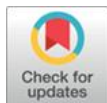


## Views on the formation and schooling of travestites and transgender woman



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### Abstract

This study examines gender and sexuality in light of the experiences lived by transvestite and transsexual students inserted in the context of Youth and Adult Education recorded in the so-called body letters. It aims to understand the meanings of schooling for these students, looking at the challenges, school dropouts, and discrimination they face, considering the following theoretical bases: Ballestrin (2020), Benevides (2020), Butler (2021), Collins (2021), Evaristo (2020) and hooks (2019). In the information in these letters, the students show strategies of survival to perceive themselves as socially inserted in the face of gender normative power. The lived experiences of the participant-authors make it possible to state that each story brings unique knowledge and perspectives on the world and the possibility of recognizing education as a social, cultural and political practice that enables transvestites and transgender woman to re-signify their trajectories of experiences, corporealities, existences and resistances. The importance of teachers recognizing and valuing these experiences for an emancipatory process of education is highlighted.

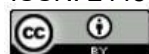
### Keywords

*escrivências* (life-writing); gender; sexuality; trans women and transvestites; schooling; emancipation.

### Olhares para a formação e escolarização de mulheres travestis e transexuais

### Resumo

Apresenta-se um estudo sobre gênero e sexualidade, sob a luz das experiências vividas por estudantes travestis e transexuais inseridas no contexto da Educação de Jovens e Adultos registradas nas chamadas cartas-corpo. Tem como objetivo compreender os significados da escolarização para essas estudantes, percebendo os desafios, a evasão escolar e a discriminação que enfrentam, considerando as seguintes bases teóricas: Ballestrin (2020), Benevides (2020), Butler (2021), Collins (2021), Evaristo (2020) e hooks (2019). Nas informações dessas cartas, as estudantes evidenciam estratégias de “sobreviver” para se perceberem inseridas socialmente frente ao poder normativo de gênero. As experiências vividas das autoras-participantes permitem enunciar que cada história traz saberes e perspectivas singulares de mundo e a possibilidade de reconhecer a educação



como prática social, cultural e política, que possibilita às travestis e transexuais ressignificarem suas trajetórias de vivências, corporeidades, existências e resistências. Destaca-se a importância de os/as docentes reconhecerem e valorizarem tais experiências para um processo educativo emancipador.

**Palavras-chave**

*escrivências*; gênero; sexualidade; mulheres trans e travestis; escolarização; emancipação.

**Miradas hacia la formación y escolarización de mujeres travestis y transexuales****Resumen**

Se presenta un estudio sobre género y sexualidad, a la luz de las experiencias vividas por estudiantes travestis y transexuales insertas en el contexto de la Educación de Personas Jóvenes y Adultas registradas en las llamadas cartas del cuerpo. El objetivo es comprender los significados de la escolarización para esas estudiantes, observando los desafíos, el abandono escolar y la discriminación que enfrentan, considerando las siguientes bases teóricas: Ballestrin (2020), Benevides (2020), Butler (2021), Collins (2021), Evaristo (2020) y hooks (2019). En las informaciones de esas cartas, las alumnas muestran estrategias de “sobrevivencia” para percibirse socialmente insertadas frente al poder normativo de género. Las experiencias vividas por las autoras-participantes permiten afirmar que cada relato aporta conocimientos y perspectivas únicas sobre el mundo y la posibilidad de reconocer la educación como una práctica social, cultural y política que posibilita a travestis y transexuales resignificar sus trayectorias de experiencias, corporalidades, existencias y resistencias. Se destaca la importancia de que los profesores reconozcan y valoren esas experiencias para un proceso educativo emancipador.

**Palabras clave**

*escrivências*; gênero; sexualidade; mulheres trans y travestis; escolarización; emancipación.

