



FOR THE DECOLONIZATION OF TRANS* IDENTITIES

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Resumo: This paper intends to make a critical reflection on the diverse transgender and non-cisgender identities and lived experiences², using concepts and methodologies inspired by subaltern studies, especially Queer Theory and Post(Anti)colonial Studies. Following the decentralizing intellectual path carried out by considering heterosexuality as an idealized and dominant value, and contextualizing contemporary visions on gender from a critical (anticolonial) historical perspective, the proposal is to conceptualize cisgender-ness as a fundamental analytical category in understanding normalizations and oppressions inflicted (not only, but especially) upon transgender and non-cisgender peoples, in some of the different aspects and spheres in which they occur.

Keywords: Transgender-ness, Cisgender-ness, Decolonization, Queer Theory, Postcolonial Studies.

Decolonization, trans* identities

“I refuse any fatalistic position regarding history [...]. I do not accept, for example, expressions such as 'It is a shame that so many Brazilians are dying of hunger, but, after all, reality is just like that'. No! I refuse, as false, as ideological, such statement. No reality is 'just like that': every reality is, in fact, subject to the possibility of our intervention on it.” (FREIRE, 1997, 5'10", author's own translation)

This paper talks about transgender and non-cisgender identities, but fundamentally talks about oppressions against transgender and non-cisgender individualities; it talks about transgender-ness, but mainly talks about cisgender-ness. In this sense, it is an analysis that is not as concerned with 'technologies of gender' as it is with the shredded and perforated transgender bodies lying on urban and rural streets; a reflection that is less interested in gender subversions and fluidities than in the apparently neutral and natural rigidity of a binary gender system; it is, ultimately, less focused on doubts about who would be *travesti*³ women *vis-à-vis* transsexual women⁴

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² We insist in the term 'non-cisgender' in order to emphasize that transgender-ness is used as a broad term, in order to oppose the myriad of gender inconformities to the cisgender norm, as well as to point out that not all these inconformities recognize 'transgender' as an acceptable term to describe their subjectivities and political struggles.

³ Such distinctions are especially relevant in the Brazilian context.

than in the certainties of abandonment, institutional and non-institutional abuses of power, and violences that happen to these people almost unanimously.

This paper deals, therefore, with the social structures that colonize transgender and non-cisgender identities, from their diverse definitions and insults to the dehumanization that authorizes (implicitly or explicitly) various forms of violence, also including the social controls and sanctions that limit the existences of transgender and non-cisgender individuals, frequently denying them access to fundamental human rights.

The title of this article makes direct reference to the important political struggle for the depathologization of trans* identities. In the International Network for Trans Depathologization's Manifesto (2011), such struggle is presented as a denouncement of the “psychiatrization of our identities and [of] the serious consequences of the so called 'Gender Identity Disorders'”, also making visible “the violence done to intersex people throughout the current medical procedures.” Amongst the demands, the removal of transsexuality from the mental disorders' manuals, the right to changes in official documents, the end of surgical procedures on intersex newborns, and equitable access to healthcare and the labor market independently of any subjection to traditional definitions of 'man' and 'woman'.

Such reference is not, however, a mere coincidence: to argue for the decolonization of trans* identities means, on one side, to pay homage to the courage and consciousness involved in the struggle for depathologization, and, on another, to reflect about the historical circumstances in which these demands are made. While it is true that transgender and non-cisgender individualities have, in some instances, been capable to put forward their perspectives on the political sphere, and even being fortunate to obtain rights previously restricted in contemporary times, it is also evident that such possibilities are severely limited by their almost absolute absence from positions of power, be them in medical, legal, or academic institutions. In this sense, to propose the decolonization of transgender/non-cisgender identities presupposes that reflections are made (1) about cisgender-ness, characterized in this paper as a colonial power; (2) about transgender and non-cisgender identities colonized by cisgender normativity; (3) about

⁴ It is interesting to note the academic interest on this distinction (see, for example, CARVALHO, 2011 and LEITE JR., 2008). However, if we take the deauthorization of medical discourses as an analytical starting point, such distinction has its meaning reduced. Besides that, in many contexts, the political struggle for transgender/non-cisgender rights is founded upon the idea that “the ultimate goal [...] does not seem to be to contain gender nonconforming identities and practices within slightly expanded yet still-normative constructions and arrangements.” (THOMAS, 2006, p. 320)

(de)colonization as a concept, and (4) its usefulness to think about the oppressions that arise from cisgender-colonial normativity.

