

FIGHTING TO EXIST: LIVED EXPERIENCE AND SOCIAL SUFFERING OF TRANSGENDER PEOPLE

Lutando para Existir: Experiência Vivida e Sofrimento Social de Pessoas Transgêneras

Luchando para Existir: Experiencia Vivida y Sufrimiento Social de Personas Transgéneras

En Luttant pour exister : Expérience Vécue et Souffrance Sociale des Personnes Transgenres

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Abstract

This paper aims to investigate the experience of transgender people from the perspective of concrete psychoanalytic psychology. It is methodologically organized as a qualitative research, using the psychoanalytical method, in the investigation of 13 YouTube videos, in which people who identify themselves as transgender people report their life experiences. The consideration of this material enabled the recognition of two affective-emotional meaning fields: “Perverse and degenerate” and “To be or not to be real”. Taking Monique Wittig and Donald Winnicott as privileged interlocutors, to reflect about these fields, we come to an overview that indicates that cisheteronormativity can be considered a radical violence against the self, facing sexuality in a reductionist way and attacking the personal feeling, which is a source of creativity and spontaneity.

Keywords: gender; transgender; social suffering; concrete psychoanalytic psychology.

Abstract

Este artigo tem como objetivo investigar a experiência vivida por pessoas transgêneras na perspectiva da psicologia psicanalítica concreta. Organiza-se metodologicamente como uma pesquisa qualitativa, com o uso do método psicanalítico, na investigação de 13 vídeos do YouTube, nos quais pessoas que se identificam como transgêneras relatam suas experiências de vida. A consideração desse material permitiu a proposição interpretativa de dois campos de sentido afetivo-emocional: perverso e degenerado e ser ou não ser verdadeiro. Tomando Monique Wittig e Donald Winnicott como interlocutores privilegiados para refletir sobre esses campos, chegamos a um quadro que indica que a cisheteronormatividade pode ser considerada uma violência radical na medida em que se coloca contra o self, encarando a sexualidade de modo reducionista e atacando o próprio sentir pessoal que é fonte de criatividade e espontaneidade.

Keywords: gênero; transgênero; sofrimento social; psicologia psicanalítica concreta.

Resumen

Este artículo tiene el objetivo de investigar la experiencia vivida por personas Transgéneras en la perspectiva de la psicología psicoanalítica concreta. Se organiza metodológicamente como una investigación cualitativa, con el uso del método psicoanalítico, en la investigación de 13 videos del YouTube, los cuales personas que se identifican como transgéneras relatan sus experiencias de vida. La consideración de este material permitió la proposición interpretativa de dos campos de sentido afectivo-emocional: perverso y degenerado y ser o no ser verdadero. Tomando Monique Wittig y Donald Winnicott como interlocutores privilegiados para reflexionar sobre estos campos, llegamos a un cuadro que indica que la “cis-hetero-normatividad” puede ser considerada una violencia radical a la medida en que se puede contra el self, encarando la sexualidad de modo reduccionista y atacando el propio sentir personal que es fuente de creatividad y espontaneidad.

Palabras clave: género; transgénero; sufrimiento social; psicología psicoanalítica concreta.

Resumé

Cet article vise à enquêter sur l'expérience vécue par les personnes transgenres du point de vue de la psychologie psychanalytique concrète. Il est organisé méthodologiquement comme une recherche qualitative, en utilisant la méthode psychanalytique, dans l'enquête de 13 vidéos YouTube, dans lesquelles des personnes qui s'identifient comme transgenres rapportent leurs expériences de vie. La prise en compte de ce matériel a permis la proposition interprétative de deux champs de sens affectif-émotionnel : pervers et dégénéré et être ou ne pas être vrai. En prenant Monique Wittig et Donald Winnicott comme interlocuteurs privilégiés pour réfléchir sur ces champs, nous arrivons à un tableau qui indique que la cis-hétéronormativité peut être considérée comme une violence radicale dans la mesure où elle est placée contre le self, affrontant la sexualité de manière réductionniste et en attaquant le sentiment très personnel qui est une source de créativité et de spontanéité.

Mots-clés: genre ; transgenres ; souffrance sociale ; psychologie psychanalytique concrète.

