

Gender discourse analysis in Silicone Blues

Análise de discurso de gênero em Silicone Blues

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The objective of this research was to understand the effects of meanings produced on gender in four comic strips of the series Silicone Blues by cartoonist Laertes. The corpus of analysis was composed of four comic strips of the series on transgender, analyzed from Michel Pêcheux Discourse Analysis by. This research, of qualitative character, was held between January and April, 2014. Silicone Blues, through humor, propitiates reflections and criticizes the compulsory heteronormative logic that articulates as undissociated: sex (biology), gender (determination of attitudes of men and women) and heterosexual orientation (attraction by people of same sex) presupposing fixed, immutable and differential characteristics for men and women. However, Silicone Blues does not definitely break with the heteronormativity, but it presents itself as a transgendered *pièce de résistance*, that is, a challenge to what is stipulated as normal for the subjects.

Descriptors: Gender identity; Transgender persons; Civil Rights.

O objetivo dessa pesquisa foi compreender os efeitos de sentidos produzidos sobre gênero em quatro tirinhas da série Silicone Blues da cartunista Laerte. O corpus de análise foi constituído por quatro tirinhas sobre transgeneridade da série, analisadas a partir da Análise do Discurso de Michel Pêcheux. Essa pesquisa, de caráter qualitativa, foi realizada entre janeiro e abril de 2014. Silicone Blues, através do humor, propicia reflexões e critica a lógica heteronormativa compulsória que articula como indissociados: o sexo (biologia), o gênero (determinação de atitudes de homens e mulheres) e a orientação heterossexual (atração por pessoas do mesmo sexo) pressupondo características fixas, imutáveis e diferenciais para homens e mulheres. No entanto, Silicone Blues não rompe definitivamente com a heteronormatividade, mas se apresenta como uma *pièce de résistance transgênera*, ou seja, um desafio ao que se estipula como normal para os sujeitos.

Descritores: Identidade de gênero; Pessoas transgênero; Direitos civis.

El objetivo de esta investigación fue comprender los efectos de los sentidos producidos sobre el género en cuatro tiras cómicas de la serie Silicone Blues del caricaturista Laerte. El corpus de análisis consistió en cuatro tiras cómicas sobre Transgeneridad de la serie, analizadas a partir del análisis de discurso de Michel Pêcheux. Esta investigación, de carácter cualitativo, se realizó entre enero y abril de 2014. Silicone Blues, a través del humor, propicia reflexiones y critica la lógica heteronormativa obligatoria que articula como no disociados: sexo (biología), género (determinación de actitudes de hombres y mujeres) y orientación heterosexual (atracción por personas de mismo sexo) suponiendo características fijas, inmutables y diferenciales para hombres y mujeres. Sin embargo, el Silicone Blues no rompe definitivamente con la heteronormatividad, sino que se presenta como un *Pièce de Résistance transgênero*, es decir, un desafío a lo que se estipula como normal para los sujetos.

Descritores: identidad de género; Personas transGénero; Derechos civiles.

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INTRODUCTION

More than the variety of sexual positions and/or fantasies (conscious or unconscious) sexuality is a device established from the 18th century consisting of countless speeches (medical, legal, pedagogical and family) that regulate relations among the bodies, becoming the stage of analyses and interventions considered appropriate or deviant to the truth about sex¹. One of the main aspects of sexuality regulation is the gender: mechanism that defines the feminine and masculine and their relations^{1,2}.

In this sense, sexuality (*scientia sexualis*) was marked in the biological difference of the bodies (sex) and the expected attitudes of men and women (gender) as the historical, cultural and organizational ways of social relations^{2,3}. Gender, therefore, results from political, economic and social practices whose interest is to maintain the social order (and the privileges), crystallizing and naturalizing the subjects as men or as women carriers of social characteristics considered unchangeable². Thus, when standards of gender normality are fixed, it means it is not to tolerate different sex (es) or gender (s).

