



“Olly e nós”, de Adriana Nunes Souza, 2022, desenho sobre papel.

Bisexuality and ambiguity: metaphoric relations and metonymic processes in discursive productions on bisexuality*

Diego Calmon**

Abstract

The absence of research on bisexuality in the twentieth century and concerns regarding the AIDS epidemic enabled the construction of speculative narratives on the bisexual population, which is commonly described as an ambiguous category. Analyzing bisexuality through an anthropological lens, this article examines the symbolic complexes that produce bisexuality as an ambiguous category, relating it to the discursive production of fictions of contagion, which are essentially metonymic.

Keywords: Bisexuality, AIDS, Ambiguity, Contagion, Metonymy.

* Received on March 29, 2022, accepted on February 6, 2023. This article was prepared with the support of the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (CAPES). Translated by Philip Sidney Pacheco Badiz.

** Doctoral candidate in Social Sciences at the Graduate Program in Social Sciences at the State University of Rio de Janeiro (UERJ), Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil. diegocalmon22@gmail.com / <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8766-4691>.

Introduction

The etymological origin of the word ambiguity, described by Victor Turner, has two underlying and complementary meanings: “moving from side to side” and “of doubtful nature” (Turner, 2015:145). This initial dichotomous definition serves as a reading key for a set of discursive productions on bisexuality with regard to medical and media literature on risky sexual practices in the twentieth century. Bisexuality began being portrayed as a problematic category at a time when concern regarding the spread of AIDS to different social groups gained new contours, when it gained a reputation as a “vector” and a “bridge” of transmission between different populations. The absence of research on bisexuality, added to concerns surrounding the AIDS epidemic, enabled the construction of speculative narratives concerning the bisexual population, which is commonly described as an ambiguous category that is difficult to pinpoint. This conception of bisexuality has historical roots that trace back to different fields, including embryology, anatomy, psychoanalysis and sexology, in which genealogical analysis enables an understand of it through a set of relationships between pairs of opposites, whether in the context of sex, gender or desire. Based on an anthropological analysis of the role of ambiguity, through models of cultural classifications, this work proposes to reflect on the symbolic complexes that produce bisexuality as an ambiguous category, which favors both the construction of essentially metonymic contagion fictions and identitary frictions that, following a logic of similarities and differences, concentrate on the metaphoric pole.

The work has seven sections and a conclusion that seek to summarize the argument developed throughout the text. In the first and second sections, a brief documentation on the symbolization of bisexuality in the Western social imaginary is presented. This is a compilation of reports, journalistic articles and theoretical observations that assume bisexuality as an object of debate in a scenario of growing epidemiological concern. Western discourse begins to deal with bisexuality through spatial and vectorial metaphors, perceiving it as a possible path for the transmission of HIV among different populations. The third section proposes the consideration of metaphors that were used to classify bisexuality in the United States in the 1980s and aims to reflect on the ambiguous social space occupied by bisexuality in the reports and discourses presented in the previous sections. The section dialogues with Roman Jakobson’s linguistic approach regarding the metaphoric and metonymic processes that compose the fundamental duality of language. The proposal highlights how the Russian linguist’s conception of language indicates investigative guidelines for understanding the causes that affect the maintenance of social erasure and the stigmatization of bisexuality – in particular, by paying particular attention to the principle of contiguity. The fourth section presents a brief genealogy on the discursive construction of bisexuality in the West and demonstrates the difficulties exposed by different theorists to integrate bisexuality into their respective scientific projects. The section also demonstrates that the forms of the discursive construction on bisexuality, as an epistemological matrix, possess a dualistic classification model that constitutes pairs of opposites. In the following sections, the work organizes the material presented in the previous sections on bisexuality, while correlating it with anthropological literature on ambiguity.

The bisexual man

Some of the main forms of representing bisexuality at the end of the last century are linked to associations established between the issue of AIDS and risky sexual practices involving bisexual men. On April 3, 1987, the *New York Times* featured an article written by Jon Nordheimer that addressed the issue of bisexuality and the spread of HIV. The title of the article was: “AIDS specter for women: the bisexual man.” In a dramatic tone, the text discussed the dangers that surrounded women due to not knowing whether their respective partners were bisexual. These men were responsible for the spread of AIDS, a “bridge” that linked the ghosts and stigmas constructed around the homosexual population to heterosexual women and wives. Bisexual men were “mysterious” and “complex,” which made it difficult for women to recognize them, thus favoring the spread of contamination. To endorse this perspective, the article presents the opinion of Dr. Theresa Crenshaw¹ “Homosexuals have been

¹ The then president of the American Association of Sex Educators, Counselors and Therapists.

out of the closet for a long time but bisexuals have not,” followed by, “Straight women are going to discover some very unpleasant news about some men they have known.” A scenario is conjectured through an emerging social imaginary, the actors are arranged in confusing and complex itineraries within a no less distressing drama of the “fear of contagion,” as Balandier points out (2019:324).

Women, continues the article, are left on their own to figure out the true sexual identity of their romantic partners and the fear of bisexual men is accentuated following the expansion of the AIDS crisis by the media. “If the guy won’t tell me, I can only guess,” commented a Miami secretary, who concluded, “even then the guy could be a good liar.” Another woman interviewed in Miami believed in her investigative potential: “I don’t care how much they want to cover it up, their little effeminate ways tip you off.” However, warns the journalist, this view is totally contestable, as bisexual men may appear masculine to their sexual partners, “to women they attract.” Garber draws attention to how “the specter of the ‘bisexual AIDS carrier’” became one of the villains in the United States of the late 1980s (Garber, 1995:104). Collecting reports from periodicals and magazines of the time, such as the *Atlantic Monthly*: “the potential role of bisexuals in the heterosexual transmission of AIDS has been gravely underestimated” (Garber, 1995:104), and *Newsweek*, which was categorical about bisexuals being the “ultimate pariahs of the AIDS crisis” (Garber, 1995:104), Garber realized that the representation of bisexuality, in which the bisexual man was the main character of the narratives that surrounded certain reports on sexuality and risky practices, characterized him as “the emblem of a dangerous and immoral duplicity” (Garber, 1995:105), responsible for “the transmission of AIDS to an ‘innocent’ and unsuspecting population” (Garber, 1995:105). *Cosmopolitan*, meanwhile, alerted its readers to the “Risky Business of Bisexual Love,” providing clues and instructions to help spot bisexual men. Some examples highlighted by Garber include: “If a man’s eyes follow other men, be very cautious”; “Be suspicious if he seems intensely interested in how other men dress”; and “If he looks into another man’s eyes for even a microsecond longer than it takes to make socially acceptable eye contact, beware” (Garber, 1995:105). An entire framework of gestural signs ends up inserted in narratives on the behavior and skills of this man who disguises and camouflages himself amid conventional attitudes of gender standards shared by society. According to Garber, the bisexual man played the figure of the “secret double agent” in the media coverage of AIDS in the 1980s. In popular culture, the figure of the “vampire” came to dominate the literary imagination as an exponent of an “overmastering erotic attraction”, in which “instead of dying, the bisexual vampire brings death—deliciously masked in pleasure” (Garber, 1995:109).

