


TECHNOLOGIES OF THE SELF AND ACCOUNTS OF ONESELF: POLITICAL AND AESTHETIC ELABORATION OF HETEROTOPIC AND UNFRAMED EXPERIENCE¹

TECNOLOGÍAS DEL YO Y RELATOS DE SÍ MISMO: ELABORACIÓN POLÍTICA Y ESTÉTICA DE UNA EXPERIENCIA HETEROTÓPICA Y DESENCUADRADA

TECHNOLOGIES ET RÉCITS DE SOI: ÉLABORATION POLITIQUE ET ESTHÉTIQUE D'UNE EXPÉRIENCE HÉTÉROTOPIQUE ET DÉCADRÉE

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Abstract: The aim of this article is to reflect on two possibilities of political and aesthetical experience that can transform oneself. We dialogue with the reflections of Michel Foucault and Judith Butler on the techniques of the self and political subjectivation, which offer us a perspective of resistance and experimentation, to characterize the transformative power

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of heterotopic and unframing experience. Through a theoretical approach, we intend to bring points of approximation into play considering the necessity to promote changes in the frameworks that structure the architecture of the visible, sayable and thinkable. These alterations are a product, simultaneously, of the emergence of processes of political subjection and the unframing of schemes of biopolitical control which allows disidentification with an imposed identity, modifying the relations between elements that locate subjects and group in a given social order. Both authors affirm the importance of questioning schemes of legibility and intelligibility of the world so that we can imagine and effectively build a common non-hierarchic order, that recognizes the dignity of all existences. We believe that heterotopic experiences, as well as unframing experiences can be disruptive and transformative, for they rely on the double capacity to critically reflect on the power-knowledge relations that constitute one's subjectivity and the capacity to engage in self-transformation practices that can modify the way one engages in community issues.

Keywords: Accounts of oneself; Experience; Heterotopia; Unframing.

Resumen: El objetivo de este artículo es reflexionar sobre dos posibilidades de experiencia política y estética que pueden transformarse. Dialogamos con las reflexiones de Michel Foucault y Judith Butler sobre las técnicas del yo y la subjetivación política, que nos ofrecen una perspectiva de resistencia y experimentación, para caracterizar el poder transformador de la experiencia heterotópica y de desencuadre. A través de un abordaje teórico, pretendemos poner en juego puntos de aproximación considerando la necesidad de promover cambios en los encuadres que estructuran la arquitectura de lo visible, decible y pensable. Estas alteraciones son producto, simultáneamente, del surgimiento de procesos de subjetivación política y del desencuadre de esquemas de control biopolítico que permiten la desidentificación con una identidad impuesta, modificando las relaciones entre elementos que ubican a sujetos y grupo en un orden social determinado. Ambos autores afirman la importancia de cuestionar los esquemas de legibilidad e inteligibilidad del mundo para que podamos imaginar y construir efectivamente un orden común no jerárquico, que reconozca la dignidad de todas las existencias. Creemos que las experiencias heterotópicas, así como las experiencias de desencuadramiento, pueden ser disruptivas y transformadoras, ya que dependen de la doble capacidad de reflexionar críticamente sobre las relaciones de poder-conocimiento que constituyen la propia subjetividad y la capacidad de participar en prácticas de autotransformación que pueden modificar la forma en que uno se involucra en los asuntos comunitarios.

Palabras clave: relatos de sí mismo; experiencia; heterotopía; desencuadre.

Résumé: L'objectif de cet article est de réfléchir sur deux possibilités d'expérience politique et esthétique qui peuvent se transformer. Nous dialoguons avec les réflexions de Michel Foucault et Judith Butler sur les techniques de soi et de subjectivation politique, qui nous offrent une perspective de résistance et d'expérimentation, pour caractériser le pouvoir transformateur de l'expérience hétérotopique et décadree. Par une approche théorique, nous entendons mettre en jeu des points de rapprochement considérant la nécessité de promouvoir des changements dans les cadres qui structurent l'architecture du visible, du dicible et du pensable. Ces altérations sont le produit, simultanément, de l'émergence de processus de subjectivation politique et du décadrage de schémas de contrôle biopolitique qui permettent la désidentification à une identité imposée, modifiant les relations entre les éléments qui situent les sujets et les groupes dans un ordre social donné. Les deux auteurs affirment l'importance de remettre en question les schémas de lisibilité et d'intelligibilité du monde afin que nous puissions imaginer et construire efficacement un ordre commun non hiérarchique, reconnaissant la dignité de toutes les existences. Nous pensons que les expériences hétérotopiques, ainsi que les expériences sans cadre, peuvent être perturbatrices et transformatrices, car elles reposent sur la double capacité de réfléchir de manière critique aux relations pouvoir-connaissance qui constituent la subjectivité de chacun et sur la capacité de s'engager dans des pratiques d'auto-transformation qui peuvent modifier la façon dont on s'engage dans les problèmes communautaires.

Mots-clés: récits de soi ; expérience ; hétérotopie ; décadrage.

1. Introduction

The way in which Michel Foucault and Judith Butler define the processes of subjectivation that transform individual and collective existences encompasses political and aesthetic operations that we are interested in developing in this article. The heterotopic experience, for Foucault, implies "the refusal of an imposed identity and its permanence"² (*O enigma da revolta* 35). The construction of heterotopic experiences requires attention to the transformations that occur in a discontinuous, fragmented and vulnerable existence, full of intervals in which lives are constantly redefined in the face of multiple forces of power and creation. In turn, Butler in *Giving an Account of Oneself* defines the experience of relational autonomy by highlighting that the conditions of vulnerability in which subjects find themselves can be changed by critically questioning the moral framework that defines which lives are worthy of recognition. According to

2 Our translation. Original quote: "A recusa de sua identidade, a recusa de sua permanência".

her, this critical operation redefines the bonds of interdependence and offers the possibility of building experience capable of refusing normative schemes that define and naturalize the routes of affirming autonomy as the capacity to transform oneself and others. Thus, the purpose of this text is to explore and highlight the contributions of both authors to the proposition of an approach to experience as a practice of transformation that contradicts the dominant consensual order, affirming how it is impossible to fully fix identities, places, times and their resistance multiple meanings.

In the first part of the article, we will see how Foucault outlines an approach to experience based on the modeling of subjectivity that follows an ethics of self-understanding and collective understanding of situated reflexive actions. His ethical conception of experience seeks to question how people oppose control techniques that manage and reduce the agency of their ways of life, configuring ways of constructing heterotopic places to create and recreate identities. According to him, a subject does not invent the arts of modeling oneself, as they are suggested and imposed on him by his culture, society and groups to which he belongs. The reflective relationship with oneself is marked by experience and experimentation brought by knowledge, everyday practices and power relations. There is no creation of the self outside the norms and frameworks that orchestrate and define the possible forms that a subject can assume. However, normativity does not remain invulnerable in the face of what Foucault (*"The Ethics of the Concern of the Self"*, *L'origine de l'herméneutique de soi*) defines as "the creation of the self", that is, a constant and critical work of redefining who we are based on the refusal of the identity that is socially and discursively imposed on us.

