

**“I DON’T ENGAGE  
IN PAID ENCOUNTERS!  
I PROMOTE  
PLEASURABLE  
MEETINGS”:  
EXPERIENTIAL  
DISCURSIVE ETHÉ AND MALE  
PROSTITUTION ON  
THE *WEBSITE BOY  
WITH A ROOM***

**“YO NO HAGO PROGRAMAS! FACILITO ENCUENTROS PLACENTEROS”:  
ETHÉ DISCURSIVOS EXPERIENCIAIS Y PROSTITUCIÓN MASCULINA EN EL SITIO  
*ELETRÓNICO GAROTO COM LOCAL***

**“EU NÃO FAÇO PROGRAMA! EU PROMOVO ENCONTROS PRAZEROSOS”  
ETHÉ DISCURSIVOS EXPERIENCIAIS E A PROSTITUIÇÃO MASCULINA NO *SITE GAROTO  
COM LOCAL***

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**ABSTRACT:** Even though male prostitution is still viewed as a mere sexual act and a ritual of displaying bodies, I examine the role of the discursive images that are projected around the affective-sexual experiences that are established between the participants in the regime of desirability that is mediated by fees, which unfold in multiple directions. In this study, I analyze the discursive constitution of self-images and discursive ethos of call boys on the *Boy with a room website*, describing a *corpus* of 14 profiles. The

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analyses were conducted from a theoretical perspective based on the notion of discursive ethos (Maingueneau, 1997, 2008, 2011, 2013, 2015, and 2018) and male prostitution studies (Cruz, 2022), it was demonstrated that the experiential images enacted by the boys are associated within a regime of enunciative-discursive volatility. This volatility gives rise to the emergence of both a more stable ethos (understanding, sexually free, naughty, and intelligent) and a hybrid ethos. In conclusion, the functioning of experiential discursive ethos reveals the plurality of ways in which male prostitution is carried out in its unfolding of subjectivity and desirability. This serves to situate the participants in the prostitution scene and singularize them among the call boys on the *site*.

KEYWORDS: Discursive *ethé*. hybrid *ethé*; male prostitution.

RESUMEN: Aunque la prostitución masculina sigue reduciéndose a un acto sexual y a un ritual de exhibición de los cuerpos, investigo el papel de las imágenes discursivas proyectadas en torno a las experiencias afectivo-sexuales establecidas entre los participantes en el régimen de deseabilidad mediado por las tarifas, que se despliegan en múltiples direcciones. Para ello, analizo la constitución discursiva de las autoimágenes y el ethos discursivo de los call boys del *sitio eletrônico Garoto com local*, para lo que comparo un *corpus* de catorce perfiles. Los análisis se realizaron desde un punto de vista teórico basado en la noción de ethos discursivo (Maingueneau, 1997, 2008, 2011, 2013, 2015 y 2018) y en los estudios sobre prostitución (Cruz, 2022). Gracias a ello, fue posible verificar que las imágenes vivenciales actuadas por los chicos se relacionan en régimen de volatilidad enunciativa-discursiva, en el que emergen simultáneamente ethos más estables (comprensivos, sexualmente libres, traviesos e inteligentes) y ethos híbridos. En conclusión, el funcionamiento del ethos discursivo experiencial revela la pluralidad de formas en que se ejerce la prostitución masculina en su despliegue de subjetividad y deseabilidad, con el objetivo de situar a los participantes en el mundo de la prostitución y hacerlos destacar entre los chicos de compañía del lugar.

PALABRAS CLAVE: *Ethé* discursivos. *Ethé* híbridos. Prostitución masculina.

RESUMO: Embora a prostituição masculina ainda seja reduzida a um ato sexual e a um ritual de exibição de corpos, enveredo pela investigação do papel das imagens discursivas projetadas em torno das experiências afetivo-sexuais estabelecidas entre os participantes do regime de desejabilidade mediado por tarifas, as quais se desdobram em múltiplas direções. Assim, analiso os modos de constituição discursiva das imagens de si, *ethé* discursivos, de garotos de programa no *site Garoto com local*, cotejando um *corpus* de 14 perfis. As análises foram empreendidas a partir de um mirante teórico calçado na noção de ethos discursivo (Maingueneau, 1997, 2008, 2011, 2013, 2015 e 2018) e dos estudos em prostituição (Cruz, 2022) e, com base nelas, foi possível verificar que as imagens experienciais agenciadas pelos garotos estão relacionadas a um regime de volatilidades enunciativo-discursiva, em que emergem simultaneamente *ethé* mais estáveis (compreensivo, sexualmente livre, safado e inteligente) e *ethé* híbridos. Em conclusão, o funcionamento dos *ethé* discursivos experienciais descortinam a pluralidade dos modos de realização da prostituição masculina em seus desdobramentos de subjetividade e desejabilidade, os quais pretendem situar os participantes na cena da prostituição e singularizá-los entre os garotos de programa conviventes no *site*.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Ethos discursivo. *Ethé* híbridos. Prostituição masculina.