Therefore, sexuality in modern western society is regarded as normal when heterosexual, in adulthood, aiming at biological reproduction and when gender and sex of the subjects are aligned – cisheteronormativity³. Transgenders (those not suitable for heteronormativity) suffer exclusion, discriminations and corrective interventions².

Moreover, because of their gender condition discordant from what is considered normal, transgenders are exposed to transphobia: various violences occurring in the domestic environment and in the public space expressed in hate crimes (murders, tortures, serious corporal injuries, sexual violence, discrimination and prejudice), difficulties in accessing the formal labour market and public education and health resulting in damage to physical and mental health, and the refusal of gender self-determination and sexuality^{4,5}.

Despite the limitation in the production of official data and indexes by governmental public agents on Transphobia in Brazil⁶, non-governmental national and international entities^{4,7} estimate that this is the most transphobic and transviolent country in the world, which becomes a serious public health problem. Transgender in Brazil is a condition of risk and social vulnerability⁸ even after the enactment of the National Policy of LGBT Integral Health and other laws that intend to protect this population^{9,10}.

Besides, sexuality (and consequently gender) is produced by several social technologies, that is, by the conceptions and practices considered normal that diffuse how men and women should be, think, act and relate³. Among social technologies of gender, mass media stands out (radio, television, newspapers and Internet) and also arts, literature and, among them, comics^{11,12}.

If genders are effects (results) of social technologies of sexuality that want to establish attitudinal standards of heteronormativity for men and women, they can also be understood as theatrical acts (performed) by the subjects.

In other words, being a man or a woman is not a consequence of biology (sex), but rather the exercise of attitudes in compliance with historically established normative standards (with specific guidelines and expectations depending on the sex of the subject) that at all times must be reaffirmed by the subjects and that, therefore, because of their exhaustive reiteration, create the illusion of naturality, when in fact they are not^{2,3}.

Therefore, by giving visibility and problematizing the numerous transgendered possibilities (and/or gender self-determination), we can question the contemporary heteronormative and heterosexist models from which arise violence among men, women and transgender¹³. Thus, the objective of this research was to understand the effects of meanings produced on gender in four comic strips of the series *Silicone Blues* by the cartoonist Laertes.

METHOD

It is a qualitative research whose data collection and analysis was held between January and April 2014, using documentary sources (images, more specifically comic strips) of the Silicone Blues series by the Brazilian cartoonist Laertes, analyzed through Discourse Analysis of Michel Pêcheux.

About the theoretical reference it is significant to emphasize that the discourse analysis (DA) of Michel Pêcheux is concerned with any linguistic materiality (written, oral, graphic and others) that produces effects of meanings among the interlocutors¹⁴. These effects of meanings are not created individually, and are the results of collective, symbolic and historical processes that come before and constitute them. The meanings depend on the material conditions of their production, i.e. who, when and how they say what has already been said, among other factors¹⁴.

For DA, the effects of meanings depend on language, which is the place where Ideology (erasing the historicity of relations between subjects, resulting in the supposed naturalization of the production of senses) and ideologies (sets of representations more or less stable and in dispute by groups) are expressed¹⁴⁻¹⁶. This means that the constitutive marks of meanings are forgotten and considered obvious or natural to the interlocutors who, in turn, believe to be authors and origin of the meanings when, in fact, there is a previous framework (of meanings) that allow or veto this or that signification¹⁶.

The illusions authorship of the meanings and dominance of the speeches occur because the language constitutes the subjects from two unconscious processes to the interlocutors, called "*Forgetting number 1*" (delusion that the subject is the cause of what is said, when they are the effect of the historical, social, situational and ideological positions that the interlocutors are talking about) and "*Forgetting number 2*" (delusion that the only way to express something is solely with the exact words that were used)¹⁴.

Similarly, besides which it is said and the possibilities/impossibilities of saying, what

has not been said also participates in the process of meaning – what it is said and the unsaid are called, in DA, interdiscourse¹⁴. Therefore, the meanings present in the intradiscourse (what it is said) are determined by the interdiscourse.