When Seffner (2016) began his bibliographic review for his research on the forms of sociability of bisexual men in Brazil, he realized that a very large volume of works was directed towards research on the spread of AIDS and on risky sexual practices. According to the author, knowledge produced on male bisexuality is closely linked to the volume of research interested in the potential for HIV transmission from men to women and the association between bisexuality and homosexuality in medical and epidemiological research. The author warns that:

The reconstruction experienced by the theme of bisexuality examines discussions on bisexual identity, bisexual subjectivity, and whether or not a culture of bisexuality exists in Brazil. Male bisexuality was linked to the AIDS epidemic, and this established new modes of handling the topic, including the culpability of bisexual men in the spread of the epidemic (Seffner, 2016:89).

The author is categorical in emphasizing the type of psychological suffering that plagues bisexual men to the extent that they are blamed for the spread of HIV, which leads to greater isolation and the intensification of social stigma. Scientific and media representations established the conceptual ground for the recognition of bisexuality as a social category, beginning with the moment that the AIDS epidemic gained new contours over time. Bisexual men began to be conceived by a lexical field pertinent to epidemiological research, which was later translated by various media platforms, until it reached popular and literary culture.

The bisexual woman

The previous section demarcated two forms of representation of bisexuality that were consolidated in the social imaginary of the 1980s, following the spread of news about AIDS. Ideas concerning the spread of the HIV virus to the heterosexual community had positioned the bisexual man as the main character responsible. The lack of information on individuals who had sexual relations with men and women led to the circulation of articles in vehicles of communication that intended to warn people regarding the specificities of the behavior of bisexual men. With regard to the construction of narratives concerning the bisexual woman, the issue of the potential contamination of lesbian women gains strength. However, it should be noted that the research initiated in that period focused mainly on the perspective of transmission from bisexual men, which caused a delay with respect to the female perspective. According to Storr (1999:7), this scenario centered on the figure of men occurred because researchers could not conceive of women as potential HIV transmitters. In contrast to this initial view, new debates on safe sex were fostered in the 1990s in the United States and United Kingdom by collectives of feminist, lesbian and bisexual women, generating controversy regarding the possibility of propagation among women themselves. In this environment of intense debate, one of the forms of representation of bisexual women linked them to the source of danger for lesbian women, to the extent that the former also had relationships with men. According to Storr (1999:7), bisexual women began to be portrayed as “HIV carriers”.

This manner of conceiving bisexuality is also present in national research on the moral grammars present in the affective sociability of bisexual women. Anthropologist Regina Facchini accentuates a zone of tension arising from the forms of production on the difference and categorization of identities related to women who have relationships with other women in her article “*Entrecruzando diferenças: mulheres e (homo)sexualidades na cidade de São Paulo*” [Interlacing differences: women and (homo)sexualities in the city of São Paulo] (Facchini, 2009). Among the material collected and presented, a set of interviews with women from São Paulo, the author favored analysis of the categories and social conventions driven by the interlocutors, who exercised the function of differentiating and articulating social identities, among which bisexuality stands out. Faced with a scale of hierarchical distinction present in the interviews, Facchini highlights three degrees of variation: women who had never had affective-sentimental relationships with men; women who had had relationships with men, but no longer had them; and, finally, women who continued to have relationships with men. According to the author, the third category was conceived as undesirable, since the respective women are portrayed as “possessors of a behavior that, for the majority of the interlocutors, goes beyond the limit of what is acceptable and legitimate” (Facchini, 2009:319). The third category of the differentiation of desire among women was represented by the bisexual identity, for which accusation and stigmatization were derived from “reasoning in which men are seen as promiscuous and dirty” and, consequently, women in this category were “contaminated by the moral disqualification that apply to them” (Facchini, 2009:319). Women who also have relationships with men are perceived as undesirable, since they are a “source of emotional and health risks.” Here, the category “health” designates both aspects of emotional life and relative to the possibilities of sexually transmitted diseases, as shown by one of the replies given to the anthropologist:

Sara: Yeah. I think you can get it. I was traumatized by the fact that Nicinha opted for guys again. She made out with me, then she went back. [...] I’m looking for someone the same age, or older than me and at least not so attracted to boys. Because of this thing about sexuality and STDs too. It’s easier. It’s easier for you to get infected by guys than by women, I think, because they’re more promiscuous (Facchini, 2009:320).

The author also emphasizes the emergence of tensions between the “bi” and “bisexual” categories disposed by the contradictions of different social strata. According to the author, adherence to “bisexuality” as a legitimate identity is concentrated among younger people from the middle and upper middle classes, or by older women, due to their proximity to discourses stemming from the fields of psychology and psychiatry.

The way in which bisexual women are conceived as potentially dangerous can also be verified in the article “*Bissexualidade e gramáticas emocionais em relatos de jovens universitários do Rio de*

*Janeiro*² [Bisexuality and emotional grammars in accounts from university students in Rio de Janeiro] (Calmon, 2019). Based on a set of interviews with young university students, the author analyzed certain forms of configuration of emotional complexes associated with the “closet” of bisexual young adults. The article corroborates the fear of bisexual women of informing their respective affective partners about their sexual identity. In one of the accounts, a young woman disclosed a pejorative qualification that targets bisexual women:

Interlocutor 2: And one thing that I think is bad is how a lot of lesbian women don't make out with bisexual women. And in this situation, I think that's why the person ghosted me. I'm not sure. Because I met the person on Tinder. The girl I fell in love with, the last one. We talked a lot and stuff. I'd told her that I'd broken up, and I was dating a man. Only she didn't remember. We met in person. Then the subject came up and she was looking at me like, “You've dated a man?” I felt kind of bad. I said, “Yeah, I did.” I wasn't going to lie. She started saying that she finds bisexuality strange and said that she finds it even stranger in men, like, bisexual men. Because I said that I feel more comfortable making out with a bisexual man, because it's something that rarely happens to me, like that. I only pull straight guys. She said I should think the opposite, because usually bi men just want to be with a woman as a way of being accepted, you know? To be accepted by their family and on the streets. She said that, in fact, bisexual men are gay and they make out with women to be accepted. Then I got kind of down about it. And she said that with women, wow, it's what many women say, lesbians say it's a “cum dump.” I was like... what the fuck?! I think that's pretty gross. Many women say that, many women I've made out with say that. Then I said: “Wow, so why did you make out with me?” I kept thinking like that. That's it.

In this last report, two categories of delegitimization of bisexual identity stand out. The first classifies bisexual men as fake or liars, they are “gays who make out with women to be accepted,” while the second is the derogatory expression “cum dump,” which vilifies bisexual women who have sex with men. In both cases, the terms can be viewed as “categories of accusation,” as proposed by Gilberto Velho (1997). For the anthropologist, categories of accusation are strategic processes for creating boundaries, organizing feelings and mapping social distinctions in everyday life. The author suggests that linked to these categories of accusation is the idea that stigmatized people retain a high power of contamination and, consequently, any contact with them should be avoided. This clue seems to propose a new approach to forms of projection regarding bisexuality that I outline in the following sections.