## 1 FEELING THAT YOU PAID WELL: THE AFFECTIVE-SEXUAL EXPERIENCE OF CALL BOYS

I would like to begin with a provocation. When the issue of prostitution is socially addressed, what are the images that characterize the practices and subjectivities involved in this social activity? Even though some variations, representations persist in which prostitution, whether male or female, is reduced to the realization of a sexual act motivated by monetary exchanges, of selling one's body (Pasini, 2005). In turn, captured as representatives of a criminal practice by legal authorities and/or morally repudiated by religious authorities (Ribeiro, 2016), the subjects inserted in the dynamics of paid sex end up being compressed into spaces of abjection. In other words, squares, parks and street corners, in the darkness of the night, are the places where these bodies are displayed, as those that should not be seen in the sunlight.

Unlike a reductionist conception of prostitution, I propose an expanded observation of the set of relationships woven in the spaces of sociability between male escorts (hereinafter ME or MEs) and would-be clients. In other moments, Oliveira (2019) and Cruz (2022) have already indicated that male prostitution reverberates in the discursive machinery about romantic relationships and their

establishment conditions, since the interactions between the participants in prostitution encompass the affective bonds between the subjects who, at times, take the lead in the hierarchy of criteria for the realization of an affective-sexual contract.

In order to highlight the centrality of the affective dimension in the construction of valued images among MEs, I assume the thesis that establishing oneself in the discursive place of ME implies the priority of assuming experiential *ethé*, in which the behaviors of these sexual workers singularize the affective-sexual practices and justify monetary investments. These experiential *ethé*, triggered by the ways of speaking, constitute heterogeneous images of the self, which intersect stereotypical statements and others, capable of being updated, about the ethical and aesthetic environment of the members of the dynamics of tarified desire.

Based on the possibility of agency between stereotypical statements and the possibilities of updating, as a research problem, I elaborate: how do male escorts manage their self-images in the face of historically regulatory statements about the ethical and aesthetic world of relationships established with potential clients? In order to answer this question, I analyze the ways in which experiential *ethé* are constituted in the profiles of male escorts on the website “Boy with a room”.

In methodological terms, I searched the website “Boy with a room” among the profiles found in the city of São Paulo. For technical-discursive reasons (Paveau, 2013), I restricted the search to the profiles that stood out, comparing those that presented, in their descriptive texts, words and/or adjective expressions about their interpersonal capabilities and the possible experiences to be provided to clients. From a data set composed of more than 100 highlighted profiles, I selected a sample, giving priority to the first 40 profiles. Of these, in turn, I compared 14 for analytical exploration in this text. I understand that this small *corpus* (Moirand; Gibin; Costa, 2020) is capable of signaling the constitutive plurality of experiential *ethé*, highlighting the complexity in the modes of development of male prostitution. The entire methodological path is detailed in the section *I pass my eyes to pass my tongue: methodological-analytical path*.

Structurally, this article presents four sections focused on the analysis of the images projected by MEs on the website “Boy with a room”. In the first section, I characterize the notion of experiential discursive *ethé*, relating it to the practices of male prostitution. In the second section, I describe the conditions of methodological development of the research, indicating the criteria for composing the *corpus*. Then, in the third section, I analyze the ways in which the MEs’ experiential images are realized based on two dimensions, namely: stable *ethé*, which, in the context of prostitution on the chosen website, are summarized as (i) comprehensive, (ii) sexually free, (iii) naughty and (iv) intelligent; and hybrid *ethé*, in which it is not possible to dissociate the images from stable *ethé*, without losing the complexity of the composition of the social image disclosed in the profiles. Finally, I conclude by defending a regime of enunciative-discursive volatility from which the images of members of male prostitution are constantly negotiated.

## 2 EXPERIENTIAL DISCURSIVE ETHÉ IN MALE PROSTITUTION

In order to ascertain the mechanisms of constitution of a valued image by the MEs on the chosen site, “Boy with a room”, it is necessary to observe the conditions from which the members of the affective-sexual dynamics mediated by monetary exchanges can speak and the ways of speaking. I defend the need to recognize the process of incorporation as an instance of negotiation of meanings about the social place assumed by the MEs, since only by recognizing the conditions of enunciation it is possible to map the agencies of meaning manifested in each of the profiles, revealing the imperative statements, those that need to be resumed, and the more plastic statements, which the male sexual workers can rearrange.

In a first retrospective look at the notion of *ethos*<sup>1</sup>, Maingueneau (2018) points out that the images of enunciators in communicative situations can be mapped based on the recognition of the mechanisms of incorporation in the enunciation. This procedure necessarily involves three forms of materialization, namely:

<sup>1</sup>I point out this as the first realization of a retrospective because, on two occasions, the author undertook this analytical gesture: in the first occurrence, published through the article entitled *Critical return to the notion of ethos* (2018) and, as the second realization, in the introductory part of the book *Variations on ethos* (2020).