Thus, from a determined social and historical juncture, which holds values and directions of references (ideological formation – IF; in this case, the capitalist production society), the words/expressions/terms change their meaning depending on the social positions of those who use them (discursive formation-DF), determining what may or may not be said. So in an IF there are several DFs. And within its reference DF the interlocutors (automatic and unconsciously in attempt to stabilize their speeches) are guided in anticipation of the meaning (theirs and) the interlocutors, what is called imaginary formation (ImF)^{14,16}.

In short, there are close correlations between ideology, ideologies, IF, DF and ImF in the speeches of the interlocutors that make up the meanings^{14,16}. For DA, it is not the speaker who uses the language, but the language that uses the speaker: the ideology calls the individual in subject, and by ideological intercourse is understood the unconscious overdetermination (not individual but collective) of the senses^{14,17}.

It is from this conceptual set (called the theoretical device) that the discourse analysts aim to understand how the language affects the production of meanings among the interlocutors. By choosing the linguistic material you want to work with and what DA concepts they will mobilize to understand their meaning production, speech analysts delimit their analytical device, and there are (potentially) as much analytical devices as analysts, even without requiring the use of all the theoretical device^{14,16,18}.

In relation to what is called data collection and analysis procedures, the following route would be used in a DA: from any linguistic materiality (corpus) the incidences of interdiscourse and *Forgetting number 2* are considered in composition of the meanings effects (desuperficialization of the

corpus, or transposition of linguistic material for discursive object) and, after that, the influences of the DF, ImF, IF and *Forgetting Number 1* (analysis of the discursive process) are considered in the discursive object production context^{14,16,19}.

RESULTS

The data (linguistic materiality) of this research are composed by four (of a total of six) cartoons of the cartoonist Laerte on transgender in the series *Silicone Blues*. We opted not to analyze the whole series because

two of them did not deal with relations between gender and transgender.

This series was originally published in printed format in 1992 and reproduced in digital format in 2009. *Silicone Blues* deals with gender identity questions of a character (Hugo) who anticipates another production (I, transvestite, from 2008) and character (Muriel Total, from 2009, an alter-ego crossdresser of Laerte) in her process of transgenderification.

The comic strips selected were the following:

Figure 1. Comic 1 from the serie *Silicone Blues*. *Traslations.



*Simple:... you get into this mould
 Fonte: http://murieltotal.zip.net/arch2009-03-01_2009-03-07.html
 *We fill it with silicone!
 *Gosh! Thanks Doctor/Thank you nothing

Figure 2. Comic 1 from the serie *Silicone Blues*. *Traslations.



*Sex? Male. Why?
 Fonte: http://murieltotal.zip.net/arch2009-03-08_2009-03-14.html
 *This nice body here is all silicone!
 *I did it for esthetic reasons.
 *Now they will just think I'm a bitch
 *I think women's body so much... I don't know

Figure 3. Comic 1 from the serie *Silicone Blues*. *Traslations.



Guard, a guy is following and offending me because of my body
 Any woman would give everything for a body like this
 But I'm not a woman, it's all silicone
 So he's offending me as a man
 Well, I'm not a guard, this is a doorman uniform.

Figure 4. Comic 1 from the serie *Silicone Blues*. *Traslations.



Gosh, look what a wonderful body Silicone is so cool.
 I can have all this... and still be a man
 Fonte: http://murieltotal.zip.net/arch2009-03-08_2009-03-14.html
 It's a pity I'm not homosexual as well...

DISCUSSION

From the corpora (linguistic materiality – each of the four corpus of comic strips) that comprise this analytical device, the DA on transgender in *Silicone Blues* will occur in two moments: (1) production of the discursive object and (2) considerations on the discursive process.

It is important to note that this analysis does not aim at locating the origin of a recurring theme in the work of the cartoonist (the issues of gender)²⁰⁻²², but rather produce, in the vast archive of the cartoonist, a mobilization of discursive sequences clipping²³, articulated to the theme of transgenderification.

1. Production of discursive object

The first comic strip (figure 1) consists of three images that show Hugo (protagonist) starting his transgenderification next to another character, which in turn operates a machine similar to a gas station pump. At first, the simplicity of transgenderification stands out: just entering a machine (technological environment) composed of a mould (of a female body idealized nowadays) and fill it with silicone to result in modifications.

