

FEMININE BUT NOT FEMINIST: DISPUTES OF MEANING IN RIGHT-WING FEMALE PARLAMENTARIANS DISCOURSE

***FEMININAS MAS NÃO FEMINISTAS: SENTIDOS EM DISPUTA NO DISCURSO DE MULHERES
PARLAMENTARES DE DIREITA***

***FEMENINA PERO NO FEMINISTA: SENTIDOS EN DISPUTA EN EL DISCURSO DE MUJERES
PARLAMENTARIAS DE DERECHA***

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ABSTRACT: This article, developed in the light of the materialist discourse analysis, in interface with the anti-capitalist feminist theory, has as its object of analysis the discourse of three female parliamentarians who were part of the *Partido Social Liberal*: Janaína Paschoal, Joice Hasselmann, and Soraya Thronicke. My aim is to reflect on the ways of saying about women by women subject to capitalism, as well as to give visibility to the divisions and displacements in the meaning of the word *woman*. The analyses show the discourse of these congresswomen produces an effect of opposition between *feminine women* and *feminist women*. This effect is inscribed in affiliation of meaning produced from a conservative and neoliberal subject-position. From this position, the discourse signifies women by the functioning of an imaginary of universality, producing an obliteration of intersectionalities and disregarding the relations among gender, race, and class regarding public policies and social programs.

KEY WORDS: Woman. Materialist Discourse Analysis. Political division of meaning. Subject-position.

RESUMO: Este artigo, desenvolvido à luz da análise de discurso materialista, em interface com o pensamento feminista anticapitalista, tem como objeto de análise o discurso de três mulheres parlamentares que integravam o Partido Social Liberal (PSL): Janaína Paschoal, Joice Hasselmann e Soraya Thronicke. Meu intuito é produzir uma reflexão sobre os modos de dizer sobre as mulheres por mulheres sujeitas no/ao capitalismo, bem como dar visibilidade às divisões e deslocamentos nos sentidos da palavra *mulher*. As análises mostram que a tomada da palavra pelas congressistas produz um efeito de oposição entre *femininas* e *feministas* que se inscreve em uma rede de sentidos filiada a uma posição-sujeito conservadora e neoliberal. A partir desta posição, o discurso significa as mulheres pelo funcionamento de um imaginário de universalidade, produzindo um apagamento das interseccionalidades e desconsiderando as relações entre gênero, raça e classe em políticas públicas e programas sociais.

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PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Mulher. Análise de Discurso Materialista. Divisão política dos sentidos. Posição-sujeito.

RESUMEN: Este artículo, desarrollado a la luz del análisis del discurso materialista, en interfaz con el pensamiento feminista anticapitalista, tiene como objeto de análisis el discurso de tres parlamentarias del *Partido Social Liberal* (PSL): Janaína Paschoal, Joice Hasselmann y Soraya Thronicke. Mi objetivo es reflexionar sobre las formas de decir sobre mujeres por mujeres sujetas al capitalismo, así como dar visibilidad a las divisiones y desplazamientos en los sentidos de la palabra *mujer*. Los análisis muestran que la toma de la palabra por parte de las congresistas produce un efecto de oposición entre *mujeres femininas* y *mujeres feministas* que se inscribe en una red de significados afiliados a una posición-sujeto conservadora y neoliberal. Desde esta posición, el discurso significa las mujeres por el funcionamiento de un imaginario de universalidad, produciendo un borrado de las interseccionalidades y desconsiderando las relaciones entre género, raza y clase en las políticas y programas sociales.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Mujer. Análisis del Discurso Materialista. División política de los sentidos. Posición sujeto.

1 INITIAL REMARKS

In the 2018 elections in Brazil, there was an expressive growth of the *Partido Social Liberal* (PSL), which represented the second-largest bench in the Chamber of Deputies. This indicated a greater acceptance of the party's political program¹ by a significant part of Brazilian society and also a greater involvement of the PSL and its congressmen and congresswomen in the drafting of laws and public policies from 2019 onwards. Such involvement fundamentally affects Brazilian society's tack and, therefore, demands from us, researchers, attentive and analytical studies.

For this article^{2,3}, I take as object of analysis the discourse of female parliamentarians who were part of the PSL, highlighting the statements of three of them: Janaína Paschoal (J.P.), Joice Hasselmann (J.H.) and Soraya Thronicke (S.T.). As materials of analysis, I selected both interviews that the congresswomen gave to *UOL Universa* website and to *Marie Claire* magazine, as well as bills developed and presented by them to the Chamber and/or to the Senate.

From the Discourse Analysis, in the line of reflection developed by Pêcheux in France and by Orlandi in Brazil, the discourse is understood not as “a transmission of information between A and B” but as “an ‘effect of meaning’ between A and B”. A and B “designate specific places in the structure of a social formation” and they “are represented in the discursive processes in which they are brought into play” (PÊCHEUX, 2014, p. 81, author's italics, my translation). As it is an effect of meaning, the discourse is always in motion; it is “an ongoing process” and, thus, one of the practices that constitutes “the society in History” (ORLANDI, 2012, p. 71, my translation).

This means conceiving the relations of meaning from a perspective supported by the historical materialism, taking into account 1) the ideology⁵ as constitutive of meaning and subjects, 2) the discourse's historicity, and 3) the political division of languages. Thus, according to Pêcheux (1988, p. 82, author's italics, my translation), “every discursive process is inscribed in an ideological relationship of social classes”.

¹ The PSL, political party through which the former president Jair Bolsonaro was elected in 2018, aligned with conservatism and neoliberalism, presented, as its main guidelines, the defense of public security and support for the military and civil police; the protection of private property; the repeal of the Disarmament Statute; the defense of the Minimal State and of the free private initiative.

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⁵ According to Althusser (1996, p. 131, my translation), “there is no practice, except by and in an ideology”; as well as “there is no ideology, except by the subject and for subjects”.

My interest is to reflect on the ways of saying about women by women, subject to capitalism, and the effects of meaning produced in/by their discourse. Specifically, I am interested in shedding light on the discourse produced by right-wing women who occupy positions in public governance in Brazil. In 2018, Soraya Thronicke was elected senator for the state of *Mato Grosso do Sul* and leader of the *PSL Mulher* – a group whose agenda was allegedly aimed at women's interests in Brazilian society. Joice Hasselmann was elected federal deputy for the state of *São Paulo* – the second most voted candidate for this position, with more than 1 million votes⁶. Janaína Paschoal was elected state deputy of *São Paulo*, being the most voted candidate in the history of Brazil⁷, with more than 2 million votes.

The motivation for this study has come, therefore, from the political situation after the 2018 elections in Brazil, which indicated, on the one hand, the growth of the PSL due to the expansion of the popularity of Jair Bolsonaro and his supporters; on the other hand, a more evident social inclination towards political values aligned with the right-wing spectrum, that is, towards neoliberalism and conservatism.