[...] the enunciation confers corporality on the enunciator, it gives him a body; the recipient incorporates, assimilates through the enunciation a set of schemes that correspond to a specific way of relating to the world; these first two incorporations allow the constitution of a body of the imaginary community of those who adhere to the same discourse (Maingueneau, 2018, p. 322, translated by the author).

In the foreground, enunciation emerges as a social instance that regulates a set of values and practices regarding the roles of each subject in communicative situations. This means that, based on the language practices involved in assuming a social position, there is the resumption of minimally stabilized meanings regarding the linguistic role to be played. The minimum regularity of these roles is shared by the interlocutors, listeners or readers, and it is recovered through the recognition of the social practice in which the subjects fit. In other words, there is always the recovery of “[...] a set of schemes that correspond to a specific way of relating to the world” (Maingueneau, 2018, p. 322).

Whether it is the role of a ME or a would-be client, assuming a social position also means assuming a place in language, a discursive place. For Maingueneau (2015), a social place directly or indirectly recovers a grouping of meanings about linguistic, bodily and psychological behaviors, which are inspected by the interlocutors during the course of the interaction. This grouping implies the resumption of an image of the speaker in the course of the linguistic choices made in front of the interlocutor. Therefore, an expectation is inscribed about the ways of speaking that the occupied social places allow to be verbalized (in writing, orally or in a multimodal way).

The set of expectations regarding the image of MEs takes into account the historicity of the statements and materialities that characterize the public image of the members of the tariff dynamics. Questions about clothing, gestures, sexual roles, age, race, among others, function as stereotypes in the initial configuration of the enunciative scenes in which they and their would-be clients interact. In other words, according to Maingueneau (2015), the resumption of a previous ethos, of mobilization of stereotypical statements, and of an ethos itself (discursive ethos), profiled in the immediate enunciative scene of dialogue between the participants in prostitution, coexist.

In the environments where male prostitution happens, this regime of contiguity between the previous ethos and the discursive ethos is translated by the need to manage a value-based self-image. As I pointed out in the introduction to the text, these mechanisms are aimed at characterizing the types of affective-sexual experiences that potential clients can have with MEs, not just a proposition of a sexual act. Based on Perlongher (1986), I note the historical persistence of a reductionist representation of prostitution as only the sexual act, in which the body of the subject involved in the dynamics of priced sex was forced to perform an exacerbated sexual performance, characterized by the exposure of erogenous parts and stimulating contact with the sexual organ.

In the context of the discursive practices of prostitution through the internet, it is possible to verify that the MEs have the agentive role of negotiating between historically valued statements and the value reinventions around self-images. In the same direction as Maingueneau (2018), I believe that the elaborated experiential *ethé* are a strategy of balancing among the enunciative possibilities that can be assumed in the enunciative scene of each profile registered on specialized sites. As a strategy, the forms of assuming the social place of a call boy are sustained by the heterogeneity, by the articulatory plurality of statements about the ethical and aesthetic dimensions of each of the subjects.

This heterogeneity is a constituent of the social practices of paid sex and leads us to the question *Who makes you special?*. Although apparently rhetorical, the question aims to reveal the strategies for negotiating meanings about the linguistic-social making of the discursive places occupied. For Cruz (2022), it is essential, in the logic of male prostitution, to manage a set of volatile meanings about behaviors and aesthetic images, as well as to reinvent the ways of attracting and convincing the potential client to move forward in the process of implementing a paid encounter. In other words, the question posed works as a translation of the logic of differentiation necessary for MEs, given that they need, in addition to recovering regular forms of self-identification as members of male prostitution, to manifest aesthetic and ethical traits that distinguish them among other subjects who prostitute themselves.

The relationship between the antecedent historicity and the most immediate enunciative scene recovers, in discursive terms, the dialogue between the scenic frame (the overlap between the encompassing scene and the generic scene) and scenography. Although Maingueneau (2018) describes the relationship between the encompassing scene, the generic scene and scenography in detail, there remains a hierarchy between the scenography and the generic scene and a detailing of the scenography. In other words, the singularities highlighted by the MEs in each of their profiles would be something random and that, sometimes, not all would present, recovering the constraints of the generic scene, of the stereotypical roles occupied by each of the participants.

In the opposite direction, in accordance with Deusdará, Rocha and Arantes (2019), I argue that scenography is not a dimension that emerges randomly, to the detriment of the generic scene. In fact, scenography is a supplementary dimension to the generic scene, accompanying it *pari passu*, highlighting the correlations between the reaffirmation of historical regularities and updates at the moment of enunciation. The abolition of an oppositive perspective of the elements favors the perception of the agencies of meaning mobilized by the MEs, in which each of them works on the threshold of anticipated historicity and the possibilities of the immediate scene.