In the next section, cisgender-ness is presented as a key analytical concept that will allow us to discuss the decolonization of transgender and non-cisgender identities.

Cisgender-ness

Generally, the thought of gender identities is related, both in lay and academic contexts, to considering gender nonconformities: *travesti*'s 'abject bodies', transsexual people with or without a “gender identity disorder” diagnosis, 'performativ' drag queens and kings, unintelligible genderbenders and genderfuckers, etc. The emphasis put in these nonconformities is of such magnitude that the opportune concern from Mauro Cabral seems inevitable: “Why is it that [cisgender] women and men have gender and transsexual people have gender identity?” (2010, p. 221 apud BENTO, 2011, p. 93)

Foremost, Cabral's critical question points out the existence of an evident asymmetry in the understanding of genders, or of gender identities. After all, if we live in a society that needs to constantly reaffirm one of its most primitive identification premises – the binary differentiation between 'man' and 'woman' –, it is quite interesting to observe the estrangement and curiosity that transgender-ness and non-cisgender-ness cause in researchers, scholars and media producers without a simultaneous, proportional questioning of the social construction of difference among human and among non-human bodies using criteria that assume gender is binary and immutable. One symptom of such asymmetry could be located in the frequently made distinction between transgender people and 'natural', 'biological' people⁵.

In this sense, if we consider transgender-ness as naming the gender identity of people who are not within the borders of intelligibility defined by the dominant gender norm – that is to say, people who in different degrees have their gender, and consequently their humanity, questioned, invalidated, illegitimated –, we will be one step closer to challenging certain transphobic assumptions, about which Kendall Thomas makes a compelling reflection:

“We live in a world in which individual human identities are forged in and through constructs of gendered difference. In the West, the notion of human subjectivity (of the human subject *as such*) has been erected on the fictional foundation of two

⁵ Even if it is, in certain contexts, a differentiation without explicit cissexist intentions, I believe that the criticism of it remains if we take into account, as Judith Butler analyzed the use of the category 'woman' by feminism, that “strategies always have meanings that exceed the purposes for which they are intended.” (BUTLER, 1990, p. 4)

fixed, unified, and coherent genders in one of which we are all inserted (by force if necessary) at birth.” (THOMAS, 2006, p. 316)

Therefore, to question such 'fictional foundation' of gender also means to problematize the constitution of the human, and consequently the idea that 'biological' men and women exist, since their supposed biology is founded on that fiction. Besides, evidently, of denouncing the transphobic imaginary that dehumanizes transgender and non-cisgender individualities without being distracted by unproductive arguments on the truthfulness of transphobic discourses, focusing instead on the “effects of power which they produce or on the ways they unfold within systems of discursive and institutional practices” (HALPERIN, 2007, p. 50, author's own translation).

It is with such purposes that we intend to define, in this paper, cisgender-ness as an analytical category. Even though the 'trans-' prefix is quite frequently utilized in opposition to 'cis-' in scientific contexts, the term cisgender-ness has been explored much more recently, and in quite specific circles (that is, amongst people more directly involved with transgender and non-cisgender political causes). The origins of the usage of 'cis-' to think about gender (identity) are generally associated with attempts from trans* activists to “de-centralize the dominant group, exposing it as merely one possible alternative rather than the "norm" against which trans people are defined.” (KOYAMA, 2002).