Despite the significant growth of the *Partido Social Liberal*, throughout the development of this article, in mid-October 2019 a crisis⁸ was established within the PSL, related to the control of the party and its budget, resulting in a fracture between the President of the Republic and the party president, Luciano Bivar, which consequently led to Jair Bolsonaro's departure⁹ from the PSL. As a result of this split, the PSL was weakened and suffered numerous defeats¹⁰ in the 2020 municipal elections¹¹.

In this article, I am interested in understanding the movements in the meaning of the word *woman* in the discourse of right-wing female parliamentarians specifically produced in the 2018 post-election political situation. Through the analytical movement of contrast and opposition, the discursive materialities¹² are conceived by the primacy of non-homogeneity, which means that any enunciation takes place from a permanent dispute, that is, from the conflict among different ways of saying something and from the incessant dispute of meanings in History. Thus, my analyses, by shedding light on the divisions in the meaning of *woman*, will be based on “[...] putting what is said in relation to what is unsaid, what the subject says in one place with what is said in another place, what is said in one way with what is said in another way, trying to hear, in what the subject says, what they do not say but which also constitutes the meaning of their words” (ORLANDI, 2012, p. 59, my translation).

The theoretical anchorage of Discourse Analysis implies assuming that meanings are divided and present a socio-historically determined specification. It is always in a historical and social practice that enunciation happens, configuring disputes for “unequally distributed *ways and rights of saying*” (ZOPPI FONTANA, 2015, p. 273, author's italics, my translation), and also producing meanings inscribed in disparate relations of dominance.

⁶ Source: VEJA os 20 candidatos a deputado federal mais votados em SP. *GI*, São Paulo, October 8th 2018.

⁷ Source: JANAÍNA Paschoal é a deputada mais votada na história do país. *GI*, São Paulo, October 7th 2018.

⁸ Source: ENTENDA o racha entre Jair Bolsonaro e o PSL. *GI*, Caderno Política, October 18th 2019.

⁹ Source: BOLSONARO anuncia saída do PSL e criação de novo partido. *GI*, Caderno Política, November 12th 2019.

¹⁰ Of the 731 mayor candidates launched by the PSL, only 90 were elected – none of them in the 100 largest cities in the country. Source: COSTA, R. Reatar com presidente ou se livrar dos bolsonaristas? PSL vive dilema após fracasso eleitoral. *Gazeta do Povo*, Brasília, November 23rd 2020.

¹¹ Joice Hasselmann also lost her influence and political strength after the fracture of the PSL and the break with Bolsonaro's supporters. In the municipal elections of 2020, running for the mayor position of the city of *São Paulo*, Hasselmann obtained around 100 thousand votes, which represents only 1.84% of the valid votes. Sources: 1) PIRES, S. Eleita com mais de 1 milhão de votos há dois anos, Joice Hasselmann faz menos de 100 mil em 2020. *GZH*, Porto Alegre, November 17th 2020.; 2) COVAS e Boulos disputam 2º turno em São Paulo. *GI*, São Paulo, November 15th 2020.

¹² From the perspective of materialist discourse analysis, verbal language has its materiality. Language is organized by its *material form*, which Orlandi (2007) distinguishes from an empirical form and an abstract form. The abstract form is taken as an element of a system; the empirical form corresponds to the result of the process of signification. The material form is taken in the process of language's inscription in history, that is, it is a significant linguistic-historical form. Thus, if the materiality of ideology is the discourse and the materiality of discourse is the text, in which the material forms of language are integrated, I assume, with Orlandi (1996, p. 14, my translation), that “any change in the materiality of the text corresponds to different gestures of interpretation, different pieces of memory, different relationships with externality”.

Relations of power, which determine the sayable and the silenced, that is, the possibilities of saying and not saying, establish meanings. From the analysis of the discursive materialities, I am interested in showing the divisions in the meanings of the word *woman* produced in/by the discourse of right-wing women who occupy positions in public governance, as well as the subject-position or subject-positions from what this discourse is produced, considering, for this, the formation, characteristics, and memory that this position or these positions cut out to produce meaning.

In the following sections, I examine, in the statements of the three female parliamentarians (J.H., J.P., and S.T.), the clash between the meanings of the nominations *feminine women* and *feminist women*, which produces an oppositional effect that signifies in relation to a subject-position aligned with conservatism and meritocracy (section 2). I also analyze the meanings of the word *woman* in laws and public policies elaborated by the three female parliamentarians. Based on a neoliberal and universalizing discourse, on one hand, they erase the divisions between women in society via the functioning of a homogenization imaginary about women's demands and urgencies (section 3). On the other hand, they silence violence and gender inequalities, presented in their statements as a private and individual issue and not as a collective and social problem (section 4). Finally, in the light of the debates held by Davis (2016), Federici (2017), and Akotirene (2019), I bring a review of the main reflections developed throughout the article, as well as a glimpse of possible ways of confronting the right-wing discourse and its deleterious social effects.

2 A CLASH BETWEEN FEMININE WOMEN AND FEMINIST WOMEN

In the discourse produced by right-wing female parliamentarians, there is a clash between what is presented as the order of femininity and as the order of the feminist movement, through an oppositional effect between the nominations *feminine women* and *feminist women*.

The discursive sequences below are excerpts from interviews given to *Uol Universa* news portal and to *Marie Claire* magazine by the congresswomen Soraya Thronicke¹³, Joice Hasselmann¹⁴, and Janaina Paschoal¹⁵. According to Orlandi (1984, p. 14, my translation), an excerpt is “a discursive unit. By discursive unit we mean correlated language-and-situation fragments. Thus, an excerpt is a fragment of the discursive situation”. Orlandi (1984) also points out that the selection of the excerpts varies according to the conditions of production, as well as the objective and scope of the analysis. It is not, therefore, a mere segmentation, but an analytical gesture so that the analysis of the excerpts that make up a text leads to the interpretation of that text (GUIMARÃES, 1987), which allows us to observe the movement of meanings in it and the discursive process to which it refers.

The word *woman* means, whether elliptically in excerpt (1), or presently in excerpt (2), by the effect of opposition between *feminine* and *feminism/feminist*, as well as by the marks of the first person of the plural, that is, the subject (*we*), the adjective pronoun (*our*) and the possessive pronoun (*ours*). Let's take a look at the discursive sequences below:

(1) Our agenda is conservative. We defend values such as the protection of life, we are against abortion, against drugs, in favor of morality, patriotism, and family. Feminist women have a pro-abortion agenda and other positions, different from ours. Another thing is respect for language: I don't accept being called *presidenta*. I'm *presidente*. I also believe that we have to come together, men and women; and feminists never praise or thank a man. I always do that. That's why I say that our agendas are feminist... Sorry! Feminine. (S.T., 2019, my translation)¹⁶

¹³ Source: BRANDALISE, C. Presidente do PSL Mulher: Bolsonaro é um doce, e feminista não diz obrigada. *Universa Uol*, June 3rd 2019.