This article aims to investigate the experience lived by transgender people from the perspective of concrete psychoanalytical psychology. We consider *transgender, transgender/trans person or transgenderity*, all people who do not identify, full-time, part-time or in specific moments and/or situations in their life, with the gender they were assigned at birth. Thus, it is a “general” term, strategically used because it encompasses different possibilities, such as transgender women and men, transvestites, non-binary genders, drag queens, drag kings, among others (Lanz, 2015). It is worth mentioning that gender is not to be confused with affective and/or sexual orientation, that is, with people’s erotic and/or romantic orientation.

Much of the social imaginary is organized around the belief that there would only be two possibilities of gender, opposite and mutually exclusive, that is, penis-man-male and vulva-woman-female (cisheteronormativity), leading affective and sexual orientation exclusively to the opposite gender (heteronormativity). Therefore, in the literature, we find the term cisheteronormativity to describe this phenomenon, for it aligns, in the same equation, the socially constructed norms between body, gender and desire (Morera, 2017).

In the psychoanalytical literature, transgenderity is understood in different ways, and it is important to remember that psychoanalysis was constituted, starting with Freud, as a plural field. Under such plurality, it is possible to recognize, according to Greenberg and Mitchell (1994), the validity of two models of psychoanalytical theorization – the instinctual and the relational, which, incidentally, coincides with the duplicity of the Freudian text pioneered by Politzer (2004). It is worth mentioning, however, that this coincidence is not surprising if we remember that the fulcrum of this paradigmatic duplicity rests on the position that psychoanalysis theorists, who succeed their creator, take on the epistemological problems posed by Freudian metapsychology (Bianco, 2016; Mariguela, 2005).

In fact, when starting his studies on psychoanalysis, Politzer (2004) realized that it was structured in an incoherent way insofar as he theorized, according to an epistemology of an abstract and positivist character, about phenomena that approached as dramatic events that constellated in the clinical encounter. For this reason, the philosopher came to propose a concrete psychology, which suppressed metapsychology to meet the demands of epistemological rigor. This proposal motivated the emergence of others, in two directions: 1) one that defended the preservation of duplicity, under the argument that it would reflect a phenomenal condition, as Ricoeur (1977) did, strengthening attempts at accommodation between the instinctual and relational models; and 2) another that preached a radical reform of metapsychology in the light of structuralism and linguistics, a major task that was effectively accomplished by Jacques Lacan (Roudinesco, 2016). As a result, today we have a psychoanalytical field that finds in the Lacanians, who are numerous and expressive in our country, probably the most consequent and coherent representatives of the instinctual model. On the other hand, those who use the

relational model - understanding that Freudian metapsychology, in its original, or Lacanian modified state, should not be accepted as a defining beacon of what is or is not considered to be authentically psychoanalytical – compose, today, the so-called relational psychoanalytical approach, whose vocation is avowedly plural and inclusive.

When we seek to determine how homosexuality is seen by Lacanism, we find that the authors see it as a manifestation of the perverse structure and/or as a defense against psychosis, while transgenerity is considered a psychotical phenomenon of denial of reality. Taking this idea into consideration, transgenerity, as well as queer theories, would be a real danger, as they would threaten the very understanding of the human underlying the psychoanalytical conception of the subject, prevailing in the Lacanian field (Cunha, 2016). Such vision can be better appreciated when we remember the importance given to the symbolic register, in which the cultural dimension is linked to the cisheteropatriarchal organization that is the Name-of-the-Father¹, disqualifying everything that is not subordinated to it - including feminist manifestations.

It is worth reminding, now, that, in the classical Freudian view, sexuality is at the origin of all psychopathological conditions: neuroses, perversions and psychoses. In other words, forms of sexual expression that do not coincide with heterosexual practices for procreative purposes are considered pathological. As we can see, classical psychoanalysis has been under the sign of cisheteronormativity since its beginnings, and it is important to highlight that the recognition of child sexuality and other forms of experience of desire did not prevent them from being in some way pathologized, as pointed out by Silva (2021), in a review of the psychoanalytical literature on perversion and transgenerity.