**1 Introduction**

This article discusses about gender and sexuality in the light of the experiences lived by transvestite and transgender students inserted in the context of Youth and Adult Education (EJA) recorded in the so-called body letters. The body letter is constituted from the theoretical work of Evaristo (2020) and refers to production as a form of resistance and knowledge from the body and life experience, a way of communicating and expressing from a physical and emotional experience. The idea of bringing this debate is justified based on the knowledge of various processes of exclusion and violence that these people suffer

throughout their life trajectory. This trajectory runs through the schooling processes, given that the school is part of our formation as subjects belonging to society.

In society, what characterizes people within the trans umbrella is the transgression of the norms stipulated in this binary gender device. In this sense, the processes of exclusion and violence with people with gender identities, considered "outside the norm", are numerous, from physical to psychological, and this, over time, has caused many people to socially isolate themselves, either for the preservation of life or because they do not consider themselves to belong to social spaces. We emphasize that, only as of 2017, there were the first records related to murders of transvestites and transsexuals in Brazil. These data on transgender people, for the most part, result from a joint action of movements of independent volunteers (who are linked to non-governmental organizations of transvestites and transsexuals), through the search for news in newspapers, on the pages of police occurrences or informants of a dialogic sharing, body to body, about this type of violence.

In order to provide visibility to these issues of violence in the debate, non-governmental institutions with different actions and practices in the construction of statistical data on these non-lives were created in the Brazilian scenario. Thus, we highlight the National Articulation of Transvestites and Transsexuals (Antra) in partnership with the Brazilian Institute of Trans in Education (IBTE) as the main protagonists in the search, compilation and dissemination of these data. Within this context, we highlight the historical contributions of the Gay Group of Bahia (GGB), which releases annual data on deaths caused by homophobia. According to the report *Homophobia Kills*, authored by Michels (2020, p. 2):

[...] 420 LGBT+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) died in Brazil in 2018 victims of homotransphobia: 320 homicides (76%) and 100 suicides (24%). A small decrease of 6% compared to 2017, when 445 deaths were recorded, a record number in the 39 years since the Gay Group of Bahia started this database. Every 20 hours an LGBT person is barbarically murdered or commits suicide as a victim of LGBTphobia, which confirms Brazil as a world champion in crimes against sexual minorities. According to international human rights agencies, far more homosexuals and transsexuals are killed in Brazil than in the 13 countries in the East and Africa where there is the death penalty against LGBT people.

Regarding the corporeality of transvestites and transsexuals, in the dossier of murders and violence against our Brazilian sisters in 2020, the organizers, Bruna Benevides and Sayonara Nalder Bonfim Nogueira (2020, p. 25), point out that "[...] Brazil

had 89 trans people killed in the first half of 2021, with 80 murders and 9 suicides. There were also thirty-three assassination attempts and 27 human rights violations [...]"

According to data from Antra, in 2020, Brazil recorded a record number of murders against transvestites and transsexuals, with a total of 75 cases. There is no denying that this high number of murders of trans people is a reflection of a still cisheteronormative<sup>1</sup> society, which denies, makes invisible and, not content, exterminates trans lives. Cisheteronormativity is a concept that describes the normalization and naturalization of a specific model of relationships, in which the standard norm is that a man relates to a woman, both cisgenders.

According to Benevides and Nogueira (2020, p. 2):

The denunciation of these violence against trans people, which we have seen intensify from a greater dissemination of news in the most diverse media, represents the reflection of a trans exclusionary CISThema operating in its most perfect performance and the way it was thought to prevent the citizenship of our population by violating the rights, life and bodies of trans people on a daily basis.

It is important to identify that we will use, throughout the text, the term "Cis" as a way of denouncing an exclusionary system, which is organized based on the idea of cisgender identity, which is that person whose gender identity corresponds to the biological sex assigned to them at birth. The term is a combination of the prefix "cis" with the word "system", intending to denounce the transphobia that dominates the cisgender order within a system that socially marks bodies (Vergueiro, 2015).

Regarding the trans-exclusionary (Cis)theme, what we observe in practice is the non-effectiveness of specific state policies for the most socially vulnerable population. This is reflected, for example, in the absence of data on enrollment, dropout and completion of transvestite and transgender students. There is no public policy for what does not exist and, in this sense, making the population of transvestites and transsexuals invisible is a way of "protecting" the State from its obligation to watch over the constitutional principles that affirm that every citizen is equal before the law.