Between metaphors and metonyms, everyday life and language

Faced with the set of accounts that are based on bisexuality, some forms of categorization emerge in models of specific social distinctions, in which the metaphorical recourse appears to be used to account for a broad set of behaviors and identifications. Metaphors emerge as reflective models that, in some manner, propose the organization of not only thought, but human experience itself. Lakoff and Johnson, in their famous work *Metaphors we live by* (2004), argue that metaphors structure the conventional conceptual systems of culture and that these are expressed in everyday language itself. Quite simply, the function of metaphor is to understand and experience one type of thing in terms of another distinct thing, which influences the way people organize their own personal and collective experiences.

On the one hand, there are imaginative and creative metaphors, where the process of assigning meaning has the effect of reverberating through a network of entailments and, therefore, stand out from mere conventionality (Lakoff & Johnson, 2004). For example, we can include statements like “bisexual men are vampires” or “secret agents” as a way of highlighting the image of a “complex,” “mysterious” man, while emphasizing a form of “immoral” behavior, which acts in secret and can

² This article is a theoretical excerpt from my dissertation entitled “*Personalidades foscas: sexualidade e roteiro em jovens universitários no Rio de Janeiro*” [Opaque personalities: sexuality and script in university students in Rio de Janeiro] (Calmon, 2019). The research that gave rise to this dissertation was conducted with the support of the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq). At the time of the research, five university students were interviewed, two men and three women, who were undergraduates studying fields ranging from Human Sciences to Performing Arts.

victimize other people. In this model, the metaphorical recourse serves to organize social aspects that characterize the representation of bisexual men in the social and media imaginary. On the other hand, the ambiguous space occupied by bisexual people among the categories that guide our sexual vocabulary is accentuated: they exist, but they are disguised; they disguise themselves, but can be discovered; they can be discovered, but do they really exist?

The judgmental expressions that guide the way bisexuality is conceived based on categories of accusation, such as contagion “bridge” and contagion “vector” or that of “cum dump,” mentioned above, present themselves as processes of assigning meaning that go beyond the colloquial and creative use proposed by Lakoff and Johnson, achieving symbolic, subjective and social processes that allude to the very functioning of language. According to Jakobson, an extension of Saussure’s analysis of sign coordination by syntagmatic and associative relations, in every communicative act two modes of arranging signs are involved: selection and combination. In the first, the choice of alternative terms is assumed among a repertoire of linguistic entities, in which the relation is stability through synonym similarity ties or contrasting antonym ties. The second operation is governed by contiguity, assuming the combination of linguistic entities in a given communicative context. In the selective operation, guided by similarity relations, the metaphoric pole predominates; in operations guided by relations of contiguity, the metonymic pole predominates.

Jakobson extends his analysis of the metaphoric and metonymic poles beyond verbal communicative manifestations.³ Polarity can also be found in the unconscious symbolic processes of dream elaboration investigated by Freud. The processes of “condensation” and “transference” of the dream keepers are anchored in relations based on contiguity (metonymy); the processes of “identification” and “symbolism” are characterized by relations of similarity (metaphor). The same scheme can be used to understand the magical rites studied by Frazer in *The Golden Bough* (1982), in which “homeopathic” rites are determined by similarity relations, while “contagious magic” is founded on association by contiguity⁴ (Jakobson, 2007:61). First, it is important to emphasize that language for Jakobson is not limited to verbal acts or linguistic expressions. Every communicative model assumes, *a priori*, a system of signs that encompasses both verbal and gestural messages. Therefore, there are numerous forms of sign construction in which translation between different codes enables the conversion between communicative models. The selection can flow, for example, in genuine non-verbal activations, such as in a pictorial sign. Remaining in verbal code, the “intralingual” method is adopted; in the relation between different systems of signs, the intersemiotic method is adopted (Jakobson, 2007).

What exactly did Frazer characterize as “contagious magic”? For the anthropologist, the sympathetic magic often encountered among primitive peoples was composed of two elementary principles: a) the first is based on a relation by similarity, in which “like produces like,” the effect resembles the cause. The law of similarity allows the magician to produce the desired effect simply by imitating it; b) the second is that of contiguity, in which “things which have once been in contact with each other continue to act on each other at a distance after physical contact has been severed” (Frazer, 1982:34). In this second case, every act involved in an object will affect the people who came into contact with it. According to Frazer, the two laws, that of similarity and of contiguity, compose primitive thought with respect to magical practices. However, as Douglas points out, the importance and

³ There is a central aspect in Jakobson’s theoretical path that enables him to extend the composition of the metaphoric and metonymic poles beyond linguistic acts and that is clarified by the correlation between the semiotic order and the semantic order, as Ricoeur (2003) rightly highlights. According to new linkages, the pair syntax-semantics can be superimposed onto the pair combination-selection and, therefore, onto the pair similarity-contiguity and, finally, onto the metonymic and metaphoric poles. Moreover, as present in Jakobson’s investigations on aphasic disorders, the metaphoric pole extends beyond its verbal use, making it possible to provide a linguistic equivalent to gesture. Ricoeur states that this double approximation enriches the concept of the metaphoric process in operations that require “definition, naming, synonymy, circumlocution, and paraphrase”, enabling the equivalence of terms between linguistic codes (Ricoeur, 2003:209).

⁴ The author also expresses the breadth of his analysis for the field of literature, in which the romantic school is predominantly linked to metaphor, and realism, to metonymy. In poetry, in which attention is paid to the metrical parallelism of the verses and the phonic aspects of the rhymes, the preponderance of relations in the choice of signs operate by similarity or contrast. In pragmatic prose, attention is paid to the referent, where images chosen by contiguity predominate, much like realist literature (Jakobson & Pomorska, 1993). In art, Cubism is characterized by a series of synecdoches; in contrast, Surrealism adopted a visually metaphorical perspective (Jakobson, 1971).

relevance of his observations on primitive thought have reverberations that go beyond the field of British anthropology and affect both psychology and the modern philosophy of mental association, in which the chain of ideas is conceived as “a spontaneous, uncontrolled energy in the individual mind, an energy gradually tamed and taught by analytic reasoning” (Douglas, 1982:12). What makes this example interesting for Jakobson’s approach to the bipolar foundation of language is precisely the elaboration of communicative models that encompass speech acts, thought, the pantomimic components of rituals, and other systems of signs belonging to distinct codes.⁵

For studying forms of bisexual sociability, this conception of language seems essential for understanding the causes that affect the maintenance of its erasure and social stigmatization, in particular, because it shares a special regard for the principle of contiguity.⁶ How bisexuality was represented at the end of the twentieth century can be seen in the examples discussed above, with key instances from different media platforms and its problematization in epidemiological research centers on risky sexual practices. A conjectural analysis can be outlined. Regarding male bisexuality, the set of narratives constructs a contiguous chain of possibilities of contagion in which the homosexual population is the starting point. In the second stage, the chain reaches the male bisexual population, after which, heterosexual women complete the first circuit of transmission present in the narratives. This initial scenario, which begins with the male homosexual population and ends with female heterosexual population, includes the bisexual man as the main “vector,” “transmitter” and “bridge” between the two sets of distinct populations. Bisexual men were mediating the possible contamination of women, as portrayed in the New York Times edition, in 1987, and other media communications.