Injecting industrial silicone aiming to transform the male into feminine body (producing bigger breasts and glutes) is a common practice among transsexuals, transgender and transvestites, but puts health at risk because of the high probability of infections and rejections²⁴, which demystifies the simplicity and harmlessness of this process represented in the comic strip.

In Figure 1 we can see a DF that joins the aesthetics of the body to the expression of gender and sexual orientation of the subjects, since it is implied that there is a specific format of male body to be observed and another one of female body. In addition, the use of the word “form” (instrument capable to adequate the objects/subjects to an ideal) on the first scene of the comic is to assume that there is an ideal body to be assumed.

This DF allows to assume that Laertes criticises the simplistic way in which the meanings on the constitutions of gender and sexuality are produced: reduce the construction of gender identities to the

biological/aesthetics constitution of the subjects would be a phenomenon similar to the illusion of language transparency, which assumes that the senses are “glued” to the words¹⁶. In this case, male and female would be (presumably) inherent to the bodies’ format that would present different characteristics for each of the genders.

Still talking about Figure 1, the sex or gender of Hugo is not mentioned, even before or after the transformation, because the only time the “*doctor*” refers to the character he uses the neutral pronoun you. This can be understood as a limitation (or, in other words, an inability to speak) in this DF (heteronormative and binary²) to refer to a subject that has female body and/with a penis – as emasculation is not performed on the comic strip. This exemplifies how productions of meanings on gender are conditioned to DF and IF¹⁶ that dictate who/how can someone be either male or female. A female body with penis does not find support in this DF and is therefore impossible to exist.

Another relevant aspect is that Hugo calls his interlocutor “*doctor*”, i.e. a holder of knowledge. The interdiscourse allows to relate the words doctor and physiologist, specialist for which they must confess their own sexuality and gender so that it can be checked and, if applicable, corrected¹. Furthermore, Hugo situated his interlocutor in a position of power, automatically he is situated as unable to decide about his own body¹. Another example of the medical discourse preponderance about sexuality and gender is the pathologization of transgender people, targets of various interventions (hormonal, surgical and psychological)²⁵.

Another issue reported in Figure 1 relates to the difference in treatment of the doctor with Hugo before and after his passage by the machine. After Hugo thanks, the doctor responds with an implicit demand (“thank you nothing ...”) with a malicious smile and look, referring to an erotic attitude between a man (doctor) and a body (intended as) a woman (Hugo).

Such a change directed at Hugo after taking over a female body demonstrates that it is the IF that beacons the productions of

meanings between the interlocutors^{14,16}: it is from the meanings produced throughout the story about the reification of the feminine body²⁶ that the doctor takes a position (means) and is positioned (meaning). So, the doctor suggests that (possession of) the female body may be exchange currency for the transformation.

Another meaning effect in Figure 1 is the overflow: the second image shows Hugo inside the machine being filled with silicone that escapes from his ears. There is no way to disregard that the technologies (of constitution) of the gender are controlled by men and from which women have to pay the price -supposed in the third image: the payment has sexual connotation.

This DF, in relation to compulsory heteronormativity, is important because it establishes the parameters for the productions of meanings among the interlocutors: a transgender (Hugo) can only be modified by a man of science who charges his price. And the supposed naturalization of this DF (which imparts an IF character) that is implied in Hugo's thanks ("Gosh! Thank you, Doctor") that does not mention neither the costs nor the consequences for such technologies, approaching (imaginary) to transgenderification to a volitional and conscious action.

Referring transgenderification to such a simplicity can be similar to the operation of *Forgetting Number 2* and interdiscourse¹⁴ (illusion that the only way to speak something is with the exact words that were used). For example, in the third image of comic 1, Hugo, instead of saying "Gosh! Thank you, doctor!", he could have said "Gosh! How much does it cost, doctor?" or even "Gosh! Thank you, sir!" The functioning of the interdiscourse clarifies that if other words had been used, others would be the effects of the meanings produced¹⁶.

