



Perception, Torsion, Event: links between body, discourse and art

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ABSTRACT – Perception, Torsion, Event: links between body, discourse and art – This study is based on the identification of the subject and his/her social place in the performance, in order to connect subject, body, and gesture in the performing act. This link becomes possible from the discursive analysis of the sixth dimension of the performing activity: an updating of Schechner's theory of performance, in conjunction with the postulates of Merleau-Ponty on perception, and Pêcheux on discourse. Results indicate an opportunity for a materialistic analysis of the field of sensitive experimentation, emphasizing the theoretical unfolding of the notion of perception in the analytical act consolidated in the feeling and action of/by the subject's body.

Keywords: **Body. Discourse. Art. Subject. Performance.**

RÉSUMÉ – Perception, Torsion, Événement: liens entre le corps, le discours et l'art – Cette étude s'appuie sur le marquage du sujet et sa place sociale dans la performance, afin d'établir des liens entre sujet, corps et geste dans l'acte de performance. Ce lien est rendu possible par l'analyse discursive de la sixième dimension de l'activité de performance, mettant à jour la théorie de la performance de Schechner, en lien avec les postulats de Merleau-Ponty sur la perception, et Pêcheux sur le discours. Une analyse matérialiste du champ des expériences sensibles est proposée, mettant en évidence les développements théoriques de la notion de perception comme acte analytique incarné dans le ressenti et l'action du corps du / par le sujet. *onteúdo do resúme.*

Mots-clés: **Corps. Discours Art. Sujet. Performance.**

RESUMO – Percepção, Torção, Acontecimento: enlaces entre corpo, discurso e arte – Este estudo toma como base a marcação do sujeito e de seu lugar social na performance, de modo a estabelecer conexões entre sujeito, corpo e gesto no ato performático. Esse enlace se torna possível a partir da análise discursiva da sexta dimensão da atividade performática, atualização da teoria da performance de Schechner, em conjunção com os postulados de Merleau-Ponty sobre a percepção, e de Pêcheux a respeito do discurso. Os resultados apontam para a possibilidade de uma análise materialista do campo das experimentações sensíveis, em que se destacam os desdobramentos teóricos da noção de percepção na condição de ato analítico consubstanciado ao sentir e ao agir do corpo do/pelo sujeito.

Palavras-chave: **Corpo. Discurso. Arte. Sujeito. Performance.**

Feeling and Knowing

What is the reason why feeling is so present in the arts and, at the same time, so strange and uncomfortable for a *traditional conception* of science? To answer this question, we may point to various historical references (Vigarello, 2016) that sustain the perspective that up until the 17th century feelings were constituted by changes in states of consciousness, separated from theoretical exercise and alienated from any cause or social function that was not subjugated to the gift (of the artist, holy office or maternal work). As such, the artist, elected as a sensitive being par excellence, was responsible for transfiguring what he/she felt into a work of art, materializing the overflow of emotion in something objectifiable. This particularity of artistic production allows us to observe in a more concrete way the split between sensitive experience and reason, which historically marks feeling and thinking as diametrically opposed. This split relates feeling to an escape from reality and views it as counterproductive, since it has no objective function that is not centered on itself; furthermore, it designates reasoning as the only valid means for obtaining truth and justice. Thus, the work of the mind is given primacy over any other type of production, manual or sensitive.

This primacy recovers the distinction of art as a technique separated from other sciences, through the Aristotelian postulation on *praxis*, the set of sciences destined to action, and *poiesis*, which encompasses the fields geared towards manufacture, where art figures. This separation is furthered under the sanction of the theoretical versus practical formulation in Plotinus' *Aenead V*, which classifies the arts as a collection of techniques whose objective is to assist nature (as in agriculture, the art of handling cultivation), or manufacturing something from it, as craftwork does. In ancient society, whose social structure was centered on slavery, technical deeds, taken to mean the servile and mechanical arts, were subjugated to the practices of the mind – to the arts of the liberal classes, such as oratory and mathematics, for example. With the rise of the bourgeoisie, the paradigm was reversed and society began to recognize mechanical techniques as work. According to Chauí (2000), techniques were classified as useful to man – medicine, culinary skills etc. or pertaining to beauty – theater, cinema, lit-

erature, and so on. Accordingly, the technical responds to the deeds coming from tradition and science and evolves to a form of knowledge of itself, technology. Beauty reverts to creation based on the sensitive inspiration of the creating artist, being seen as creative expression.