A second circuit model was elaborated in the section on female bisexuality, in which the bisexual woman plays the role of “transmitter” between the two separate groups of individuals. In this case, by maintaining physical contact with men, who are conceived as “promiscuous,” the bisexual woman serves as a “bridge” between the male population and the population of lesbian women. In the second example, the “vector” and the “bridge” are bisexual women, like bisexual men in the first. Although the category “promiscuous man” in Facchini’s article emerges as indifferent to sexual identity, by logical inference, the sum of these two contiguous circuits can be registered, which results in the conjunction of bisexual men and bisexual women in one broad category. Thus, three contiguous circuits have been articulated⁷:

- a) Gay man – bisexual man – heterosexual woman
- b) Man (undefined) – bisexual woman – lesbian woman
- c) Gay man – bisexual man – bisexual woman – lesbian woman

What makes this mapping necessary is understanding the ambiguous, boundary space occupied by the category of bisexuality, a space that enables the construction of this propagation model. The representation of bisexuality as a nexus of connection and mediation, that is, as an intermediate category, can examine the domain of medical discourse and encompass the moral and symbolic spheres of interpersonal relationships that make up social life. But what does this space consist of? And how do we investigate it?

⁵ An interesting proposal for an anthropological analysis based on the distinction between the law of similarity and contiguity can be found in the article entitled “*Porcos espinhos na pandemia ou a angústia do contágio*” [Porcupines in the pandemic or the anguish of contagion] (Coelho, 2020). In this essay, the author argues that the ideas established and mediated by relations of contiguity between “contaminated” people and objects, especially in the dramatic experience of a pandemic, are capable of producing a profound “anxiety of contagion” among the population. Individuals who “consumed” the growing, and frequently contradictory, news and disclosures of scientific knowledge and who seek to solve and contain the transmission of the new coronavirus called SARS-CoV-2, ended up understanding such information “magically,” due to a lack of broad scientific knowledge at the onset of the pandemic.

⁶ The intention is not to compare magical rites, in themselves, with the discursive, symbolic construction of bisexuality in the West, but rather the endeavor of the reflective model of communication that understands magical practices through the duality between similarity and contiguity, between metaphoric and metonymic arrangements.

⁷ The ways in which HIV disseminates are diverse and this mapping does not assume the veracity of the facts mentioned, which to a certain extent have led to the promotion of stigma concerning the bisexual and gay community over the last few decades.

The fence and the ambiguous

The bisexual group is found to introduce uncertainty and doubt.
Havelock Ellis (1927)

The fence metaphor is commonly used to refer to bisexuality. As observed by Pramaggiore (1999), this borderline object that postulates the position attributed to bisexuals marked the cultural landscape of the last century. The fence is the precise place of indecision and mediation. Fences can be permeable and structured from two sides that oppose each other in a binary structure, thus delimiting the expansive limits of each lateral proportion. To follow through on this metaphor of the fence, which commonly appears in everyday life or, as in this case, in specific disciplinary programs like the work “Epistemology of the fence” (Pramaggiore, 1999), what exactly does it mean to be in a mediating position? Furthermore, what exactly does bisexuality separate? Is this complex position also present in the discursive itinerary of scientific projects that propose to reflect on bisexuality?

The genealogy of bisexuality can be delimited by three specific stages.⁸ At first, the terminological neighborhood of bisexuality (such as bisexuous) refers both to the model of bisexual reproduction, involving a male and a female organism and, as Macdowall (2009) points out, to classify certain forms of life that were undifferentiated or that presented characteristics of both sexes.⁹ This way of looking at bisexuality occurred mainly among physiologists, anatomists and botanists in the nineteenth century. This etymological heritage was the argument used by Alfred C. Kinsey, a prominent American biologist and sexologist of the twentieth century, to express his regret at the use of the word bisexual for the purpose of classifying individuals involved in homosexual and heterosexual activities on the Kinsey scale.¹⁰ His criticism resides in the fact that the term is still used in the field of biology to specify structures or groups of individuals that possess the anatomy or functions relative to both sexes, that enables the classification of human beings, plants and animals. In his own words:

(...) it is rather unfortunate that the word bisexual should have been chosen to describe this intermediate group. The term is used as a substantive, designating individuals-persons; and the root meaning of the word and the way in which it is usually used imply that these persons have both masculine qualities and feminine qualities within their single bodies (Kinsey, 1999:37, *apud* Storr, 1999:37).

At the dawn of the twentieth century, bisexuality acquired new semantic contours, moving from that of a physical, bodily register to a psychological, mental register. At this stage, Sigmund Freud’s notion of “psychic bisexuality” can be used as an example to determine the development of the human psyche. According to Roudinesco (1998), the initial idea was developed by Wilhelm Fließ, for whom “biological bisexuality is extended in man into psychic bisexuality” (Roudinesco, 1998:72), that is, a correlation between the biological and psychic. Freud broke with this perspective in his famous work *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, from 1905, by treating bisexuality in terms of a duality between masculine and feminine and linking them to expressions that designated the

⁸ It is important to note that the conceptual and terminological evolution of bisexuality did not occur in a linear and continuous manner, but rather it was fragmented and branched, occurring through an amalgamation of sexual devices that dealt with different institutional and political paths on human sexuality. For a critical approach to the history of bisexuality, see Angelides (2001).

⁹ According to Angelides, in studies on embryonic development, hermaphroditism and bisexuality had a synonym relation and were used interchangeably (Angelides, 2001).

¹⁰ The Kinsey Scale is the result of a set of studies coordinated by Alfred C. Kinsey, beginning in 1930, which aimed to understand the sexual behavior patterns of American men and women at that time. According to the author, a continuum of variations in human sexual behavior can be traced, ranging from its initial limit 0, related to people who maintained exclusively heterosexual relationships, to the number 6, related to people who maintained exclusively homosexual relationships (Kinsey, 1999). Kinsey also highlights the difficulty of classifying bisexuality on his scale: is bisexuality represented by the number 3 or by the range of numbers from 1 to 5? It is interesting to note that the very specification of bisexuality is tributary to a dualistic approach, in which the semantic load establishes a relation between heterosexuality and homosexuality, without being fully defined by either one.

oppositions between “activity” and “passivity”¹¹ in the psychosexual development of the individual (Storr, 1999).¹² Later, Freud emphasizes how unsustainable this hypothesis is and, in some of his last writings, we see that his description of bisexuality is mediated by the conceptualization of desire and the distribution of libido expressed in a manifest or latent form, while remaining linked to the duality of heterosexuality and homosexuality.¹³

Finally, bisexuality as it is conceived today, that is, as a kind of complex relation between homosexuality and heterosexuality, was developed from 1970 onwards by the emergence of gay activism in the United States, which extended into the following decades due to the intensification of research that sought to clarify the advent and spread of HIV/AIDS in the American population. According to Gagnon (2006), the sexual activities of bisexual people acquired substantive fascination in scientific research at a time when greater attention was directed to the control and dissemination of the disease among the heterosexual population. It became a key moment for the discursive formulation of a set of images and social representations concerning bisexuality from a medical and epidemiological paradigm. A second point that should be highlighted is related to the classification criteria that circumscribe bisexuality: is it a behavior-oriented category or a self-declared identity by those who identify as bisexual? According to Gagnon, many ethnographic works and interviews with “convenience groups” indicated a wide variety of people who had, or had at some point in their lives, sexual relationships with men and women, but who did not identify as bisexual. This was the case, for example, of young people who work in the universe of prostitution or those inserted in prisons and who maintained relationships with people of the same gender (Gagnon, 2006). These situations raise important ethical questions for the development of research and the projection of public policies that encompass the specificities inherent to different social groups. An attempt to alleviate such difficulties in classification without slipping into stigmatizing models like the “risk group” category can be found in the consolidation of the acronym MSM (men who have sex with men) by different multilateral bodies, such as the Global AIDS Program (PGA), the World Health Organization (WHO), and the Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS). However, as Calazans and Facchini (2022) point out, the adoption of this category in the sphere of HIV/AIDS policies ended up homogenizing different social segments, which resulted in the violation of “normative expectations of recognition in public health care” (Calazans and Facchini, 2022:3919).