<sup>1</sup> The "cis" terminology has as its principle, initially, to differentiate trans people (term created by Donna Lynn Matthews – for more information: [http://donnas-hideout.org/tg\\_def.html](http://donnas-hideout.org/tg_def.html)). Cisheteronormativity is related to gender identities and normative-based patterns of sexuality, it is a central concept in the work of Butler (2016), who criticizes the idea of gender identity as an inherent and unshakable biological characteristic.

The school, although it is a place that seeks democratic and citizen practices, was not formulated differently from the norms of the system, since the culturally reproduced sexist and hierarchical standards were incorporated into it, which caused the school institution to produce exclusionary practices. Based on this brief explanation, we believe that this debate is essential for schooling contexts, as rights must be realized regardless of gender or sexuality issues. Thus, we bring as an approach some writings by trans people, who report their experiences and which will be better defined in our methodological proposition.

## 2 Methodological and theoretical elements

This work is based on studies related to a doctoral thesis, which focuses on bringing aspects related to the schooling of females subjects who transgress the norms imposed by gender standards. This thesis had a three-handed writing, with a trans student, a supervisor and a co-supervisor, who are researchers with publications that provide theoretical support to the themes of gender, sexuality and EJA.

The complexity of this theme has the advantage of stimulating new debates, emphasizing reflective possibilities that boost new perspectives. We seek to understand the reality of the subjects in a complete and deep way, framing ourselves in a qualitative perspective, anchored in theorists and theorists of gender studies. From the point of view of the inseparability between the theoretical-methodological assumptions, the investigation intersects in a critical practice, which makes it possible to think of a movement consisting of a reflection of reality for a practical action to transform the condition of injustices and inequalities that transvestites and transsexuals experience.

From this perspective, the methodological issue needs to have a diverse corporeality and identity. Reading and rereading, we found as a viable way the possibility of drawing on the perspective of the “*escrivências*” (life-writings) of the writer Evaristo (2020), as an instrument for data collection that allowed us to read issues from the lives of the participating authors. Writing *is* an alternative to registration, a document to be read and interpreted. Evaristo (2017, p. 11) points out that “[...] stories are invented, even real

ones, when they are told. Between the event and the narration of the fact, there is a space in depth, it is there that the invention explodes [...]"

In view of the above, the expectation is that the narratives of the people in the research would tell us how the process of their self-definition took place, of becoming a person who self-declared with the transvestite or transsexual identity, of how this affected their experience in the school environment and their social relations. To this end, four body letters were collected, based on *writings*, which we will not present in full, but we will bring some grafts as a way to contextualize the debate. The participants of the research are all trans women, who were selected from the contact with the Department of Education of the State of Santa Catarina (SED), through a survey of trans students who attended the EJA, in order to carry out a survey of these students enrolled in the last five years in the 40 Youth and Adult Education Centers of Santa Catarina, as well as collect other data, such as: age, race, grade, dropout and graduates.

By using this methodology, articulated with a critical investigation of the world, we highlight the experiences lived by the research participants, in order to initiate a dynamic writing. We emphasize that the information presented is in accordance with the ethics committee, having been passed on to all the Informed Consent Form (ICF) in the institution where the research was developed. Their identities are guarded and identified with a random initial letter of name.

Considering that the methodological construction process is a constant challenge for those who research, knowledge constructions were sought in the encounter with paradigm breaks when listening to experiences. It is from this right to write as a political act of transgression and subversion that the methodological procedures of this study meet the letter-body as a methodology that intersects the production of multiple *knowledge* with writings that constitute a social, educational and political construction. This alternative proposed in the body letter leads the participants to write about how their gender identity was constructed and how they were present at school.