Given its avowedly inclusive character (Kuchuck, 2021), the relational model encompasses many theoretical initiatives which always keep a certain affinity with the British school of object relations. These refer to a set of proposals that have in common not only the recognition of bonds as the basis of human existence, according to an anthropological vision that maintains that, given that the conditions of human life, individual and collective personalities are driven by motivations that frankly extrapolate the limits of sexuality in general, but also, of sexuality as it is carried out under the aegis of cisheteropatriarchal norms. Concrete psychoanalytical psychology, the theoretical-methodological perspective we adopted, should be included as a pioneering proposal that is part of the so-called relational psychoanalytical approach (Lieberman, 2014).

It is not difficult to see that, given its foundations, the relational aspect has found great development in contemporary times, criticizing psychoanalytical visions based on hierarchical gender relations and, in this way, revealing itself better prepared to dialogue with the important cultural changes that take place in the sense of an inclusive radical humanism that is positioned against cisheteropatriarchal capitalism. It may seem curious, at first glance, that the model that does not place sexual instinctuality as the basis of the psychical proves to be more apt to understand manifestations such as transgenerity, however, everything becomes clear when we understand that instinctual theories are not neutral and adopt a vision of the human being that, being closely linked to European geopolitical power, came to be contested in many fronts.

Method

The research we carried out was methodologically organized as a qualitative investigation with a psychoanalytical method in the light of concrete psychoanalytical psychology, a reference derived from Politzer's proposals (2004), which were taken up and developed by Bleger, (1988, 2007), inscribing themselves in the relational psychoanalytical approach (Kuchuck, 2021), based on his assumption that the psyche is structured from interhuman bonds and interactions, which are always directly impacted by the macro-social contexts in which they are inserted. For the sake of cultivating rigor and coherence, concrete psychoanalytical psychology, like other relational approaches, such as that of Stolorow et al. (2014), requires a radical reformulation of the idea of the unconscious – which is no longer seen as an individual psychical instance to be conceived as a set of intersubjective fields produced by human acts. Therefore, psychoanalytical interpretations, in this framework, consist of proposing affective-emotional meaning fields.

Considering, with Herrmann (2001), that the psychoanalytical method is a general way of producing knowledge about affective-emotional meanings of human acts, we understand that it is necessary to describe the investigative procedures as they are operationalized in the research in which they are used. Adopting a scheme that follows the logic of knowledge production in the human sciences, we distinguish stages of the investigative process carried out in terms of investigative procedures for the production, recording and interpretation of research material (Ambrosio et al., 2013). In this way, we reach psychoanalytical interpretations in terms of creating/encountering affective-emotional meaning fields, which will be revisited in a discussion that will develop in the form of reflective interlocutions, that is, in a close dialogue with authors who

1 The "Name-of-the-Father" is defined as a term that designates "the signifier of the paternal function" (Roudinesco & Plon, 1998, p. 541). It is, in our view, a concept that is rooted in Freudianism, remaining a tributary of the cisheteropatriarchy according to which the figure of the man-father is seen as a civilizing agent while the woman-mother is considered as a basically natural being.

have dealt with human issues to which our interpretive results point to.

In order to comply with the *investigative procedure for producing the research material*, we observed the following video selection criteria: (a) being available on YouTube; (b) resulting from a search that combines the terms trans and difficulties, without using quotation marks; (c) containing reports of self-declared transgender people; (d) being recent, in the sense that they were included in the platform from 2015, that is, in the last four years of the search (April/2019); (e) meeting the so-called criteria of relevance of the platform itself, that is, we selected items that were organized in descending order, by algorithms that consider the number of views, likes, comments, channel subscribers, words used in the search, among other factors (Briggs, 2018); (f) showing progressive signs of saturation (Fontanella et al., 2008), indicating a sufficiently expressive amount of videos about the researched phenomenon, acceptable for a qualitative research.