We also try to explore in this first part Foucault's definition of heterotopic experience, which emphasizes the attempt to transform a way of life, including tactics to appropriate aspects of different elements of cultural and political contexts as well as to make an inventive work of elaborating and juxtaposing other possible spaces of experience, including symbolic and discursive spaces. Heterotopias can shed light on the multiple characteristics of social and cultural spaces; just as they can invent other spatialities, temporalities and corporalities through the practices, arrangements and rearrangements that subjects and groups put into operation in a specific context. In this aspect, we approach heterotopia as a reconfiguration of the coordinates of experience, involving spatialities, temporalities and corporalities (more than a specific place) in order to understand how processes of subjectivation are produced through a game of relationships between the heterogeneity of temporalities coexisting spaces and spaces inhabited and traveled by the subjects. We consider that heterotopias involve a relational and open circuit where multiplicity, diversity and various activities coexist in a

complex flow of locations, temporalities, corporalities and narratives.

In an open dialogue with Foucault, Butler's approach on political subjectivation points to a political and aesthetic experience as a process through which people become subjects in fields of power through the act of becoming aware of the socio-symbolic formulations that define their realities. It requires changing their relation to the complex configuration of discourses, unframing the naturalized arrange among images, arguments, objects and experiences that make up this socio-symbolic formulation and invoking a more permeate relation between these elements, which are from various regimes of experience, which in turn are typically juxtaposed spatially and temporally as discrete spaces. Their new articulation of this multiplicity of socio-symbolic elements contributes to the process of redefining how they both understand and enact their form of life (Butler, *Relatar a si mesmo*). We argue that Butler tries to show us how, in a scene of interpellation, it is possible to disentangle and unframe the moral frameworks that guide intersubjective judgments about ways of life to be protected or condemned.

The account of the self, as Butler reminds us in *Giving an Account of Oneself*, is not to be confused with the story produced about the self, but which develops from a scene of interpellation in which the subject is urged to talk about the self in order to respond to a demand that causes one to justify one's conduct, attitudes, procedures, and to situate them in relation to a previously established force of law. It is, in this sense, about a subject placed in relation to an authority, to a focus to which a response is owed, not proposed, to be produced within some more or less intense parameters in conformity with the situation.

In this aspect, the account of the self can be brought closer to the realm of confession, in which the subject's speech about the self is not only based on the practice of the common account ("telling a story") but refers to a critical spirit of moral fabrication capable of giving an account of one's own attitudes in relation to the *ethos* in force in a given space. Therefore, explains Butler, the account of the self is different from telling a story about oneself, insofar as its elaboration is directly linked to the interpellation by a power that shows itself in the expectation of placing this narrative within a discursive framework of moral references responsible for defining not its validity, but its appropriateness. The account of oneself is driven by a reflexivity that not only interferes with the way the subject organizes their experience and transforms themselves from this political gesture, but that also questions and unframes the standardizing intelligibility schemes of the moral frameworks that hierarchically organize the world and their intersubjective relations: "When we act and speak, we not only reveal ourselves, but we act on the schemes of intelligibility that govern who will be a being who speaks, subjecting

them to rupture or revision, consolidating their norms or contesting their hegemony”³ (Butler, *Relatar a si mesmo* 167).

Thus, the key to breaking the norms that constrain subjects’ self-definition is the practice of unframing, which consists of acting on the moral frameworks that guide judgments about who can or cannot be considered worthy of recognition and respect. The lack of framework allows networks of interdependence to be remade based on struggles against stigma and in favor of an autonomic experience that recomposes the bonds between subjects and their communities of belonging. Autonomy would thus be a relationally constructed process, since its achievement changes the subject’s position in their networks of social interdependence and modifies the way in which expression and perception occurs of when and how to build trust in one’s own experience. This helps the subject to perceive the validity and legitimacy of their own life trajectory, in addition to expanding forms of friendship and collaboration.

2. The techniques of the self and heterotopic experience

Between 1978 and 1984, Foucault dedicated himself to reflecting on self-care and its importance for refusing control techniques and ways of being subjected to power relations. He argues that, despite having concentrated much of his studies on surveillance devices and techniques for controlling bodies and lives, his interest was concentrated at that moment on “the interaction that exists between the ‘I’ and others, and about the techniques of individual domination, about the mode of action that an individual exercises over himself through techniques of the self”⁴ (Foucault, “Les techniques de soi” 785). Techniques of the self are defined by Foucault as social, cultural and historical practices that interact with object production techniques, techniques of sign systems (which allow the production of meaning and meaning) and technologies of power (which determine conduct and objectify the subject). Such techniques operate in an intertwined manner, but each of them is associated with a type of domination that implies “certain modes of education and transformation of individuals, insofar as it is not just about acquiring certain skills, but also about acquiring certain attitudes”⁵ (785).

3 Our translation. Original quote: “Quando agimos e falamos, não só nos revelamos, mas também agimos sobre os esquemas de inteligibilidade que determinam quem será o ser que fala, sujeitando-os à ruptura ou à revisão, consolidando suas normas ou contestando sua hegemonia”.

4 Our translation. Original quote: “L’interaction qui s’opère entre soi et les autres, et aux techniques de domination individuelle, au mode d’action qu’un individu exerce sur lui-même à travers les techniques de soi”.

5 Our translation. Original quote: “Certains modes d’éducation et de transformation des individus, dans la mesure où il s’agit non seulement, bien évidemment, d’acquérir certaines aptitudes, mais aussi d’acquérir certaines attitudes”.

In the early 1980s, Foucault recognizes that he had dedicated himself to exploring the way in which techniques of power can act in favor of a disciplinary control of existences. His concept of biopolitics advances the idea of docilization of collective bodies (internalization of rules, standards and self-punishment mechanisms), of establishing parameters for group surveillance, for monitoring collective behaviors, for supervising mortality and birth rates and for containment and immunization against epidemics and diseases.

At the intersection between technologies of power and technologies of the self, individuals will shape themselves in an ethical and aesthetic way, carrying out “alone or with the help of others, a certain number of operations on their bodies and souls, their thoughts, their conduct, their way of being, of transforming themselves in order to achieve a state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection or immortality”⁶ (785). Foucault thus explains to us that “care of the self” implies progressive consideration of oneself, the control through which one does not renounce reality, but prepares the individual to face the reality of this world today, using a set of practices through which he can build a “principle of permanent action” (800).