Therefore, in the working condition of the expression, since its conception, art was intimately related to science and the technical, and it was not rare for cases such as the connection between painting and the expression of passions through the face, of Le Brun, to have helped in the development of the Cartesian conceptions and in the discovery of the principle of blood circulation¹. This organic system of knowledge combined feeling, technique, body, art and science in a single holistic confluence. In the 17th century, physiognomy, for example, sought precise medical diagnoses based on the influences that the bodies of patients underwent in relation to the action of the stars and also their physiognomies. In this context, knowledge about moral inclinations was formed, such as the proximity of the eyes revealing character deviation, and also claims coming from astrology, whereby the star sign of cancer was more likely to be associated with big eyes and a fragile stomach. These holistic conceptions were gradually dispelled throughout the century, accompanying the change in tone that resulted from the advance of medicine, and later consigned to common sense with the advent of positivism as a scientific method, which did not include sensitive exercise.

Limited to non-scientific endeavor, although occasionally explored as a secondary tool in the investigation of certain academic objects, feeling was purged from the center of the intellectual production of the time, giving way to method and its formalities. From the panorama depicted so far, if placed in sequence, the associations I have referred to involve feeling, expressing and creating artistically, as opposed to thinking, working and reproducing scientifically. These arrangements are shaped as a consequence of the social changes brought about by the manner in which the sciences are conceived, from which comes the differentiation between action and manufacture, which leads to the separation between art, the place of emotional doing; and technology, the place of rational doing. This Manichean distinction, between thinking and feeling, recalls the discourse of positivism and goes through different formulations, governing a specific way of doing sci-

ence and facilitating, for example, the belief that there is a relativization of rational rigor in the treatment of themes linked to the sensitive universe.

The space given to feeling here is that of contingency, disturbance of rational ordering, subversion and discomfort, metaphorical language, polysemy, of the first person, the breaking of the continuous chain; in short, the same as that designated to art, and with the same force and intensity of *restlessness* that Denise Maldidier attributed to discourse. It is from the destabilization of the structures provided by feeling, and the relationship it maintains with the sensitive experience of the subject, that the objective is to unite art and discourse, in articulation with the material substance of the subject, his or her body, in the mode of the holistic conjunctions between creative expression, science and body technique to which I briefly referred herein. The proposal is to think of art as torsion in the plane of language, and to observe, from the bending, how the senses are erected in the relationship that the subject establishes with the sensitive perception of the artistic object. To this end, I start from a discursive notion of torsion, explaining one of its specificities: that of making possible the analytical act of perception. The qualitative and bibliographic approach method used in this study takes into consideration the discursive analysis of performance *Helena terrorista de gênero* [Helena gender terrorist] (2018), presented at the IX Symposium of the Discourse Theory Group (GTDIS), in Caxias do Sul, in order to elucidate the way in which, through the gesture, art, body and subject are intertwined, with discourse featuring at the center of this bond.

Torsion and Perception

The exercise of analysis involves the investigation of the effects arising from the torsions in three instances essential to Pecheutian inspired Discourse Analysis, which are: the subject, the language and the memory. The notion of torsion used here is elucidated by Maria Cristina Leandro-Ferreira (2013), who associates the torsion of language to the production of equivocation. In the same perspective, the torsion of the subject causes the unconscious to erupt, and torsion in the memory causes “[...] other senses to be forgotten, and forgotten so that others may be remembered” (Leandro-Ferreira, 2013, p. 130). The nodal point of this conception is that the yaw of the torsion reveals the constitutive incompleteness of these structures, and the constant attempt to annul or rectify them – through the various

forms of negation which, to a greater or lesser extent, cover up the fact that the subject does not control what he or she says and is not the source of what is said, that the equivocation is the place of observation for the subject and the sense, and that the lapse reveals societal and historically determined ideological affiliations.