The second comic strip (figure 2) consists of four images: Hugo dialogues with his interlocutor about the reasons for transgenderification and some of his concerns. It is possible to consider, in Figure 2, criticism to the three constitutive variables of the subjects: sex, gender and sexual

orientation. Recalling, sex would be a pre-discursive, natural and biological inscription of the subjects designated at birth (having as main reference the genitalia); genders would be the roles arising from the sexual difference; and, sexual orientation would be the desire of the subjects and with whom they relate in a romantic and/or erotical way²⁻⁸.

It is possible to consider that Hugo makes meanings effects with his (hidden) interlocutors who intend to question the heteronormatives threads that associate sex/gender/sexual orientation. This is evident when he names (himself) as a male at the same time that he shows a female body and questions his sexual orientation. Hugo, at the same time that reaffirms and exalts (because in bold in the image) his sex, inquires the reasons of distrust and expresses to the interlocutor the issue (everything is silicone, that is, artificial) and justifies his transgenderification (aesthetics reasons and interest in the women's body, that is, heterosexuality).

But he also highlights the nuisance of transgenderification ("now they will just think I'm a bitch"). The effects of meaning in Figure 2 (among them we stand out the affirmation of gender, admiration for the female body and the concern with the judgment of others) may be a counterpoint to figure 1, since they did not mention the motivations and concerns of transgenderification.

The presence of the interdiscourse is shown in Figure 2: in the first image Hugo responds to a hidden interlocutor (reader/s), but we don't know what was the question held, and even if there was question. In any case, the most significant is that the interlocutor is out of the picture: through this feature it is evident that the effect of meaning is not controlled by the speaker (Hugo), but occurs in the interaction between interlocutors¹⁴, which highlights the character socially precedent of the language in speeches (and in the formation of the effects of meanings).

Hugo's answer is an imaginary anticipation²⁷ corresponding to a IF of the protagonist inserted in a specific DF that exalts the compulsory and strange

heteronormativity to a subject that contains penis, breasts and female glutes at the same time. So, imaginarily, just a “bitch” (pejorative term for male homosexual) or an outsider of the heteronormativity. It could be assumed that Hugo's answer would have several possible questions, such as, “what is your sex/gender?”, and/or “what sex/gender do you like? ”, to which he replies “masculine, why? ”, what can be both his sex/gender and his predilection (sexual orientation).

The second and third images of Figure 2 reveal the artificiality of his body: *it is made of silicone, a result of aesthetic interests and admiration for the female body*. Within this, the interdiscourse allows to consider that Hugo's interest is to have a female body to maintain affective and sexual relationships (the last image of the sequence) as being a female body without being called homosexual. The intradiscourse (what Hugo says) is filled with other sayings and the untold – of interdiscourse^{14,16}.

Another way to address the constitutive artificiality of the bodies by sex (biology) is to use the concept of performativity: reiteration of attitudes (actions, thoughts and feelings) that establish the coherence illusion of sex (biological aspects), gender (cultural aspects) and sexual orientation^{2,13}. This non-naturality (performativity) of the bodies would be the constitution of the gender, as in the comic 4 (figure 3) composed of three images that show a conversation between Hugo transgenderized and another character.

Figure 3 can be understood as a response to the previous comic strip (Figure 2), in which Hugo questioned whether they thought he was a “bitch”. Hugo informs a guard that he is being verbally offended because of his body (feminine), but again we don't know the offences.

The guard responds by questioning the reasons of the protagonist's nonconformity, suggesting that Hugo (for having an ideal feminine body) should be thankful for being the subject of offences that, in fact, are expressions of the men's interests – remembering that Hugo explicit that it was a man who offended him.

This reveals an interesting effect of meaning in a heteronormative DF: male dominance and female submission/passivity. This DF limited the interlocutors (cisgender/guard; transgender/Hugo) and determines their sayings and the senses of their words, since Hugo spells his nonconformity for having been mistaken/resembling a woman when, in fact, he is a man. In fact, the last image of Figure 3 allows to observe, through the interdiscourse, that the male designator refers both to the autoprone gender (male) and to the species (human, bearer of rights).