It is important to highlight that Foucault's argument about the autonomous potential of self-transformation does not refer to an independent subject, outside of society or relationships and power. Firstly, the practices and techniques of the self are not invented by the subjects, but “are schemes that they find in their culture and that are proposed, suggested, imposed on them by their culture, their society and their social group”⁷ (“L'éthique du souci de soi” 719). Secondly, self-care appears to be an intensification of social relationships: it is not a question of renouncing the world and others, but of modulating relationships with others differently through self-care. Foucault's late work invites us to reflect on the plasticity of ways of life as raw material for the production of ethical transformations. When defining the notion of “self-care”, he states that techniques for caring for oneself and others consider the existence of friendships as territorialities of affection and sharing of experiences, encouraging a gesture of emancipation and autonomy that challenges the violent model that insists on representing subjects as victims devoid of agency.

According to Isabelle Galichon, self-care seeks not only self-transformation, but also an openness to otherness, in a double movement of differentiation that has ethical, aesthetic and political characteristics. Foucauldian political subjectivation is indissocia-

6 Our translation. Original quote: “Seuls ou avec l'aide d'autres, un certain nombre d'opérations sur leur corps et leur âme, leurs pensées, leurs conduites, leur mode d'être; de se transformer afin d'atteindre un certain état de bonheur, de pureté, de sagesse, de perfection ou d'immortalité”.

7 Our translation. Original quote: “Ce sont des schémas qu'il trouve dans sa culture et qui lui sont proposés, suggérés, imposés par sa culture, sa société et son groupe social”.

ble from ethos-poiesis (the formation of ethos, the relation to the self), or éthopoïétique, as developed by Galichon in “L'éthopoïétique de l'écriture de soi”. The necessity to conjoin the transformation of institutions, laws, and the transformation of the self, others, and existence represents, for Foucault, the problem of politics itself. The formation and transformation of a subject's way of being involves, according to Galichon, practices such as writing, reflection and friendship, insofar as they redefine the networks of relationships that connect the subject to himself and to others. Inventing oneself involves valuing experiments that highlight the forces that drive ordinary lives. As Foucault mentions, the poetic practice of creating oneself and the space for bonding with others requires that subjects be fully recognized “to the end as subjects of action; and that a whole field of possible responses, reactions, effects and inventions be opened up in the face of power relationships”⁸ (“O sujeito e o poder” 132).

This field of responses and interactions that configures the care of oneself and others also involves the courage to tell the truth, that is, parrhesia. For Galichon “the singularity of parrhesia is that it modifies, at the same time, the speaker and the interlocutor”⁹ (“L'éthopoïétique” 27). Foucault defines the practice of parrhesia as the courage to tell the truth, without dissimulation, speaking frankly that brings a risk in relation to the person to whom one speaks: “In speaking the truth one must open up, establish, and confront the risk of offending the other person, of irritating him, of making him angry and provoking him to conduct which may even be extremely violent. So it is the truth subject to risk of violence” (*The Courage of the Truth* 11). Parrhesia, according to Galichon (“Introducción: La escritura de sí”) puts at risk the relationship between the interlocutors, but also the very existence of the subject. Foucault's proposition is closely linked to the relational practice of subjective construction as an ethical and political work in which the individual establishes his or her standard of values and his or her orientation following this standard that guides him or her in the world in which he or she lives. It is not about creating a universal ethical code that must be internalized as conscience, but about creating relationships with oneself and with others that provide an immediate context for recognizing these values in a community.

Interviews granted by Foucault in the late 1970s and collected in the book *O enigma da revolta* show how popular uprisings are connected with the creation of new ways for the subject to relate to culture, to the body, to work, and to their dreams: “Changing

8 Our translation. Original quote: “Até o fun como o sujeito de ação; e que se abra, diante da relação de poder, todo um campo de respostas, reações, efeitos, invenções possíveis”.

9 Our translation. Original quote: “La singularité de la parrêsia c'est qu'elle modifie à la fois le locuteur et l'interlocuteur”.

everything, and initially changing oneself, being other, but, deep down, not knowing who that other will be, is this radical desire for otherness in relation to oneself"¹⁰ (26). But there is also, along with experience —“experience is to risk no longer being oneself”¹¹ (29)— the need to build a set of norms that ensure the achievements derived from subjective and collective transformations.

Contemporary feminist philosophers such as Stelle Ferrarese, Margareth McLaren, Fabienne Brugère and Amy Allen take up Foucault's arguments to propose a rapprochement between the usual forms of enunciation in political processes and the expression of sufferings (especially moral), desires and needs. According to them, vulnerable subjects cannot be mistaken as victims devoid of the ability to reflect and act ethically, but rather as protagonists of their experiences who seek alternative paths and routes to the dominant expectations and ideologies to shape their existences, practicing insurgencies and developing the most diverse techniques of the self.

Techniques of the self are connected to a practice of care that, for Fabienne Brugère (208), combines a reflective critique that a subject makes of their life, their knowledge and their practices, with a responsible practice of caring for themselves and others. Self-care, according to this author, can be configured as a type of “minoritarian becoming, in which the subject moves away from an imposed identity and develops on the margins, in the intervals in which strangeness expands the limits” of a way of life and its network of interdependencies.

Allen and McLaren point out that Foucault outlines an approach to resistance based on the care of the self and the modeling of subjectivity based on an ethic of self-understanding that seeks to question how people submit to techniques of self-control that manage and reduce the agency of their ways of life, configuring more subdued ways of constructing and understanding identities. Thus, the subject is constituted by forces of power that can be analyzed empirically, in the sense that the discursive and sociocultural conditions of possibility of subjectivity (located precisely in a historical and cultural moment) can be mapped by analyzing regimes of knowledge and power. Remembering that the subject can potentially transform the conditions of oppression from arrangements that involve a process of permanent self-creation and self-transformation, Allen remarks, along with Foucault, that “there is always an unstable balance, with complementarity and conflicts, between the techniques that ensure coercion and the

10 Our translation. Original quote: “Tudo mudar, e inicialmente mudar a si mesmo, ser outro, mas, no fundo, não saber quem será esse outro, é essa vontade radical de alteridad em relação a si mesmo”.

11 Our translation. Original quote: “É isso a experiencia, é arriscar não ser mais si mesmo”.

processes by which the self is constructed and modified by itself"¹² (Foucault, *L'origine de l'herméneutique de soi* 38-39) in the emancipatory practice.

Freedom and emancipation, in Foucault, would consist of an operation of the subject on itself that would govern its own conduct (Ferrarese). According to Allen, Foucault defines the capacity for self-transformation as the capacity for autonomy, with autonomy understood as the dual capacity to reflect critically on the power-knowledge relations that have constituted someone's subjectivity and to engage in practices of self-transformation. Autonomy would thus be the dual capacity for critical reflexivity and deliberate self-transformation.

Foucault's argument does not refer to an independent subject, outside of society or of relationships and of power. Foucault's late work invites us to reflect on the plasticity of ways of life as raw material for the production of ethical transformations. In defining the notion of "care of the self", he reveals how intersubjectivity plays a central role in the "work of the self on the self".