Within the scope of the history of social movements, bisexuality is now conceived as a legitimate identity by those who fought for its social recognition. However, the contrast and the search for visibility for people who self-declare as bisexual were accentuated as the collectives themselves reacted to the lack of acceptability of bisexual identity. At times, tensions are perceived in the distrust of gay and lesbian groups who struggled for visibility and equity of political rights in civil society. Bisexuality seemed to dissolve the boundaries between the identities that fought for visibility and political representation in the public scene and, consequently, its inclusion in the plans and political agenda of other social movements took place through conflict and suspicion. Garber cites a particularly interesting event that took place in January 1990 in Northampton, Massachusetts: the vote devised by organizers of the Northampton Gay and Lesbian Pride March to remove the word bisexual from the title (Garber, 1995). The arguments presented for the withdrawal of the word manifested the fear

¹¹ Freud himself seemed aware of the difficulties of this model of psychic organization which associated masculinity with “activity” and femininity with “passivity”, as observed in later texts, for example, in “*An Outline of Psycho-Analysis*”, from 1938.

¹² In the words of Freud (2016:55), when dealing with the duality between sadism and masochism: “We [psychoanalysts] should rather be inclined to connect the simultaneous presence of these opposites with the opposing masculinity and femininity which is combined in bisexuality—a contrast which often has to be replaced in psycho-analysis by that between activity and passivity” (Freud, 2016:55).

¹³ See “Analysis terminable and interminable” (Freud, 2020), in which Freud points out the existence of bisexuality through its psychic universality, though guided by the object of desire. If bisexuality is a manifestation of sexual libido by people of the same sex and the opposite sex, in this case, “we have come to learn, however, that every human being is bisexual (...) his libido is distributed, either in a manifest or a latent fashion, between objects of both sexes” (Freud, 2002:313). As presented in Kinsey’s description, the definition of bisexuality is tributary to the dualism or polar positions of heterosexuality/homosexuality, which does not mean that there is an evident approximation between Kinsey’s studies and psychoanalytic theory. As I discuss later, studies on bisexuality seem to establish a set of possible relationships between opposite terms.

that bisexual identity could, in some way, dissolve the identity boundaries present in the group: “everything gets watered down and suddenly we all become ‘gay people’” (Garber, 1995:89).

Regarding research produced in Brazil, Helena Monaco demonstrates how different works on bisexuality conducted by researchers in Brazil also explored the conflicting insertion of bisexual identity in different social groups (Monaco, 2020). Among the works cited by Monaco, Regina Fachini’s research on the CORSA group (*Cidadania, Orgulho, Respeito, Solidariedade e Amor* [Citizenship, Pride, Respect, Solidarity and Love]) stands out, due to the constraints experienced by bisexual people and by people who mentioned sexual practices with different genders,¹⁴ and the work of Camila Dias Cavalcanti, conducted with the *Núcleo Bis* [Bi Nucleus], in Brasília, which reported that people who self-declared as bisexual were the targets of malicious jokes and had a limited space in the group’s daily life.¹⁵

When tracing this mapping of the terminological construction of bisexuality, through three specific cultural and historical scenarios, the elaboration of three registers of pairs of opposites are observed: male/female; masculine/feminine and heterosexual/homosexual, in which the respective discursive locus of bisexuality begins in the body or organism, moves on to the human psyche and, finally, focuses on the register of desire. As I examine below, in these three models, the ambiguous condition is consolidated by the dualistic criteria of the epistemological evaluation of sexuality and its marginalization in modern theories concerning sexuality¹⁶ (Macdowall, 2009).

The “fence” metaphor seems to suggest an understanding of bisexuality as the mediating term of dualistic registers. The terms for its conceptual determination come from the very binary structure of the classification of bodies, the psyche and desire. What is said about bisexuality mobilizes terms that are understood separately by an elemental antithesis relation; however, without being converted into a clear totality of a simple summation operation. According to Mircea Eliade, the very idea of “universal bisexuality” derives from the religious belief that proclaims divine bisexuality, the perfect union of opposites that consolidates a unity-totality, in which “everything that exists must therefore be a totality, carrying the *coincidentia oppositorum* to all levels and applying it to all contexts” (Eliade, 1999:111). So, an anthropological analysis that is interested in investigating the cultural motivations concerning the stigmatization and social erasure of bisexuality must then follow a different analytical path. How can bisexuality be conceptually located, given the trajectory of its discursive construction within dualistic perspectives on sexuality? A journey through anthropological theories of ambiguity will enable the consolidation of another vision of the possible relations between pairs of opposites, without the necessity to cede to arguments that examine its universalization. In this sense, discourses that propose reflecting on bisexuality through spatial metaphors, like a fence, a wall or a bridge, possess the convenient advantage of entering the social imaginary and the set of social representations

¹⁴ Currently, collectives and scholars have questioned approaches that conceive bisexuality through a binary, exclusionary logic. They argue that the affective-sexual desire of bisexual people goes beyond the man-woman dichotomy by encompassing other gender identities. This reframing also includes transgender and non-binary persons who also form part of bisexual collectives.

¹⁵ The works cited by Monaco are: “‘Sopa de Letrinhas’? Movimento homossexual e produção de identidades coletivas nos anos 90: um estudo a partir da cidade de São Paulo” [“Alphabet soup”? Homosexual movement and production of collective identities in the 90s: a study from the city of São Paulo] (Fachinni, 2002) and “Visíveis e invisíveis: práticas e identidade bissexual” [Visible and invisible: practices and bisexual identity] (Cavalcanti, 2007). Monaco’s work mobilizes numerous authors who have focused on themes concerning the construction of bisexual identity in Brazil and provides an interesting chronology of the history of bisexual movements. Monaco also conducted her fieldwork in a *mono-dissident* collective, the *coletivo B* [B collective], in the city of São Paulo. The author highlights different pejorative labels reported by people who identify as bisexual and highlights the precarious mental health of bi people.