Such differences in popularity between the use of the prefixes 'trans-' and 'cis-' with regards to gender are directly related to processes of production of differences, which usually assume the dominant 'condition' as natural and stigmatize the dominated 'condition'. As Julia Serano points out, this process of naturalizing dominant aspects could be historically observed in relation to sexuality:

“Fifty years ago, homosexuality was almost universally seen as unnatural, immoral, illegitimate, etc. Back then, people regularly talked about “homosexuals,” but nobody ever talked about “heterosexuals.” In a sense, there were no “heterosexuals” – everyone who wasn’t engaged in same-sex behavior was simply considered “normal”. (SERANO, 2009)

An answer that intellectual-activists pursued was to question the asymmetry between homossexuality and the supposedly 'natural' heterossexuality:

“But then [...] activists began challenging this notion. They pointed out that all people have sexualities [...]. The so-called “normal” people weren’t really “normal” per se, but rather they were “heterosexual.” And the activists pointed out

that heterosexuals weren't necessarily any better or more righteous than homosexuals. It was just that heterosexism – the belief that same-sex attraction and relationships are less natural and legitimate than heterosexual ones – is institutionalized within society and functions to unfairly marginalize those who engage in same-sex relationships.” (Ibidem)

In a similar way, to propose the decentralization of naturalized genders, or gender identities – that is, exposing cisgender-ness as merely one possibility for interpreting gender, not as an assumption from which 'normal' is defined – suggests an analytical path (or an analytical trench, if we choose to be more dramatic) in which it becomes possible to equate transgender and non-cisgender perspectives to dominant cisgender norms. This equatability process is, along with the sociopolitical changes that follow it, the process of decolonization of transgender and non-cisgender identities and individualities⁶.

By defining cisgender-ness as the gender identities or expressions that are legitimated by dominant gender norms, we intend, then, to contribute for such equatability and decolonization. After all, to utilize the analytical concept of cisgender-ness has the objective of, ultimately, deauthorizing discourses and practices that naturalize the cisgender norm, therefore understanding transgender and non-cisgender individualities as marginal and resistant positions in relation to the cisgender colonial domination. Such understanding allows us to depart ourselves from bodies of knowledge about transgender-ness and non-cisgender-ness that are friendly, respectable, and corroborated by 'cisgender institutions', and to define a horizon of possibilities that take these nonconforming existences as privileged positions from which it is possible to critically comprehend the power systems that relate to gender⁷.

In this sense, the next section of the article is dedicated to detailing what is intended with the use of 'trans* identities'.

Trans* identities

Identities are elements used by humankind in the most diverse aspects of our existences. We can notice the necessity of recurring to them, for example, to answer the

⁶ Therefore, a process that assumes the avoidance of “the trap of taking differences for granted and, on the contrary, make the social processes that generate them visible.” (MISKOLCI, 2007, p. 12, author's own translation)

⁷ An analysis of genders that is inspired, therefore, in the foucauldian effort of “removing sexuality as an object of knowledge and, in doing so, deauthorizing those branches of science founded upon a scientific or semi-scientific comprehension of it.” (HALPERIN, 2007, p. 62, author's own translation).

apparently simplistic question 'Who are you', or to think about various political and social contemporary issues, which in general revolve around conflicting claims of disparate identities (SEN, 2006, p. XII).

However, in a world increasingly seen as a “federation of religions or of civilizations, thereby ignoring all the other ways in which people see themselves” (Ibidem, p. XII), it becomes critical to avoid the mistake of thinking of people as identified with one, and only one, category, as well as the mistake of considering them as devoid of any identity⁸. In this sense, to think that “identifying with others, in various different ways, can be extremely important for living in a society”, also requires having in mind that “there are a great variety of categories to which we simultaneously belong.” (Ibidem, p. 19).

The perception of simultaneity in identity belongings, added to a critical analysis of the very constitution of identities themselves, are important contributions of Queer Studies to the evaluation of the dynamics of political struggle regarding sexualities and genders. Through the problematization of dominant norms and the questioning of resistance processes which flirted with sub-normalizations of what means to be gay, lesbian or queer (amongst others), a political proposition was sought in defense of differences, of multiplicities, even when articulated on the basis of identities (see MISKOLCI, 2007, p. 9-10). Recognizing such important criticisms, this paper does not intend to establish any strict definition of transgender and non-cisgender individualities which is not useful, as a conceptual map, to the understanding of the numerous oppressions faced by them.