And the humour appears in the last image of that comic strip (figure 3). When he says that he should not be a victim of violence for being of the human species (and thus men, women and transgender should have rights), the guard reveals that he is a doorman, mentioning his uniform. The uniform of the doorman metaphorises Hugo's body, because if a doorman can impersonate a guard because of the uniform (performativity), Hugo can impersonate a man even with a woman's body – questioning the articulation sex, gender and sexual orientation of compulsory heteronormativity¹³.

But when declining of his discursive position of guard and moving on to the doorman, we can understand his lack of interest in protecting the subjects not suitable to heteronormativity. This exemplifies the concept of speech in DA: effects of meanings among the interlocutors depend on their material conditions of production¹⁴.

The fourth and final comic strip (Figure 4), which is the sixth of the Silicone Blues series, shows again, in three images, the satisfaction and frustration of Hugo with the transgenderification. In the first two images, Hugo confirms his satisfaction with the transgenderification and continues to be a man with big breasts and glutes and wears women's lingerie while (in the last image of the scene) reveals his frustration.

Among the possible effects of meanings produced there is the enhancement of the results of the prosthetic technology (gender) of the silicone that models the body according

to the will of the character, bringing it closer to the feminine universe at the same time that it causes consternation.

Thus, image 3 in Figure 4 lets you wonder who would want Hugo with a woman's transgendered body. The answer and its meaning (ImF) can only be set up on a specific DF (heteronormative): only a man not adequate to heteronormativity could wish another man (Hugo) transvestited and transgenderized who still considers himself a man – that's why the lamentation.

The result of the supposed freedom of gender represented by transgender is not full satisfaction, but concern, inadequacy and exclusion. The discourse about sexuality that delimits the heteronormativity as normal (men or women, whose psychological and social characteristics must be appropriate to the biological determinations) is equivalent to situate transgenderification not as the resolution of the binary of/between the genders, but rather as a questioning of naturalizing gender binary².

However, this effect of meaning could be another, if Hugo considered that women may also be interested in women's bodies or in hybrid and border bodies (protruding breasts and glutes besides penis), but due to the heteronormative DF this constitution of meaning is vetoed, because the interdiscourse is composed by what it is said, by what it is unsaid, by the silences and by the impossible to say that reach the interlocutors in certain DF^{14,16}. In the case of Silicone Blues, strips 6 (Figure 4) and 2 (Figure 2) show that under the compulsory heteronormativity sermons, only subjects out of the standard (in the case, "bitches") may wish transgenderized subjects, as they are both deviants.

2. About the discursive process

For DA, the understanding of the discursive process intends to clarify the material conditions of meanings production, i.e. what are the main DF, ImF and IF concerning the production of the discourses^{14,16,19}. This could be summarized to the understanding of how *Forgetting Number 1* questions the production of meanings among the interlocutors.

Forgetting Number 1 refers to the illusion (constitutive) that the subject is the

cause and origin of what it is said and the meanings, and this process is also called ideological oblivion – the deletion of ideology in the subjective constitution¹⁴. In DA, it is important to understand that ideology questions the individuals (material entity without history) in subjects (social and historical entity), placing them in a specific DF. This interpellation is an unconscious process for the subjects and thus it is important to highlight the influence of the Ideology and the ideologies in the constitution of meanings^{17,19,28}.

It repeat that Silicone Blues was produced and published by Laertes in 1992, and is available since 2009 on the official website of the cartoonist in the section of the crossdresser character, Muriel. In relation to the cartoonist, Laerte Coutinho was born in 1951 and was considered one of the most influential Brazilian cartoonists since 1970 when he professionalized his production of comics, having received numerous prizes for his work, which increasingly dealt with political issues and sexual minority rights^{11,29,30}.

In 2000, Laertes effectively began his transgenderification process (wearing women's underwear and clothes; removing hair; growing hair and nails). Before that, in adolescence, he had a few criticized relationships (with men) motivated by curiosity, but then he had a wife and children. Despite that, he always felt like a strange man.