The care of the self is ethical in itself; but it implies complex relationships with others insofar as this *éthos* of freedom is also a way of caring for others. [...] And the care of the self also implies a relationship with the other insofar as proper care of the self requires listening to the lessons of a master. One needs a guide, a counselor, a friend, someone who will be truthful with you. Thus, the problem of relationships with others is present throughout the development of the care of the self ("The Ethics of the Concern of the Self" 281).

In the interview entitled "Is it useless to revolt?", Foucault states that people revolt all the time. But the law and institutional frameworks do not absolve them: their voices continue to be perceived as muddled, noisy, and lacking in legitimacy. However, the voices of "infamous men" exist, clashing against power, attracting its wrath and, precisely because of this, producing scenes thematizing and naming injustices, in which insurgency takes place. "It is necessary to exercise insurgency, that is, to practice the refusal of the status of subject in which we find ourselves. The refusal of our identity, the refusal of our permanence, the refusal of what we are. It is the first condition for refusing the world"¹³ (Foucault, *O enigma da revolta* 35).

Insurgency takes place, it is a fact: that is why subjectivity (not that of great men, but that of anyone) introduces itself into history and gives it its breath. [...] No one is obliged to

12 Our translation. Original quote: "Há sempre um equilíbrio instável, com complementaridade e conflitos, entre as técnicas que asseguram a coerção e os processos pelos quais o si é construído e modificado por si mesmo".

13 Our translation. Original quote: "É preciso praticar a sublevação, quero dizer, praticar a recusa do estatuto de sujeito no qual nos encontramos. A recusa de sua identidade, a recusa de sua permanência, a recusa do que somos. É a condição primeira para recusar o mundo".

think that those muddled voices sing better than the others and speak of the essence of the real thing. It is enough that they exist and that they have against them everything that stubbornly makes them silent, so that it makes sense to listen to them and to seek what they want to say¹⁴ (Foucault, “É inútil revoltar-se” 80).

For Foucault, this movement of listening to the voices that are present in the narratives of the self requires attention to the transformations that take place in the condition of realization of the experiences, the temporalities of insurgency, the intervals promoted by the discontinuous time of reflexivity about one’s own trajectory and its intersections with the collective trajectories (Gavillet). These conditions are related to the notion of heterotopia and its capacity to fully address the changing networks of power (asymmetries, differences, vulnerabilities) and resistance that permeate both the political and aesthetical experience of subjects and groups.

3. Heterotopic experiences and their resistance potencies

The techniques of the self are a range of actions, practices and appropriations that contradict the consensual order, attesting to the impossibility of fixing destinies and their meaning. They result from the practices of resistance to the majoritarian models of translation and accommodation of experience, of changing the function of existing announcements, offering affective, political, and social conditions for the transformation of vulnerabilities and for other experimentation of intersubjective relations and other political imagination. According to Foucault (*O enigma da revolta*) these practices of resistance and transformation can give birth to a heterotopic experience.

In Foucault’s later publications he defines experience as an element in the process of subjectivation as the courage to “risk not being oneself anymore” (*O enigma da revolta* 29). Thus, experience is constituted from individuals’ actions that transform the conditions of oppression from arrangements that involve a process of permanent ongoing self-creation. In experience there are “operations by which the body is torn from its own space and projected into another space”¹⁵ (*O corpo utópico* 12). In Foucault’s perspective, experience is no longer just that which is imprisoned by knowledge in the form of a governed existence and trapped in power relations, but also the force that

14 Our translation. Original quote: “Insurge-se, é um fato; é por isso que a subjetividade (não a dos grandes homens, mas a de qualquer um) se introduz na história e lhe dão seu alento. [...] Ninguém é obrigado a achar que aquelas vozes confusas cantam melhor do que as outras e falam da essência do verdadeiro. Basta que elas existam e que tenham contra elas tudo o que se obstina em fazê-las calar, para que faça sentido escutá-las e buscar o que elas querem dizer”.

15 Our translation. Original quote: “Operações pelas quais o corpo é arrancado de seu espaço próprio e projetado em um espaço outro”.

drives transformations in subjectivities, towards other historical formations and other ways of life (Sabot; Laval).

According to Michel Foucault the formation of a heterotopy entails a redefinition of the coordinates of the experience we have with time, space and our bodies. When Foucault says that “heterotopia has the power to juxtapose in a single place several spaces, several positions that are in themselves incompatible”¹⁶ (“Des espaces autres” 13) he is emphasizing how the concept of heterotopia can explain, for example, the confluence between different cultural and political spaces in any one society and how these spaces can define the social relationships and experiences of individuals and groups, shaping their subjectivation.

In these experiments, subjects can elaborate alternatives to create a habitable and possible space of existence from heterotopic “operations by which the body is torn from its own space and projected into another space”¹⁷ (*O corpo utópico* 12). The notion of heterotopia, therefore, allows us to think about the reality of subjective and social space created by individuals and groups through their ideas about representations of the places they create which shelter as well as transform their relationships. According to Rago, Foucault’s interest would be in the possibilities of “inventing new modes of existence, built from other relations of oneself to oneself and to the other, capable of escaping the technologies of the biopolitical device of individual and collective control”¹⁸ (Rago 362). The notion of heterotopia has then an epistemological potential for thinking about power relations that interfere in possibilities to change experiences resulting from restrictions and make choices that foster developing personal and collective autonomy. Therefore, transformative experiences promote a constant and critical work of redefining who we are in the face of the denial of the identity that is socially imposed on us (Ionta). According to Foucault, this denial requires the construction of a subject of knowledge and of experience:

No longer to be subject as one has been until now, subject in relation to a political power, but subject of a knowledge, subject of an experience, subject also of a belief. For me, this possibility of insurging oneself from the subject position that has been fixed to them by a political power, a religious power, a dogma, a belief, a habit, a social structure, is

16 Our translation. Original quote: “L’hétérotopie a le pouvoir de juxtaposer en un seul lieu réel plusieurs espaces, plusieurs emplacements qui sont en eux-mêmes incompatibles”.

17 Our translation. Original quote: “Operações pelas quais o corpo é arrancado de seu espaço próprio e projetado em um espaço outro”.

18 Our translation. Original quote: “Invenção de novos modos de existência, construídos a partir de outras relações de si para consigo e para com o outro, capazes de escapar às tecnologias do dispositivo biopolítico de controle individual e coletivo”.

spirituality, that is, becoming other than what one is, other self of oneself¹⁹ (*O enigma da revolta* 21).

Although scholars have used heterotopia in several fields of studies, it is a controversial concept which was little developed in Foucault's works. Foucault's lecture at the *Cercle d'études architecturales* in Paris, in March 1967²⁰, was his most explicit reference to his proposal to systematically study "other spaces" that challenge the space we assume we inhabit, which entails what he calls a science of *heterotopology*. According to Daniel Defert, the interest in the political and epistemological dimension of space permeates Foucault's work, arising from his study of the "spatializations of power" and its interrelationship with knowledge. In the 1967 lecture, Foucault defines the space we currently inhabit as a "set of relations of *emplacement*"²¹ ("Des espaces autres" 11), a term that refers to *place, locations, and site*, in order to express the relational dimension of spaces.