It should be inferred here that the present study involved different processes of understanding and analysis, in which the acronym itself includes a multiplicity of subjects who are crossed by class, sex, gender and race. Given this, hooks (2019, p. 19) asserts that "[...] just as our lives are not static, they are always changing, our theory has to remain



fluid, open, permeable to the new [...]”. In this sense, the theoretical option is based on decolonial studies, allied to intersectional ones, as a critical analytical possibility to think about issues of gender, race, class, sexuality and their normalization processes, which multiply around the productions of identities and differences. In particular, identities are intersected by the marginal, pathologized, violent and oppressive structures of the (CIS) world theme - modernity/coloniality.

It is a fertile field endorsed by other knowledge, analysis and understanding of experiences lived individually or in groups. In this regard, we share Ribeiro's (2019, p. 14) thought that “[...] the purpose here is not to impose a true epistemology, but to contribute to the debate and show different perspectives [...]”. We assume that science is not neutral, objective and apolitical knowledge. In this statement, the transit carried out intentionally is to seek knowledge as keys to understanding for interpretations of the experiences lived by subaltern identities.

Regarding decoloniality, the contributions on “epistemic disobedience” (Mignolo, 2008), by *performatizing* a transgressive identity, allowed us to approach Mignolo's thought (2008, p. 290), by situating that: “[...] the decolonial option is epistemic, that is, it detaches itself from the genuine foundations of Western concepts and the accumulation of knowledge”. It is in the criticism of these hegemonic, Eurocentered and dominant knowledge that decolonization helps us to rethink our worldview. Thus, we claim the epistemic agency of our knowledge, arising from our multiple identities, corporealities, subjectivities.

Regarding the analytical, political and intellectual category of intersectional thinking, we share Collins' (2021, p. 16) ideas of “[...] that, in a given society, in a given period, power relations involving race, class and gender, for example, do not manifest themselves as distinct and mutually exclusive entities [...]”. It is through these overlapping power relations that transexclusion *is* practiced.

In this epistemological turn, it is essential to highlight the intellectual turn of trans researchers in the formulation and construction of knowledge around their social place, lived experiences and conditions of subalternity, inferiority and oppression, as well as resistance and empowerment to a structural and institutional heteronormative (CIS) theme,

so, at various times, we will use the prefix “trans” to compose some words, as a way to affirm trans identity.

When we write about lived experiences, we occupy another place in the research, in which transvestites and transsexuals cease to be the object of research to become research subjects, because, “[...] as objects, however, our reality is defined by others, our identities are created by others [...]” (Kilomba, 2019, p. 28).

Intersectionality studies bet on the decolonization of single thought and claim the heterogeneity that constitutes being a woman. Issues related to the subalternization of marginalized groups cross the lived experiences of these individuals, which makes their theoretical and practical formulations unique and distinct. This ends up questioning the idea of stability that has historically been attributed to the term “feminism”. The recognition of these experiences and perspectives is essential for the development of an intersectional feminism, which recognizes and addresses the intersections between gender, race, class, sexual orientation and other forms of oppression and subordination to the terms that purport to represent feminism, as Ballestrin (2020) observes:

With regard to the markers race, ethnicity, color, gender identity and sexual orientation, the hegemonic representations of feminism generally include white, cisgender and heterosexual women; their subaltern representations refer to black, mixed-race, indigenous and ‘Chicano’ women, whether transgender, non-binary, homosexual and bisexual [...]. (Ballestrin, 2020, p. 5).

In short, it is a production that excludes many women who are not in the conditions of this supposed universality and that, to some extent, disregards other experiences lived beyond the idealization of human nature; a thought that believes it unites all women in a single theoretical and political movement. This is a supposed idealization proposed by the feminine, conceived in analytical terms in the construction of the cisheterosexual, white woman and, in general, belonging to the middle or upper class.

From this point of view, “[...] many women are more familiar with the negative perspectives on ‘women's liberation’ than with the positive meanings of the movement. It is the meaning and political power of this term that we must fight to recover and preserve [...]” (hooks, 2019, p. 55). In this same movement, transfeminist thinking is constituted, in which it is fundamental to positivize our lives and experiences.