As Braga (2009) recalls, self-reports, as they occur in diaries and blogs, fulfill different functions, such as venting or rebuking anguish, recording their own history, communicating with others or seeking recognition, involving more or less authentic manifestations. Thus, we consider the materials available on the Internet, such as the ones we used, as manifestations of the same nature as those we obtain in other ways, for example, in psychological interviews or autobiographies. In these cases, we are faced with individual expressions that may be psychologically understood in terms of their affective-emotional meanings, coinciding with what actually interests us. We, obviously, do not fail to recognize that the transference conditions in which interviews of participants, manifestations in personal blogs or testimonies in the form of videos are not the same, since users are able to achieve, within the resources arising from technology, a very high number of people, including acquaintances and strangers, almost immediately. However, despite the differences, we are always faced with people who want to offer narratives about the experiences they are living or have already lived. Consequently, as psychologists/psychoanalysts, we understand that when studying videos, which bring narratives of life itself, we are not faced with something whose nature essentially differs from what we hear in an interview or in a session. On the other hand, we remind that, by making use of manifestations that reach us via the Internet, we expand our access to content that might not reach us in other ways, which can be usefully used in the production of comprehensive knowledge about the conduct of individuals and human collective in psychological research (Schulte et al., 2016).

The *investigative procedure for recording the research material* was carried out by downloading and transcribing the videos. This has become indispensable, as YouTube videos can become unavailable at any time without prior notice.

We, then, carried out the *investigative procedure of interpreting the research material*, collectively, in research group meetings, taking into account that the affective-emotional meaning fields may remain predominantly non-conscious. We aimed to create/find them, cultivating a state of floating attention and free association of ideas (Laplanche & Pontalis, 1967), letting ourselves be guided by the slogans of Herrmann (2001, p. 40): “let it emerge”, “take into account” and “completing the configuration of the emerging affective-emotional meaning”. In this way, we suspended prior knowledge to openly face the possibility of being affectively impacted by the material, in order to reach its interpretive understanding.

After completing the investigative procedures, we moved on to *reflective interlocutions*, a section usually referred to as discussion, in other researches. We suspended the cultivation of floating attention and the free association of ideas and began to seek the production of dialogical and comprehensive knowledge about the affective-emotional meaning fields, making it possible not only to think about contemporary human issues but to subsidize psychoprophyllactical and psychotherapeutical practices.

Interpretive Results

The search we carried out on the YouTube platform, according to the criteria adopted, resulted in a total number of 13 videos, enough to compose the research material. Published between 2015 and 2018, these videos put us in contact with 25 people who talk about their experiences as transgender (Table 1).

Table 1

Videos that make up the research material, organized in order of appearance on the YouTube platform

Video title	Youtube channel	Channel type	Upload data	Number of subscribers	Number of views	Number of trans people
[Trans students] Feeling isolated for being trans, Theo was unable to return to school.	Uol TAB	Information channel	07/30/18	35.2 thousand	24,366	1 unspecified
The difficulties of being a trans man (beginning of transition).	FTM Pedro Franco	Personal channel	01/27/17	2.44 thousand	2,760	1 trans man
Trans: the challenges of being who we are (Transgender).	Telma Martes	Information channel	03/09/18	25	1,583	2 trans women and 2 unspecified
Trans men difficulties.	Caio Silva	Personal channel	03/16/18	8	208	1 trans man
Report on the difficulty of trans women inserting into the job market.	Emerson Miranda	Information channel	07/10/17	51	7,133	1 trans woman and 2 unspecified
Is it easy to work being a trans man? - Ask Bee 148	Bees' Channel (Canal das Bee)	Information channel	01/23/17	374 thousand	34,390	1 trans man
Skarlett Ohara talks about the difficulty for trans people to get a job in Ruy Barbosa.	Ruy Barbosa News (Ruy Barbosa Noticias)	Information channel	01/11/18	7.46 thousand	5,395	1 trans
Difficulties in the life of a transsexual transvestite person in the job market.	severi Larissa74	Personal channel	05/03/18	25	2,119	1 transsexual transvestite
Transsexuals talk about the difficulty of surgery in the public health system.	Metropolises (Metrópoles)	Information channel	09/09/15	730 thousand	3,621	5 unspecified
Fred Soter is a trans man who talks about the difficulties in accessing health care.	Ministry of Health (Ministério da Saúde)	Government channel	04/12/16	424 thousand	652	1 trans man
Profissão Repórter (06/22/2016) - Young homosexuals and transsexuals talk about their difficulties.	2012 GSantos	Information channel	01/04/18	78.3 thousand	418,344	2 trans women, 1 ex-transvestite and 1 drag queen
Relationship with transsexual - transvestite Sabrina Velmonth.	Sabrina Velmonth	Personal channel	04/07/18	16.2 thousand	8,426	1 transvestite / transsexual
Difficulties of a trans man, by Aunt Claudia.	Aunt Claudia (Tia Claudia)	Personal channel	06/03/16	145	463	1 trans man