¹⁴ Sources: 1) BRANDALISE, C. “Feministas têm comportamento vexaminoso”, diz Joice Hasselmann. *Universa Uol*, November 1st 2018.; 2) CORTÊZ, N. Joice Hasselmann: a deputada de extrema direita que se compara a Bolsonaro e despreza o feminismo. *Marie Claire*, December 7th 2018.

¹⁵ Sources: 1) SOUTO, L. “Estou chocada com o presidente”, diz Janaina Paschoal sobre Bolsonaro. *Universa Uol*, July 25th 2019.; 2) CORTÊZ, N. Janaina Paschoal não descarta escrever um novo processo de impeachment. *Marie Claire*, March 25th 2019.

¹⁶ Source: BRANDALISE, C. Presidente do PSL Mulher: Bolsonaro é um doce, e feminista não diz obrigada. *Universa Uol*, June 3rd 2019.

(2) Feminism has a reductionist agenda that reaches just a few women. I criticize the victimization defended by the feminism; I criticize this idea of a woman against a man, a man against a woman. That's lame. Compartmentalizing is lame. A woman does not have to be greater than a man. She has to be what she is. If she wants to be a housewife, what's the problem? And I think it's funny to take to the streets and show the breasts. It doesn't represent what the woman wants. If it represented, there would be a feminist woman elected with the highest vote in history and not a right-wing woman who respects the spaces of men and women. I want to lead a feminine movement in Brazil. (J.H., 2019, my translation)¹⁷

The comparison of (1) and (2) gives visibility to a division between the so-called feminine women and the so-called feminist women. In (1), this division is built by the functioning of the marks of the first person of plural, which produces an effect of opposition between *us* and *them*: the marks of 'we'¹⁸ point to the president of *PSL Mulher*¹⁹, to the group's participants and to those who are aligned with the group's values and projects, establishing, in this alignment, an opponent: the feminist women.

The divisions in the meaning of the word *woman* are produced not only by the marks of the first person of plural in (1), but also by the oppositional effect between *feminine* and *feminist* in (2). Both functionings point to different ways of saying about women in Brazilian society. The so-called "feminine women" in (1) are described as those whose values are conservative: against abortion and drugs, in favor of life (which is not the life of the woman in her psychosocial conditions, but the maintenance of the biological life of the fetus), of the (Judeo-Christian) morality, the patriotism, and the (heterosexual and binary) family. Thus, there are disputes not only about the meaning of *woman*, but also about the meanings of *life*, *morality*, *family*, and *patriotism*, which, however, present themselves by an effect of strict interpretation, that is, as unambiguous and evident objects.

By meaning women as those who *respect language*, the discourse of the congresswomen represents the so-called "feminine women" as normative and conservative regarding the demands for modification in words' gender. Therefore, as defenders of a supposedly pure language, which reinforces reactionary guidelines. The following paraphrases are possible:

- a) I respect language, but I don't respect non-binarism.
- b) Language deserves respect, but the demand for a non-binary language does not.
- c) Language is respectable and non-binarism is not.

The statement of the parliamentarian establishes both a projection on women and a projection on language, which disqualifies the non-binarism and indicates that language not only reflects, but also structures social oppressions, and more specifically, gender oppressions.

Values such as conservatism, tradition, exacerbated nationalism, and devotion to the homeland are characteristics of authoritarian regimes and were strongly present in the totalitarian experiences of fascism and nazism witnessed by the 20th century. According to Trindade (1981), in the 1930s, in Brazil, such authoritarian values were the motto of the *Ação Integralista Brasileira* (AIB), which, inspired by Italian fascism and led by Plínio Salgado, a conservative Brazilian politician, was the first mass organization in the country, including sectors of the working class and the middle classes. Thus, the return of these values in the right-wing

¹⁷ Source: CORTÊZ, N. Joice Hasselmann: a deputada de extrema direita que se compara a Bolsonaro e despreza o feminismo. *Marie Claire*, December 7th 2018.

¹⁸ According to Benveniste (2005), the category of person *I/me* presents, as characteristics, uniqueness and subjectivity, which makes its pluralization impossible. In this sense, "we" is not a multiplication of identical objects but a *junction* between the 'me' and the 'not-me', whatever the content of that 'not-me' may be. This joining forms a new totality and of a totally particular type in which the components are not equivalent: [...] there is only 'we' from 'I' and this 'I' subjects the 'not-me' element by its transcendent quality" (BENVENISTE, 2005, p. 256, author's italics, my translation). The linguist also points out that 'we' can be exclusive (*I + them*) or inclusive (*I + you*), concluding that 'we' is characterized by an indistinct globality, an amplification of 'I': "it is not a quantified or multiplied 'I', it is an 'I' expanded beyond the strict person and, at the same time, increased and with vague outlines" (BENVENISTE, 2005, p. 258, author's italics, my translation).

¹⁹ A possible question regarding the existence of the *PSL Mulher* would be: why would an anti-feminist political party propose an exclusive front for women? In what failure of ideology and in what gap in the feminist demand is it possible to install an anti-feminist agenda called "feminine"? Although the specific analysis of the *PSL Mulher* nomination is not part of the scope of this study, such questions are thought-provoking and, not going unnoticed, erupt in the analysis process.

congresswomen discourse shows the functioning of the interdiscourse, the discursive memory, affiliated with a fascist and a conservative right-wing subject-position.

The meanings of *feminine/femininity* also appear in the discursive materiality of the bills elaborated by the congresswomen, affecting how women are represented in society and, therefore, establishing their ways of social existence as well as divisions characterized by the dominance of one group and the exclusion of others. See below the sequence (i), an excerpt from Bill 912/2019²⁰, proposed by the state deputy Janaína Paschoal. This bill legislates about the right to a companion in the postoperative period of mastectomy:

(i) In addition to the physical effects, it is clear and widely known that the emotional consequences caused by mastectomy are immeasurable, especially for women, who are the main victims of breast cancer. Indeed, the woman, at first, goes through the shock and emotional pain of knowing that she has cancer. In a second moment, when she receives a medical opinion against less invasive treatments, the woman goes through the difficult decision of proceeding with the total removal of the breast. Submitted to mastectomy, the woman, in most cases, is taken by numerous psychic changes, such as decreased self-esteem and impairment of sexuality. This is because the breast represents, for the vast majority of women, a symbol of femininity so its removal brings with it the fear of no longer being accepted by their partner. (PL 912/2019, by J. P., my translation)

A document, formulated from an (Ideological) State Apparatus²¹, as understood by Althusser (1966), is always political²², that is, constituted by contradictions. Therefore, the meaning production process that constitutes any state document occurs anchored in an ideological position. In this same direction, Pêcheux (1988, p. 132, author's italics, my translation) states that "the ideological instance exists under the form of *ideological formations* (referred here to as the Ideological State Apparatuses), which, at the same time, have a 'regional' character and comprise social class positions".