Thus, the participating authors, when posing as trans women, start to take a bold stance, which challenges the normative (CIS)theme of gender. By transgressing the place that is given to womanhood, the notion of what is socially given of what it means to be a “woman” is expanded. Transvestites were not named as such, it was necessary for trans people to position themselves for womanhood to become plural. They are in the place of a transvestite and a woman; an epistemic, political and daily struggle to be recognized as women. This movement goes through generational issues built on ancestry in the search for rights, by assuming the political position of affirming identity as trans women.

Based on these reflections, we seek to account for the experiences of different women, which encompass a multiplicity of actions and questions that seek to answer political contradictions and theoretical conflicts. This new look allows us new fissures in movement, always unfinished of pluriversity within contemporary feminism. Thus, the theoretical, methodological assumptions and the instruments of empiricism intersect in the experiences lived by transvestites and transsexuals, in a transversal dialogue related to identities, subjectivities and corporeality, which are situated as emancipatory and liberating educational practices.

### 3. Results and Discussion

Reflection on the *status* built in relation to gender allows us to connect it to a given (CIS)theme of intersectional oppression, which remains unchanged over time, with a heteronormatized basis. Regarding heteronormativity, Butler (2021) describes that it is characterized as a force naturalized by a compulsory normative that imposes that being heterosexual is the ideal standard, thus being at the base of the social order, guiding daily practices built from gender domination. As a cultural inscription, gender establishes power relations, based not only on skin color, sex, sexuality, but also on the construction of a hegemonic masculinity and femininity, which require constant surveillance, control and discipline in order to be embodied.

In this (CIS)theme, legal, political, ideological, religious, economic, cultural and educational structures constitute a true colonial/modern apparatus, which guarantee their survival by reproducing colonizing practices of violence, oppression, discrimination and

prejudice towards bodies that challenge the structures of power and normal belonging in force in cisheterosexuality.

We highlight such issues within the school, as stated by one of the research participants, who indicates that, in current times, it is still difficult for people with identities that transgress this (Cis)theme to place themselves in educational spaces, even after adulthood. For this participant, many teachers treated her with contempt: *"Several times, I felt harshness in speech, arrogance or demerit in classroom dialogues, as if my condition nullified any kind of knowledge I might have, or information to contribute to the dialogue"* (Letter-Body of K.).

These facts result in a set of standards and behaviors that perpetuate gender stereotypes, limiting the expression of individuality and repressing gender diversity. This repression even affects trips to the bathroom, as K<sup>2</sup> puts it in the sequence of his letter:

*The trips to the bathroom were also a problem at first, I had been going to the bathroom for days before going to school and only going home again. It was clear that my presence in the EJA of the Florianópolis Center was not desired by the servers and teachers. As for the students, I had more catcalls than hostility; only a few people bothered with me, but I realized that it was because of their religious beliefs* (Letter-Body of K.).

Thus, a normative device, consubstantiating a compulsory theme (CIS) of sex/gender/coherent desire, within the scope of a heterosexual colonizing structure, gives rise to the construction of the cisheteronorma, which is sustained through the colonial matrix of gender, sex and sexuality "said to be normal".

With regard to being respected for her gender identity in EJA, she considers that she was not and said that, at another time in her school career, in the grade in which she escaped, she was also not recognized and respected for her gender identity. She considers the school environment a transphobic place for transvestites and transsexuals, and that was terrible.

In the CONTEXT of EJA, we need to develop practices and strategies for listening to the knowledge that transvestites and transsexuals bring, as well as their experiences, lived through their life and schooling trajectories. Regarding schooling, it is necessary to

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<sup>2</sup> K states that for her there is no difference between being a transvestite or transsexual, but that she self-identifies as a transvestite and black and that her name was rectified in a notary's office.

think of an EJA school in which we will have to produce new knowledge and cultural heritages, in order to promote a broader understanding of the world in which we live, the plural world in which transvestites and transsexuals live.