It is worth noting that the channels are mostly personal or informative, with a very different number of subscribers (between 8 and 730 thousand) and number of video views (between 208 and 418,344), in the consultation carried out in November 2021. People not always specify how they identify themselves, among the various possibilities of being trans, in the videos. However, generally speaking, there are trans men, trans women, transvestites, transgender people and a drag queen² in the research material. We also point out that the process of building these identities is complex and intertwines with concrete reality, involving personal biography, historical and political contexts, the relationship with legal and medical knowledge/powers, social activism and public policies (Carvalho, 2018). Therefore, it is a relational phenomenon, which goes beyond naturalizing, individualizing and/or identifying limits, to insert itself into a range of macrosocial relationships (Haider, 2019), which take place in the sphere of social being (Lukács, 2013).

2 We remind you that drag queen is an expression of artistic genre, so people can identify as cisgender or transgender. In any case, considering Lanz's (2015) definition of transgenerity, as well as our research interests, we chose not to exclude it from the material.

The consideration of the material, in the light of the psychoanalytical method, from the perspective of concrete psychoanalytical psychology, allows us to propose two affective-emotional meaning fields: *perverse and degenerate* and *to be or not to be real*. Such fields correspond to our interpretive results and, as we know, defined themselves as a kind of region or emotional world that is configured around beliefs, values or fantasies. Thus, a good definition, which denotes apprehension of fundamental elements will necessarily be brief and succinct. Following this guideline we elaborate the following definitions.

The first affective-emotional meaning field, called *perverse and degenerate*, is the one that is organized around the belief or fantasy in which the refusal to conform to “biological sex”³ corresponds to a form of moral abnormality, freely chosen by the person. As an illustration of the behaviors present in our study material, which can be considered as emerging from this first field, we cite, for example:

So, my whole life, because I was raised in this transphobic society, a struggle between me accepting myself, because it's hard for you to accept yourself, imagine a whole society saying that this is a disease, this is wrong, this doesn't exist and that is what you are. So, it's a very big mental struggle you are in and you end up internalizing that being trans, for example, and this is something I ended up internalizing, that being trans is ugly and it's wrong and people think it's weird and all this kind of thing, I ended up internalizing it until, luckily, I managed to work it out in my head. (Video 2)

I remember in high school people would look at me and call me little girl, little woman and everything. If I was going to talk to the director, she would say 'hey, if you didn't dress/ behave like a woman, maybe they wouldn't call you that'. But I didn't know that I behaved like a woman, I was like that, born that way, you know? (Video 11)

My parents are very strict evangelicals and I didn't know how to handle this situation. So it's that question: 'you're going to hell'. I don't think I'm going to hell. Not disdaining the religion of others, but that was the first thing they came to tell me. Then I got a little bewildered and stuff, they put this doubt in my head. Is it true? (Video 13)

The second affective-emotional meaning field, entitled *to be or not to be real*, is the one that is organized around the belief or fantasy that it is important to be faithful to one's own feelings. To illustrate what kind of behaviors, expressed in the videos we studied, may be considered as emerging in this field, we cite, for example:

And you're showing something you've hidden from others for a long time. It's who I am now, you know, before it was a mask, it felt like I was in a costume all the time and then taking that costume off in front of everyone is like being naked in front of someone. (Video 1)

So I finally got my hair cut and then I got to buy men's clothes, what a huge relief. (Video 2)

So just imagine, you are trans, that is, you are in the 'wrong body' and you have to look in the mirror every day and see an image that is not yours. Not only do you see an image that is not yours, but everyone else sees that image as well. You wanted to show yourself to the world and there's no way because no one really sees you. (Video 2)

I have always been like this, since I was young... I always knew what I wanted to be, then I thought 'my God, I want to be a woman, I want to be a woman, I want to be a woman, I want to dress like a woman, want to be who I am, got it?!' (Video 11)

Reflective Interlocutions

Once the affective-emotional meaning fields have been defined, according to a minimalist style, through which we intend to highlight the essential aspects of imaginative beliefs about aspects of human reality, which are at stake here, we will begin to elaborate reflections dialoguing with contributions that can broaden our understanding of the issue studied by us. We therefore divide this section into two parts, dedicated to the above-mentioned interpretive results.