Heterotopias are capable of juxtaposing spaces from different areas and times²², some that are incompatible with each other, within concrete places, creating a particular heterogeneous combination of spatial elements within themselves. The combination of dissimilar spatial elements including those that are incompatible is important to us, because transformative experiences are made in a complex web of social, digital and urban spaces where conversations, memories and new embodied forms of living form the basis for a shared world that is continually produced. It is important to highlight that the juxtaposition of spaces, times and discourses

19 Our translation. Original quote: "Não mais ser sujeito como se foi até agora, sujeito em relação a um poder político, mas sujeito de um saber, sujeito de uma experiência, sujeito também de uma crença. Para mim, essa possibilidade de se insurgir si mesmo a partir da posição do sujeito que lhe foi fixado por um poder político, um poder religioso, um dogma, uma crença, um hábito, uma estrutura social, é a espiritualidade, isto é, tornar-se outro do que se é, outro de si mesmo".

20 Foucault's notion of *heterotopia* is developed by a briefly presentation of six principles, which he illustrates through many different examples. The first principle expresses that heterotopias are recurrent in every human group, although take different forms and functions depending on the culture where they are found. The second principle affirms that heterotopias can also evolve with time. The third principle argues that heterotopia has the capacity to juxtapose in a single real place, many spaces, many *emplacements* that would be otherwise incompatible with each other. In formulating the fourth principle, Foucault points out a connection with the *découpages du temps* (slices in time, or alternatively, temporal discontinuities), the *heterochronias* that emerge in breaks in traditional time and that highlight the discontinuity and multiplicity of our current spatiotemporal experience. The fifth principle states that heterotopia is also manifest in the nature of spaces that are neither totally closed nor completely open. But all heterotopias have, according to Foucault, a system of opening and closing that isolates them and at the same time allows access (through permission or submission to certain procedures). The sixth principle argues that the places articulated in heterotopia are at the same time represented, contested, and inverted.

21 This is a term he uses precisely in a technical sense when addressing architects, to avoid common words. In French, this word generally refers to marking a position within an archeological site, for example, a designated camp site within a larger camping area, in order to indicate the relationships between different specific points within a given space.

22 According to Foucault ("Des espaces autres"), heterotopias are very often associated with time cuts; that is, they establish heterochronies. It is possible to say that heterotopia and heterochrony expresses the constant remaking of life, the active waiting in which political subjects do not cease to recompose and dissolve their identities, in a constant transformation. Thus, heterotopia and heterochrony articulate in a relatively complex way.

is not free from conflicting situations, but sometimes the tension can stimulate the emergence of collective experimentations in order to better understand and to solve public problems. We also believe that the concept of heterotopias has to take into consideration how they must be seen not simply as a category with which to label a particular site or a singular experience, but primarily as a lens with which to consider a particular relational and communicational phenomenon from a new perspective (Johnson).

Our argument is more aligned to the analyses made by Christian Laval, in order to show that Foucault's notion of heterotopia reveals itself precisely in his conception of experience, which permeates multiple spatial arrangements across the course of history. For Foucault, through examining experience we can examine how heterotopias produce "displacements"; in particular, how they cause uneasiness, upset ordinary places and disrupt the usual distribution of things. With heterotopias things are not put in the expected place: as such they produce, instead, experiences that unveil to us the variety of places we can inhabit, building a place for differences that previously didn't necessarily have a place or were problematically put in seemingly unchangeable places. This spatial conception of heterotopia enables experiences and experiments of active resistance, including displacements to escape from authority or authoritarian attributions of places and identities. Moreover, the heterotopic experience can produce a way of life based on caring for oneself and others distinct from disciplinary practices of control: it submits life to a transformation, while also recognizing that subjects' experiences take place in the historically situated articulations between a regime of truth (knowledge), a form of governmentality (power) and a practice centered on the self that is not, again, necessarily completely determined (subjectivation).

Transformative experiences are carried out through transformative actions, changing the conditions of oppression through arrangements that involve a process of permanent self-creation. We believe, considering this perspective, that transformative heterotopic experience brings the opportunity to build alternative paths and routes of experimentations in order to face the dominant expectations and ideologies that shape subjects' existences.

4. The accounts of oneself and the thematization of experiences of injustice

The accounts of oneself fabricate forms of subjectivity, capable of functioning as autonomous resistance to the normalizing powers. They promote a game of enunciation

and invention of scenes in which words become audible and subjects recognizable: these are operations of creation, by working with language, which bring the possibility of resistance against the reproduction and government of ways of life and their powers. In accord to Butler (*Relatar a si mesmo*), the accounts of oneself bring with them the intervals in which lives are transformed by experimentation and performance.

The constitution of a narrating subject is a complex process, referenced by intensities relative to the historical moment, as a broad context, but also to the positions and stances taken by speaking subjects in relation to those with whom they speak. This type of relationship, which may eventually present itself as egalitarian under conditions that artificially leave aside the present asymmetries, seems to turn to the question of observing what regimes of truth are in force at a given time and place and their ramifications as constituents of a scene of interpellation of autonomous subjects, but challenged in this same autonomy by the present, historically and socially constituted discursive plots.

The question about the relationship between discourse and power gains special contours when thought of as having the space of the biographical account as its vertex, a space of tensional intersection between subject and group, private and collective memory, personal and social history. It is thus worth recalling Butler when she says that “the act of telling performs an action that presupposes an Other, postulates and elaborates the other, is given to the other or by virtue of the other, prior to providing any information”²³ (*Relatar a si mesmo* 107).

This is not, evidently, about binary oppositions guided by the necessity of choice, but about articulations, negotiations of meaning, the development of forms of resistance external to a given place of production of the discourse of truth, but also within the discourses themselves from minimal forms of narrative elaboration of a situation. The proximity between discourse and power, from the biographical perspective, endows this moment with very specific characteristics that deserve a careful look, especially in the sense of avoiding reductions among the social, the subjective, and the narrative.

It can be imagined that this is, from the outset, an ambiguous relationship, not devoid of tensions and multiple intensities related to the lines of force that cross the narrating subjects in the processes of referentiality to a “real” that insists on escaping through the gaps in language in a more direct way, the greater the efforts to situate it within the limits of a story.

23 Our translation. Original quote: “O ato de contar realiza uma ação que pressupõe um Outro, postula e elabora o outro, é dada ao outro ou em virtude do outro, antes do fornecimento de qualquer informação”.

The interpellation that generates the account of the self, while an intervention from a regime of truth, brings as a presupposition its pretensions to an established truth, when not official and dogmatic, related to the way in which the narrating individuals should subject themselves—a subjection that would not constitute them as subjects, but subjected—in the sense of thinking a certain way about the fabrication that would confirm, at least partially, some aspects of the discursive regime of production of this same “truth”.