We observed, in K's writings, that she manages to unveil the universe of oppression she experiences in EJA and, from that, she commits herself to a transformative praxis, questioning the social structures of subordination and inferiorization to which she should be subject. She does not accept the way she is treated and recognized. He states that: "[...] *the school was made to educate cis-white people and middle and upper classes, and this rancidity is perpetuated to this day within institutions, both by non-black students, teachers and other servants*" (Letter-Body of K.).

In view of what they experienced in their life and schooling trajectories, we can say that, from children, transvestites and transsexuals live with looks of rejection and inferiority in the school and social environment and that both words and looks of estrangement cause differences, that is, they become "[...] victims of persistent looks and sexist, racist, classist structures that segregate them by the body [...]" (Arroyo, 2017, p. 266), but resist the imposed segregation.

It is necessary to consider that the participant faced hostile treatment from some servants and teachers, who expressed themselves with harshness and disrespect for her gender identity, and this generated an uncomfortable and exclusionary school environment. In short, this reality reveals a group exposed to conditions of extreme social vulnerability, which has historically been seen as marginal and criminal by the State, whose role would be to protect and build public policies to promote and guarantee constitutional rights, because, as Butler states (2021, p. 67):

[...] when 'vulnerable groups' are identified. On the one hand, the discourse on 'vulnerable groups' or 'vulnerable populations' has been important, both for feminist work in favor of human rights and for the ethics of care. For if a group is termed 'vulnerable', it acquires a condition that allows it to claim its protection [...].

Still in line with Butler (2016, p. 63), "[...] productions deviate from their original purposes and inadvertently mobilize possibilities of 'subjects' that not only go beyond the limits of the border of what is in fact culturally intelligible [...]" . From this perspective, the author highlights that:

The binary notion of masculinity/femininity can be recognized, but in any case the 'specificity' of the feminine is once again totally decontextualized, analytically and politically separated from the constitution of class, race, ethnicity and other axes of power relations, which both constitute 'identity' and make equivocal the singular notion of identity [...] (Butler, 2016, p. 22).

The other participant narrated similar situations, however there were other aggravating factors that caused her to drop out of school:

*[...] in the 2nd year, in the new school I started missing, so that my father and my older brother could work outside and I, aged 11-12, stayed at home alone. I remember, many times, that the school principal would come to my house to pick me up by car to go to school; even so, I wouldn't go, because it was bad to see the little friends call me nicknames like 'deer', 'faggot', etc. (Letter- -Body of J.).*

The author-participant's writing analysis movement leads to the understanding that the challenges faced since childhood are related to prejudices and *bullying* present in school, which led her to feel ashamed and shy. Even if they were not expelled from home, as this was not evident in all participating authors, there are practices they learned to be able to overcome barriers and exist in the family environment. EJA emerges in the trajectory of life and schooling of transvestites and transsexuals as a pedagogical practice of resistance and survival, with education as a hopeful emancipatory political strategy, which makes it possible to believe that we can become subjects of our lives.

This feeling towards school reveals that educators still do not know how to deal with differences, leaving people invisible and essentially relegated to their own fate. These episodes of discrimination impact self-esteem and motivation to study.

In this regard, a vicious circle is formed: invisibilizations, exclusions and absence of public policies that protect and guarantee dignity to trans lives. Regarding schooling, what is observed in practice is the suppression in curricula and teaching plans, translated into silencing actions, as Junqueira (2019, p. 134) explains:

We have seen in recent years the emergence of a reactionary discourse that, among other things, claims to be a worldwide conspiracy against the family. According to him, the school became the strategic space for the imposition of an ideology contrary to human nature: 'gender ideology'. Engaged in this global agenda, teachers, instead of fulfilling the curriculum, would seek to usurp from parents the protagonism in the moral education of their children to indoctrinate them with ideas contrary to the convictions and values of the family.