Another plane that needs to be taken into consideration concerns the dimensions of ethos. Maingueneau (2018, p. 322), in his second retrospective on the concept, organizes the ways of approaching self-images in discourse in three dimensions. In the author's terms, it is possible to access an ethos through

[...] categorical ' dimension covers very different things. It can deal with discursive roles or extra-discursive statuses . Discursive roles are those linked to the activity of speaking: entertainer, storyteller, preacher ... Statuses extradiscursive can be of a very varied nature: family man, employee, doctor, peasant, American, bachelor, etc.; 2. the 'experiential' dimension of ethos covers the stereotypical sociopsychological characteristics associated with the notions of incorporation and ethical world: common sense and slowness of the peasant, dynamics of the young entrepreneur...; 3. the ' ideological ' dimension refers to positions within a field: feminist, left-wing, conservative or anticlerical... within the political field, romantic or naturalist... within the literary field , etc. These three dimensions interact strongly.

I consider this segmentation to be merely didactic, resulting from a set of operational difficulties aimed at systematizing a more objective approach to the concept. This means that these dimensions can function through crossovers and gradualness, which will depend on the research objective and the *corpus* analyzed. By arguing that the experiential *ethé* of MEs are constituted by a process of agency between repetition and singularity, I bring together the categorical and experiential positions: categorical, because, to the extent that they need to emphasize verbally, orally or iconotextually their singularities, they occupy a role that is sedimented in the course of history; as a corollary, the experiential position manifests itself by the need to mobilize an image associated with the regimes of affections and sexual desire to be provided to potential clients.

Since all scientific research establishes an entry point into the functioning of language phenomena, I chose the experiential dimension as the triggering thread of the complex process involving the images of the MEs, supported by two reasons. The first is associated with the way in which prostitution practices are constituted on the chosen website, in which the strategies mobilized by the subjects who experience the work of prostitution take center stage through the presentation of data favorable to the realization of the affective-sexual contract. The second is related to the notions of masculinity, which are seen, according to Connell and Messerschmidt (2013, p. 253), as heterogeneous constructions, situated in the social practices of each subject and incorporated in multiple ways in the daily exercise of identity performances. Therefore, the experiential dimension becomes the link for unveiling the apparent stability of categorical places.

The experiential ethos, therefore, implies corporality and character. According to Maingueneau (2011, p. 98), assume a turn to speak (or write) in any enunciative scene unfolds in the constitution of an ethical and aesthetic world, in which the interlocutors elaborate a feature of the character and corporality of the one who speaks. These correspond to "a range of psychological traits [...] [and] a body complexion". In other words, it means that MEs assume a feature regarding the modes of visual presentation, treatment and behavior in the path of interaction with clients, in which they can assume distinct affective-sexual behaviors.

In general, the process of assuming a position to speak, the linguistic choices and the limits of speech outline the implementation of an ethos. Positioning oneself as a ME on a specialized website and elaborating a presentation of oneself in order to establish affective-sexual encounters results in the need to mobilize, through the “tone” of speech, an image of corporality, an aesthetic image, an image of character, of social and sexual behaviors considered valuable among the members of the discursive community. For the ME, this becomes more latent to the extent that it requires “a discipline of the body” (Maingueneau, 2011, p. 98), of the acuity regarding the effects that choices in the mode of presentation can have, which can recover valued or devalued representations.

### 3 “I SCAN WITH EYES TO SCAN WITH MY TONGUE”: METHODOLOGICAL-ANALYTICAL PATH

As I argue, there is a constituent heterogeneity in the process of elaborating the self-images of the MEs, which is demonstrated by the presentation texts of 14 participant profiles on the *website Boy with a room*. I recognize, following Maingueneau (2013), that the notion of ethos presents a “constitutive instability”, characterized by the multiple forms of access to self-images (materialities, articulation planes, points of view and levels of recognition of historicity), which requires the construction of criteria for the composition of a *corpus*. These choices of composition of the analysis material are profiled by techno-discursive determinations (Paveau, 2013), in which the website, as a meta-enunciator (Maingueneau, 2018), conditions the modules to be presented and the order in which the profiles’ advertisements are presented. Consequently, the ordering is configured daily, changeable depending on the degree of involvement of the participants.



Figure 1: How profiles are ranked on the *Boy with a room* website

Source: author's collection

Considering that the methodological composition is implied in the techno-discursive determinations (Paveau, 2013), I understand that the technical structuring of the *website* impacts the composition of the corpora. As shown in Figure 1, this determination is manifested by the way in which the participants' data is updated, because, as the callboys change the verbal or image information, their profiles acquire greater visibility during a certain time frame, causing them to occupy the first initial places in each city on the website. This means that the profiles do not occupy a stable position for a long period, fluctuating daily, weekly and monthly in the ranking of the most accessed profiles. That said, it is important to point out that the data collection I carried out took place on July 27, 2023, and was restricted to the profiles located in the city of São Paulo, capital of the state with the same name.

