

Gender Identity: passionate discourses on discoveries

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Abstract:

The gender identity subject has been the focus of several social and political debates in which: there are individuals who try to eliminate social inequalities regarding gender; and, on the other hand, there are those who seek for visibility, fighting for their rights to be validated. Both of the groups constitute part of the LGBTQI+ community. Thus, the present study refers to a research carried out at a university in the interior of São Paulo, whose *corpus* consists of statements made by undergraduate students that discuss the themes of identity, gender, prejudice and discrimination. Once it is a multifaceted theme, in which the phenomena of intolerance, hatred and fear emerge – in addition to discussions and positions that involve political, religious and ideological issues – the present work draws on the French discursive semiotics, by Algirdas Julien Greimas and collaborators. In conclusion, in their discourses, it was observed the identity transformation through the subjective confrontation of some malevolent passions, such as hatred and intolerance.

Keywords:

Discursive semiotics. Intolerance. Gender identity.

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INTRODUCTION

Contemporaneity has demonstrated, through its social marks, the predominance of practices and patterns that translate ways of existing and conceiving the other. A reductionist emphasis, imposed by the homogeneity of values and ideological constructs – that categorize, segregate and exclude those who are not conformed to this pattern – can cause discomfort and permanent repulsion, besides to let under anonymity those who suffer from this kind of segregation regarding to the independent identity subject.

Summing up, it is possible to observe that the subject in question here is composed of plurality and common to everyone: the one who affects other's existence and is affected by others. Contemporary linguistic studies, more specifically those related to the discursive semiotic theory, reveal how the effects of meaning, from the perspective of the diversity of the textual or discursive modality, are projected in the themes and figures that specifically anchor, in this work, the phenomena of identity, alterity, prejudice and intolerance.

Studies on gender identity have been a fertile field for the development of research that elucidates, through the analysis of different *corpora*, the possibility of portraying subjects that give rise to many debates, questions and divergences of thoughts.

This study general objective it to unveil new knowledge regarding the gender identity matter, starting off with testimony given by the ones who are affected by the phenomena that emerge in the social field, such as prejudice, stigma, discrimination, stereotype and intolerance. The particular objective is to discuss the various types of violence that LGBTIQ+ community faces, simply because it coexists in society and is often seen as a threat to the heteronormative population.

Concerning the methodological and analytical course, the generative semiotics guided this study development. The generative semiotics can be understood as the theory which inquires the creation of meaning, or the effects of meaning, starting off from the deepest level, called the fundamental level, going through the narrative level and its unfolding order of the sensible and the intelligible, and finally the discursive level, known as the most complex, in which the discourse is presented in consonance with what is known as the natural world or the world of common sense.

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Although the semiotics grounds this article, it was chosen to maintain a dialogue with the gender identity matter. Thus, it is necessary to find tools to deal with the concept of gender, based on the theoretical reference of Butler, Beauvoir, and others who argue about the gender identity subject in the contemporaneity.

The manifestation of several movements and attitudes on dealing with others emphasizes the way how some groups react to the differences in many social aspects, excluding the ones who do not fit on certain norms, precepts and ideological values that aim standardizations, brought by the power that establishes what is correct and has to be followed.

Based on the aforementioned points on the topic of gender identity, it is valid to mention that this study is characterized, at first, as a bibliographical survey, that aims to investigate several existing facets about gender identity and relate them to the semiotic theory, in its analytical and investigative path.

This article is a selection of the main research *corpus*. The study subject refers to testimonies collected at a local university, located in the interior of São Paulo, where scholars narrate their experiences concerning themes as gender identity, prejudices, conflicts and resistances.

In regard to the description of the speeches, experiences and meanings that the deponent presented during the recording of the interview, a fictitious name was used in order to maintain the confidentiality of their identity. The deponent will be identified as Alice¹. Her real age will be informed in order to preserve the socio-historical aspects that increase the relevant analytical data.

This article is organized as follows: initially, a panorama of semiotic theory will be presented, from which the analytical foundations of the theory will be presented, starting from the generative semiotics. Then, the analysis will focus on the passionate dimension of discourse, that is, the examination of the passions of fear and intolerance presented in the deponent's discourse. Finally, the discourse formulation and meanings will be discussed, observing how the identity of the deponent in their narrative is transformed at the moment of the refusal to the social values imposed by their parents and their values change, conforming to the standards of another set of values.

SEMIOTICS PATHS: METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

Semiotics aims to understand the process that creates meaning. Once it is a vast field that focuses on the human sciences, it can act in correlation with Psychology,

² To maintain the secrecy of their identity was used the fictitious name Alice. The testimony was held in October 2018.