The various manifestations of this buffering movement make up a larger picture of intellectual inclination marked by the positivist inheritance of prioritizing objectivism, side-lining in this process objects that operate in greater measure with subjectivism and its predicates, the impossible and the incomplete. In *Semantics and Discourse* (2014a [1975]), Pêcheux proposes a non-subjectivist approach to subjectivity, adopting, as per Grigoletto (2013), discussions on ideology and Althusser's constitution of ideological subject, expanding this paradigm on noting, in the self-criticism weaved into *There's Only Cause for What Fails, or The French Political Winter* (Pêcheux, 2014b [1978]), which are the flaws in the mechanism of ideological questioning that enable the subject, at the edges of the process, to resist the position assigned to him/her. This conception delineates the *modus operandi* of the subjectivation process more clearly, centralizing the flaw in it and making it possible to materially conceive objects previously set aside by positivism, such as the flaw and the subject him/herself.

The assumption of the flaw as an integral part of the theoretical scheme of Discourse Analysis sets a precedent so that one can materially analyze certain objects that were once neglected, or at least little explored throughout the history of scientific development, since they represent the imprint of instability and the disturbance of what would be considered an *ideal object*, free of distortions and unpredictable or contradictory variants, caused by the subject's action. This is the case, for example, of *perception*, disregarded by the objectivist tradition as a construct subject to analysis, since it was related to the sensitive and potentially problematic in a study of a positive nature. If we shed light on the subject and its sensitive manifestations, we can affirm that perception is an action that is connected to the experience provided by the senses, which, in turn, is conditioned to language. It is to the sensitive experience that Locke (1999, p. 80) confers the term perception, it “[...] is the first operation of all our intellectual faculties and the inlet of all knowledge into our minds”, which is equivalent to saying

that language, thinking and perception are consolidated in the body – the place in which experience is perceived through movement (Giorgi, 2017).

Similarly, Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1999) postulates that “[...] the identity of the thing through perceptive experience is merely another aspect of the identity of the body itself in midst of the movements in exploration” (Merleau-Ponty, 1999, p. 251). In this manner, there is a distinction between sensation – an accumulation of stimuli, essentially related to the five senses, not hindered by them but rather in how they are signified (all or none of them) – and perception – the associations, inversions and relationships, obtained through sensations, and which are established between the subject's way of being in the world (the body) and the other objects that participate in it. Merleau-Ponty (1999) thus defines the body as a representation of the subject, an object of its own that, in relation to another, perceives the identity of things, gives meaning to them, mediated by two fundamental categorical universals: time and space. The scheme of identifying meanings also includes the search for *eidōs*, which consists of treating sensitive data as representative of a set, placing them in relation to each other, ordering them in a system, centering the plurality of these experiences in the same intelligible nucleus. This ordering of the matter of experience enables the subject to see behind the flow of impressions and, finally, perceive the meaning that is constructed (the identity of the thing), and not the one that appears to be finished (the impression or the automatized experience).

As the body is the representation of the subject in the world, and the objects that inhabit it representations of things in relation to the body, the search for the *eidōs* corresponds to what Pêcheux (2014a [1975], p. 115) defines as “[...] the examination of the subject's relationship with that which represents him/her”, involving both the investigation of the discursive process, and the analysis of the influence it exerts over the subject's body and gestures. In *Indirect Language and The Voices of Silence* (1991), Merleau-Ponty discusses the concept of sign based on Saussure's *Course in General Linguistics*, centralizing the idea of relation between the part and the set, affirming that language “[...] goes beyond signs towards their meaning” (Merleau-Ponty, 1991, p. 42). Along these lines, and similar to Pêcheux, for Merleau-Ponty (1991, p. 42) the sign should contain a more opaque aspect that “[...] never offers us absolutely transparent significations, [since] the genesis of the meaning is never over”. He continues by stating

that the sign is not enough to explain the exercise of language, whereby the *gesture* is closer to a basic unit of meaning, given that it predicts an action and hosts that which the system does not process, as with what is established before the word is spoken, its “[...] background of silence that does not cease to surround it and without which it would say nothing” (Merleau-Ponty, 1991, p. 47). This conception lays bare the threads of silence, which are interwoven into words, and highlights the actions implicit in the act of communication, thus exploring “[...] potentialities through the experience of the gesture and the meaning we assign to it” (Bienaise; Levac, 2016, p. 523).