3 We use quotation marks when referring to “biological sex” to remind that the limitation of the male to the penis and the female to the vulva corresponds to socially produced abstractions, which remain distant from lived experience, although they are commonly claimed, in our culture, as natural, absolute and concrete truth of human sexuality.

“Perverse and degenerate”

In order to critically reflect on the first affective-emotional meaning field, *perverse and degenerate*, in which possibilities that go beyond gender norms are considered abnormal, we make use of the contributions of Monique Wittig (2006). According to the author, the constitution of the other/different, through binarisms such as “being a man” or “being a woman”, “being cisgender” or “being transgender”, occurs through sophisticated imaginative constructions that reinterpret reality from social systems and power relations. These representations are natural determinations and mask their truly political character. When we are able to understand reality with acuity, we see that it is oppression that creates gender and not the other way around.

Thus, for Wittig (2006), the concepts mentioned above, are political, corresponding to interpretations of a historical situation of domination, whose function is to mask conflicts and interests, including ideological ones. Therefore, cisheterosexual society needs and is based on the constant necessity of this other/different at all levels, in economic, symbolic, linguistic and political terms, for its maintenance. In this way, what organizes relationships, in fact equivalent to a social construction, falsely appears as a natural phenomenon.

However, the existence of transgender people, in analogy to what Wittig (2006) thinks of the condition of lesbians, lays bare the political and ideological production of the categories “men” and “women” as “natural groups”. In other words:

On the one hand is the world, with its overwhelming assertion and assumption of heterosexuality as what-it-should-be, and on the other hand there is a weak, fugitive perception, sometimes as a trap, as a forced political regime. It is possible to escape it. It's a feat. (Wittig, 2006, p. 74)

When we consider concrete psychoanalytical psychology (Bleger, 2007), we realize that, in the *perverse and degenerate* field, divalent fanciful beliefs expressed through the schizophrenic split, of the other as a “being that is completely good” and a “being that is completely bad” prevail. In the case of trans people, there would be a direct projection of the evil that uses them as depositaries, that is, it is good to be cisgender and heterosexual, which places “being trans”, in the sense of “not being cishetero”, as something perverse, as “being completely bad”. That is, since the world is divided between good and bad, the best option remains to root out evil, either symbolically or concretely. Ultimately, it is always about producing violence and murder.

Therefore, we could think of the first affective-emotional meaning field, *perverse and degenerate*, as a reflection of what Wittig (2006) described under the sign of “you-will-be-straight-or-you-will-not-be”, that is, an incapacity of societies governed by cisheteronormativity of conceiving existences that break with this normative, relegating them to the space of what we could think of as abject and degenerate - pointing to sufferings that have their root in social relations that are not guided by respect for the human. In this way, such a field distances sexual dissidence from the true self, does not conceive it as a human experience that cannot be confused with any form of essentialism. Or, as described by Trevisan (2018, p. 42): “*someone who affirms uncertainty, who makes room for difference and who constitutes a sign of contradiction in the face of normality standards. In other words, it is about desire as a becoming and, therefore, as an affirmation of an itinerant identity*”.

“To be or not to be real”

It is now appropriate to reflect on the second affective-emotional meaning field that was interpreted in this research, based on the psychoanalytical consideration of the videos studied: *to be or not to be real*. This field points to an absolutely nuclear conflict, from an existential point of view, indicating that it is deeply linked to a radical form of emotional suffering that, as we know, received significant attention in Winnicottian thought.