I choose visual mapping as the first instance for establishing any other stages of interaction, since would-be clients mobilize this first sense (the visual) to choose which profiles are clickable (accessed in their specificities on the MEs). Since the first stage is viewing the most accessed profiles, I use a metaphor, “I scan with my eyes to scan with my tongue”, in which potential clients visually map the profiles that stand out the most and choose, based on the ease of access among the number of users, those that are “at the top of the ranking” to analyze the images of masculinity and, consequently, to carry out the meetings.

This metaphor is intentional, as a way of questioning the ways of interpreting interactions in digital environments. Paveau (2012) problematizes the separation of online and offline language activities, as binomial pairs of human socialization processes, and defends a post-dualist ecology, in which it is necessary to perceive the mediation roles and the modes of negotiation of interactions performed by websites, social networks, among other communication spaces. In this sense, “passing your eyes to pass your tongue” recovers this mediating nature of the website “Garoto com local”, ratifying the core of the dialogues established between MEs and potential customers.

These techno-discursive contours lead to methodological and analytical choices. In addition to the temporal delimitation, two other choices regarding the *corpus* need to be highlighted. Firstly, the chosen materiality is restricted to the verbal dimension, the texts written, therefore, the self-presentations by the MEs. Although Maingueneau (2018) highlights the semantic plurality motivated by the iconotexts, the restriction to the verbal plane is due to a discursive issue in scientific practice, in which, for the analysis of materials in which there is nudity, the debate on the discursive dimension in the creation of data processing protocols persists, in addition to the extension of the corpus, which would exceed the scope of this article. Although I do not analyze the image material, I proceed to de-identify the names of the subjects of each profile collected, using pseudonyms, as a way of preserving the image rights and, to a certain extent, not being able to predict the effects that the text may have on the lives of these subjects.

As a corollary of the analytical choice of verbal material, the second delimitation relates to the plane of the ethos said and shown (Maingueneau, 2015). As articulated instances, I conceive that the verbal material of self-presentations is a productive starting point for ethnographing the situated practices of male prostitution (composed from the profiles collected on July 27, 2023 and located in the city of São Paulo), which dialogues with the negotiations of statements that stabilize and/or update the practices of prostitution on the market plane (of the monetary mediation of encounters) and on the affective-sexual plane (of the ethical and aesthetic images elaborated by the MES). In other words, the text written by the MEs indexes the functioning of the rules of speech in the scene of male prostitution, highlighting what is resumed and what is subject to updating.

#### **4 “I DON’T DO SEX! I PROMOTE PLEASUREFUL ENCOUNTERS”: EXPERIENCES OF SELF IN ADVERTISEMENTS FOR CALL BOYS**

Some statements are configured as a demand inherent to the exercise of the social place occupied by MEs, as it is the case of indicating physiognomic information, such as weight, height, age, size of the genital organ and, in some cases, ethnic-racial self-declaration.

The ethnic-racial identification of MEs presents the regularity of disconnection from blackness. They usually identify themselves as men with “light skin” (Thiago Montenegro), as “brown-skinned [...] cinnamon-colored” (Rafael Menezes) or “dark-skinned” (Lucas Santoro). According to Cruz (2022) and Munanga (2012), this way of talking about their race is configured as a subterfuge strategy to the mechanisms of sexualization and abjection of blackness. This means that self-affirmation as black implies the location of a shifting social place, in which the ME can be recognized and valued by statements about the performance of the “black man with a big dick” (Barros; Barreto, 2018), while at the same time being rejected due to factors such as muscle tone, femininity traits or any other elements that index the devaluation of the public image.

Likewise, interstitial categories for determining sexual places are mobilized. In the *corpus* analyzed, Thiago Montenegro, Marcelo Alencar and Bruno Alencar categorize their participation in sexual acts as “versatile”, while Felipe Cardoso characterizes himself as “exclusively active”. It is clear that sexual versatility and activity are two naturalized forms of composing self-images, while femininity is situated on the edge of silence, as forbidden. Perlongher (1986) noted this process, in which femininity was conceptualized as

inferiorizing, which labels the bodies of subjects as supposedly “lesser”. Despite this, it persists in private practices, in which MEs occupy the bottom place, as long as the information does not emerge in public practices. One way to balance the categorical weight of bottomness, but without abolishing it, is to mark the place of sexual action as versatile.

