class transgender people, saying that she does not represent these subjects because they have received a different education from her. This is related to Raissa Raiana's race and financial condition. From a perspective that encompasses race and class, Raissa Raiana distances herself even further from a "first" Other (the cisgender, white, heterosexual, upper-class man without disabilities), and even his experiences may be closer to the experiences of white transgender women. From the upper middle class, the interviewee still distances herself from this Other because she is a poor and black person who does not have the same experiences as other white and/or middle/upper class people due to racial and socioeconomic factors.

These intersections of Raissa Raiana need to be demarcated because discussions about gender should not only move around the binary or nonbinary but also focus on the interior of the various groups that construct their subjectivities: racial, ethnic, religious, class, etc. (Vergueiro, 2012). If one is a woman, that is not all one is, as gender is embedded in other intersections that are discursively constructed (Louro, 1997).

However, why is this representation of Raissa Raiana compulsory? The human intelligibility imposed by cisgender bodies that have privileges in gender coloniality results in the nonparticipation of bodies that depart from the "cis" theme. Thus, we affirm that bodies such as those of Raissa Raiana do not actively participate in different discursive practices in society, such as those that occur at the university. Therefore, by participating in the academic field, Raissa Raiana subverts the logic that the place of transvestites is in prostitution.

The representation of Raissa Raiana at the university is compulsory because, in most universities, no transvestites participate. Their representation is sucked in at different times, as the informant states: "So... we automatically begin to have political representation in these spaces... as if we represented the whole...". She also talks about spaces that are not "built" and "thought out" to receive bodies such as hers. On this issue, we can use Bento (2011), who defends the point of view that because they do not adapt to the system, bodies that distance themselves from the

binary and the heterosexual – more specifically, the trans and transvestite bodies – are often limited and prevented from existing. Thus, these bodies are situated out of place outside the university, as in this case.

For many years, the representation of trans women and transvestites was crystallized and linked to prostitutes. This representation was perpetuated and repeated in different discursive practices, especially practices related to television. One of the reasons that this representation was preserved in the Brazilian media was the presence of the caricature of Vera Verão (conducted by actor and comedian Jorge Laffond) in a TV program. The construction of the character was the construction of the identity of all trans women and transvestites throughout Brazil, and its representation built, at many times, the stereotyping of transsexual women and transvestites because Vera Verão was debauched, extravagant, barracks and bad-natured.

In his studies, Pêcheux (1995) argues that the meaning of a word/expression is determined only by the ideological positions in which that particular word/expression is produced. Thus, the meaning of the expression “whore of Babylon” – a term that the lady at the market called Raissa Raiana – does not exist in itself because this expression changes its meaning according to the ideological formations through which a given subject utters it (Pêcheux, 1995).

In this light, “words change meaning according to the positions of those who use them. They ‘take’ their meaning from these positions, that is, in relation to the ideological formations in which these positions are inscribed” (Orlandi, 2012, p. 42-43) and in relation to discursive formations—by the positions in which a given saying is situated in a given discursive chain. The meaning of the expression “whore of Babylon” is derived according to the discursive formations in which it is inscribed. The position of this saying uttered by the lady in the market evokes meanings through history, or rather, through interdiscourse, given that the words resume other words and, thus, they are part of the discourse in a relationship with other sayings in memory. The expression “whore of Babylon” takes up meanings that concern the religious discourse.

This expression is included in the seventeenth chapter of the Book of Revelation in the Bible, which states that “the woman wore a dress the color of purple and bright red and was covered with ornaments of gold, precious stones and pearls. In her hands, she held a golden cup full of wine, which represented her indecent practices and the filth of her immorality. On her forehead was written a name that has a secret meaning: ‘Babylon the great, mother of all the

harlots and all the immoral people of the world.’”<sup>1</sup>. Given the saying, one can ponder that the whore of Babylon is a biblical character who is portrayed as a being without religion, as a beast, an evil that is the creation of abominations.

On the one hand, because it constitutes a particular discursive formation and not another, the term “prostitute of Babylon”, directed at Raissa Raiana, recovers meanings that refer to a possible nonsalvation of the transvestite. Therefore, the transvestite is seen as an abomination that needs to be judged and mistreated for not following the precepts considered good and virtuous. In other words, the lady (subject of her discourse) is positioned to a given ideological formation, and the sayings she utters come from certain discursive formations that correspond to a given ideology (Pêcheux, 1995).