Thus, it is expected that the individual, interpellated by a regime of truth, produces an account of the self that will be compatible—or, in the limit, rendered compatible by the ethical violence of the single narrative—not only with the assumptions, but also with the expected procedures and consequences, even when totally at odds with the subjects’ narrative perspectives. The interpellation by authority seeks to produce in the individuals a narrative relationship contradictory with themselves, thus affirming the relationship of subjection when the person builds an account from the destruction of their own story in favor of the official version. In this way, it is sought to reduce as much as possible the agency of the subjects to produce accounts other than those previously sanctioned, while hoping, with this, to bring not only reinforcement to the discourse of production of truth, but even some expectation of legitimation.

Thus, when the oppressed is urged by the oppressor to speak about their condition before a third party, their discourse effectively tends to be forced, by the existence of an extra-discursive power capable of translating its directives into threat, to confirm before that third party the version expected by the one who holds the power at that moment.

In his study of total institutions, Goffman shows that the subjection of inmates usually begins by imposing an institutional discourse, forced over any other story, leading to an erasure of individual accounts—which would indicate belonging to other groups and the existence of other bonds—and, consequently, the inability of individuals to weave any narratives about themselves other than those produced about them.

The elimination of subjectivity in favor of a uniformity appropriate to a certain institutional discourse is thus imposed, in this way, as a form of production of a discursive truth appropriate to those in a situation of domination to the extent, above all, that they seek to benefit from this moment to legitimize the order itself from this type of account that, confirming an institutional power, reinforces the traumatic situation of the subject devoid of subjectivity.

Not by chance, says Goffman, total institutions are based on an absolute control of the subjects, defining, as said by others, spaces in which everything that is not man-

datory is prohibited. This type of procedure begins precisely with the appropriation, and almost immediate destruction, of the narratives of the individuals, who are not even challenged to explain themselves as subjects of action but are rewarded or punished according to the degree of adherence to the normativity present in these spaces.

The substitution of the proper name by another one, or by a number, or any other type of identification based on complete depersonalization, which institutes a form of serialization of the subject, begins to destroy the present aspects of subjectivity until the moment when, hopefully, there is a dilution in uniformity, in which the account of the self, as well as the narrative, would be completely eliminated.

When asked to speak by the holder of a power, the person in a situation of vulnerability evidently can do nothing but produce an account of the self aimed, at least in appearance, at agreeing with the assumptions of the established regime of truth. To the ears of the interpellant, situated in the comfort of a relationship in which asymmetric violence, if it does not escape them, is at the same time justified—in their eyes—by the constitutive knowledge of the regime of truth that sustains it, the account of the subject confirms what they have always known, reinforcing their generally high regard of themselves.

Urged to speak of the other through the self, the violence of the situation is observed insofar as one's voice is not simply silenced, which would already constitute an intensity of oppression, but forced to reproduce a discourse alien to the self, which ultimately reinforces one's own condition of oppression. The ethical violence of the production of the subjects' account thus becomes closer to the definition of "fascism" proposed by Barthes: fascism does not lie in the prohibition of speaking, but in the obligation to speak.

The inauthenticity of the account of the self, produced in situations of ethical violence, does not fail to be perceived by any more attentive instance capable of noticing the impossibility, by the subject, of producing any discourse other than that of conformity, when not that of praise, except for the hints offered, minimal resistances, produced by the subjects as a gesture of the challenge of the affirmation of the self (Galileo: "*epur si muove*", "and yet it moves").

In certain contexts, this type of attitude is affirmed by the supposed generosity of the holder of power in the sense of leaving the challenged to produce their own reports "at will", in situations of "comfort", that should reinforce a narrative linked to the truth produced. The "spontaneous" testimonies, in this way, can effectively take on a double violence in the sense that they not only demand from the subject the production of an

account, but also place under their responsibility the way of elaboration: creating an account of oneself against oneself is one of the main forms of psychological destabilization of subjects, when faced with the trauma situation from which it is impossible to escape.

Historically, this type of situation often oscillates between the grotesque and the tragic when, for example, one observes the pseudo-official accounts produced under different degrees of coercion of the subjects. And, immediately, it is also possible to observe resistance strategies —understood as the reaffirmation, even if in a minimal way, of people's characteristics related to individuality and subjectivity.

An example, by way of illustration, is the grotesque episode of the authorization given by the Nazis to Sigmund Freud and his family to emigrate from occupied Austria in 1938 to England. After weeks of keeping Freud in agonizing anticipation over travel clearance, surrounded by absurd demands and unreasonable requirements —at one point it was even stated that he could only go with his personal belongings, and would be forced to leave everything else behind— made with the intention of not only hindering the proceedings but also of bending his will, authorization was finally granted. But on one condition: Freud had to sign a document, “of his own accord”, indicating how well he had been treated by the Nazis. Freud, in fact, completed and signed the document, adding that he “recommended to everyone” the treatment he received. The irony, evidently, escaped the Nazi officials, who used the letter as a “proof” of the “good treatment” accorded Freud, reinforcing before anyone else the grotesqueness of the situation.

Freud's ironic gesture shows us that it is possible to redefine the framing of violence of the interpellation scene, inserting unforeseen enunciations, but which show that it is possible to juxtapose accounts of oneself to those accounts imposed by others. This tension between accounts reveals how vulnerability can be redefined by changing the linguistic conditions through which fractures and deviations in the moral frameworks used to characterize and judge lives are promoted.

This refers to the perspective of thinking about the relations between “telling a story”, and “producing an account” as a reference, not only to the situation of resistance within the subjections related to the interpellation —which can even be a constituent of a scene of justice, recalls Butler (*Relatar a si mesmo*)— but also to the subjects' own ability to do all the work of elaborating a scene when one is already outside it. After all, in the words of Butler, “regardless of what the Other has done, one will continue to impose

an ethical requirement on me, one will continue to have a 'face' to which I am obliged to respond"²⁴ (*Relatar a si mesmo* 121).

This subsequent narrative elaboration, outside the position of power in which a situation of asymmetry and violence effectively occurred, is not necessarily revealed in the form of an account of oneself produced in the interpellation of another, but also in the confrontation of the subjects with themselves mediated by a time that becomes historical insofar as it is no longer related only to memory, but already to the accounts and experiences of the body in the collective.

In this aspect, if the body is the center of the experience, it is therein that the marks of the experiences and the processes of affectation through which we pass and which go on tattooing our skin and weaving our memory are inscribed (Lapoujade). The discursive practices cross, and are crossed, by the singular experience in tension with the collective experience. What we verbalize has effects of meaning that go beyond a simple everyday interaction, it presents itself as the reproduction of imaginaries that can forge a scenario either of hospitality or of rejection and exclusion (Pessoa; Boessio; Civil). "So many are the precarious, fragile modes of existence that border the solid, ordered world of things. [...] As fragile as they are, they have this power to disturb the order of the real"²⁵ (Lapoujade, *As existências mínimas* 70-71).