¹⁶ It is important to highlight Judith Butler’s criticism of presupposed equivalence in many theoretical projects that tend to perceive gender as a cultural inscription and sex as neutral biological data. For the author, sex should not be allocated in the register of nature in opposition to a culturally constituted, elaborated gender, rather it is the effect of discursive practices that, through a binary logic, act “as a naturalized foundation of the nature/culture distinction and of the strategies of domination that that distinction supports” (Butler, 2015:74). Butler’s criticism also extends to theoretical projects, particularly psychoanalysis, which address bisexuality as an innate predisposition prior to the subject’s entry into culture. Instead, bisexuality associated with the psychic foundation to be repressed at a given moment in the individual’s psychosexual development is also a discursive production guided by a logic of “normative heterosexuality” (Butler, 2015:102). From this perspective, the register of pairs of opposites analyzed above should be seen as effects of discursive productions and not as data of a neutral nature.

of bisexuality, providing an analysis that favors considering bisexuality as a legitimate object of anthropology.

Ambiguity and taboo

First, the logic that mobilizes such metaphors, the referentiality to a mediating point between polar elements, can be aligned with the way in which Edmund Leach describes ambiguity based on its elementary correspondence with social taboos. The logic that underlies his reasoning enables thinking about ambiguity as an elementary condition of categories that are anomalous to those that are in mutual opposition. In his words:

If *A* and *B* are two verbal categories such that *B* is defined as “what *A* is not” and vice versa, and there is a third category *C* which mediates this distinction, in that *C* shares attributes of both *A* and *B*, then *C* will be taboo (Leach, 1983:181).

This small principle that comprises the general theory on Leach’s taboo allows us to identify the categories that imply a classification difficulty as potentially dangerous for a broad social structure. Cultural classification systems, understood as a “discriminatory grid” that operates through the separation, determination and ordering of social categories derived from language, end up organizing the worldview itself and the cultural reality in which the individual is inserted. In the fissures of these classificatory models, we encounter ambiguous elements that possess the terrible quality of embodying both sides of a relation, a pair-of-opposites, that is not understood as a simple general sum of the terms.¹⁷ For Leach, this is the case with certain mythological characters who seem to mediate the relationship between humans and gods. If the image of the God is constructed as a binary antithesis of his relationship with humans, since, unlike the first, humans are found in his terrestrial dimension and not the celestial dimension, the mediation of this relationship (world of the living/world of the gods) is carried out by a set of “supernatural beings of a highly ambiguous kind,” including, among others: “incarnate deities, virgin mothers, supernatural monsters which are half man/half beast” (Leach, 1983:181).

The mythological figure of the trickster seems to correspond to Leach’s analysis. The trickster can be found in a wide range of native mythologies around the world and is commonly conceived of as an ambiguous, ambivalent, and multiform being; they can change sex depending on their momentary interest and are surrounded by all sorts of confusion caused by the pranks that are characteristic of them. According to Lévi-Strauss, they are commonly associated with the coyote and the raven in Amerindian mythology (even though they are depicted as an anthropomorphic animal, that is, half human and half animal), since these animals occupy a privileged place as mediators between polar terms. Understood as “carrion eating animals,” coyotes and ravens are mediating the opposition between herbivores and predator-hunters, since they feed on animal flesh, though without killing what they eat (Lévi-Strauss, 2017).

This small anthropological principle enables us to situate the social forms of apprehension of bisexuality through metaphorical language as a possible effect of the ambiguous cultural relation established by elements that are located at the interface of polar relations. These ambiguous categories have the ability to arouse great interest in humanity, in addition to provoking intense feelings of taboo. From this inherent contradiction, such categories can operate as elements that symbolize danger to and disorder for the social order and, in this case, the sources of this troublesome power must be sought.

¹⁷ Certain substances, such as feces, urine and semen, are considered ambiguous, since they are both part of the self and the not-self. They are associated with a group of elements that are targets of intense public aversion derived from the social taboo they share. In different parts of the world, these are the substances that compose magical “medicines” and, therefore, cannot only be considered dirty, but also powerful (Leach, 1983).

Ambiguity and the danger of the interstice

The idea that individuals who possess ambiguous social status concentrate the potential for disorder within themselves is not new. In her work *Purity and Danger*¹⁸ (2017), Mary Douglas argues that general notions concerning hygiene and purification rituals tend to seek control or, at least, undermine the potential for disorder caused by dirt, by ambiguity or by anomaly. The ideas of pollution and hygiene, in turn, are related to symbolic systems that seek to promote the order of things, through classificatory models and the establishment of a broad social order. Elements that do not have a specific place or that are out of place end up hindering organizational principles that edify the social structure, hence “ideas about separating, purifying, demarcating and punishing transgressions have as their main function to impose system on an inherently untidy experience” (Douglas, 2017:15).

Beliefs in the proliferation of pollution and contagion are fertile ground for the exploration of sexual organization and its symbolic load for social life. Pollution beliefs are employed as analogies that express the social order. Her examples are categorical for the discussion: “there are beliefs that each sex is a danger to the other through contact with sexual fluids. According to other beliefs only one sex is endangered by contact with the other, usually males from females, but sometimes the reverse” (Douglas, 2001:3). However, such patterns of sexual danger or bodily pollution are not inscribed in the relation of the sexes per se, but rather they symbolically express the relation between parts of society, “mirroring designs of hierarchy or symmetry which apply in the larger social system” (Douglas, 2017:14). It is then interesting to observe that such elements have a symbolic correspondence with the ambiguous substances disclosed by Leach, those that are circumscribed by rules of avoidance and intense taboo, in addition to great interest and importance in magical practice. The relations of contact, contagion and substances involved in rituals or in the rules of avoidance and purification depend, to a large extent, on the cultural and cosmological scenario in which they are inserted, and are tributaries of the social system that organizes and establishes possible social relations among its members.

The potential for disorder is intrinsically implied on the fringes, at the interstices of classification principles, in the ambiguous and anomalous zones that threaten to blur the borders¹⁹ and, therefore, they present themselves as a worrying source of power and danger. Individuals who somehow remain in this opaque zone carry the weight of the symbolic burden of the effects of transgression and are commonly accused of committing acts of witchcraft or blamed for the tragedies and misfortunes of the community. They are outsiders in the community subsystem, and their ambiguous social position is seen as a threat to the social order. At this point in her argument, Douglas is interested in understanding witchcraft not only as a presumed psychic force, but ensuring an explanation that takes into account the social structure itself as a condition for its exercise and the production of beliefs concerning its symbolic effects. It is the interstitial spaces that attract fear and aversion, and these ambiguous social spaces are credited with a kind of inarticulate power, capable of disrupting the order stipulated by the power accrued from the articulated social system.

Victor Turner presents a similar take on the ambiguous nature of young neophytes of the Ndembu culture. When entering the liminal period of the rites of passage, young people are deprived of their social position, becoming invisible and potentially contaminating for other individuals. In this transition phase, their “condition is one of ambiguity and paradox, a confusion of all the customary categories” (Turner, 2005:141). The “liminal persona” is found “betwixt and between” all classificatory stability, including in relation to their sex, and they are considered contaminating for people who have not been “vaccinated” against them. In this example, Victor Turner proposed a dynamic perspective of beliefs regarding impurity and pollution, since his objective was to understand

¹⁸ Mary Douglas’s work seeks to promote extensive dialogues with the anthropological issues of her time and which dealt with the sacred and the profane, religion and magic, disorder and social structure. This article is not the place for an in-depth reflection on Douglas’s entire discourse within these respective debates. However, her position on ambiguity and social disorder deserves to be highlighted.