Although he was not an author inclined to produce systematic texts, we find, in Winnicott (1988), a very complex psychopathological vision capable of illuminating the understanding of phenomena that, as everything indicates, have become more striking in contemporary times. There is a fundamental aspect in his texts to which Aiello-Vaisberg (2006) has dedicated special attention, which consists in the fact that they contain two different psychopathological models. Thus, we can distinguish in it an explicit psychopathology, of a tripartite character, which coincides, in general terms, with the one (practically) adopted by all post-Freudian authors, and an implicit psychopathology, which consists of a theory of human suffering that takes place throughout since personal authenticity is unable to be fulfilled by adopting submissive behaviors. If, for the first theory, the dividing point between health and illness is the maintenance or loss of the judgment of reality, what is in fact at stake, for the second, it is the possibility of the person feeling alive, real and capable of spontaneous gesture, through which they can both transform themselves and the world in which they live (Aiello-Vaisberg, 2012).

Feeling real and true is an indispensable condition for a genuine life, based on the true self, conceived as a theoretical place where the spontaneous gesture emerges, gesture that makes one “become themselves”. The human being would naturally tend to be spontaneous in their process of being, if not interrupted by the environment. Therefore, the great obstacle to the realization of the true self would be to be invaded by a dominating environment that demands the submission of the individual.

Thus, it is not surprising that Winnicott (1975, 1978, 1983) has devoted attention to the domination/submission binomial, addressed both in the context of babies’ lives and in the lives of patients affected by psychotical anguish, worrying, however, in leaving clues about its importance throughout the lives of all people.

In the Winnicottian perspective, when submission takes place, before the complete constitution of the self, as a relatively separate existential unit, it has truly devastating effects, which promote fragilities conducive to the emergence of psychotical anxieties and unthinkable agonies (Winnicott, 1968). However, even when it is experienced by someone already constituted as a unitary self, submission always brings severe damage because it affects the possibility of feeling alive, real and capable of spontaneous gestures, making it necessary to protect the false self. At this point we remind that:

(...) whenever someone’s sense of continuity of being is interrupted, it is worth saying, that their possibility of being present to their own experience is obstructed, there is the possibility of a withdrawal of themselves, while the false self assumes the apparent continuation of life. This false self can deceive everyone, including the person himself, and this may seem effective for a long time. (Aiello-Vaisberg, 2002, p.12)

The notions of false and true selves were coined to refer to the way in which patients themselves communicated their experiences for Winnicott (1983). In other words, the psychoanalyst learned from those he served that they felt false and inauthentic, aspiring to another condition in which they could feel true. It is essential to note, now, that authenticity, in the Winnicottian perspective, can only be harmed, by the environment that, being oppressive, prevents personal spontaneity.

It does not seem difficult for us to perceive that the affective-emotional meaning field *to be or not to be real*, which we interpretively proposed in the present research, based on the psychoanalytical consideration of the videos, indicates that transgender people experience a conflict between their feeling of self and the (im)possibilities of gender, given what has been and continues to be designated from the outside, by the other. Their drama revolves, therefore, around the possibility of submitting to gender norms, experienced as deeply invasive, in order to please others, or rebelling to affirm their feelings, losing love, approval, respect and recognition, to become the target of hatred and violence, which is justified through the beliefs around which the first proposed field is organized, that is, *perverse and degenerate*.

In the Winnicottian perspective, the feeling of being false has a truly corrosive effect, in affective-emotional terms, bringing a persistent and hopeless discomfort. We understand that living under the primacy of seeming, that is, of the gender assigned at birth, instead of feeling, corresponds to an extremely painful emotional charge, because the inauthenticity experienced is added to the impression of being attracted to something nefarious, since cisheteronormativity appears for everyone as a unique and desirable condition. On the other hand, affirming one’s feelings and becoming the target of extreme prejudices that, ultimately, aim at the banishment and even the extermination of those who do not conform to the prevailing gender norms, puts the person in a very suffering place, a target of depersonalizing attacks (Aiello-Vaisberg, 2017).

Thereafter, our interpretive results point to a very interesting configuration insofar as the reference of birth brings to this event the power to carry a truth. However, we cannot fail to notice that, in the material, such truth is clearly linked not only to the “seeming”, but to the “being” of the baby, as something that we could call, inspired by Winnicott (1975), as an inherited potential of belonging to the human condition. In other words, when we talk about designated gender, this would be designated by the other, having a relationship with “seeming”. Faced with such a configuration, we can say that the society in which we live is organized according to a belief that the “seeming” corresponds to the “being” of the person, simplifying the complex reality in which this not always happens in this way.