The discursive sequence above produces a biological and universalizing bias for the meaning of the word *woman*, which then represents only those who have breasts – allegedly *a symbol of femininity*, responsible for their self-esteem. By producing meaning from the functioning of an imaginary in which women are defined biologically, there is also an erasure of transgender subjects who may be submitted to such a surgical procedure but are not included in the bill's justification. Although the first article of Bill 912/2019 generally refers to *patients*²³, the target of this law is women, signified only by biological aspects, in a cisheteronormative discourse produced from a conservative right-wing subject-position.

In this sense, I highlight the following statement from the discursive sequence (2), above: "A woman does not have to be greater than a man. She has to be what she is. If she wants to be a housewife, what's the problem?". The defense of a supposed feminine essence is

²⁰ SÃO PAULO. *Projeto de Lei nº 912/2019, de 15 de agosto de 2019*. Garante o direito a acompanhante no pós-operatório aos pacientes submetidos à mastectomia, na rede pública ou privada de saúde do Estado. São Paulo: Assembleia Legislativa do Estado de São Paulo (ALESP), 2019.

²¹ The *State Apparatus* is, according to Althusser (1996), the State itself as "a force of repressive execution and intervention, 'at the service of the ruling classes', in the class struggle led by the bourgeoisie and its allies against the proletariat" (p. 111, author's italics, my translation). The *State Apparatus* contains the government, the army, the police, the courts, etc., and, because it works through violence, it is a repressive apparatus – repression that can take place both physically and administratively. The *Ideological State Apparatuses* are presented "in the form of distinct and specialized institutions" (p. 114) – churches, schools, political parties, newspapers – and function by ideology. More specifically, it is the ideology of the ruling class, the one which holds the state power (the [*Repressive*] *State Apparatus*), which takes place in the *Ideological State Apparatus*, thus ensuring "the reproduction of production relations, that is, the capitalist relations of exploitation" and, therefore, the oppression of the dominated social classes (ALTHUSSER, 1996, p. 121, my translation). Based on this conceptualization, Althusser (1996, p. 129, my translation) elaborates his thesis that ideology has a material existence, since it "always exists in an apparatus and in its practice or practices."

²² The *political*, in a materialist position about the language, is not restricted to public governance relations; it "refers to social practices in general, in which language is fundamental" (ELIAS DE OLIVEIRA, 2014, p. 44-45, my translation) and, therefore, it is characteristic of all saying. Thinking about the political in language is taking it as the basis and foundation of social relations themselves. In this way, I understand the political, according to Orlandi (1998, p. 74, my translation), as the constitutive contradiction of the processes of meaning production: "the political understood discursively implies that meaning is always divided, and this division has a direction that is not indifferent to the injunctions of power relations that derive from the organization of society in history".

²³ "Article 1 - It is guaranteed, in all hospitals or health care establishments, in the public or private network of the State of São Paulo, *the right to a companion for patients undergoing mastectomy*, during the entire period of hospitalization in the postoperative period" (SÃO PAULO. *Projeto de Lei nº 912/2019, de 15 de agosto de 2019*. Garante o direito a acompanhante no pós-operatório aos pacientes submetidos à mastectomia, na rede pública ou privada de saúde do Estado. São Paulo: Assembleia Legislativa do Estado de São Paulo (ALESP), 2019, my emphasis and my translation).

presented as evidence: *to be what she is*. Emphasis on the example – to be a *housewife* – which affiliates the discourse of the right-wing female parliamentarians to conservatism and tradition, recalling (and also celebrating) the values of the cisheteronormative family and the patriarchy. Their discourse produces an imaginary of universal femininity as if every woman is (or aspires to be) a mother and responsible for taking care of the household.

Such discursive functioning silences what is flagrant in Federici's work (2017): the discrimination against women in society as a consequence of the primitive accumulation of capital. The author's reflection points out that the origin of the social role of the *housewife* is intrinsically related to capitalism's process of formation in which women were made invisible and socially relegated to domestic service, that is, to the generation of workers and to the of capacity of work regeneration – having children and taking care of these children so that they can later enter the labor market. In the same direction, Davis (2016) analyzes the *housewife* as a symbol of the middle classes and the bourgeoisie. According to her, the nineteenth-century ideology established the housewife and the mother as models of femininity for white women, which led to gender inequality at work, alienating women from the labor market and making it mostly male.

The statement that a woman *has to be what she is* as well as the example of the female social role as a housewife produce an update of a discursive memory that inscribes the discourse of the congresswomen in a semantic network in which the condition of women is presented as based on their alienation from the labor market and their devaluation in society.

"Feminist women", in turn, mean, in the discursive sequences (1) and (2) above, as rude and as those who lack politeness. Their social performance is depreciated by being associated with the alleged fact of not praising others or saying "thank you". In this direction, *feminism* means a movement whose agenda is *reductionist* and *victimistic* regarding the condition of women in society, promoting confrontations between men and women, and street demonstrations in which women only *show their breasts*.

The meaning of *feminist women* is constructed as opposed to the meaning of *feminine women*. The predication of *feminist women* as pro-abortion, in (1), for example, confirms this opposition, reducing the plurality of feminist movements and thus producing a homogenization effect over them. Thus, "feminist women" means contrary to the values defended by the right-wing congresswomen, that is, contrary to life – the biological life of the fetus –, to family – the cisheteronormative family – and to patriotism.

There is a dispute between what is presented as the order of *femininity* and the order of *feminism*, whose principles and causes are divergent – despite the intriguing lapse committed by Soraya Thronicke (excerpt (1)) when swapping the word *feminine* for *feminist*. There is, thus, a gap between what was the intended enunciation and the words uttered by the congresswoman, frustrating the act²⁴ and, at the same time, pointing to the constitutive contradiction of each and every discourse. There is, according to Courtine (2014), a driving contradiction that constitutively affects any analysis material, since statements are always divided, and always pursued by their other. In other words, discursive materialities "are related by contradiction, each one putting to work the incompleteness of the other" (LAGAZZI, 2009, p. 69, my translation). There is, therefore, no homogeneity in discourse, but an overdetermination of alterities and a functioning of non-saturation in the interpretation.