Anthropology, and Philosophy, thus, theoretical fields that have already studied the meanings, origins and functions of the most diverse phenomena that emerge from the social field. However, Semiotics seeks, beyond the meanings presented in the dialogical relations, the *apparent sense* that

underlies in its relativistic approach to a sense, if not always incomplete, at least always pending in the plots of discourse. [...] it defines the statute of signifying forms as an interstitial space between the sensible and the intelligible, between illusion and shared belief, the reciprocally founding relationship between sensible subject and perceived object, standing out in the horizon of sensation (BETRAND, 2003, p. 21).

This study's theoretical field also seeks to understand what a text presents, what are the resources used in it to symbolize and, finally, to signify what constitutes it. This analytical way of observing a discourse allows the reader to immerse themselves in the experience of the subject in question, to understand what their discourse presents and the paths that semiotics runs to make them understood by others.

Thus, the speeches were analyzed by following the generative semiotics, contemplating the meanings that emerge at the fundamental, narrative and discursive levels. Before the analysis, a brief conceptual presentation will be made in order to explore the basics principles on which the generative semiotics is based.

The semiotic level comprises three stages considered necessary for the clarity of the explanation of the generative course: *the fundamental structures*, a deeper instance, in which the elementary structures of discourse are determined, *the narrative structure*, intermediate syntactic-semantic level, and *the discursive structure*, closer to the textual manifestation (BARROS, 2001, p. 15).

In addition to the methodological delineation, it is possible to observe two paths that the analysis indicates: the first points out the content presented in the text; the second one would be characterized as the historicity, which is revealed through enunciation and the created discourse.

Since "language can be seen as a social institution and a vehicle of ideologies" (FIORIN, 1998, p. 6), new meanings and particular meanings are revealed for each social group and the discourses that precede it. In this perspective, since language is conceived as an instrument of manipulation based on the social conventions, standardizations and ideologies prevailing in these groups, it will conceive effects of meaning.

To this set of ideas, to these representations that serve to justify and explain the social order, the living conditions of man and the relations he maintains with other men is what is commonly called ideology. **As it is elaborated from the phenomenal forms of reality, which conceal the essence of the social order, ideology is "false consciousness** (FIORIN, 1998, p. 28, emphasis added).

An important point that needs to be emphasized is the social representations arisen from what is disseminated through language as an instrument of manipulation, which carries several ideologies that involve a multiplicity of values, ideals, worldviews, etc., based on subjects such as economy, religion, tradition, and conservatism that corroborate to the so-called *false conscience*, which in its turn subdivides society into classes.

It is possible to understand that this *false consciousness* comes from the instance of *appearance*, creating a (ideological) simulacrum in which values are employed and established as a collective consciousness, when in fact it is a game in which *fantasy* and *reality* are mixed. Therefore, it is not a collective consciousness, but the consciousness of a single class, according to the Marxist conception from which Fiorin takes his expression “false consciousness” which refers to the consciousness of the bourgeoisie.

Semiotics uses the resources and forms of language and discourses to analyze and to understand how the processes of signification are constituted.

There is an “already-given” meaning, deposited in the cultural memory, shelved in the language and in the lexical significations, fixed in the discursive schemes, controlled by the encodings of the genres and the forms of expression that the enunciator, at the moment of the individual exercise of speech, updates, repeats or, on the contrary, repeals, refuses, renews and transforms (BERTRAND, 2003, p. 87).

According to Bertrand, signification has a dimension in which meaning is almost naturalized. Thus, when the enunciators mobilize the existing significations, they are only reorganizing what is already given as a constitution of meaning in cultural and social terms. Consonant to this concept is the analysis of Alice’s discourse, which describes her relationship with her parents, accepting the consolidated senses and pondering little about them. In this way, it will be observed how the reprocessing of the traditional senses can free and aid her to become an active subject.

FEAR AND INTOLERANCE: THE CONSTITUTION OF SOCIAL PASSIONS

In the excerpt transcribed below, Alice was asked to describe how it was to deal with issues related to her sexuality throughout her life.

Well, in my childhood I was a very **shy** child, my parents are deaf, so I do not know if it could have been that, you know, living in a quieter environment. Until the adolescence I was a really **closed** child, I lived in my own **closed** world. As I grew up, in teenage years, I felt that I was attracted to people of the same sex as me; by women. But since my family is very traditional, I was afraid to try to understand that, so I let it go (ALICE, section 2).