Bearing such considerations in mind, we can define what is intended in utilizing 'trans* identities' as an analytical concept. First, to refer to 'trans* identities' means to take into consideration a broad spectrum of transgender and non-cisgender individualities: the reduction of such individualities to 'trans* identities' was made with the intention of evidencing the parallel with the struggle for the depathologization of transgender-ness and non-cisgender-ness, staying closer to the slogan adopted by it. Thusly, we consider 'trans* identities', or transgender and non-cisgender identities, the group of individualities whose gender identities or expressions are, in different degrees, illegitimated in relation to dominant cisgender norms⁹.

⁸ The criticism to the disregard or minimization of the relevance of identities is made in the context of economic theory, in which the idea of 'rational agent' is widely used (SEN, 2006, p. 21).

⁹ Such comprehension is inspired by the definition of 'transgender' put forward by Harney (2007): “a transgender person is someone whose gender is not universally considered valid”.

In that wide definition for trans* identities, we also intend to recognize criticisms made by Julia Serano to the breadth of the term 'transgender', utilized in many contexts for people who “transgress binary gender norms”; Serano points to the fact that such approach risks erasing “the struggles faced by those of us who lie at the intersection of multiple forms of gender-based prejudice” (SERANO, 2007, p. 2). In this paper, the utilization of trans* identities or of transgender and non-cisgender identities-individualities has as its main purpose not the reduction or invisibilization of the multiplicity of gender experiences, but the denouncing of cisgender-ness as norm, while being attentive to the fact that these individualities have a significant diversity of existential objectives and political demands.

In a similar sense, it is fundamental to emphasize that the analysis does not intend to reduce transgender and non-cisgender individualities to their gender dimension: markers like class, race-ethnicity, nationality, sexuality, educational level, religiousness, among others, also influence the formation of such individuals' subjectivities, in different compositions according to each individual living experiences. These dimensions must be remembered when one analyzes the forms through which the various gender oppressions operate upon transgender and non-cisgender individualities, so that it becomes possible, in the words of Audre Lorde, to fully concentrate our energies in the struggles we embrace as part of our lives:

“My fullest concentration of energy is available to me only when I integrate all the parts of who I am, openly, [...] without the restrictions of externally imposed definition. Only then can I bring myself and my energies as a whole to the service of those struggles which I embrace as part of my living.”
(LORDE, 1984, p. 120-121)

Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to focus on the inferiorized position of gender inconformities in relation to the cisgender norm, evidencing the common colonizatory ties that permeate these individualities, in order that their differences are respected given a conscious reflection about the oppressive roots that affect all such inconformities, and also respectfully considering factors beyond gender that enrich our lived experiences and political struggles, especially those in which this piece of work is more directly inspired, still breathing in the rich diversity of colonized peoples in the world, inferiorized by their race-ethnicities, languages, ways of life and hopes of decolonization.

(De)colonization

“Thus the native discovers that his life, his breath, his beating heart are the same as those of the settler. [...] This discovery shakes the world in a very necessary manner. All the new, revolutionary assurance of the native stems from it. For if, in fact, my life is worth as much as the settler's, his glance no longer shrivels me up nor freezes me, and his voice no longer turns me into stone. I am no longer on tenterhooks in his presence; in fact, I don't give a damn for him.” (FANON, 1963, p. 45)

Generally, the concept of colonialism is associated with the “historic process of establishment of colonies” by a certain nation (HOUAISS, 2001, p. 763, meaning 1, author's own translation). And even though it is not simple to establish chronologic, geographic or political criteria that allow us to define, with a certain degree of precision, what would the colonial period(s) be, there is a widely common correlation between the concept of colonialism and the European domination, from the 16th century onwards, of countless populations and territories currently denominated American, African, Asiatic, Oceanic. Such association might be attributed, in part, to the general characteristics of that European colonial project, directly related to the commercial and productive exploitation which gave rise to the origins of the contemporary capitalistic economic system, the industrial revolutions¹⁰.

The discussions about colonialism and its legacy, however, are not currently restricted to aspects more directly related with the commercial and political relationships between colony and metropolis. In this sense, postcolonial studies might be seen as developing “within two broad (and overlapping) contexts. The first is the history of decolonization itself. Intellectuals and activists [...] challenged and revised dominant definitions of race, culture, language and class in the process of making their voices heard. The second context is the revolution, within 'Western' intellectual traditions, in thinking about some of the same issues – language and how it articulates experience, how ideologies work, how human subjectivities are formed, and what we might mean by culture (LOOMBA, 1998, p. 20).