Evidence of the plasticity of the effects of meaning for the choices of MEs begins to emerge, in which signifiers are mobilized based on the need to orchestrate opposing statements. This “enunciative juggling” is a condition, in the all-encompassing scene of prostitution, in order to emphasize the most valued performative elements and consolidate affective-sexual encounters. However, this heterogeneity becomes more evident with the recovery of the ethical worlds activated from the signals about the singular experiences that would-be clients would have with MEs. Thus, four more specific *ethé* predominate regarding the possible performances, namely: understanding; sexually free; naughty; and intelligent. In addition to these, there are also hybrid *ethé*, in which there are no clear decision lines to define them only on one plane, but on the interface of their possibilities.

## 5 THE FOUR *ETHÉ*: UNDERSTANDING, SEXUALLY FREE, NAUGHTY AND INTELLIGENT

In the first case, we see the ethos of an understanding escort. Bruno Alencar conveys a different image based on the description of the stages of the service: “I love foreplay, and I am ready to fulfill your fantasies. I am the ideal companion for you who are a beginner”. By using the terms “lover” and “ideal companion”, there is a shift from a place of providing a sexual service to the incorporation of an affective image, associated with an instance prior to the sexual act. The ME states, in the way he states, that his concern is associated with the client’s comfort, through the use of pronouns “for you”, “your fantasy” and “you”. This tactic of valuing the other’s experience is latent when he states that he is a “companion” with a special sensitivity towards “beginner” clients.

In addition to the comprehensive ethos, the ethos of sexual freedom or of a sexually free subject also appears quite frequently. These are the cases of Thiago Montenegro and Gabriel Farias.

In his profile, Thiago associates youthfulness with an image of sexual freedom, in order to provide a differentiated service. To this end, he describes himself as a 24-year-old “big boy” who “loves to take care of himself” and who “enjoys connection, exchange of energy”. Just like in Bruno Alencar’s profile, Thiago approaches his relationships with clients from a more affective perspective, in which connection and compatibility of a behavioral and value dimension (of an “energy”) predominate, overcoming the understanding of prostitution as a service in which the subjects are depersonalized, to the detriment of the logic of capital, as Antunes (2009) points out. The connection between concern for the client and the image of youthfulness occurs through the notion of sexual freedom. Youthfulness would be a facilitating dimension for the fulfillment of fetishes, as Thiago states: “I fulfill your fetishes and do complete whoring”. This idea is confirmed in the ME’s lexical choice, in which he is not only concerned about the client, but also knows how to serve him sexually, with the appropriate “whoredom”.

In Gabriel Farias’ presentation, I also see the return of the age issue in the composition of the image of sexual freedom. He indicates that he is 19 years old and, as a person of that age, he states: “I really like to have adventures and enjoy the good things in life, I enjoy fulfilling fetishes and I am totally discreet, kind and naughty in bed... lol”. There is the establishment, through the way he speaks, of a correlation between youthfulness and the need to enjoy life, manifested by the verbs “to adventure” and “to enjoy”. These linguistic actions are also effective in the behavior of the ME, since he, at the same time, is concerned with kindness and naughtiness. The signaling of this double articulation is manifested in the use of a verbal representation for a laugh (“lol”), as a constituent of the ambiguity from which he can associate himself.

Another type of recurring ethos is associated, more exclusively, with the idea of a naughty man. Among the 14 profiles listed, the enunciative scene of five self-presentations predominated. To confirm this behavior, the MEs activated nominal adjective markings aimed at the body and the male genital organ (the penis). Gustavo Cunha, for example, calls himself “Tattooed slut brat” and always walks around with “a bottle always full and a hard dick for you”. The age issue (“Young Man”), the ethos of sexual freedom, and the image of a naughty man (“young man”) are intertwined, which mark the objectification of constant sexual desire (“a bottle always

full”) and the permanence of a state of sexual excitement (“a hard dick for you”). Therefore, they translate as ways of emphasizing the ethical world from which the client will be served.

In the same way, Felipe Cardoso calls himself “a fucking bastard”<sup>2</sup>, a hyperbolic resource to emphasize his psychological behavior, translated into sexual desire. In this sense, he describes his penis as “a thick, beautiful, big-headed, HARD DROOLING mast”, resorting to the use of capital letters, with the ending marked in the augmentative, to emphasize the idea of constant excitement (“hard”) and inexhaustible desire (“drool”).

Furthermore, the penis acquires an objectified connotation. It is not just a penis, it is a “mast”, with characteristics that corroborate the visualization of constant excitement. This, in turn, signals a more intense sexual behavior, in which, in sexual practices, Felipe is “a brat, a rascal and a bombshell”, “a naughty guy who loves to have sex”. Therefore, the choices of nominal adjectives do not project a standardized image of a “conventionalized” sexual practice, but of the possibility of experiencing a “more *hardcore*” sexual modality or the idea of wild sex.