In Western thought, this “seeming” imposes itself – justified as being of the biological order – considered “more real and more concrete” than the vivid – hence the myths of the natural, abstract and isolated person to be overcome, according to Bleger (2007). In other words, the designated gender is supposed to be an objective reading of the biological (and real) condition of the child. As can be seen, there is a whole imaginative path taken so that the designated gender is taken as the person’s “real gender”, a practice entirely in accordance with the objectifying and simplifying positivism of reality. Therefore, in this scenario, the transgender person must fight, either to impose a “being” that overflows the rule, or to suffocate their own feeling/being.

When analyzing the aforementioned beliefs, we realize that these are from the human sphere, from the ontology of the social being (Lukács, 2013), but transvested as ordinary norms, especially through the ideological use of biology. When we take reality critically, we realize that dissidence is in no way confused with abnormality or pathology. On the contrary, for us, cisheteronormativity would be pathological, since it has a corrosive, harmful and sickening effect on people’s lives.

Final Considerations

Finally, let us remind that when we searched for the videos studied, taking into account the investigative procedure of producing the research material, we used *trans* and *difficulties* as search terms. In this way, in the videos, we were able to find out about the types of difficulties that emerge in the field of consciousness of those who told about their lived experience. These would be: difficulties in family relationships, in love relationships, at school, at work, in everyday life, in the health system, in personal safety, in the relationship with one's own body and a sense of personal falsehood. Such difficulties gain intelligibility when we interpretively produce the affective-emotional meaning fields, intersubjectively created and maintained, which are: *perverse and degenerate* and *to be or not to be real*. These two fields are antagonistic to each other, insofar as one of them derives directly from hierarchical gender norms, making transgenerity one of the degraded ways of being, in the face of cisheteronormative supremacy, while the other corresponds to a form of valuing individuality, a form of feeling, and the human capacity to create the new beyond the organic sphere of being (Lukács, 2013).

Considering Wittig (2006), we hope to have demonstrated how the “subjective”, “individual” and “private” problems of transgender people are, in fact, socially determined, demarcating a violent and oppressive social institution, permeated by ideological interests. Therefore, the general picture points to dominant groups that, through depersonalizing attacks and social norms, aim to create a field that threatens the individual existence of those who do not submit to what the author would describe as “you-will-be-straight-or-you-will-not-be” as this would be a necessary condition for the maintenance of the existence and privileges of the former.

As far as the Winnicottian theory, we believe it has been possible to reflect on the submission to gender norms and how it affects the creative and spontaneous potential, impacting mental health, which would affect all people, including those who constitute themselves in cisheteronormative terms. We justify this because the harmful effects of environmental invasions focus on the fact that “normality” can also be experienced as something pathological, being nothing more than submission to norms, which should not be confused with sanity, a state in which authenticity and freedom would be preserved. (Cooper, 1985). Therefore, a person may “seem” healthy, when they are just “normal”, or they may have their behavior guided by their own creativity, experiencing a healthy and “playful” sexuality, to use a Winnicottian term, closer to this second case.

To this extent, we hope contribute to a better understanding of the depersonalizing effects of norms, because by demanding submission to them, otherwise you “will not be”, we face an acute perception of the threat of being. From this, sufferings, which are articulated to social conditions arise – as we saw in this study, the expression of this human problem in the sphere of gender, however, is a broader condition showing similar conditions.

Thus, with this study we perceive the importance of recognizing and valuing the other in their singularities and diversity, but being careful not to incur some kind of essentialism, as we must not neglect the social aspect. Although we are talking about socially determined sufferings, since the norms belong to the sphere of social ontology (Lukács, 2013), we remember that it is also from this scenario that the possibility of transformation, of creation, of the new, arises – and, as a consequence, diversity.

Regarding such changes, we recall a basic and fundamental prerogative of concrete psychoanalytical psychology: everything that exists in the human world is a product of human acts (Bleger, 2007). Therefore, it is up to us, as individuals and society, to fight for better living conditions for all people, that is, to play a leading role in this process. Hence, we end with an invitation, or rather, a provocation, also present in Wittig (2006, p. 29): after all, “what are we waiting for?”.

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