The word *feminist*, already established and grounded in discursive memory, breaks through the discursive thread of those who are opposed to feminism. Here, the ritual of ideology stumbles and shows that the dominated ideology affects the dominant ideology. The lapse committed by senator Thronicke indicates that discourse is affected by otherness, by other meanings that pursue it. According to Orlandi (2012, p. 79, author's emphasis, my translation), "the process of meaning production is necessarily subject to slippage, thus there is always a possible 'other' that constitutes it" – and that resists.

It is, therefore, the division of meaning of the word *woman* that constitutes the discourse of the right-wing female parliamentarians. In this litigation, there is a dominance of "feminine women", since "feminist women" do not find representation in their agenda.

²⁴ According to Žižek (2015, p. 74, my translation), "the unconscious intervenes when something 'limps' in the order of causality that encompasses our daily activities: a faulty act introduces a gap in the connection between intention-to-mean and words, a lapse frustrates my act..."

Feminism, in its heterogeneity and multiplicity of agendas, struggles, and demands, is thus denied in the discourse of right-wing congresswomen. However, this is not a closed opposition: there is also room for nuances and displacements. Let's see the excerpt (3):

(3) People have a concept of feminism that is distorted. Recently, I was interviewed with Joice [Hasselmann], and the journalist asked if we were feminists. I said yes and Joice got mad. "You're not, you're not," she said. I explained: "Joice, I am, because feminism has nothing to do with this stereotype of wanting to have an abortion, of taking your clothes off in a street demonstration." There has been a catch of the term feminist. What is it to be a feminist? It is to understand that a woman has to occupy the positions she deserves to occupy, that she does not have to submit herself to a subordinate situation for being a woman. That doesn't mean she has to be aggressive, that she can't get married and have children, that she can't have a life devoted to family. (J.P., 2019, my translation)²⁵

The words *feminism* and *feminist* also concentrate disputes over meaning. If, in the statements of the congresswomen Soraya Thronicke and Joice Hasselmann, there is an aversion to such names to name themselves and to speak of the women's struggle in society, Janaína Paschoal is the only one who identifies herself as a "feminist woman". At this point, a dispute is established between what is presented, on the one hand, as the distorted, stereotyped, captured feminism, that is, the feminism rejected and condemned by the congresswomen for supposedly defending abortion, nudity, aggressiveness; and, on the other hand, the feminism claimed by Janaína Paschoal, characterized by women who deserve their social position, again exemplified by the family bias, that is, by a woman who assumes the role of mother and wife.

I highlight a particular statement from the excerpt (3) that presents what it means to be a *feminist woman*: "It is to understand that a woman has to occupy the positions she *deserves* to occupy" (my emphasis). Women are signified as individually responsible for the social position they occupy. Here echoes the discourse of meritocracy, which is inscribed in a network of meanings affiliated with neoliberalism: to occupy a position in society, women need to deserve it, and deserving comes from individual effort.

This semantic network, affiliated with meritocracy and neoliberalism, silences the historical and economic process that constituted gender inequalities and the patriarchal structure of society. Federici (2017) presents the close connection between the formation of capitalism and women's discrimination and invisibility in society. Analyzing pre-capitalist Europe from a Marxist conception, the philosopher explains that the primitive accumulation of capital destroyed the collective relations among women and their systems of knowledge, which ranged from the production of consumer goods for the family and for the local community to the domain of contraceptive and abortive methods, and which "had been the basis of women's power [...], as well as the necessary condition for their resistance in the fight against feudalism" (FEDERICI, 2017, p. 205, my translation). As a direct consequence of this destruction, Federici points out that, in the late 17th century, "a new model of femininity began to emerge: the ideal woman and wife — passive, obedient, parsimonious, chaste, silent" (FEDERICI, 2017, p. 205, my translation).

In this movement, a severe criticism of the normativities that have organized society throughout history as well as the demand of feminist movements for public policies that address gender, race, and social class inequalities mean *victimization*, already present in the excerpt (2) and also in excerpt (4), below:

(4) I think it's important for women to take a leading role in what they do. It's very common for them to settle backstage. And I think it's her fault [laughs]. I'm a feminist woman hard on women. [...] I don't like the victimistic feminism. "Oh, they did this to me because I'm a woman." So, darling, let's fight! It's very practical to stay protected behind the scenes. It's hard to be at the front. You are accused, you are beaten up and you are criticized. (J.P., 2019, my translation)²⁶

²⁵ Source: CORTÊZ, N. Janaina Paschoal não descarta escrever um novo processo de impeachment. *Marie Claire*, March 25th 2019.

²⁶ Source: CORTÊZ, N. Janaina Paschoal não descarta escrever um novo processo de impeachment. *Marie Claire*, March 25th 2019.

By identifying herself as a *feminist woman hard on women*, differentiating herself from a supposed *victimistic feminism*, the discourse of the right-wing congresswomen produces, as an effect of meaning, the blaming of women for their submissive social situation, once not fighting, *settling for backstage* and *staying protected behind the scenes* mean as a practical and safe choice made by women themselves. This meaning is produced in contradiction to the feminism claimed by Janaína Paschoal, in which women are not aggressive (excerpt (3)). *Feminist woman* means from this tension between the meanings of *fighting* and *aggressiveness*, establishing, thus, a dispute in the discourse: fighting would supposedly lead to the protagonism of women, while aggressiveness would be a characteristic of the *distorted, stereotyped, and captured feminism*.

In the discourse of the right-wing female parliamentarians, women are signified, therefore, as responsible, or even guilty, for the social role they assume. This movement of meaning silences gender inequalities as a consequence of the sexist social structure and of the capitalist economic system constitution, as well as the legitimacy of feminist movements and their actions and demands for effective public policies.

3 WOMEN IN POLITICS

Akotirene (2019) discusses the development of the concept of intersectionality in feminist theories and argues for the need to consider the crossroads of race, gender, and class when elaborating public policies, since “[...] gender inequities have never affected women in analogous intensities and frequencies” (AKOTIRENE, 2019, p. 28, my translation). The Brazilian researcher points out that “gender inscribes a racialized body” (AKOTIRENE, 2019, p. 28, my translation), highlighting the importance of “thinking the racial aspects of gender discrimination without losing sight of the gender aspects of racial discrimination” (AKOTIRENE, 2019, p. 55, my translation). In this way, according to Akotirene (2019), it is decisive to articulate identity cleavages in order to overcome the cisheteronormativities and the patriarchy, as well as to combat the concept of universal woman, which has guided several public (necro)policies in Brazil and in the world: “The concept of intersectionality leads us to recognize the possibility of being oppressed and supporting violence. Not all women are white, not all black people are men and not all women are heterosexual adults [...]”. (AKOTIRENE, 2019, p. 45, my translation)

The elaboration of laws and public policies specifically aiming at women, with their different demands, needs, and interests, which are articulated by the crossroads of race and class and by identity cleavages, as well as the issue of women’s representation in public governance positions are, therefore, urgent and fundamental themes both for public debate and for the construction of an equitable society.