In the report of the next participant, she tells us that, several times, she stopped studying, either due to discrimination processes suffered at school or due to other emotional issues that made up her trajectory. She self-identifies as transsexual and black and her registration name is rectified in a notary's office. She states that there is a difference between being a transvestite or transsexual. As an adult, she tells us that she went to the Youth and Adult Education Center (Ceja) and describes it as follows:

*Already studying at Ceja, it was a calmer period in my transition phase. They were older people, people with more open minds, people who were also transgender and there were people who talked behind us, because there always was. I started having more transvestite friends and, in one of these, I ended up going into prostitution at the age of 19. In this experience it was a flash with money spent, violence, among others” (Letter-Body of B. A.).*

It is relevant to note that the proposal was to seek alliances with other social segments, so that they could pressure society to act in the face of the mishaps, injustices, inequalities and violence that transvestites and transgender people still suffer. As Moira (2018, p. 176) reminds us, “[...] transphobia excludes us, prostitution embraces us and putaphobia extends the exclusion to which we are already subject just for merely existing [...]”.

The last report brought emphasizes everything that has been discussed so far, highlighting that schooling spaces do not contemplate diverse identities and, in general, there is a contempt for those who are different from the culturally invented standard. B. B. self-identifies as a transvestite and white, having rectified her registration in a notary's office. As she tells her story, she recounts:

*I came from a humble family in the Jaws countryside. I'm 42 years old and I left the inner city. I grew up and started my studies in public school without knowing who I was. I faced many prejudices, suffered physical aggression because of my sexual orientation. I grew up, my parents separated and we came to live with my grandmother. I continued my studies already in high school and suffered prejudice at school. They found out what my sexual orientation was and the most difficult thing is that those who were most prejudiced against me were the ones who had already taken sexual advantage of me. I had few friendships and ended up leaving school (Letter-body of B. B.).*

Even with experiences overflowing with violence suffered by these women, it is worth bringing the hope indicated in K. 's body letter, because, even with the situations of

exclusion she faced in her school life, she believes that the life of a transvestite or transsexual can be transformed in/by school education.

The letters incorporate identities that, when experiencing the act of exercising the experiences with the written word, record, through the *writings*, their stories. Writing, here, is seen as writing that is born from their daily lives, from their memories, from the experiences of living and feeling real life, and in it the intersections of gender, race, class and sexuality are expressed. Transvestites and transsexuals are historically marked by social confluences, which are evidenced in their writings and present the denunciation of inequalities generated in the social sphere, and in it the school. Imagine the “[...] suffering of a child who wakes up, puts on his school uniform and, as he prepares, thinks: ‘another day when I will have to endure that boy calling me a deer; another day when I will have to spend the entire recess alone [...]’” (Bento, 2011, p. 555).

(Trans)exclusionary educational practices are still written on the pages of our stories. We subvert the binary (CIS) theme of gender and overcome the normative structural barriers, populating the “normative” colonizing spaces with our bodies, our histories, our resistances, because, according to Bento (2017, p. 551):

[...] the experiences of transiting between genders demonstrate that we are not predestined to fulfill the desires of our bodily structures. The system does not get the desired drive. There are bodies that escape the production process of intelligible genres and, in doing so, put themselves at risk because they have disobeyed gender norms, at the same time revealing the possibilities of transformation of these same norms. This process of escape from the prison of sexual bodies is marked by pain, conflict and fear. The doubts: ‘why don’t I like these clothes? Why do I hate everything girlish? Why do I have this body?’ lead subjects who live in conflict with gender norms to locate in themselves the explanation for their pains, to feel like an aberration, something impossible to exist [...].

The body letters of the participating authors allow us to reaffirm that, for them, breathing, living and moving in the world belong to the order of surviving, seeking their place in liberating and emancipatory thought.

We need to establish more inclusive conditions in school for the reception and maintenance of life, in order to resist the socially imposed models of assimilation of what it is to be a man and a woman. This suggestion of a standard, *a priori*, is based on a culture that privileges certain bodies, stereotyping others, and this results in a biological/cultural determinism, defining that “normal men” must be masculine, strong, aggressive, virile and,



at times, even careless with their appearance; and “normal women” must be feminine, careful, delicate, sweet, attractive, calm and angelic. According to Louro (1997, p. 25):

[...] gender institutes the identity of the subject (as well as ethnicity, class, or nationality, for example), it is intended to refer, therefore, to something that transcends the mere performance of roles, the idea is to perceive gender as part of the subject, constituting it. The subject is Brazilian, black, male, etc. In this perspective, it is admitted that the different institutions and social practices are constituted by the genders and are also constituents of the genders. These practices and institutions' fabricate 'the subjects [...].