When Alice defines herself as a shy child, the formulation of the opposition of *freedom* versus *oppression* can be observed on the fundamental level. Oppression is identified in her speech by the emphasis on describing a personality type (timid and closed). Note that the fact that she grew up in a quiet environment does not justify her shyness in her childhood by itself, but is related to the fact that she grew up surrounded by her family immersed in a cultural traditionalism that perpetuated and affected her, preventing her from showing new excerpts of her identity, since they set limits even on the possibility of being attracted to people of the same sex, as she herself tells.

Still on Alice's narrative, her shyness in childhood is not a byproduct of her personality but is due to the restriction or negation of *being-able-to-do*², presupposed by the rigid posture of her parents, in regard to the aspects that contradict their heteronormative and cultural ideals, according to the young woman's reports. It is also important to note that Alice's parents idealized and identified with their daughter's posture, until she breaks with the precepts and cultural norms they defended; after this change, she finds herself in disjunction with the ideals that parents have transferred her since her childhood.

On the one hand, we understand that a social group that locally enjoys a dominant economic, cultural or political position, and that **has a kind of idealized self-image, tends to define negatively the otherness of those it does not recognize as its own**, and this in proportion to what he constitutes, from his point of view, his degree of non-conformity in relation to the normality which he believes to incarnate (LANDOWSKI, 2012, p. 33).

In what concerns the narrative structure, at the intermediate level in the generative semiotics course, it is possible to highlight a scheme of four phases that organize the discourse's operation and the mechanisms used to conceive meanings, they are: manipulation, competence, performance and sanction.

Barros describes the concept of manipulation as:

Narrative pathway of manipulation or narrative pathway of the sender-manipulator is the one in which the sender assigns to the subject-recipient the semantic and modal competence necessary for the action. There are different ways of manipulating, and four major types of manipulation figures can be cited: temptation, intimidation, provocation and seduction (BARROS, 1990, p. 87).

As far as the *competence* phase is concerned, Fiorin (1999, p. 23) points out that "the subject who will perform the central transformation of the narrative is endowed with a knowledge and/or power to do so. Each of these elements can appear at the most superficial

³ According to Barros (2001, p. 50): "From semiotics perspective, modalities result from the conversion of the fundamental thymic-formic category. [...] alter, in the narrative instance, the relations of the subject with the values."

level of discourse, in the most varied forms.”. We can also introduce the meaning of *performance* that, according to Fiorin (1999, p. 23), “is the phase in which the central (narrative) transformation takes place.”

Finally, the *sanction* can be characterized as the phase in which the action of the subject is legitimized, and subsequently the rewards or punishments are implemented based on the plot transformations.

In Alice’s narrative, it is inferred that her shyness is imposed by the values of her parents, who as manipulators follow traditional patterns permeated in the society, making her abstain her same-sex attraction. The veiled action of Alice’s parents can be characterized as *manipulation by temptation*³ since they leave the primary repressive message unintelligent, but emphatically and concretely transfer to her daughter heteronormative values, their expectations and how they wish her behavior/thoughts/desires should be; on the other hand, she consents to the repressive message of her parents and refuse the permissiveness of being attracted to women.

Landowski (2012) proposes the existence of four types of interaction regimes: *assimilation, exclusion, admission* and *segregation*. In *corpus* excerpt, it is possible to emphasize the mechanism of admission, using Landowski’s words:

starting to admit that the fact that the Other is “different” does not necessarily mean that it is in the absolute, but that its difference is function, is the point of view adopted, it is already creating the possibility of other modes of relation with the singular figures that will incarnate it (LANDOWSKI, 2012, p. 14).

As far as Alice’s negation or illusion is concerned, she refuses to accept what she feels, plunging into a system of internal exclusion, where she excludes all deviating prerogatives from what is accepted by everyone around her. This negation in her next lines will proceed to the regime of admission, when Alice will come to accept the aspects of her identity constitution, recognizing them as her own, regardless of external factors and conventions that show her the opposite. As Greimas (2014, p. 117) says: “Discourse is this fragile place where truth and falsehood, the lie and the secret are inscribed and read; modes of veridiction resulting from the double contribution of the enunciator and the enunciate”.

Exclusion arises at various times due to this outsider who presents themselves in the social sphere and excludes others because they do not fulfill the expectations and social norms that the heteronormative statutes foresee.

³ In semiotics the concept of temptation refers to the modes of manipulation of the sender to the recipient in a given situation, conceiving the action of the manipulator sender’s competence which by possessing the power (positive values) alters the recipient’s competence to a *wanting-to-do*. Still in relation to the phenomenon of temptation Fiorin says: “When the manipulator proposes to the manipulated a reward, that is, an object of positive value, in order to make him do something, a temptation is given” (1999, p. 22).