André Oliveira’s self-presentation, through his lexical choices, recaptures the centrality of the penis as a value-enhancing dimension of the ethos of the naughty man. Equipped with a “thick and playful dick”, the ME projects his behavior through a scenography of liberality, in which sexual practices are carried out with a certain lightness (like a game). This lightness implies the behavior of the site member in his relationship with would-be clients, as a person who “enjoys liberal sex without fuss and without haste, nothing mechanical and robotic”<sup>3</sup>. The image of liberality, in the ethos of the naughty man, is ratified by the terms “no fuss” and “no hurry”, in order to qualify the behavior during the sexual act.

Holder of, as he calls himself, “a thick and heavy dick”, Matheus Novais uses multiple statements, characteristic of an interdiscursive practice (Maingueneau, 2008), to project an image of sexual intensity and constant, heightened desire. In ME terms, he is a “hot, insatiable bahiano man”<sup>4</sup> from the Scorpio sign, naughty, affectionate and with a good grip”. The lexical choice “hot bahiano” rescues statements about blackness, since there is a historical and intersectional association (Akotirene, 2020) between territory and race: being “bahiano” recovers the association with the expressive number of self-declared black people<sup>5</sup>, as well as the permanence of the memory of slavery, reverberating to the revival of the stereotype of the black man as the holder of a differentiated sexual instinct, as indicated by Barros and Barreto (2018).

The agency of an ethos of a naughty and understanding man acquires greater latency in Rafael Menezes’ profile. According to him, his behavior fits, at the same time, into the “little boyfriend whore” style and the “little scoundrel whore” style. Although the idea of a “whore” man prevails, linked to the image of a sexually naughty man, the ME achieves the balance in the following terms: “We can start by touching each other, then caressing each other, we have a nice kiss! We can let it roll... even good foreplay and nice sex! An exciting fuck, with a lot of heat, talking dirty, we have good grips, naughty faces, thirsty looks”. The ethos of a naughty man is activated through the lexical choices “exciting fuck”, “horny”, “whoredom”, “grips” and “thirsty look”<sup>6</sup>, linked to the more informal level of speech about the categorizations of the sexual act. At the same time, Rafael creates an image of understanding when

<sup>2</sup> Although he defends an image of a possible “passionate boyfriend”, there is a preponderance of lexical markings aimed at an image of more daring sexual desire, of sexual insatiability. In fact, the adjectival phrase may be a symptom of the call boy’s strategy to avoid being captured by the effects of meaning exclusively directed towards an image of a naughty man.

<sup>3</sup> A pertinent indicator obtained in most profiles is the denial of a “robotic” sexual practice. This is a remarkable fact to be investigated, as it addresses the modes of ethical constitution of the work practice in prostitution, of the values and actions affirmed in the ethical affective-sexual world of the monetized dynamics of encounters.

<sup>4</sup> As a regional designation to the state origin of the user, “bahiano” means a person who was born in the state of Bahia, Brazil.

<sup>5</sup> I affirm this based on data from the latest Census by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE, 2010), in which 980,350 people self-declare as black.

<sup>6</sup> Maingueneau (2008) warns that the grammatical register of the language can function as a criterion for a positive or negative image of the statement, as knowledge or lack thereof of the written norms. Although I believe this to be a prevailing perception in certain enunciation scenes, I do not consider the advertisements of callboys to be plausible, since none of the comments by clients evidence knowledge of the standard norm as a condition for the nullification of the profile in the desirability regime.

describing the steps for possible treatment, in which the well-being of both parties prevails, in terms of touch (“we can start by touching each other”; “us caressing”) and in displays of affection (“a nice kiss”).

Another type of ethos materialized was that of an intelligent man. Pedro Drummond ratifies this image by stating that he is “postgraduate and intelligent”, but he reaffirms it much more by the way he speaks when elaborating an English version of his self-presentation: “Hi, I’m PEDRO, 1.82 tall, 25 cm real, graduate and intelligent”. The translation into English recovers the symbolic capital of linguistic practices, from which mastering a foreign language would be symptomatic of a superlative degree of intelligence. In the same direction, Eduardo Barbosa presents himself as “intelligent, polite, university-educated, attentive and affectionate”, in which the level of higher education emerges in the choice of qualifiers about himself (“perfect company”) and the possible sexual act (“good moments of pleasure”). Both subjects resort to the modalization of the social place occupied, characterizing it by the symbolic value of educational training, as a differential that surpasses the sexual relationship to which, in theory, the program would be destined.

## 6 HYBRID ETHOS

Despite my attempt to identify more stable forms of ethos for each ME’s self-presentation, I occasionally refer to the simultaneity of other self-images. In itself, this is already an indication of the “constitutive instability” (Maingueneau, 2013) in heterogeneous social practices, based on the need to manage multiple images to reach distinct client profiles. Following Maingueneau’s (2015) approach, I classify this occurrence as a hybrid ethos, which is more poignant in the profiles of Lucas Santoro and Pedro Cavalcante.