Questioned about these themes in the interviews conducted by *Uol Universa* and *Marie Claire*, the congresswomen Janaína Paschoal, Joice Hasselmann, and Soraya Thronicke are reticent and even opposed to the idea. They claim to legislate for *everyone*, for a supposedly homogeneous collectivity, the *nation* – signified by an imaginary of unity that silences the fact that the nation is always the product of a discursive construction, existing only as an effect of meaning. There is, therefore, in their discourse, no interest in turning their eyes to the social groups that are in the intersections, named by them as *segments* and *ghettos*:

(5) I don’t like this thing about proposing segmented projects. I was elected by Brazilians from *São Paulo*; my projects are for the nation. (J.H., 2018, my translation)²⁷

(6) I don’t have a bill only for women. Projects have to be nationwide; they cannot be segmented. Legislation is for everyone; I will not work for ghettos. (J.H., 2019, my translation)²⁸

(7) Why can’t a female candidate be regarded purely and simply as a candidate? It annoys me. So can’t I comment on topics that have nothing to do with women? Why do I need to have proposals only for women? [...] Why do

²⁷ Source: BRANDALISE, C. “Feministas têm comportamento vexaminoso”, diz Joice Hasselmann. *Universa Uol*, November 1st 2018.

²⁸ Source: CORTÊZ, N. Joice Hasselmann: a deputada de extrema direita que se compara a Bolsonaro e despreza o feminismo. *Marie Claire*, December 7th 2018.

people ask me what I'm going to do for women? Do you sit down with a politician or a scholar and ask them "what are you going to do for men"? (J.P., 2019, my translation)²⁹

Despite what is stated in the interviews, there is a contradiction: the same congresswomen propose programs that aim at greater participation of women in public governance positions, and they also prepare bills whose scope includes specific aspects of women's lives in society, such as the *Programa Mulher Senadora*³⁰, by Soraya Thronicke; the protective measure for victims of domestic violence (Bill 11/2019)³¹, proposed by Joice Hasselmann; the right to a companion in the postoperative period of the mastectomy (Bill 912/2019), mentioned above, the teaching of wrestling for girls at schools (Bill 643/2019)³², and the guarantee for the pregnant woman to opt for a cesarean section (Bill 435/2019)³³, formulated by Janaína Paschoal.

This movement highlights the ritual of ideology's flaws and gaps in the discourse of the right-wing congresswomen. According to Pêcheux (1988), full and perfect subjection is impossible and, therefore, does not happen without cracks in the process of interpellation. By proposing bills and public policies aimed at women – and, let us not forget, by inaugurating a group within the party entitled *PSL Mulher* –, the parliamentarians are responding, in some way, to feminist agendas, which indicates a process of affectation of the dominant ideology by the dominated ideology. However, the solution proposed by the congresswomen to the social issue of gender oppression is always via neoliberalism:

(8) I want to work with women because they've always been sort of left aside when it comes to politics; especially the ones who joined it because of a family tradition and not because they wanted to. But look, we're on the sidelines of politics because we wanted to. Women say that politics is a very dirty place – and it really is. We need to go in to clean it up. (J.H., 2019, my translation)³⁴

Sort of left aside is the formulation that signifies women in their relationship with politics. The adverbial phrase *sort of* minimizes the intensity of the exclusion of women from positions in public governance, reducing the social importance of the fact and discrediting it as a reality to be confronted, as a problem triggered by the structure of society. What follows confirms: "we're on the sidelines of politics *because we wanted to*" (my italics). Women are held responsible for their condition of being banned from politics, a situation that means as a result of their individual will.

This way of meaning women is produced from a subject-position that insists on returning to the discourse: a neoliberal and reactionary subject-position, which is based on meritocracy as the answer and the solution to any social inequalities. This subject-position recalls and updates the representation of women as confined to domestic services and subject to the same social role, no

²⁹ Source: CORTÊZ, N. Janaina Paschoal não descarta escrever um novo processo de impeachment. *Marie Claire*, March 25th 2019.

³⁰ "Single paragraph. The program is designed to provide women with knowledge about the structure and functioning of the Brazilian Legislative Power, as well as to encourage a permanent relationship between the female citizens and the Federal Senate". (BRASIL. *Projeto de Resolução do Senado nº 80, de 2019*. Cria o Programa Mulher Senadora no âmbito do Senado Federal. Brasília, DF: Senado Federal, 2019, my translation.).

³¹ "Article 1 – This law provides for the right of domestic violence victims to have their request for a protective measure granted by the police authority", without having to wait for a judge to be granted. (BRASIL. *Projeto de Lei nº 11, de 08 de fevereiro de 2019*. Dispõe sobre o direito da vítima de violência doméstica ter o seu pedido de medida protetiva concedido pela autoridade policial. Brasília, DF: Câmara dos Deputados, 2019, my translation.).

³² "Article 1 – In order to provide women with the conditions to defend themselves against any form of violence, one of the weekly Physical Education classes will be aimed at teaching some type of physical fight to female students in Elementary School and in High School". (SÃO PAULO. *Projeto de Lei nº 643/2019, de 15 de maio de 2019*. Determina que uma das aulas semanais de Educação Física seja destinada ao ensino de alguma modalidade de luta corporal às alunas, tanto no Ensino Fundamental como no Ensino Médio. São Paulo: Assembleia Legislativa do Estado de São Paulo (ALESP), 2019, my translation.).

³³ "It guarantees the pregnant woman the possibility to opt for a cesarean delivery from the thirty-ninth week of pregnancy, as well as analgesia, even when natural birth is chosen. Article 1 – The parturient has the right to an elective cesarean, which must be respected in her autonomy. § 1 – Elective cesarean will only be performed after 39 (thirty-nine) weeks of gestation after the parturient has been made aware and informed about the benefits of normal delivery and the risks of successive cesarean sections. § 2 – In the event that the mother's option for a cesarean is not observed, the doctor will be obliged to record the reasons in the medical record". (SÃO PAULO. *Projeto de Lei nº 435/2019, de 10 de abril de 2019*. Garante à gestante a possibilidade de optar pelo parto cesariano, a partir da trigésima nona semana de gestação, bem como a analgesia, mesmo quando escolhido o parto normal. São Paulo: Assembleia Legislativa do Estado de São Paulo (ALESP), 2019, my translation.).