On the other hand, Raissa Raiana is positioned in a given other ideological formation. Therefore, the words she utters are words from other discursive formations that are far from the discursive formations of the words uttered by the woman in the market. Raissa Raiana interprets the expression “prostitute of Babylon” differently from the way in which it was uttered because all meanings have an ideological character (Orlandi, 2012). Therefore, Raissa Raiana says she was happy to be called by the expression because, for her, the term means “a woman who did not adapt to the current standards of the time”, which is subversive to patriarchy, machismo and religion. Furthermore, the denomination made by the lady is based on hate speech and constitutes an insulting act. Given that the saying uttered by her is situated in a given discursive formation and not in another, we can infer that this saying does not overflow with richness for those who receive it. This is affirmed because, according to Butler (2021, sp), “the statement according to which certain types of speech not only communicate hatred but also constitute injurious acts presupposes not only that language acts but that it acts on its addressee”. in an injurious manner”.

However, in his studies of denominations, Butler (2021) states that, like all speech acts, not all denominations are fruitful because they are susceptible to failure. Raissa Raiana, in the clipping, narrates that the name she received was intended to insult her, as “I think she wanted to offend me like that”. However, as argued, speech acts may or may not produce effects. Some speech acts are considered performative failures, or rather, do not have the effect(s) of the act that is conjectured (Butler, 2021), as demonstrated in the words of Raissa Raiana: but in the end, it was not that much of an offense. In other words, the saying “whore of Babylon”, uttered by the lady to Raissa Raiana with the

<sup>1</sup> [www.bible.com/pt/bible/211/REV.17.NTLH](http://www.bible.com/pt/bible/211/REV.17.NTLH).

intention of threatening and judging her, is a flawed speech act since it produces sequences of consequences different from the “original context” expression, such as the happiness expressed by the transvestite in the narrative: I was a little happy with what the expression itself meant.

The representation of transvestites is constituted through a discursive memory, that is, by interdiscourse, in a process of reproduction of sayings, the saying that trans women and transvestites are prostitutes is repeated today, returning to ideas that have already been said about this group of people. This also occurs in the abovementioned representations, in which the imaginary that these subjects are violent, drugged, aggressive, lack confidence and full of sexually transmitted infections is reproduced by different segments of society.

However, this repetition of a single representation of trans women and transvestites erases other representations of other subjects that do not fit into it. The dangers of a single saying, in this case, a single representation, will also be exposed in the testimony of another informant of this study: Mirela. When narrating herself, she tells about one of her sorrows: her relationships outside the workplace. For this transvestite, people’s veiled prejudice does not allow her to build friendships outside the place where she works.

#### Cutout 2: Mirela

(...) and the worst prejudice in this whole situation is the veiled prejudice... I live this veiled prejudice... and many pretend they like me... that they adore me... but underneath they hate me. ... just like I said before about pasta... I have never been to a coworker's house... to invite me to a Sunday pasta dinner... to invite me to a barbecue... to invite me for a drink. .. “We are going to have a round of drinks here at home, invite Mirela”... no... “I like it and respect it, at work, on the street. I do not want this type of person in my house, I do not want that kind of person in my house”... which is very sad... right? (...) many times when I am invited to a conversation circle or a lecture... in a conversation... I always talk about the training I have... and a lot of times people talk like this... “Oh, do you want to show yourself”... no... because in this society I always have to be reassuring myself... “look, I can handle it, I can do it... look, I'm here”... understand? it is a society that... we trans women and transvestites... we seek every day acceptance and understanding of a society that does not see us as... does not see me as a professional... society sees me as The transvestite ... and that... for me... is very sad... I want to be known as Mirela... nursing technician... as Mirela... social worker... not as The transvestite.

When she is not invited to celebrations or even to meetings with friends, Mirela suffers violence. We can also say that although many manifestations of offensive language are characterized by the use of certain terms, other forms of language can also be substantiated by insult (Butler, 2021), as in the case of Mirela. The informant is not invited and is not reminded by different subjects who surround her to perform activities together: a pasta dish with friends on Sunday, a barbecue with coworkers, etc. The abusive language, in this example, is grounded in the silence and in the omission of other subjects in relation to Mirela.