Therefore, the broadening of scope in studies about colonialism also included analyses and challenges to influences from the colonial project over concepts of gender and sexuality, both in its period of effective dominance and its contemporary effects and

¹⁰ This is a reflection made in detail by Loomba (1998, p. 4) when considering the terms 'colonialism', 'imperialism', 'neocolonialism', 'postcolonialism'. These terms cannot be simply understood from their “semantic meaning but by relating its shifting meanings to historical processes.”

presences, making the 'post' in postcolonial studies more connected to a poststructuralist perspective than to the temporalities in the colonial enterprise¹¹. To think, for example, about the artistic and cultural mechanisms that contributed, and contribute, to the exoticification of colonial subjectivities¹² allows us to strengthen historical evaluations of colonialism as well as to found the multiple contemporary oppressions upon historical grounds.

In taking (de)colonization as an analytical concept for transgender and non-cisgender individualities, we intend to denounce the colonizatory nature of the institutional and non-institutional obstacles that operate against our dignity, including among such obstacles the systematic exclusion from decisory and intellectual positions, and also to evidence the ethnocentrism that permeates dominant gender definitions, destabilizing cronologies which privilege medical institutions and discourses in the analysis of gender inconformities – respecting, therefore, the historical existence of perspectives about gender other than the 'Western' one¹³.

Therefore, to analyze the conditions of existence for transgender and non-cisgender individualities as related to the concept of colonialism means to understand such concept as the “inferiority or subjection of a community [...] dominated by another [...]” (HOUAISS, 2001, p. 763, meaning 5), taking 'community' in its most abstract sense, that is, as the interpersonal connection originated “by a certain historical conscience and/or by common social and/or cultural and/or economic and/or political interests” (HOUAISS, 2001, p. 782, meaning 12.4). Transgender and non-cisgender individualities, examining the fact that our perspectives about gender are belittled and dehumanized in relation to cisgender normativities, would have in that the common interest that would define such colonized community: attaining consciousness about a colonial regime of gender consists, then, of critically perceiving the systemic hierarchisation of cisgender perspectives over transgender and non-cisgender ones, and of finding social and individual forms of resistance to such regime.

¹¹ According to Jorge de Alva, postcolonialism should “signify not so much subjectivity 'after' the colonial experience as a subjectivity of oppositionality to imperializing/colonizing [...] discourses and practices.” (1995 apud LOOMBA, 1998, p. 16)

¹² For more on discursive colonial constructions in relation to gender and sexuality, see Loomba (1998, p. 151-172).

¹³ In this sense, the objective is to problematize analyses which invisibilize, in different degrees, the existence of “cultures that reject binary sex and gender systems” (GREENBERG, 2006, p. 53). Such invisibilization is especially striking in the consideration of transexual and intersex non-cisgender-nesses, in whose cronologies the dominance of medical discourses is usual.

In the next section, we discuss, from an articulation between cisgender-ness, transgender-ness and non-cisgender-ness, and (de)colonization, some evidences of cisgender-ness as a colonial normativity.

Normative-colonial cisgender-ness

How are, then, transgender and non-cisgender individualities, as well as such individualities constituted into identities – throughout various mechanisms –, colonized? We propose, in this section, to consider the cisgender colonization in 3 interconnected aspects: (1) the ideological one, which positions cisgender-ness as superior or central in relation to transgender-ness and non-cisgender-ness; (2) the political one, which excludes transgender and non-cisgender individualities and political perspectives from decisory spheres – particularly those that affect ourselves more directly; and (3) the individual one, which belittles, psychologically and socially, transgender and non-cisgender subjectivities¹⁴.

In this sense, the composition of these different aspects and spheres of cisgender colonization allows us to regard the colonial domination as exerted through a myriad of vectors whose directions and magnitudes are diverse, commonly interarticulated but also allowing room for contradictions and concessions, including the possibility of loosening of oppressions, even if, eventually, such loosening is originated from problematic assumptions¹⁵. One of the ideological vectors that constitutes one of the most visible colonizatory nexuses over transgender and non-cisgender individualities is in the medical-pathologizing definitions for some of these individualities, which we shall take into consideration next.