Alterity can only be thought of as a difference from elsewhere, and which assumes, by nature, the form of a threat. As we see, assimilation and exclusion do not ultimately pass from the two sides of one and the same response to the demand for recognition of the dissimilar: As it stands, you have no place among us (LANDOWSKI, 2012, p. 10).

The contract that the sender-manipulators (Alice's parents) establishes with the daughter remains in force and is not broken, as she respects the rules and conditions laid down in it: to be a good daughter who follows the traditional values inferred by the parents. The place of daughter that dwells with the parents would be the *object of value* that Alice tries to preserve in the contract of veridiction, and – for that reason – she submits and subjects herself to the inferences that the parents propose, making it appear true what in reality is not. It is possible to relate this thematic role of a good daughter who resides with the parents, obedient, who submits to the values interposed by them, without questioning them, to the veridictory square where the relations of *being* and *appearing* are proposed by Greimas:

If truth is only an effect of meaning, one concludes that its production consists in the exercise of a particular doing, a making-seem-true, that is, the construction of a discourse whose function is not the truth-teller, but the opinion. This opinion does not aim, as in the case of verisimilitude, to adequacy to the referent, but to the adhesion of the part of the addressee to whom it is addressed, and by those who seek to be read as true (GREIMAS, 2014, p. 122).

It is also possible to notice in the phrase “**closed within herself, in her own world,**” the restriction of her freedom by the modification of the *have-to-do* to a *not-being-able-to-do*, since it is characterized by her speech that, when living trapped in her world of shyness, Alice could be who she truly was. However, in the contact with otherness, it was necessary to prune their identity, to demonstrate what Greimas (2014) defines as simulated performance. It's all about the *appear-to-be-fine*. When Alice seeks to hide and remain closed inside herself, she creates this simulacrum and develops the *simulated performance* to support the image that she believes is sufficient to avoid questionings and judgments of parents and others. According to Greimas (2014), “the *competence of the subject* (= his qualification) can only be acquired with the help of a *simulated performance*. Now, when it is affirmed that it is simulated, it is understood that it is performed to appear true, although ‘in reality’ it is not” (GREIMAS, 2014, 66).

The fear described was constant in Alice's life since her childhood, and it refers to the phenomenon of intolerance that could have been brought by her parents, once they would not accept the values contrary to the ones they were oriented. The fear also relates to the intolerance that could be brought to her life in the school environment, in social relations and at work when Alice was older.

Barros conceptualizes, in the narrative organization, such intolerant discourses that prevail in the social field, what are their purposes and to whom they are intended:

The intolerant discourse is a discourse of sanction to the subjects considered as bad adherents of certain social contracts: of bleaching of the society, of purity of the language, of heterosexuality, of religious identity and others. These subjects are, therefore, at the moment of judgment, recognized as bad social actors, bad citizens – ignorant blacks, bad users of the language, barbarian Indians, dangerous Jews, fanatic Arabs, promiscuous homosexuals – and punished with the loss of rights, of employment or even death (BARROS, 2016, p. 8).

Following this line of reasoning, intolerance is divided into two phases: the first in which the prejudice arises as a malevolent passion; in the second phase, intolerance turns into an action of an intolerant person against others, in the attempt to destroy what they consider as non-valid values and acts based on social grounds. Fear, in this sense, conceives the passions of hatred, merging with other ones, and increasing the intensity of intolerant actions.

Reiterating what had already been mentioned about Alice's fear and shame of her family, who denied her possibility of being (as she was) with *not-being-able-to-do* or *not-being-able-to-be* when she thought to herself: "I *-am-not-able* to allow myself to be attracted to people of the same sex." It is pertinent to bring to light the notes of Fiorin (1992) in his work on fear and shame:

If the subject acts in breach of duty, he may be punished. **Fear is also a passion of the psychological order**, but, unlike shame that concerns be aware of that another knows. **It refers to know that the other can do in a dysphoric way.** [...] the definition of the lexeme fear given by the Petit Robert: psychological phenomenon with marked **affective character that accompanies the awareness of a real or imaginary danger, a threat** (FIORIN, 1992, p. 57).