Bento (2011) suggests that the so-called ideal genders (masculine and feminine) produce hierarchies and, therefore, exclusions. Therefore, Mirela (a transsexual woman who identifies herself as a transvestite) deviates from the ideal gender, leading to her social exclusion and segregation in the different discursive practices that involve other subjects. When prioritizing binary genders, nonbinary genders are considered false and abnormal. Because they are abnormal, the idea that subjects such as Mirela should not share the same relationships as subjects who have a gender expression considered normal is solidified.

Mirela explains other people’s thinking as follows: “I like and respect her, at work, on the street. I don’t want this type of person in my house; I don’t want that kind of person in my house”. From her point of view, these people only tolerate her in places where they are obliged to tolerate her. In other discursive situations, they want her distant because they do not see her as someone who can frequent the same places frequented by “normal” people. This can be reinforced by the imaginaries that trans women and transvestites carry, those of prostitutes, of violence and of people without confidence.

The segregation of Mirela from the homes of individuals who participate in her daily life may also be related to a possible threat that she may cause to the traditional Brazilian family. Mirela’s existence challenges the binary truth, and because it is a threat to this crystallized truth, it is rejected from other possible relationships.

At other times in history, trans women and transvestites were persecuted by a hygienist culture in Brazil when they were labelled threats to normality and/or good customs. An example of this is the 1987 tarantula operation, carried out by public policies organized together with civil and military police and the press. Under this coercive practice, transvestites who worked on the streets of São Paulo were hunted, imprisoned, tortured and killed, with the aim of cleaning up the city and eliminating threats to the traditional family. At the time, this was justified due to the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) epidemic—a virus that was attributed to the *queer* community for many years.



As exemplified, the regulatory practices and the coloniality of gender can have a series of consequences for bodies that do not correspond to the institutionalized truth. In this study, we assume that gender coloniality, or rather, heterosexualization and the cis-generation of bodies, manufacture oppositions that are only contemplated in a binary logic (male and female). One of the consequences of this logic is the nonexistence of different identities that depart from binarism. These identities, such as those of Mirela, must not exist because they are unintelligible; in other words, they are incomprehensible in the binary field. Mirela's words highlight the differentiated treatment received by transvestites in various social instances. As she said, society sees her as "the transvestite" and not as "the Mirela". To be accepted, a transvestite often needs to present herself as someone who has a degree and a job and avoids prostitution.

We can also say that the fact that Mirela breaks the paradigms of what it is to be a transvestite is a subversion. In the imaginary, as already seen, a transvestite is one who is in prostitution, one who should not be trusted, one who is violent, etc. We believe that the informant subverts this false generalization about the category "transvestite" because she vacates this place that is imposed on her, occupying other spaces, as stated in "I want to be known as Mirela... Mirela... social worker".

The existence of subjects such as Mirela subverts the impossibility of corporeal plurality that is imposed by the binary system. Its existence is shown and differs from the norms given, in the binary system, of the sexual category. What Mirela says refutes crystallized precepts that refer to the body, causing significant dispersions and (re)productions of different experiences that are not situated in binary compulsion (Vergueiro, 2012). In the same vein, Mirela's experience, when defined within the experiences of women and/or femininity, is understood in the fields of humanity and gender (Nascimento, 2021). Therefore, her experience is one of the factors that denatures the crystallized imaginary of what it is to be a woman, of what it is to be a transvestite.

Furthermore, based on Orlandi's (2012) statement that the polysemic and paraphrastic processes are not independent because, through repetition, the new is imminent, it can be said that the representation of Raissa Raiana, Mirela and the collective of trans people and transvestites is displaced in a polysemic process that creates and breaks meanings already constructed referring to an idea. In this process, different sayings and meanings are produced, and displacements of rules are produced that affect the subjects and meanings in the discourse. There are other meanings for the representations of trans women and transvestites. Raissa Raiana exemplifies this by citing subjects who are

not in prostitution but in politics and the arts in Brazil, such as Erika Hilton, Duda Salabert and Gabriela Lohan, who not only represent their respective bodies but also different bodies that are still in the stigma of prostitution, violence, drugs, STIs.

The representations of these bodies can break the crystallized imaginary of transvestites. For example, subjects who look at Erika Hilton humanely on television, in politics, more specifically, may also look at a transvestite who is on the street, on the corner, in a more humanistic way. The body of the transvestite who works on the street is paraphrastically represented by the body of the Federal Congresswoman, just as the body of the transvestite – who is in prostitution – paraphrastically represents the body of Erika Hilton, Duda Salabert, Gabriela Lohan, Raissa Raiana, Mirela, among other trans people and transvestites.