¹⁹ This is the case of the Kahchin wife, wherein, according to Douglas (2017:126), “linking two power groups, her husband’s and her brother’s, she holds an interstructural role and she is thought of as the unconscious, involuntary agent of witchcraft. Similarly, the father in the matrilineal Trobrianders and Ashanti, and the mother’s brother in patrilineal Tikopia and Taleland, is credited with being an involuntary source of danger.”

the ambiguous social status of young Ndembu who entered the symbolic processes that characterize the rites of passage. What is important to highlight in this case is the relation established between ambiguity and the potential for disorder and contamination that is established in the liminal zones of the social structure.

Bisexuality and ambiguity

The space occupied by bisexuality is established and arranged by the set of terms that constitute and imprint it with a model of ambiguous relationships. Bisexuality is not easily placed within historically elaborated dualistic models that register sexuality (male/female; masculine/feminine; heterosexual/homosexual) and, as referenced in the metaphors of the “fence” or “wall,” it seems to touch elements that compose polar terms, without conforming to either side; it manifests itself as a “sign of the certainty of ambiguity, the stability of instability” (Garber, 1996:77).

Through the proposal of the anthropological theorization of ambiguity by Leach and Douglas, bisexuality is constituted in the interstice of classification models that organize the basic notions of a broad social order²⁰ and with respect to human sexuality. This ambiguous and liminal condition is present in the social life of its agents in different ways. It becomes more noticeable when guided by a manifest identity renunciation or transference, instituted at both a linguistic and performative level: “Why can’t you be gay for a day?” (Garber, 1995:89). This possibility of negotiating and shifting sexual identity is intimately linked to the invisibility of bisexual identity, in which the lack of an axiomatic “form” can be translated into the debate on bisexuality, based on its marginal character and lack of identifying elements shared by society.²¹ In this sense, reports can be found that seek a dualistic reference to account for experiences involving bisexual individuals, which are not necessarily related to the criteria of silencing with regard to the closet of LGBTQI+ people, even though they show ample affinity with the reservations and caveats related to secrecy and self-disclosure. In both cases, whether the transit of identity is a personal option or an immediate need, a game of differentiations and similarities comes into play through the set of symbols used to determine the boundaries that differentiate social identities, such as: clothing, mannerisms, intonations, performances, personal narratives and confessions that reference the closet or are directed toward possibilities for its dissolution. In the symbolic field of social life, the body’s boundaries surpass its physical limits and are intertwined with culturally structured social values. The body, according to Mary Douglas, is seen as a “symbol of society,” that is, the powers and dangers concerning the social structure are reproduced in the body itself. The metaphor that alludes to bisexual women can now be better understood. The logic that organizes social differentiations and that seeks the concreteness of its intelligibility and cultural visibility is combined with the respective rules of avoidance that accompany it and consolidate a coercive moral amplitude. The idea that semantically correlates the body to a deposit, a kind of receptacle, embodies the relational dynamics of identity fringes, in which the male element, operationalized as a synecdoche,²² substitutes a form of relation to be avoided – the relationship with men. The metaphoric constellations rest on a symbolic base with a predominantly metonymic orientation.

The set of twentieth century media and medical discourses on the bisexual man, like those presented at the beginning of this paper, seems to engender the dual problematic that involves, on the one hand, descriptions concerning the possibility of bisexual men to “camouflage” themselves among heterosexual men and, on the other, the way in which they are conceived and designated as “vectors” that contaminate different populations. This equates a set of conceptions regarding the

²⁰ An additional challenge must be taken into account in further sociological research on bisexuality: the struggle for public legitimacy and adherence to historically established discourses on bisexual identity in the West. Not all forms of classification have the same degree of absorption and social validity, in the same manner that not all popular elaborations are covered by scientific *doxa*.

²¹ This is an important argument in the discussion on the social erasure of bisexuality. It is also present in the work of Regina Ferro do Lago, entitled: “Bissexualidade masculina: uma identidade negociada?” [Male bisexuality: a negotiated identity?] (1999).

²² According to Jakobson (1962), synecdoche is a type of metonymy that establishes a *pars pro toto* (part (taken) for the whole) relation.

similarities and differences that act at the level of behavior and interpersonal attitudes and that take shape through the dual organization of gender and sexuality. The relations of contagion, as presented in a somewhat fantastical manner, are implied in the very beliefs of pollution and sortileges attributed to border zones, difficult to define, opaque to current models of classification. It is in this sense that the metaphor of the vampire alludes to a form of social reality that combines the dual semantic competence of ambiguity, whether in terms of its “doubtful nature” or its “lack of form,” and in beliefs regarding pollution and in the construction of contagion circuits between different populations. With significant expository force, it represents what Balandier determined to be the relation between “fear of contagion” and “relations of avoidance” in a scenario in which social relations are corrupted by the anguish of contamination and by otherness understood as an incessant source of suspicion and uncertainty (Balandier, 2019).

Conclusion

Throughout this article, I have argued that the metonymic pole, predominant in contagion rituals and determined by the law of contiguity, serves as a reading key for the promotion of associations of contagion circuits in cultural settings in which bisexuality is conceived as a “golden mean” in dualistic models of gender and sexuality determinations. On the symbolic level of social life, these ambiguous and interstitial zones are associated with ideas of pollution and the great danger of contagion for unprotected interlocutors, that is, those not “immunized.” The metonymic pole seems to be rooted in this plane of factual and imaginary chain-linking as a vector of meaning that has contributed to the social and discursive construction of bisexuality in the West. The potential for disorder associated with bisexuality thus manifests itself as a constant transit between two worlds, the traces of which remain in a latent state, on the verge of an undesirable and conflicting otherness, and act as a focus of danger for interlocutor identities. The social construction of bisexuality, as historically and culturally woven in the West, establishes a dual problem that manifests itself both in terms of differentiations and similarities – in the risks of assimilation and silencing, a problematic related to the social invisibility of the bisexual identity – as well as in narratives of contagion that, articulated with ideas of moral contamination and transgressions of distancing and identity boundaries, directly contributes to its stigmatization.

The attention directed toward ambiguity made it possible to ratify the multivocal importance of its investigative reach which, far from being conceived as an analytical tangle, enables us to elucidate and penetrate a set of symbolic, linguistic, social and subjective processes that can compose the experience of bisexuality in the cultural scenario of the West. This interpretative scheme, which seeks anthropological guidelines for ambiguous social forms, ends up strengthening and shedding light on a proposal for a sociocultural reading of bisexuality, in addition to reflecting on its social erasure and the extent of its stigmatization. However, ambiguity is not an idiosyncratic specificity of bisexuality; on the contrary, it depends on a broader context that also encompasses linguistic, cultural and political aspects. Ambiguity is relational, it depends on the disposition of the terms that are involved in the analysis and, consequently, on the sociocultural context in which they are inserted.