If we analyze the current definitions within the 'international classification of diseases-10' from World Health Organization (2010) regarding 'gender identity disorders' (ch. V, F64 code), the centrality of cisgender-ness is noticeable: from the “desire to live and be accepted as a member of the opposite sex [*sic*]” (in 'transsexualism', F64.0 code) to the “persistent and intense distress about assigned sex” (in 'gender identity disorder of childhood', F64.2 code), it becomes clear that such

¹⁴ The individual aspect of colonization is a fundamental aspect in Fanon's anticolonial critique: “In the period of colonization when it is not contested [...], the defensive attitudes of the natives give way and they then find themselves crowding the mental hospitals. There is thus during this calm period of successful colonization a regular and important mental pathology which is the direct product of oppression.” (FANON, 1963, p. 250)

¹⁵ The access to healthcare resources (such as pharmaceutical and surgical resources) for some transgender and non-cisgender people, granted under the pathologizing assumption, can be comprehended as an example of such problematic loosening of colonizatory oppression.

feelings are presented as abnormal in comparison to perceptions of cisgender-ness considered adequate, without any reservation or criticism to the oppressions imposed from birth to many non-conforming people¹⁶ – oppressions that, after all, have the potential to explain such 'distresses' and sufferings.

Such medical constructions of cisgender-binary nature end up influencing legal understandings about gender. Analysing the US legal system, Julie A. Greenberg (2006, p. 53) problematizes these understandings: “Implicit in legislation using the term *sex* is the assumption that only two biological sexes exist and that all people fit neatly into one of these two categories”. From this assumption, we can better understand the difficulties faced by many transgender and non-cisgender people who want to alter their name and/or gender¹⁷.

Difficulties are not limited to issues of name and legal sex, however. The violence perpetrated against some intersex people is exposed, even if acritically, in an article at 'revista piauí':

“The hermaphrodite [*sic*] is usually born with a penis and a vagina [*sic*], the so-called ambiguous genitalia [*sic*]. In such cases, Alexsandro is requested to provide an opinion and, when recommended, to surgically intervene in order to define the newborn's sex. The situation is considered a medical emergency because the parents need the sex definition in order to register the child.” (BECKER, 2010, author's own translation)

Beyond the absence of critical questioning over the necessity or even possibility of defining sexes, the surgical violence and the 'medical emergency' are legitimated in the name of the birth certificate – another evidence of the importance that is given to the binary, genitalizing definition of gender.

The existence of these oppressions is intrinsically related to the relative absences of transgender and non-cisgender people in decisory and influential positions within the spheres of medicine and law, amongst others, absences which constitute the political aspect of normative-colonial cisgender-ness. Our colonized position causes our political possibilities to be restricted to demands for dignity, equity and resources within a structure erected by and for cisgender people, with little, if any, margin for questioning the very foundations of such structure: in this sense, the supposed conservatism and

¹⁶ Which is not surprising, given that “the foundational idea for the gender dysphoria clinics was first, to study and interesting and potentially fundable human aberration; second, to provide help, as they understood the term, for a 'correctable problem'.” (STONE, 1991, p. 160)

¹⁷ Difficulty that is evident in a case (another one) in which a request to change legal sex was denied: because the requesting person did not undergo certain surgical procedures, the court established that the transsexual woman has shown 'lack of interest in acting'. (TJ-SP..., 2011).

desire for assimilation from some transgender and non-cisgender people, pointed out by some studies, could only be minimally understood if these structural restrictions and their impact over such subjectivities are considered¹⁸.

The relative absence of transgender and non-cisgender people in decisory positions is an easily observable reality in nearly all spheres of sociability; it presents itself in a peculiar manner, however, in the production of academic knowledge, in which our absence as researchers and PhDs contrasts with our growing presence as subjects-objects of study. Would it be possible to think of such particular coexistence as related to cisgender colonization?