In this case, the feeling or passion experienced by Alice in regard to her parents, the fear of what they might do when they find out that she is attracted to other women, this doing (of the parents) could be: expelling her from home, repressing her or feeling compelled to undergo gay⁴ cure among other possibilities of negative sanctions. This conjunction of Alice's parents with the dysphoric factor, the discovery of the daughter's sexual orientation, points out that dysphoria is justified by the parents' non-acceptance of the lifestyle that opposes the heterosexuality they traditionally espouse. In short, the fear that the deponent

⁴ **Gay Healing Project:** Complementary Law 234/2011, authored by Federal Deputy João Campos (PSDB-GO), which was being processed by the Chamber of Deputies Commission on Human and Minority Rights, chaired by Federal Representative Marco Feliciano (PSC-SP). This project in one of its axes suspended the prohibition of offering care of psychologists to homosexuals and to speak publicly in the name of Psychology, associating homosexuality with disease. The project was shelved as a result of the repercussions and social manifestations that counterposed such a directive (MARTINS *et al.*, 2014, p. 163).

feels is due to the way her parents created her, and she can imagine and detect the danger lurking if she assumes her true sexual orientation until the moment hidden of her parents.

In this sense, Alice's fear corroborated the adoption of a coercive stance, in which even she did not feel well in following and obeying heteronormative patterns. According to Fiorin (1992, p. 57): "The fear derived from the possibility of a negative pragmatic penalty (dissuasive fear) leads her to act according to a given social norm".

As a result of the fear that Alice felt, her shame is manifested by her non-conformity with the precepts that the social group of which she was part and was part shared. Thus, with the fear of the negative sanction of the parents and the fear of reprobation that would cause her shame. She was closed in on herself, evidencing/confirming the oppression pointed out as a semantic category contrary to freedom presented at the beginning of the analytic course.

It establishes a simulacrum (set of modality and acts and thematic roles) of what should be **a member of a given social group and act in relation to non-compliance with it is cause for shame or fear.** [...] if the subject acts in non-conformity with this deontic modality, he will receive, in the case of shame, a negative cognitive sanction, his own or another's disapproval according to whether or not the sanctioner is syncretic with the subject of doing. This reprobation begets shame (FIORIN, 1992, p. 56-57).

During Alice's teenage years, she claims to have met a boy and "thought she liked him." Emphasizes that "I thought I loved him." Her statement at that time provides for an underlying change, for then, by declaring that she has lived an abusive relationship, she shows that it was not about love, but she sought through her relationship with him to assume/maintain his heterosexual condition and to be accepted by all without any kind of judgments, because she respected the impositions and traditionalism spread by her parents and the other members of her family. Butler (2017) defines that the "unity" of the **gender** is the **effect of a regulatory practice** that seeks **to standardize gender identity through compulsory heterosexuality** (BUTLER, 2017, p. 67).

The negative sanction of parents and other subjects who were linked to Alice constitute what Butler defines as regulatory practices, since they sought to standardize behavior and even the way of being and to bond with the other young person. In the passage "I thought I liked him" and "I thought I loved him," we mean that this "thought" relates to the interpretive doing that led Alice to the epistemic act that later reveals itself as self-deception. The persuasive make-up derived from the directive position of her parents made her conceive the *interpretive doing* based on formulations that were not her own. Thus, at that moment, it was only a transfer of the knowledge of their parents that corroborated to the interpretive doing that changed in Alice, in the same scheme pointed out by Greimas (2014, p. 127): "The /make-know/ who presided over communication became, then, a persuasive doing to which, at the other end of the chain, there was an opposite interpretive act."

Subsequently, in Alice's discourse, a belief that precedes knowledge emerges, for she, by means of an interpretive act based no longer on the persuasive doing of her parents, but on herself, was able to see that she was attracted to people of both sexes. In both situations, Alice receives sanctions. In the first one, when she reports that she experienced a depressive condition, the negative sanction occurred due to the fulfillment of the fiduciary contract proposed by her parents, where the rules were contradictory to what Alice felt/believed. In the later account, when she says that after the psychological treatment, she breaks with the contract proposed by her parents, Alice could contemplate the positive sanction getting rid of the abusive relationship and (re)discovering new faces of their identity and sexual orientation.

In short, there were three processes: at first a make-believe, directed by Alice's parents, based on the foundations of their traditional statutes that at first manipulated her in her attitudes and which led her to relate to and marry a man, certain that she was a heterosexual woman. In the second moment, a belief emerges that is based on the experience that she herself has lived and ratifies her previously-felt but self-denied self-knowledge and, finally, the belief that she is a bisexual woman.

DISCOURSES OF (RE)DISCOVERY

In the past, Alice followed the standards set by her primary group, which was her family, then she experienced situations in which social groups held as norms to be followed by all. Throughout Alice's speech, it was possible to identify gradual changes in her way of existing and to present herself to the other, this movement is clear in the following excerpt:

And it was a very interesting moment, because then I started giving me more freedom to meet myself. And at that time I got involved with women, I got to have a date with a person, who is a great friend today, and during that time I believed, I thought I only liked women. Like when I was younger, I thought I only liked men, then after I broke away from that relationship, I just thought I only liked women, and that was not it. After I left that relationship I was trying to reflect on myself, I was realizing that I was traumatized, that I had a trauma, because I went through a relationship that made me sick, so I discovered that it is not the question of being a woman or being a man. I've always felt enchanted by what a person is like, by her essence, the way he/she sees life, it's what he/she's inside, not what he/she's physically. So that today I am with a person who makes me well, he is a man, but it is a relationship in which I feel very happy (ALICE, section 4).