Lucas Santoro presents himself as “naughty, affectionate and polite. I like to give pleasure and satisfy desires. In bed I am top, dominating, rough, romantic and affectionate, however you prefer”. I would like to highlight the use of the adverbial phrase of place, “in bed”, as a marker of the transition between instances of occurrence of specific behaviors: on the one hand, the assumption is triggered that, in public practices, he resumes an image of a polite man (“affectionate, polite”); on the other, in private interactions, he can evoke the ethos of the naughty man (“dominating”, “rough”). This division, however, is not harsh, since the overlapping composition of the adjectives allows for the competition and intersection of distinct ethical worlds, depending on the client’s requests (“as you prefer”).

In Pedro Cavalcante’s presentation, the mobilization of *ethé* becomes more complex. By describing himself as “I don’t do programs! I promote pleasurable encounters”, he recovers an image of a compressive man, in a direct dialogue with the reader: “I want to tell you that I understand that you may feel insecure”; “or maybe you are tired of traditional relationships”. The consolidation of this ethos results from the choice of the first person in the discourse, embedded in the verbal inflection (“I want”, “I understand”)<sup>7</sup>, which establishes a connection with the interlocutor. This connection is made concrete by the marking of the interlocutor in the textual plane, with the use of the object pronouns “te”, “se” and “você”<sup>8</sup>, consolidating a conversational tone, of understanding dialogue between two interacting parties.

Based on the comprehensive ethos, Pedro supports the creation of another image of himself, that of a pleasure professional. Unlike a sex professional, in whom the sexual act would be the ultimate unit of interaction, the ME proposes that one of his skills is “Realizing your most hidden desires (listening to and doing things you want to do but don’t reveal to anyone)”. In this segment, Pedro mobilizes the generic scene of prostitution as a parallel, in order to differentiate the actions undertaken during the encounters. Thus, he categorizes the activity of sexual intercourse, with its focus on monetary exchange, as anti-ethos (Maingueneau, 1997) to affirm his singularity as someone who, in his ethical world, explores the psychological dimensions of his clients’ desire.

<sup>7</sup> In Brazilian Portuguese the identification of a subject in discourse can be made by the verbal inflection, in the end of the morphological forms of the verbs. In a different way, in English, this function is represented by the subject pronoun (I, You, He, She, It, We and They). Specifically in the *corpus* analyzed, it is crucial to emphasize that the verbs “to want” and “to understand” show the final morphological part -o as an identification of the subject of discourse.

<sup>8</sup> In this case, “te” and “você” are unstressed object pronouns, and “se” is a reflexive pronoun in Brazilian Portuguese.

The exploration of the psychological dimensions of desire composes the third image of himself projected by Pedro, as an intelligent man. In this area, the ME argues “I have a degree in Law and am a lover of subjects related to human psychology, body language and personal development”. The circumscription of interest (in being a “lover” of the subject) in the area of human psychology and body behavior (“body language”) functions as a transversal justification for the ways of speaking and for the images of the understanding self and of a pleasure professional. Therefore, the ethos of an intelligent man crosses the *ethé* of understanding and professionalism, forging them in their coherence and sustaining an ethical world that values the diversity of clients.

## 7 ENUNCIATIVE-DISCURSIVE VOLATILITY REGIMES

A reductionist conception of prostitution as a sexual act makes it impossible to perceive the complexity from which MEs aim to develop images of themselves that are valued in the market of affective-sexual experiences. I argue that this complexity can only be ethnographically analyzed by recognizing the heterogeneity that constitutes the ethos that can be developed, which prioritize the description of socio-affective experiences. Therefore, I define male prostitution practices on the website “Boy with a room” as being based on a regime of enunciative-discursive volatility regarding the experiences to be provided to would-be clients.

First, the volatile nature of this discursive regime highlights the strategic and tense position in which male prostitutes find themselves. Assuming the discursive role of being part of the dynamics of prostitution underscores the circulation of stereotypes about the imagery and ethics of its participants. For those who aim to profit financially, the demand involves not only the reproduction of historical statements, but above all the updating of forms of presentation, as a differentiation strategy to obtain success in negotiations with clients.

Secondly, the need for updating is characterized by the movement of statements, their forms of textualization and the constitution of multiple and interpenetrated images. In the 14 profiles analyzed, I perceive this functioning through the manifestation of four types of “more stable” ethos, in which the participants defined themselves as understanding, sexually free, naughty and intelligent. At the same time that the more stable ethos interpenetrate, to a greater or lesser extent, I also verified the occurrence of profiles with a hybrid ethos, in which the fluctuation between different images of the self crystallizes on the textual plane. This fluctuation is marked by the mobilization of the more stabilized planes of self-presentation, in which the images of the self overlap.

The data obtained from the *corpus* allow us to assert that the experiential *ethé* are a reflection of the need to encompass the plurality of desires of the interlocutors. An indication of the strategies for treating the image of the subject that can reaffirm the history of the interaction as a sexual practice but can also highlight ways of experiencing prostitution through other interactions.

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