When considering the 'Western' production of academic knowledge as strongly eurocentric, Raewyn Connell, in her book *Southern Theory*, notes the following:

“The colonised world was merely a data mine whose raw numbers would be exported back to ‘the metropole’ [...] for theoretical production that would then come together as a definitive vision of the colonised. In this way the relationship between coloniser and colonised is no different when regarding the academic realm as opposed to, say, the political or industrial ones.” (2007 apud CROSS, 2010b)

Connell's observations could sparkle a reflection about the participation of transgender and non-cisgender individualities in academic works:

“We were and still are exploited by men and women of science to buttress their theories – be they psychological, anthropological or sociological – but rarely able to speak without the cis man or woman in a white coat interpreting our words and interpolating an identity for us.” (CROSS, 2010a).

Therefore, such individualities end up being used to validate theories and political objectives in academic researches, instead of “being given the opportunity to speak for ourselves on the very issues that affect our own lives” (SERANO, 2007, p. 12). In this sense, to critically analyze the academic production about transgender and non-cisgender realities means that one is alert to such colonizatory aspects and the consequent theoretical-political limitations arising from them.

¹⁸ See, for example, Lorber (1994, p. 20, apud CROSS, 2011), who infers that “[trans folk do not challenge the gender order because] their goal is to be feminine women and masculine men”, invisibilizing in such analysis a broad array of transgender and non-cisgender individualities. Such tendency of applying “theoretical criteria in order to determine what is 'truly' radical or resistant and what 'looks' to be that but in reality is recuperated, reinscribed within what it aims to escape from” is already strongly repudiated by Foucault (HALPERIN, 2007, p. 136, author's own translation).

Criticism of the centrality and superiority of cisgender perspectives and of the various absences of transgender and non-cisgender people has, then, the objective of provoking a reexamination about the analytical pathways which are utilized to think about transgender-ness and non-cisgender-ness and, as a consequence, a significant change on perceptions regarding such individualities. We hope, furthermore, that this change is accompanied by a process of undertaking critical consciousness as well as by an increase of transgender and non-cisgender people in decisory positions. That process and this increase would engender a dynamic whose potential lies in undoing the consequences of cisgender colonization upon the inferiorized, stigmatized subjectivities of transgender and non-cisgender people, to whom the conclusive lines of this article are dedicated.

To attain consciousness about the ideological, political and individual situation of inferiorization and marginalization constitutes a fundamental step for our critical insertion into the world¹⁹, effecting a questioning of the obstacles to our existential possibilities and the perception that, after all, reality is *not* like that, and that “these people *do not and should not own the canon*” (CROSS, 2011). And if a “deeper analytical language for transsexual [or transgender] theory” is proposed (STONE, 1991, p. 166), such statement does not imply that only transgender and non-cisgender individualities would be capable of thinking about gender or about transgender and non-cisgender realities, however it asserts that there exists an untapped potential, in our frequently invisible stories, of destabilizing the foundations upon which dominant gender discourses lie.

In the first words of his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Paulo Freire shares with us a situation that occurred during a course in which he participated. In a discussion about the “danger of critical consciousness”, he cites the words of a person regarding that: “I cannot say that I have understood every word that was said here, but I can surely say one thing: I was *naïve* when I arrived to this course and, upon finding out that I was naïve, I started to become *critical*. Such discovery, however, does not make me fanatic, neither gives me a sensation of collapse.” (FREIRE, 2011, p. 31-32)

Conscious of the social limitations which impose difficulties to us in sharing ideas and struggles – thus recognizing the role played by colonizers in the promotion of strategies of political disintegration –, as well as my own limitations, I hope this paper

¹⁹ Insertion that Paulo Freire defines as the “decision undertaking towards intervention upon the world” (FREIRE, 1997, 4'19"), distinguishing that from mere adaptation to given social conditions.

can still be a contribution to the awakening of critical consciousness for transgender and non-cisgender people, and not only theirs. May the analytical usage of cisgender-ness as a concept facilitate the perception of oppressions and, mainly, of ideologies and socio-political structures which authorize them, implicitly or explicitly. Not for us to become fanatic or hopeless about our existence, but to become critical about it, generating the intellectual and physical energy which can bring about the social and political transformations of our decolonization.

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