In this fragment of Alice's speech, the fundamental semantic category takes up *freedom versus oppression*. *Freedom* is experienced by Alice at the very beginning of the passage, when she says, "I was given more freedom to know myself." However, further down when she points out that she once thought that she only liked boys (because of *manipulation by her parents' intimidation*), the *restriction* is highlighted when she emphasizes: "When I was younger,

I thought I only liked men, then after I got rid of that relationship, I just thought I only liked women,” never with both. While this passage demonstrates that by experiencing the freedom of possibility in relating to women, Alice paradoxically experiences the restriction of relating only to women.

The narrative level of the analyzed text shows the junctive and transformative functions in the two forms of the elementary statement. In the *statement*, the subject Alice is in *conjunction* with the *objects* freedom and the power to relate to women. In the *statement of doing*, the *transformation* of this state takes place: the subject Alice goes into *disjunction* with the objects conquered (the freedom and the courtship with a woman) and, during her course, discovers her truths. First, she had suffered a trauma in the previous relationship and subsequently (re)discovers her attraction to people, regardless of biological sex.

The elementary statement of narrative syntax is characterized by the **relationship of transitivity between two actants, the subject and the object**. The relationship defines the Actants; the transitive relation between subject and object gives them existence, that is, **the subject is the actant that relates transitively to the object**, the object that maintains ties with the subject. **There are two different transitive relations or functions**, the junction and the transformation, and therefore two forms of elementary utterance, which in the text establish the distinction between state and transformation (BARROS, 1990, p. 17).

In spite of the *virtualizing modalities*, in the excerpt analyzed, we should note the *must-be-able-to-do*, when Alice believed that she should only be involved with boys and then only with girls, and the *want-to-be-able-to-do*, when she happens to be and, prior to her relationship with a girl, she wanted to have her. In the *actualizing modality*, the *know-how-to-do* is unveiled after Alice’s encounter with herself, when she identifies her trauma due to the relationship she has previously experienced and thus she becomes aware that she is attracted to people. *Be-able-to-do* is conceived when, in becoming aware of her condition, she allows herself to enter into a new affective relationship, this time with a man.

In assuming their current relationship, Alice says “it’s a man, but it’s a relationship in which I feel very happy.” And when she uses the adversative (but) it is possible that there is an unmanifested meaning, perhaps linked to the trauma experienced in the past in her abusive relationship or it may also be related to the way she conceives the male image (abusive macho) if detached from the relation of the past, this simulacrum still prevails in her imaginary.

The themes that emerge in Alice’s speech are:

- a) the self-knowledge provided by the freedom to turn the gaze to herself;
- b) the relationship and contact with the other by releasing the dogmas of the past and allowing herself to meet new people;
- c) the identity crisis after identifying that there was no standardization about liking

- only men or women;
- d) trauma due to living in an abusive relationship in the past, which triggered repulsion, fear and withdrawal from the possibility of new future involvement with men;
 - e) the meaning and personal meaning that Alice has about love, the ways of loving and conceiving the affective relationships with the other.

The production of meaning in Alice's discourse is given by the observance of the particular fragments that constitute the content plane and expression plane. In this way, we can say that the sense elucidated by her has the excellence of her quest to explore new paths and to allow herself to know other facets of her identity when she infers her particular meaning to/in relationships with the other: "I've always felt enchanted by what a person is like, by her essence, the way he/she sees life, it's what he/she's inside, not what he/she's physically." In this section we can highlight again the game between *appearing* and *being*.

In this passage, the deponent uses her ultimate experiences to (re)signify her existence and find her place in relationships with the other. It is possible then to unleash the uniqueness of Alice's prism in relation to the world around her when analyzed to the information dictated in the content plane and expression plane where it clearly and truly exposes elements of her subjectivity.

In the following excerpt, Alice points out how she defines herself, how she sees and conceives herself in the present day, and highlights her journey until she reaches that conclusion.