From this investigation, new questions emerge as demands for new studies: how do gender violence affect the bodies of trans children and adolescents? How are trans corporealities perceived in the school context of children? How does violence affect their lives? What practices and strategies of resistance are set in motion to deal with the injustices and social inequalities that affect their existence?

Isolation and other violence experienced result from a heteronormative standardization, which is imposed in a symbolic or physical way, directed mainly to those who break gender norms. Thus, we invite educational institutions to:

[...] rethink content, practices, actions, if we want to produce a really fair school, and exchange silence and the comfortable absence of dialogues for the discomfort of talking about everyday school things. It is necessary to transform every joking comment, every value judgment, every aggressive and prejudiced intervention into an opportunity to discuss old prejudices, stereotypes and exclusion and to build a new way of dealing with knowledge, with the life stories of all the people who pass through the school, with their surroundings and social life [...] (Vencato, 2014, p. 53).

Even with so many advances and discussions about diversity and the acceptance of differences, the school is still permeated by power relations that reproduce inequalities and reproduce hierarchical relations, making subjects who do not fit the standards and norms that society and, particularly, the school still perpetuate invisible. In recent years, many political and social changes have been incorporated, leading the school to rethink some pre-established concepts, seeking to be more than a space for learning and knowledge. Thus, we understand that education can be a repressive phenomenon, but it can also be an emancipatory phenomenon.

## 5 Final considerations

The article highlights the importance of incorporating writing as a method, not only to reflect on experiences, but also to recognize the intrinsic value of each narrative in a context that has historically silenced such identities. When we verified the proposed objective, which was to understand the meanings of schooling for the participating authors, realizing the challenges, school dropout and discrimination they face, we brought, in the writings of the body letters, important reports that respond to the proposed, and it is possible to affirm that resistance is a practice and a strategy of surviving, recognizing and inserting oneself socially. They also show a becoming in the face of the normative power of gender, of life attitudes that go beyond the academic theoretical frameworks.

Thus, the lived experiences of the participating authors consist of corporealities and identities that are nourished by empires and living theories. Thus, the constructions of the subjects' identities are established in their relationships, curricula and school practices.

These constructions define and guide behaviors and postures, as was perceived in the speeches of the research participants who, in many moments, registered that insecurity and violence were part of their school experiences and that violence was motivating the absences. Therefore, reflection on educational practices should be broadened to include approaches that respect and celebrate diversity, promoting a true space for welcome and transformation.

It is important to portray that these people did not evade or drop out of school, but were expelled from educational institutions, because, in these cases, we understand that evasion is not only the voluntary act of the person to evade, but is a kind of expulsion motivated by symbolic acts of everyday school life (Bento, 2011).

In the evaluation of the Brazilian Association of Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, Transvestites and Transsexuals (ABGLT, 2016), to reverse this scenario, teachers need to have training with specific content aimed at sexual diversity, as well as pedagogical materials to promote respect for all. They also suggest that there be channels for students to report aggression. Among other measures, the association calls for public policies and laws to combat discrimination against this population (ABGLT, 2016).

Therefore, it is imperative to remember that education is, in fact, a practice of freedom capable of transgressing limitations and opening doors to new possibilities of existence and recognition, reaffirming that each story, however unique, contributes to the construction of a more just and inclusive world.

Finally, we emphasize that there is a need to survey the schooling of the trans and transvestite population and a teacher education that brings to the debate the issues of gender and sexuality, demonstrating how the lack of reception and reciprocity of this population can negatively impact the training of people. Therefore, developing writing exercises for *life-bodies* can allow teachers to recognize and value their own experiences and those of their students, considering that this enriches the educational process, since each story brings unique knowledge and perspectives.

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