In this sense, as we face the other through their testimonial narrative, we would face the enormous challenge of combining responsibility and integrity and not just sincerity. We would be facing an ethical dilemma of listening without imposing, without directing it for investigative purposes, of welcoming the other who is in front of us without judging them and without stifling their voice, even if under the pretext of empowering it (Pessoa). More than answers, we try to equalize in ourselves the yearnings for the acceptance of possible existences and that introduce uncertainties in the forms of sensitive distribution of the elements of experience, beyond those socially normalized.

5. Unframing processes of resistance

When Butler reflects upon the socio-political crossings that modulate differentially the precarity of forms of life, she proposes that these are an effect of a processual social reiteration of certain "frames of intelligibility" and "norms of recognizability" which allow

24 Our translation. Original quote: "Independientemente do que o Outro tenha feito, ele continuará impondo sobre mim uma exigência ética, continuará tendo um 'rosto' ao qual sou obrigada a responder".

25 Our translation. Original quote: "Tantos são os modos de existência precários, frágeis, que margeiam o mundo sólido e ordenado das coisas. [...] Por mais frágeis que sejam, têm essa potência de perturbar a ordem do real"

and prioritize the preservation and promotion of some lives and forms of existence, while legitimating or naturalizing violence and death of others, these that often are not even considered worthy of grief. Such frames selectively sculpt the experience of subjects, in a way that

we cannot easily recognize life outside of the frameworks in which it is presented, and these frameworks are not only structuring the way which we come to know and identify life but constitute conditions that support that same life (Butler, *Frames of War* 23).

For Butler, the frameworks would help us distinguish the lives we can appreciate and value from the ones that wouldn't be deserving of being considered. The terms, categories, conventions and general rules that operate in devices of framework shape and transform, for instance, a living being from a subject prone of being recognized through a specific form of apprehension, in other words, a form of knowledge associated to feeling and perceiving. It is about knowing how these norms operate to turn certain subjects into recognizable people and making others decisively harder to recognize.

The framework promotes a type of power that involves the forms of (in)visibility and (i)legibility of subjects and groups, regulating the space and the forms of appearance. Frameworks set a way of neoliberal governmentality that structures the eventual field of appearing and action of subjects. According to Judith Butler, frameworks (or interpretative frames) "do not unilaterally decide the conditions of appearance [in the sense of a performative apparition about a public scene] but their aim is nevertheless to delimit the sphere of appearance itself" (*Frames of War* 1). The problem, according to Butler "is not merely how to include more people within existing norms, but to consider how existing norms allocate recognition differentially" (6).

The tacit interpretive scheme that divides worthy from unworthy lives works fundamentally through the senses, differentiating the cries we can hear from those we cannot, the sights we can see from those we cannot [...], which means that a struggle must be waged against those forces that seek to regulate affect in differential ways (51-52).

Therefore, the practical reiterations of "intelligibility schemes" which compose framings and "norms of recognizability" linked to them do not determine the destiny of a corporeality, identity or a subject in a certain social context, even though it conditions roles, functions, social actions and modes of existence. Butler finds the power of resistance in the performative reiteration, in redefinitions and dislocations that fracture hegemonic social orders:

The performative is not a single act used by an already established subject, but one of the most powerful and insidious forms in which a subject is called to become a social being through diffused places and is inserted in the social through a set of powerful and

diverse interpellations. In this sense, social performative is a crucial part not only of the affirmation of the subject, but also of the consequent political questioning and the reformulation of the subject itself. The performative is not only a ritual practice is one of the most influent rituals in formation and reformulation of subjects²⁶ (*Lenguaje, poder* 256).

In this sense, “performativities” produced by corporalities crossed by vulnerabilities, violence and damages, such as the caused, for instance, by individuals, groups and social movements in their daily interactions or in protests, enable the emergency of an act of objection to injustices that are supposedly updated and naturalized in a given context. “These collective forms of resistance are structured in a very different manner from the idea that a political subject that establishes their agency while subjugating their vulnerability —this is the masculinist ideal which we must continue to be opposed” (*Rethinking Vulnerability and Resistance* 24).

Butler gives special emphasis to the need of understanding political “performances” not only through the interaction effects of multiple scales that produce, but also through networks and relationships of alliance or opposition, which enable or create obstacles so that corporalities discuss the perceptive social field or “space of appearing” (*Corpos em Aliança*). The spaces or scenes of appearing are effects of the alliances and agencies that are guided by the care and responsibility with the other more vulnerable.

Butler’s “space of appearing” takes into account the exposure of individual and collective bodies, revealing her relational constitution dependent of alliances that can be established “among people that live together with that purpose, it doesn’t matter where they are, which means that as with any action happens in a localized place, it also establishes a space that belongs to the alliance itself”²⁷ (*Corpos em Aliança* 73). According to Butler, subjects and corporalities can, even though in brief and infinitesimal instants, introduce cracks in the social normative framings that comprises them, through tensions, dislocations and/or even reconfigurations of labeling, values, social esteems and even the aesthetic of the “normalized” and “normalizing” gaze which, in other contexts, are reiterated by the norm.

26 Our translation. Original quote: “El performativo no es un acto singular utilizado por un sujeto ya establecido, sino una de las formas potentes e insidiosas en que el sujeto es llamado a devenir un ser social desde lugares sociales difusos y es insertado en lo social por medio de un conjunto de difusas y poderosas interpelaciones. En este sentido, el performativo social es una parte crucial no solo de la formación del sujeto, sino del subsiguiente cuestionamiento político y de la reformulación del sujeto mismo. El performativo no es solo una práctica ritual: es uno de los rituales más influyentes en la formación y reformulación de los sujetos”.

27 Our translation. Original quote: “O ‘verdadeiro’ espaço está, então, ‘entre as pessoas’, o que significa que assim como qualquer ação acontece em um lugar localizado, ela também estabelece um espaço que pertence à aliança propriamente dita”.

We point out that Butler is interested in the ruptures that can be made in the system of visibility, in other words, in how it is possible to subvert the dominant order and seek moments in which unframing operations fracture the dispositif that controls which bodies and forms of life are worthy of being considered legitimate or not. The premises, judgements, disagreements, values, affective predispositions, etc. which allow social actors to recognize and understand the facts and perceptions reveal how the framing is set as a central organizing idea in processes of unveiling and discursive construction of a political problem and the subjects articulated by those. However, the framework is not capable of fully contain what it transmits and, because of that, it cracks every time it tries to give a definitive organization to its content (Butler, *Frames of War*). In this process of continuous rupture, the terms through which subjects are named and known are produced, dislocated, questioned and altered. The unframing operations, according to Butler, transform the appearance performances that make certain subjects and groups visible and listened, considering their demands for recognition, while others are clearly kept away from respect and consideration.