## V. FINAL REMARKS

Through the analysis of Raissa Raiana's and Mirela's testimonies, we can say that the constitution of these transvestites is marked by the social representation that the group of transvestites has, by the violence they suffered in their lives, as their deletion in the different social practices, as well as by the violence they suffered in their lives. as by the sayings that challenge them in society.

We have also seen that the different intersections – of class, sexuality, race, etc. – involve the constitution of the interviewees, given that their subjectivities are not limited to the social representation they assume because the gender of a subject is interrelated with other intersections. Because they are demarcated at certain intersections, such as races (in the case of Raissa Raiana), Raissa Raiana suffers different pains than other subjects.

The sayings in society have created a single representation of trans women and transvestites, especially in the Brazilian media, delegitimizing and erasing representations of transvestite subjects that do not fit this single truth. However, we also claim, in this study, that there are different transsexual identities that break meanings already constructed regarding the idea of what it is to be a transvestite: a plural identity that encompasses different experiences and bodies.

We also address the exclusion procedures and the nominations narrated by the two transvestites in their experiences. In this study, the will to truth, the exclusion procedure, was related to a binary will to truth. This single truth is intended to erase subjects who move away from binarism – men and women. She tries to exclude all bodies that are not named in the binary field, that is, in the field of truth, such as the bodies of Raissa Raiana and Mirela.

## REFERENCES

- [1] Bento, Berenice. Na escola se aprende que a diferença faz a diferença. *Revista Estudos Feministas* [online], 2011, vol.19, n.2, pp.549-559. Disponível em: <<http://www.scielo.br/pdf/ref/v19n2/v19n2a16.pdf>>. Acesso em 12 de jun de 2023.
- [2] Butler, Judith. *Problemas de gênero: Feminismo e subversão da identidade*. Rio de Janeiro – RJ: EDITORA CIVILIZAÇÃO BRASILEIRA, 2003. p. 5-235.
- [3] Butler, Judith. *Discurso de ódio: Uma política do performativo*. São Paulo: Unesp Digital, 2021.
- [4] Courtine, Jean-Jacques. Definição de orientações teóricas e construção de procedimentos em análise do discurso. *Revista de Estudos do Discurso, Imagem e Som - Policromias*, v. 1, n. 1, 2016. Disponível em: <http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.11959/brapci/118380>. Acesso em: 21 set. 2023.
- [5] Foucault, Michel. *A ordem do discurso: aula inaugural no Collège de France, pronunciada em 2 de dezembro de 1970*. Tradução de Laura Fraga de Almeida Sampaio. 3. ed. São Paulo, Brasil: Edições Loyola, 1996.
- [6] Foucault, Michel. *A arqueologia do saber*. 7ed. Tradução Luiz Felipe B. Neves. Rio de Janeiro: Forense Universitária, 2008. p. 1-85.
- [7] Jesus, Jaqueline Gomes de; *Orientações sobre identidade de gênero: Conceitos e termos*. 2. ed. Brasília: [s.n.], 2012.
- [8] Louro, Guacira Lopes. *Gênero, sexualidade e educação: Uma perspectiva pós-estruturalista*. 6. ed. Petrópolis, RJ: EDITORA VOZES, 1997. p. 7-56.
- [9] Nascimento, Letícia. *Transfeminismo: feminismos plurais*. 1. ed. São Paulo: Jandaíra, 2021. p. 12-124.
- [10] Orlandi, Eni Puccinelli. *Análise de discurso: Princípios & Procedimentos*. 10. ed. Campinas, SP: Pontes, 2012. 100 p.
- [11] Pêcheux, Michel. *Semântica e discurso: uma crítica à afirmação do óbvio*. 2. ed. Campinas – SP: Editora da Unicamp, 1995. p. 85-185.
- [12] Pêcheux, Michel. *Análise automática do discurso (AAD-69)*. In GADET, F; HAK, Tony (Orgs.) Por uma análise automática do discurso: uma introdução à obra de Michel Pêcheux. Trad. Eni P. Orlandi. Campinas: Editora da Unicamp, 2014, p. 61-162.
- [13] Vergueiro, Viviane. Pela descolonização das identidades trans\*. In: VI Congresso Internacional de Estudos Sobre a Diversidade Sexual e de Gênero da ABEH, 2012, Salvador. *Anais [...]* VI Congresso Internacional, 2012.