In 2004 he created the Muriel crossdresser character from another character (Hugo). In 2010 he publicly revealed his transgender condition and, in 2012, he was one of the founders of ABRAT (Associação Brasileira de Transgêner@s) and began to openly defend the transgender cause. According to several interviews, his transgenderification was difficult and generated several individual, family and public conflicts. Laertes calls himself transgender, and makes it a point to be recognized in the feminine.

She does not call herself a transvestite/crossdresser (man who dresses as a woman) or transsexual (sees no problem in having penis, and does not intend to

perform sexual reassignment surgery, despite not disregarding implanting silicone breasts) in addition to refer his sexual orientation as heterosexual and homosexual at the same time. According to the cartoonist, she is a man who, even performatively is near the feminine, is only interested in cisgender women (biologically born as women and who identify themselves subjectively with this sex) and therefore says that she can be nominated as lesbian^{11,29,30}.

A sentence that well represents the work of Laertes is “*ridendo castigat mores*” (humor corrects/punishes the customs)³⁰. Castigare means becoming chaste and revising prejudices (in the case, those of gender) by ways of humour. And maybe this is the main ImF of Silicone Blues: using sarcasm and irony to highlight the oppressions of the (trans) genders.

Not for nothing, the title (Silicone Blues) and the contents of the series produced and analyzed in this research refer both to a social technology of sexuality (use of silicon), which produces transgender subjects, as to a feeling of sadness (blues), which refers to a musical style of melancholy nature, even if its intention is to produce humor.

This ImF is inserted and is a component of an already specified DF: the possible position of a transgender cartoonist in the compulsory heteronormativity. This heteronormativity establishes and delimits a system of two sexes (males and females) and two genders (men and women) that should be in adequacy and complementar (male/man versus however requiring female/woman)² – in other terms: cisheteronormativity or cissexuality – transgenders are considered morally deviant or sick.

It is assumed that even questioning and problematizing this DF, Silicone Blues does not break with the binary sex and gender. He could not even do this because, in general, the performativity of gender occurs in a naturalized and unquestioned way by the performers², being an unconscious and uncontrollable process of the subjects, as the *Forgetting number 1*¹⁴.

In this context of DF on the compulsory heteronormativity, the IF (which is the social

and historical juncture) of contemporary and that limited Silicone Blues is the capitalist production system^{17,28}. In short, questioning the cissexuality and cisgender can only come from inadequate subjects^{1,29}.

Given the linguistic material proposed for analysis in this research, it is possible to highlight the effects of meanings that even inquires the compulsory heteronormativity that limited the speeches, or denounce the (discursive) obstacles of them.

Considering the language as a mechanism that places the interlocutors in the current IF (heteronormative) and as a control and power device, Silicone Blues, through humor, provides questions about the (heteronormative) logic that articulates and considers sex, gender and (hetero) sexual orientation inseparable. However, at the same time it does it, it denounces the limitations of the language to recognize subjects that are about the (supposed hetero) norm.

Despite the significant insertion, recognition and social success of Laertes in the scenario of artistic production and gender technologies, Silicone Blues should be considered not a disruption, but a *pièce de transgendered résistance*, that is, a challenge to what is taken as normal for genders. This helps to understand why in the comic strips Hugo always returns to inquire about the consequences of his transgenderification while conceiving it as a magic pass, a simple scientific intervention or a conscious choice.

In this sense, although the considerable effects of potentially questionable meanings on gender in Silicone Blues (because the real interlocutors are the readers), they should be considered within a broader scope than just humor: the IF (and the DF and the ImF of the speech) of the contemporary is based on differentiations and asymmetries of gender and power among the interlocutors, whether they are men and/or women, being difficult to visualize them and, even more, to break them.

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CONTRIBUTION

Rafael De Tilio, Maria Teresa de Assis Campos, Izabella Lenza Crema e Juliana Machado Ruiz contributed equally in all stages of this research (conception, design, analysis and interpretation of data and writing the article).

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