It should be noted that Butler does not explicitly conceptualize “unframing”, but the word runs across her discussions and has been conceptualized by some interpreters of her work (Hankey; Marcondes). Butler’s theory has always challenged the stability and coherency of identities, focusing on the indeterminacy of subjectivation. She has emphasized that identities are not attributes but rather dynamic practices and performances that acquire different meanings in different contexts. It is through continuous iterations that meanings, subjects, and realities are transformed. In this sense, Butler (*Corpos em Aliança*) conceives of subversion as deriving from the deconstruction generated by the displacing reproduction of what exists.

In her later works, Butler seeks to grasp these processes through which existing frames are “called into question”:

[T]o call the frame into question is to show that the frame never quite contained the scene it was meant to limn, that something was already outside, which made the very sense of the inside possible, recognizable. The frame never quite determined precisely what it is we see, think, recognize, and apprehend. Something exceeds the frame that troubles our sense of reality; in other words, something occurs that does not conform to our established understanding of things (*Frames of War* 9).

Following Jeffrey Hankey, we see these processes as forms of unframing. According to Butler, frames are power operations through which we apprehend the world and engage with it. Such power operations interfere in the conditions of appearance and consideration of the subjects, for they outline specific mechanisms through which a way

of life is apprehended and evaluated. Frames compose complex networks of actions, discourses, norms, and values, which delimit the conditions for the public appearance of subjects and of their demands, interfering with the understanding of what may or may not count as relevant.

Butler's approach seeks forms of mismatch capable of challenging existing frames. Dismantling and refusing naturalized interpretative schemes, the practice of unframing nurtures connections and disconnections that may raise awareness to alternatives ways of perceiving and understanding the world. Given that the norms and values that ground identity formation are socially constructed, Butler links resistance to a capacity of unframing the categories and structures that frame actors' roles and places in the world. To Butler, unframing is essentially a process of deconstruction of identities, through the exposure of the contradictions of norms that ground these identities. She argues that the undoing of moral frames can expose the institutional violence that fuels inequality. For her, unframing reveals the fragility of the reproduction of norms when, faced with a moral challenge that denies the recognition of the value of lives, subjects have the possibility of responding in a different way than that already prepared by the existing identities.

Butler deepens the discussion about the discursive mechanisms through which the process of unframing happens, questioning the moral grounds of identity detachments. Moreover, she offers a particular contribution to this debate when she shows that even the act of reiterating oneself leads to self-displacements, which are seen as the very basis of identity formation. In addition, she is attentive to the aesthetic dimension of unframing, which grounds new forms of perceiving one-self, other political actors, and the world.

6. Final considerations

Foucault and Butler, used as a basis for discussion in the present text, provide, as a common reading possibility, a refusal to think of identities and their narratives as something given, but, on the contrary, as a constant game between signifiers and signified mediated by action and by the contradictions of the real. The emergence of autonomous subjects requires, in this way, the review of the account of the self in the work of elaborating their trajectories, highlighting powers and unframing imposed values and models.

We believe that heterotopic experiences, as well as unframing experiences can be disruptive and transformative. For Foucault and Butler, the capacity for self-transforma-

tion relies on the double capacity to critically reflect on the power-knowledge relations that constitute one's subjectivity and the capacity to engage in self-transformation practices that can modify the way one engages in community issues. Political subjects show how they exist in different relations, and specifically, how their bodily existence has been harmed by powerful forces of control, including those enforced by other actors as well as government institutional agents responsible for social policies and (failing to uphold) human rights, and that's why they create concrete and symbolical spaces where they can name injustices, foster resistance including methods for the refusal of imposed identities and moral values in a world that does not recognize them.

Heterotopic experiences articulate and rearticulate memories, languages and new tactics for caring for oneself and others. It is a relational process that privileges the contingent and constant articulations among heterogeneous elements without implying a closed or complete system that designates absolute difference. Heterotopias are not stable entities, but involve contingent qualities that entail a relational and open circuit where multiplicity, diversity and several activities coexist in a complex flux of localities, temporalities, corporalities and narratives (Johnson). In this sense, heterotopic experiences do not operate in isolation from experiences that occur in other social and institutional spaces, but they have the potency to open sites of emancipation or resistance. It is important to see how subjects' experiences are made up from a set of relations that form a web of sociocultural spaces, temporalities and memories from different geographic and temporal sites that coexist, combine and connect.

The heterotopic experience requires the ethical and political practice of care, understood as a process in which subjects articulate and reinvent their trajectories, placing special emphasis on the potentialities with which they are endowed, the resources they mobilize, the tactics they put into practice, the achievements they achieve, the solidarities and imaginaries that allow them to question the constraints that weigh on them. Even though their actions are constantly limited by the institutional rules that delimit their social life, subjects in conditions of vulnerability mobilize resources to fracture schemes and frameworks that disregard respect for differences. According to Bruguère, care requires sensitivity to the details that are repeated in the tasks of constantly repairing the articulations that configure the conditions of existence and collective survival of subjects and groups.

The accounts of oneself (Rago; Butler) help individuals to construct themselves as political subjects, endowed with expressive and listening capacity, as they begin to pay attention to their own movements and responses, to listen to themselves and to the other in a more critical and systematic way, seeking to find what defines them, what de-

finer the other, and what nominates problems and sufferings. In this sense, the account of oneself is one way of examining one's own steps to acquire a firm sense of direction toward an autonomous life project. This exercise enables the creation of relationships with the self and others that provide a context in which the conditions of recognition are in constant negotiation and review. The account of oneself has a political-affective dimension marked by two main properties: i) the construction, improvement, and mastery of one's own language and vocabulary to shape one's own world and the possibilities that come with it; ii) the opportunity to exercise self-expression and listening, situating the importance of the other in the constitution of the account of the self. This second dimension, communicational and relational, brings forth the issue of how we allow ourselves to be touched by others, by alterity, interfering in the framings that control our openness to welcoming and recognizing the unfamiliar other.

According to Butler, framing negatively contributes for intensifying subjects' precariousness and their conditions of vulnerability. Therefore, becoming visible in a communicative scene by a framing operation involves not only the choice of frameworks of shared meaning and values —through which individuals will be identified, known and named— but also the instauration of a conflictive relationship of searching for recognition, legitimacy and autonomy. Thus, Butler's reflection on the recognition and the ethics of justice involves problematizing framing in search for cracks which indicate that framing does not determine in a precise manner what we see, think, recognize and apprehend.

The practice of unframing seeks to expose the regimes of violence and appearance that sought to control the functioning of the interpretative schemes. Such a practice aims not only to find new framings but also to intervene in already stabilized interpretations to show their possible fractures and gaps, which would promote other political imaginaries. What is at stake in questioning the frames is the promotion of another way of structuring the "thinkable". Unframing and giving an account of oneself are experiences that involve an alteration of a regime of perception and of cognition that can be heterotopic for they are connected to an emancipatory power that lies in the formative potentiality of thresholds, zones of negotiation and hybridity in which subjects appropriate and articulate different elements in order to encounter and evoke the awareness of 'the other' in the way of developing new collective forms of life.

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