Today I can say that **I know myself very well**, I am Alice, I am a woman, I feel good as a woman and I am a person who likes people, whether male or female. I think what has to predominate is the feeling like that, and it's kind of difficult today, right? I believe that today love is an act, you like a person of the same sex, it is a political act. Today I understand that I am a cis woman, bisexual, I feel attracted to both man and woman. But this was a process, I had to go through a lot of things in order to reach that conclusion. So I believe that life is this, we go through several stages like this, of learning, I think the whole time we are getting to know each other, you know? (ALICE, section 5).

When we analyze the phrase "you like a person of the same sex, it is a **political act**", it is necessary to understand the previous and current period to the meanings, and the meanings of the statements of the deponent interviewed would be to explain how the political dimension of the gender is. First of all, a cutout on the type of genre we are talking about is needed, since it could cover socioeconomic, racial and other aspects. The object of this research refers exclusively to the gender treated and understood as Scott's "social organization of sexual difference" (apud FARAH, 2004). Contextualizing the beginning of gender studies, dated the 1970s, with the advent of feminist movements that contributed significantly to the emergence of this field of studies (focus on women and their

representativeness) in universities and research centers. The present mismatch in the power relations between men and women demarcated the asymmetry in society, the object of which women sought and seek the recognition of rights and changing/breaking of paradigms until the present day.

Under the impact of these movements, in the 80's the first public policies with gender cutout were implemented. This is the case of the creation of the first State Council for the Condition of Women in 1983 and the first Police Station for the Defense of Women in 1985, both in the State of São Paulo. These institutions then spread throughout the country. Also, in 1985 the National Council of Women's Rights, an organ of the Ministry of Justice, was created (FARAH, 2004, p. 51).

Subsequent to this initial period of gender insertion in the political dimension, advances and setbacks have arisen in relation to the rights not only of women, but also of the LGBTTIQI community, which, together with the feminist movements, joined forces in search of visibility and in the struggle against intolerances and prejudices lived up to that moment. In the analysis of the above context and the context in which the deponent Alice is inserted, some similarities are pointed out: the iconization of the representation of the woman as inferior and that must be subject to the standards established by third parties without questioning or critical positionings (in Alice's speech, she subjects herself by fear to the traditionalism of parents to act as they determine); to the predominance of a power-holding figure who negatively and positively manipulates and punishes those who follow the norms established by power and the regimes of exclusionary and segregating interactions that permeate the society in which one lives.

In relation to the semantic category perceived in the analyzed narrative, we again have *freedom versus oppression*, since, once Alice affirms the knowledge of herself, she presents herself again, using her name "Alice", she defines herself as a "woman" and, further down in her account, she concludes that she considers herself a "cis-gender bisexual woman who is attracted to both men and women." This demonstrates a *freedom* previously unperceived, when analyzed and compared her reports that signaled the oppression experienced during her life course.

Again, Alice's thematic paper appears, when she defines herself as "cis gender," because it is the identification and recognition that matches her biological sex, the feminine, and the underlying values of it. She was born a woman and identifies herself as a woman. Simone de Beauvoir points out:

No one is born a woman, one becomes a woman. No biological, psychic, economic destiny defines the way the human female assumes within society; it is the whole of the civilization that elaborates this intermediate product between male and castrated, which qualify as feminine [...] between girls and boys, the body is, first of all, the irradiation of a subjectivity, the instrument that realizes the understanding of the world: it is through the eyes, the hands and not the sexual parts that they learn the universe (BEAUVOUR, 2016, p. 11).

In this sense, we can relate the author's speech to what Alice stands out about being a woman, because, throughout a process, in which, through what she lives and experiences with herself and the anti-subjects: family, school, boyfriend, ex-girlfriend, Alice started to identify and conceive as a woman.

The sanction that appears in Alice's speech is positive (reward), because, after abdicating the values transferred by her parents, she becomes the owner of herself, (re)discovers herself as a woman, cis, bisexual and independent, reaching her longed for *freedom*, after breaking with the fiduciary contract proposed by his parents earlier and that put her in the axis of the oppression.

In previous accounts, the punishment that Alice suffered was negative (punishment), because, after obeying and fulfilling the contract provided by her parents, she would give up her way of being, feeling and existing, and her freedom. She used to live under *oppression* caused by her inability to express her sense of attraction to women, now she can fully experience her desire without repressing herself.

In the passage "I am Alice", the deponent uses the iconization⁵ of the figurative element "Alice", and then the thematic paper "woman", "cis and bisexual", the discovery and acceptance of her identity constitution and her sexual orientation when she defines herself as such, after experiencing moments of oppression, not freedom and finally freedom.

The resumption of Alice's presentation of herself points to her conviction of a knowingness that institutes through her affirmation of the recognition of her gender identity, her sexual orientation, and how she deals with all of this. The categories of contrariety would be *non-assumption of her name (dysphoric)* versus *individuality (euphoric)*. And it would be between the *individual* and the *collective*, in the *non-individual*, one step away from the *collective*.