³⁴ Source: CORTÊZ, N. Joice Hasselmann: a deputada de extrema direita que se compara a Bolsonaro e despreza o feminismo. *Marie Claire*, December 7th 2018.

matter where they are: “Women say that politics is a very dirty place – and it really is. *We need to go in to clean it up*” (excerpt (8), my italics). This statement could be paraphrased by:

- a) Women’s role is to clean up the dirt.
- b) Women should clean up the dirt produced by men.
- c) Women’s role in politics is to clean up the place.

The conservative and sexist discourse of the right-wing congresswomen means *women*, therefore, as servants and responsible for organizing the chaos generated by men.

The discursive sequence (9) presents the priorities of *PSL Mulher*, which works in partnership with the *Instituto de Inovação e Governança* (Indigo) on a project to enable women for politics:

(9) I will work in partnership with Indigo (*Instituto de Inovação e Governança*, created by PSL) to enable women for politics. That’s the priority. We will organize self-help lectures in 27 Brazilian states and not only teach economic and political issues, but also raise their self-esteem. Many women don’t get into this sphere because they think they can’t. We want to inspire them with our cases: 90% of the women in PSL are in their first mandate. We want to have 40% of female participation in the party and go beyond the legal requirement, which is 30%. There will be a fight to protect women, but this is an obvious motto. I want to bring different things. Domestic violence and femicide are commonplaces. (S.T., 2019, my translation)³⁵

The project’s objectives enumeration produce meanings for the word *woman*: enabling women for politics means providing *self-help lectures* to *raise their self-esteem* and to *inspire them*. The effect of meaning produced is that the minority participation of women in the National Congress is a mere consequence of low self-esteem and lack of inspiration and, thus, an individual responsibility, which produces an erasure of the historical processes that established gender inequalities in society.

In this semantic movement, the right-wing congresswomen’s discourse is produced from an interdiscourse’s region that, by updating a memory, resumes a meritocratic discourse and inscribes it at the level of formulation in order to present it as an argument for the low representation of women in politics. Therefore, the meaning of the word *woman* is linked to a neoliberal discourse, which erases the constitutive divisions among women in society and their different demands and urgencies, producing an imaginary of homogenization and of universality.

Akotirene (2019) exposes the necropolitics engendered by the public power that, by meaning women as universal subjects, disregard intersectional crossroads, such as race, class, and gender. According to the researcher, it is essential to consider intersectionality for the analysis of the structural conditions that permeate the subjects: “Intersectionality allows feminist movements political criticality in order to understand the fluidity of subordinate identities imposed on prejudices, gender, class, and race subordinations and on the structural oppressions of the colonial matrix from which they emerge”. (AKOTIRENE, 2019, p. 37-38, my translation).

At the same time, in the discourse of right-wing female parliamentarians, there is an erasure of the urgency and the topicality³⁶ of the fight against femicide, mitigated in its importance by the operator “but”, which reverses the orientation of the sentence: “There will be a fight to protect women, *but* this is an obvious motto” (excerpt (9), my italics). The fight against gender violence is undermined as an obvious motto, as a *commonplace*.

Instead of fighting against femicide, there is a proposal of alleged innovation that is, however, undefined: *I want to bring different things*. There is no explicit statement about what these “different things” would be; however, there is an effect of evidence due to the

³⁵ Source: BRANDALISE, C. Presidente do PSL Mulher: Bolsonaro é um doce, e feminista não diz obrigada. *Universa Uol*, June 3rd 2019.

³⁶ According to a *G1* report from April 2019, cases of femicide increased by 76% in the 1st quarter of 2019 in *São Paulo*, which points to the need, among other actions, for a consistent debate in society about domestic violence and its harmful effects. Source: ACAYABA, C.; ARCOVERDE, L. Casos de feminicídio aumentam 76% no 1º trimestre de 2019 em SP; número de mulheres vítimas de homicídio cai. *G1 SP e GloboNews*, São Paulo, April 29th 2019.

lack of specificity on them: the effect that “everyone knows what I’m talking about here”. *PSL Mulher*’s proposals are diluted in vagueness and indefiniteness, thus minimizing and devaluing the agenda for the fight against gender violence.

4 SELF-DEFENSE: THE GREAT SOLUTION?

Even though devaluing the seriousness of gender violence and of the sexist social structure, a specific way to solve this problem appears in the right-wing congresswomen’s discourse: self-defense.

(10) I know how to defend myself from rape. Krav Maga. With just one move, I take down any man of any size who tries to touch me. (J.H., 2019, my translation)³⁷

In a sexual violence situation, the parliamentarian claims to know how to make Krav maga³⁸ moves that would defend her and overthrow *any man of any size*. The effect of meaning produced here is that women are only raped because they do not know how to defend themselves. Therefore, the fight against machismo and its violence is presented as women’s responsibility, and not a social, public, and collective issue. The discourse of right-wing female parliamentarians means gender violence and sexism as individual and private challenges.

The right-wing female parliamentarians’ most encouraging resource is self-defense by a physical practice, that is, by fighting – which appears in legal documents and so constitutes public (necro)policies. Bill 643/2019 determines the teaching of wrestling to Elementary and High School students:

(ii) Article 1 – In order to provide women with conditions to defend themselves against any form of violence, one of the weekly Physical Education classes will be aimed at teaching girls some form of physical fight, both in Elementary School and in High School. [...] Jocelyn Hollander, an American researcher who has been dedicated to the subject for a long time, has already asserted on several occasions that knowledge of self-defense techniques improves the quality of life of women in various fields. In addition to increasing their self-esteem and confidence, it increases their abilities to recognize threatening behavior and increases their physical competence, which helps them not only to be able to resist attacks but also to reduce the onset of aggression against them. In other words, women who have been trained in self-defense techniques are able to prevent violence from occurring even before it starts (HOLLANDER, Jocelyn A. “The importance of self-defense training for sexual violence prevention.” In: *Feminism & Psychology*, vol. 26, n. 02, 2016, p. 210/211). [...] In addition to the necessary long-term solutions, which seek to face the structural problems of society, it is imperative to adopt strategies that can be promptly implemented and that bring immediate results in terms of reducing the rates of violence against women – and, at this point, the acquisition of knowledge of self-defense techniques has proved to be the most effective measure (HOLLANDER, Jocelyn A. “The importance of self-defense training for sexual violence prevention.” In *Feminism & Psychology*, vol. 26, n. 02, 2016, p. 219). [...] It doesn’t matter if JUDO, KARATE, KRAV MAGA, TAEKWONDO, JIU JITSU, KUNG FU, MUAY THAI, among many other modalities of fight and self-defense, what matters is to prepare women to take care of themselves, without depending on anyone, not even on the State. [...] It is also imperative to recognize that this Bill is not only related to the Education theme but also (and perhaps mainly) to Public Security, as its objective is precisely to prevent violence against women. This project is avant-garde, as it addresses the issue of violence against women not from the perspective of the woman who needs to be tutored, but from the perspective of the woman who must be prepared not to need a tutorial. If approved, in the medium and long term, women will be able to effectively defend themselves and prevent many crimes from happening. (PL 643/2019, by J. P., my translation)³⁹

³⁷ Source: CORTÊZ, N. Joice Hasselmann: a deputada de extrema direita que se compara a Bolsonaro e despreza o feminismo. *Marie Claire*, December 7th 2018.