References

- ANGELIDES, Steven. *A history of bisexuality*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2001.
- ARMSTRONG, Elizabeth. Traitors to the cause? Understanding the lesbian/gay “bisexuality debates”. In: TUCKER, Naomi (ed.). *Bisexual Politics: theories, queries & visions*. Binghamton, NY, Harrington Park Press, 1995, pp.199-218.
- BALANDIER, Georges. Pensar a AIDS. In: BALANDIER, Georges. *O social em tempos de incerteza*. São Paulo, Edições SESC, 2019, pp.324-326. Tradução: André Telles.
- BUTLER, Judith. *Problemas de gênero: feminismo e subversão da identidade*. Rio de Janeiro, Civilização Brasileira, 2015.

- CALAZANS, Gabriela; FACCHINI, Regina. “Mas a categoria de exposição também tem que respeitar a identidade”: HSH, classificações e disputas na política de Aids. *Ciência & Saúde Coletiva*, v. 27, n. 10, 2022, pp.3913-3922 [<https://doi.org/10.1590/1413-81232022710.08142022> - acesso em: 24 dez. 2022].
- CALMON, Diego. Bissexualidade e gramáticas emocionais em relatos de jovens universitários no Rio de Janeiro. *Cadernos de campo*, v.28, n.2, São Paulo, 2019, pp 282-305 [<https://www.revistas.usp.br/cadernosdecampo/article/view/164129> – acesso em: 24 mar. 2021].
- CALMON, Diego. Personalidades Foscas: sexualidade e roteiro em jovens universitários no Rio de Janeiro. Dissertação (Mestrado em Ciências Sociais), Programa de Pós-Graduação em Ciências Sociais (PPCIS) - Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro (UERJ), 2019.
- CAVALCANTI, Camila Dias. Visíveis e invisíveis: Práticas e identidade bissexual. 2007. 112 f. Dissertação (Mestrado em Sociologia) - Centro de Ciências Humanas e Filosofia, Universidade Federal de Pernambuco (UFPE), Recife, 2007.
- COELHO, Maria Claudia. Porcos-espinhos na pandemia ou a angústia do contágio. *DILEMA: Revista de estudo de conflitos e controle social. Reflexões na pandemia*, Rio de Janeiro, 2020, pp.1-10 [<https://www.reflexpandemia.org/texto-3> - acesso em: 24 mar. 2021].
- DOUGLAS, Mary. *Pureza e perigo*. São Paulo, Perspectiva, 2017.
- DOUGLAS, Mary. Introdução de Mary Douglas. In: *O ramo de ouro*. Rio de Janeiro: Zahar, 1992, pp.9-15.
- ELIADE, Mircea. Mefistófeles e o andrógino. In: ELIADE, Mircea. *Mefistófeles e o andrógino: comportamentos religiosos e valores espirituais não-europeus*. São Paulo, Martins Fontes, 1999, pp.77-130.
- FACCHINI, Regina. Entrecruzando diferenças: mulheres e (homo)sexualidades na cidade de São Paulo. In: DIAS-BENÍTEZ, Maria Elvira; FIGARI, Carlos Eduardo (ed.). *Prazeres dissidentes*. Rio de Janeiro, Garamond, 2009, pp.309-341.
- FACCHINI, Regina. “Sopa de Letrinhas”? Movimento homossexual e produção de identidades coletivas nos anos 90: um estudo a partir da cidade de São Paulo. 2002. Dissertação (Mestrado em Antropologia) Departamento de Antropologia do IFCH, UNICAMP, Campinas, SP, 2002.
- FRAZER, James. *O ramo de ouro*. Rio de Janeiro, Zahar, 1982.
- GAGNON, John. Uma interpretação do desejo: ensaios sobre o estudo da sexualidade. Rio de Janeiro, Garamond, 2006.
- GARBER, Marjorie. *Vice Versa: bissexualidade e o erotismo na vida cotidiana*. Rio de Janeiro, Record, 1996.
- JAKOBSON, Roman. Decadência do cinema? In: JAKOBSON, Roman. *Linguística. Poética. Cinema*. São Paulo, Perspectiva, 2015, pp.153-161.
- JAKOBSON, Roman. *Linguística e Comunicação*. São Paulo, SP, Cultrix, 2007.
- JAKOBSON, Roman; POMORSKA, K. *Diálogos*. São Paulo, Cultrix, 1993.
- KINSEY, Alfred C. et al. Sexual behavior in the human male. In: STORR, M. (org.). *Bisexuality: a critical reader*. New York, Routledge, 1999.
- LAGO, Regina. Bissexualidade masculina: uma identidade negociada? In: HEILBORN, Maria (ed.). *Sexualidade: o olhar das ciências sociais*. Rio de Janeiro, Zahar, 1999, pp.157-174.
- LAKOFF, George; JOHNSON, Mark. *Metáforas de la vida cotidiana*. Madrid, Catedra, 2004.
- LEACH, Edmund. Aspectos antropológicos da linguagem: categorias animais e insulto verbal. In: DA MATTA, Roberto (org.). Edmund Leach. São Paulo, ÁTICA, 1986, pp.170-198.
- MACDOWALL, Lachlan. Historicising contemporary bisexuality. *Journal of bisexuality*, 9 (1), Haworth Press, Inc., 2009, pp.3-15 [<http://hdl.handle.net/11343/34739> – acesso em: 24 mar. 2021].
- MONACO, Helena. “A gente existe”: ativismo e narrativas bissexuais em um coletivo monodissidente. Dissertação (Mestrado em Antropologia Social), Centro de filosofia e Ciências Humanas, Programa de Pós-graduação em Antropologia Social, Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina (UFSC), Florianópolis, 2020.
- NORDHEIMER, Jon. Aids specter for women: the bisexual man. *The New York Times*, 04/03/1987 [<https://www.nytimes.com/1987/04/03/us/aids-specter-for-women-the-bisexual-man.html> – acesso em: 24 mar. 2021].

- PRAMAGGIORE, Maria. Extracts from epistemology of the fence. In: STORR, M. (org). *Bisexuality: a critical reader*. New York, Routledge, 1999, pp.144-149.
- ROUDINESCO, Elisabeth; PILON, Michel. *Dicionário de psicanálise*. Rio de Janeiro, Zahar, 1998.
- SEFFNER, Fernando. *Derivas da masculinidade: representação, identidade e diferença no âmbito da masculinidade bissexual*. Jundiaí, SP, Paco editorial, 2016.
- STORR, M. Editor's introduction. In: STORR, M. (org.). *Bisexuality: a critical reader*. New York, Routledge, 1999, pp.1-12.
- TURNER, Victor. *Do ritual ao teatro: a seriedade humana ao brincar*. Rio de Janeiro, Editora UFRJ, 2015.
- TURNER, Victor. Betwixt and between: o período liminar nos "ritos de passagem". In: TURNER, Victor. *Floresta de símbolos: aspectos do ritual Ndembu*. Rio de Janeiro, EdUFF, 2005, pp.137-158.
- VELHO, Gilberto. Duas categorias de acusação na cultura brasileira contemporânea. In: VELHO, Gilberto. *Individualismo e cultura: notas para uma antropologia da sociedade contemporânea*. Rio de Janeiro, Zahar, 2012, pp.59-68.