In this context, the gesture is not exclusively physiological, as a mechanical attitude, nor is it reduced to the awareness of sensation; rather, it is an arrangement between the two instances, which is defined in the torsion between physical and mental action, so that “[...] body and consciousness are not limited to each other, they can only be parallel” (Merleau-Ponty, 1999, p. 174). The germinal principle of the gesture is thus the action that combines language and perception – the relationship between the subject’s body and other objects, and which also includes mutual affectation, the manner in which it will be received, and, in turn, how it will interfere with those who use it. According to Merleau-Ponty, gestures, among them those of language, define the forms of expression of being, represented, in the world, by the body. The articulation of these gestures can occur through mimesis, which automatizes them, or diegesis, which can break the automatized chain. The process takes place in the same way that, in Psychoanalysis, polysemy breaks the paraphrastic sequence of transference, causing the symptom to emerge, or in discourse, where the event breaks a certain network of meanings sedimented by memory. Thus, deautomatization is the place of torsion in a structure, the point through which creative expression is observed. This is the same place that art occupies par excellence. For example, a painter “[...] affects us through the tactile world of colors and lines” (Merleau-Ponty, 1991, p. 45), a gesture “[...] requires of us merely the power to reclassify our significations” (Merleau-Ponty, 1991, p. 45), to reconsider that which may have been naturalized, to *defamiliarize* what appears as ordinary.

The idea of *estrangement* or defamiliarization comes from Viktor Chklovski (1976), who on criticizing the notion of poetry as a set of imag-

es, proposes that the identification of poetic language, even before forming an image, operates a destabilization in ordinary language. The use and habit make language undergo an automatization that “[...] swallows objects, the dress, furniture, the wife and fear of war” (Chklovski, 1976, p. 44), so art would be that which, using the same language, but subverting its order, time or space, promotes a re-encounter with what has been familiarized, returning to the subject the sensation of life. Art is not therefore at the service of new image creation, but the manufacture of a particular perception of a certain object, “[...] the procedure of art is the procedure of singularization of objects and consists in obscuring the form, increasing the difficulty and duration of the perception” (Chklovski, 1976, p. 45). As such, art is a way of experiencing the becoming of the object, and in this process the act of perception appears as an end in itself, which must be prolonged with maximum effort and duration. The aesthetic character is not then at the service of beauty and good taste, as per Kant (Campos; Neckel, 2016), but rather linked to the liberation of the perception of automatism.

Referring to the conjunction between perception and creative exercise, Merleau-Ponty (1991) claims art is an advent, an infinite promise of happenings, which founded a tradition “[...] because it collected another: that of perception. The quasi-eternity of art is confused with the quasi-eternity of human existence incarnate” (Merleau-Ponty, 1991, p. 73). Perceiving the different, and the behavior of this *quasi*, involves “[...] the exercise of our body and our senses” (Merleau-Ponty, 1991, p. 73), understanding the manner in which the artist’s gesture places us in time and space. As advent and in its relationship with time, art can destabilize repeatability, disarrange automation, updating an event in a defined time and space; an act that for Pêcheux (1999) corresponds to the rupture of a memory perpetuated in the field of interdiscourse, a *discursive event*.

The Event and the Rupture

The discursive event is characterized by the emergence of a new discursive formation, hence its rare character, since this type of event requires the identification of a new domain of knowledge; it is a movement “[...] towards the new, the unusual, this movement of rupture marks a punctual, unique, fleeting, unrepeatable moment” (Indursky, 2008, p. 21). The discursive event occurs in relation to the rupture of the subject with the

knowledge mobilized by the subject-form, thus being associated with de-identification, while counter-identification is linked to an event of a specific type, in which the agitation of knowledge is not strong enough to initiate a discursive-formation, but rather a counter-identified subject-position; to this last event, Indursky (2008) ascribes the term *enunciative event*. In a similar approach, although in the space between the field of arts and the discursive, Renata Marcelle Lara (2016) posits about the possibility of the performing body characterizing an artistic-discursive event since, as an artistic practice, the body in performance only happens at a specific moment, “[...] fleeting and symbolically eternalizing” (Lara, 2016, p. 205), in addition to destabilizing, “[...] in the territories of Art (as an area of knowledge), possible meanings for art (as a manifestation/artistic work), for the subject-artist and their relations with time-space” (Lara, 2016, p. 205).