³⁸ Self-defense practice developed in Israel in the 1940s.

³⁹ Source: SÃO PAULO. *Projeto de Lei nº 643/2019, de 15 de maio de 2019*. Determina que uma das aulas semanais de Educação Física seja destinada ao ensino de alguma modalidade de luta corporal às alunas, tanto no Ensino Fundamental como no Ensino Médio. São Paulo: Assembleia Legislativa do Estado de São Paulo (ALESP), 2019.

The proposal of Bill 643/2019 is to provide young girls with conditions to face situations of violence. The way presented for this is by learning modalities of corporal fight –judo, karate, kung fu, krav maga –, which indicates that only physical violence is taken into account by this bill, silencing the possibility of women suffering other types of violence, such as psychological, moral and patrimonial.

The discursive sequence (ii), above, means self-defense practices as a way of *improving women's quality of life, raising their self-esteem and confidence, increasing their physical capacity*, as well as a resource that allows them to recognize imminent aggression, to resist to attacks and even *to avoid the occurrence of violence*. The proposal of the congresswomen to reduce gender violence is to prepare women for their self-defense; it is to entrust them with the task of their own security. The discourse is thus inscribed in a semantic network that produces the exaltation of individuality and of a supposed subject's autonomy while exempting the State from the responsibility of protecting citizens: *what matters is to prepare women to take care of themselves, without depending on anyone, not even on the State*.

This semantic network inscribed in the thread of the right-wing congresswomen's discourse is affiliated with an interdiscourse region that updates the discourse of neoliberalism, exalting individuality, that is, supposed individual freedom to act and a supposed consequent merit of that action.

All responsibility rests with the subject; the State and society are exempt. This is the government project outlined by the discourse of right-wing female parliamentarians: a minimal state which does not intervene in the protection and care of citizens; and, in turn, citizens responsible for themselves, masters of their destiny and circumstances. In short, the discourse of right-wing congresswomen produces an exaltation of self-defense, autonomy, and individualism, which determines a neoliberal way of life and, in such a manner, women's position in society. Responsible for themselves, they must be prepared for everything, as there is no one to defend them or watch them but themselves. The State withdraws.

5 FINAL REMARKS (OR: IS IT POSSIBLE TO GLIMPSE RESISTANCE STRATEGIES?)

Developed in the light of the materialist discourse analysis in an interface with the anticapitalist feminist theories, this article aimed at giving visibility to the divisions in the meaning of the word *woman* and to the clash between the ways of saying about women in the discourse of right-wing female parliamentarians, produced from a conservative and neoliberal subject-position.

The semantic movements in the discourse of the congresswomen present an opposition effect between *feminine women* and *feminist women* in which there is a dominance of femininity and the denial of feminism. A feminine woman means one who values the (biological) life, the (Judeo-Christian) morality, the patriotism, and the (heterosexual and binary) family; as one who praises and is grateful to men; and one who needs the inspiration to conquer a greater social position. In addition, the discourse of the right-wing female parliamentarians means women by the functioning of an imaginary of universality: they are defined by biological characteristics (menstruation, pregnancy, breastfeeding) and by a heterosexual orientation.

The imaginary of a universal woman erases the social intersections, disregarding relations between gender, race, and class in the proposal of public policies. Therefore, the word *woman* means from a semantic network affiliated with conservatism and with the values of patriarchy, that is, the conception of women as housewives and mothers, confined to domestic services and excluded from the labor market and from positions in public governance.

In the right-wing congresswomen's discourse, women's political struggle is reduced to a matter of self-help, proactivity, and inspiration, which means that every woman, individually, is the only one responsible for their success, their social representativeness, and even their safety. The neoliberal and meritocratic discourse produces an erasure of the minority position occupied by the right-wing female parliamentarians, that is, of their condition as women in a macho society. Because they occupy a privileged social position – white, heterosexual, high middle class –, they do not suffer from race and class oppressions; and because

existing gender laws protect them, the female parliamentarians deny the gravity and even the existence of machismo, misogyny, and gender violence. The oppressive discourse of neoliberalism works, therefore, as a shield for the maintenance of social asymmetries.

Then what resistance strategies to the normativity's discourse could be glimpsed?

Both Davis and Federici ponder women and gender relations in capitalism and the deleterious effects of this predatory economic system regarding the division of social roles and women's participation in the political sphere. Davis and Federici also propose ways of questioning and challenging women's oppressions by the disarticulation of monopoly capitalism, which sustains and benefits from sexism.

Davis (2016) shows that feminist movements and gender equality struggles are inseparable from an antiracist fight. Federici (2017), in turn, shows the impossibility of a feminist movement that is not anti-capitalist. Akotirene (2019) explains that the necropolitics engendered by governments is a consequence of conceiving women by an imaginary of universality, that is, without considering intersectional crossroads. Race, class, and gender are, therefore, inescapable: evaluating the condition of women in society for the elaboration of public laws and policies implies considering such intersections and also the nuances of the oppressions – the social experience of gender varies according to race and class, which cannot be ignored by the feminist movements.

By means of a democratic libertarian subject-position in the interdiscourse that interrogates the meanings of *woman* produced by normativity, it becomes possible to introduce “political demands for recognition and discursive resistance practices” (ZOPPI FONTANA, 2018, p. 66, my translation). Therefore, it is fundamental and urgent in any society: 1) assertive initiatives that defend the political-social cause of gender inequalities and violence against women, 2) collective actions considering women's participation in positions of power, 3) and also resistance movements that question normativity's discourse, that is, statements and actions of public governance, as well as their bills and necropolicies.

As Modesto (2016), I understand that resistance takes place in the process of *talking about*: it is by language that meanings are displaced, which then opens space for difference and misunderstanding. Resistance is not, therefore, a product of the subject's intention, which although exists doesn't guarantee its effectiveness. The gesture of resistance arises as a “shifting possibility within the [ideological] domination and, therefore, cannot happen elsewhere” (MODESTO, 2019, p. 122, my translation).

From a position inscribed in a materialist theory about the functioning of language, I understand that by means of semantic movements and displacements it becomes possible to produce other meanings for women in society. The questioning of the statements produced by normativity produces a rupture with socially stabilized meanings, thus enabling other possibilities and perspectives that consider the intersectional crossroads and the urgency of a project of society in which the anti-racist, anti-capitalist, and anti-patriarchal struggles are a priority.

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