In this sense, Alice's attitude provokes a break with the paradigms adopted by her parents, which were based on the traditionalism that extinguishes and abhors the practices known as deviant, as in cases of relationships with people of the same sex and/or the diversity of gender that exists in the social field, showing herself one step away from the dilution of the collective.

The cultural matrix through which gender identity becomes intelligible requires that certain kinds of "identity" cannot "exist" – that is, those in which gender is not derived from sex and those in which the practices of desire are derive "neither" from sex "nor" gender. In this context, "deriving" would be a political relationship of law instituted by the cultural laws that establish and regulate the form and meaning of sexuality (BUTLER, 2017, p. 44).

⁵ Iconization is the exhaustive figurative investment of the last phase of the figurativization procedure, with the aim of producing illusion of reference or reality (BARROS, 1990, p. 87).

The competence of knowledge and/or *being-able-to-do* is manifested in Alice's discourse when she recognizes herself and defines herself as a woman, cisgender and bisexual, and confesses that coming to that conclusion was a long and arduous process. On the other hand, it reveals itself in the stage of performance or change of state, before (not assuming her name) unaware of her real identity, and in the present, highlighting her name, her freedom to be as she defines herself (individuality⁶).

Landowski (2012) points to the existence of two types of self-conceiving, two distinct ways of identity:

or the reference group **considers itself as a totality already constructed whose sole purpose is to persevere as such in its being, and it will endeavor, in this case, to neutralize, by a series of stationary transformations, the external or even internal pressures, which could have the effect of altering what he thinks to be by essence. Or, on the contrary, the group admits that its identity is only built thanks to an open series of dynamic transformations that, by changing it, make in itself possible the establishment, always provisional, of a just relation with the Other.** Whether he has to recognize within himself a part of Alterity, or he discovers that in part his own Identity comes to him from the Other, the subject, in such a case, is never himself, but becomes himself – as long as he accepts to change (LANDOWSKI, 2012, p. 27).

The demarcation of the second type of Identity proposed by Landowski, which emerges from the interaction between Identity and Alterity, is presented in Alice's speech throughout her process of self-acceptance and identity reconstruction, when, finally, through the contact with the Other, she begins to see new possibilities and ways of existing, without restrictions that delimit her way of being in the world.

Assuming her uniqueness as a subject of herself, Alice in her speech notes the empowerment of *being-able-to-be*, without fears and insecurities, legitimates resistance in not allowing herself to be placed in a category of segregation or exclusion, on the contrary, this quest by means of her affirmative ratifies her existence and the freedom of expression as a subject under construction.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

In sum, the emphasis on research and discussion on the issues of gender identity, sexuality and sexual orientation deserves special mention, which are still very lacking in the present day and which demand the need for further studies that contemplate this sphere of knowledge.

⁶ In the stage of competence, the subject who will perform the central transformation of the narrative is endowed with a knowing and / or can do (FIORIN, 1999, p. 23).

Performance is the stage at which the central transformation of the narrative takes place (p. 23).

The present work evidenced a clipping, which are the deployments that occur in the life of a person, which by the fact that it does not correspond to the social expectations of established and expected patterns, starting from the prejudice established in several spaces in which the subject is inserted, whether at home, at work, at school, at university and how these manifestations occur, in some places in a more subtle and veiled way, and in others in a more coercive and excluding way.

The phenomena of fear and intolerance appear at times in the discourse analyzed. Fear is revealed at first, accompanied by the mode of doing, referring to a fear of the other and of what he can do. We treat the other more specifically as one that does not follow the conventional standards established in today's society. Finally, it is, after the assumption of identity in its various facets, the fear of negative sanction that can arise as a result of non-compliance with heteronormative statutes conceived by those who counteract this practice as deviant from the norm, which can generate violent attitudes of intolerance and discrimination.

With regard to the intolerance present in some moments of the speech and in the analysis of the testimony portrayed, it is possible to highlight the need for care and acceptance of this population that lives to these days segregated, hurt, scared and excluded, in which, mostly for not finding any other way, embarks on the path of marginality or prostitution, not counting the more serious cases when deaths occur resulting from suicides or homicides of the LGBTTQI population, who, by greater oppressive and repressive forces, did not manage to remain resisting in this world.

It is worth mentioning the transformation of Alice's identity as well as of those who, for some time or in a great part of their lives, lived silenced by various factors that made them unable to exercise their identity freedom, going through two poles: from someone oppressed to a subject in conjunction with freedom.

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