The caveat that Lara (2016) makes relates to the fact that assuming the existence of the artistic-discursive event does not imply that “each and every performance actually produces discursive resistance” (Lara, 2016, p. 206) – the intimate resistance to identification would cause the rupture and counter-identification to which Indursky (2008) refers, since it is by resisting the knowledge that the subject modifies his/her position. This does not erase the novel character that resides in the conception of an event as the founder of a new discursiveness, but it twists it, revealing the essential relativization in this process: the event is, before the rupture, a question of altering the paraphrastic chain of repetition, in which the explanation of the deautomatization occurs. In this paradigm of the norm’s subversion, just as in Hibbeler’s *Mechanics of Materials* (2011), a force is employed to a body, and originates in it a type of exertion, which can culminate in a deformation – stress, torsion, necking, etc. Torsion alone does not imply rupture, since there is a strength coefficient of this material which, combined with its composition, determines the variation and proportion of the deformation. Depending on the force employed, the stress may be a) proportional to the movement that this body exerts in response to the force, remaining within the proportional limit of the body, which would be equivalent to the reduplication of the knowledge in discursive formation; b) forcing the limits of the body beyond the limit of elasticity, causing the body to deform and assume a plastic form, different from the original one, but not foreign, thus counter-identifying itself with the subject-form; and, finally, c) the increase

in this stress may cause the body to exceed its ultimate strength, undergoing yield and thereby causing fracture, as shown in Figure 1, below:

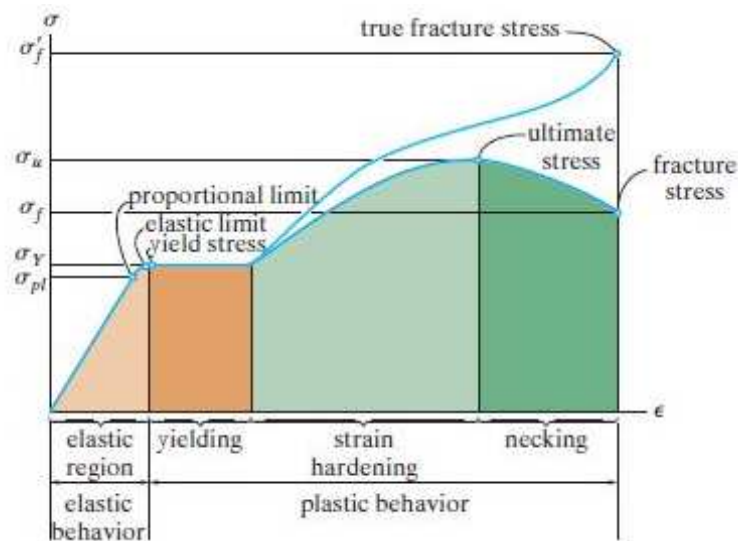


Figure 1 – True Fracture Stress.
Source: Hibbeler (2011, p. 84).

Therefore, it is worth highlighting, from the outline in which the event is framed, that the rupture is just one of the stages of a process that encompasses other primary deformative manifestations (regarding the active trajectory of the forces on a material), and it depends on the proportion of the load employed in relation to the body's limits (proportional, elastic and strength). In the manner in which it is presented, we can examine the event, and specify its details on a scale that places the deautomatization of language at the base of the deformative process, moving to a secondary level in which torsion fits, and finally, depending on the position that the subject assumes in relation to the updating of memory, the rupture. Repetition, which crystallizes knowledge in the memory, and the action of the ideology, which determines what is deemed obvious, sedimented and reduplicated also participate in this scenario. Going back to Lara (2016), if there is a network of possible meanings for the artistic manifestation with which the artistic-discursive event ruptures, it is because the perception of these meanings has been stabilized by repetition and crystallized by memory until it automatizes them and makes them obvious. Figure 2, below, demonstrates this:

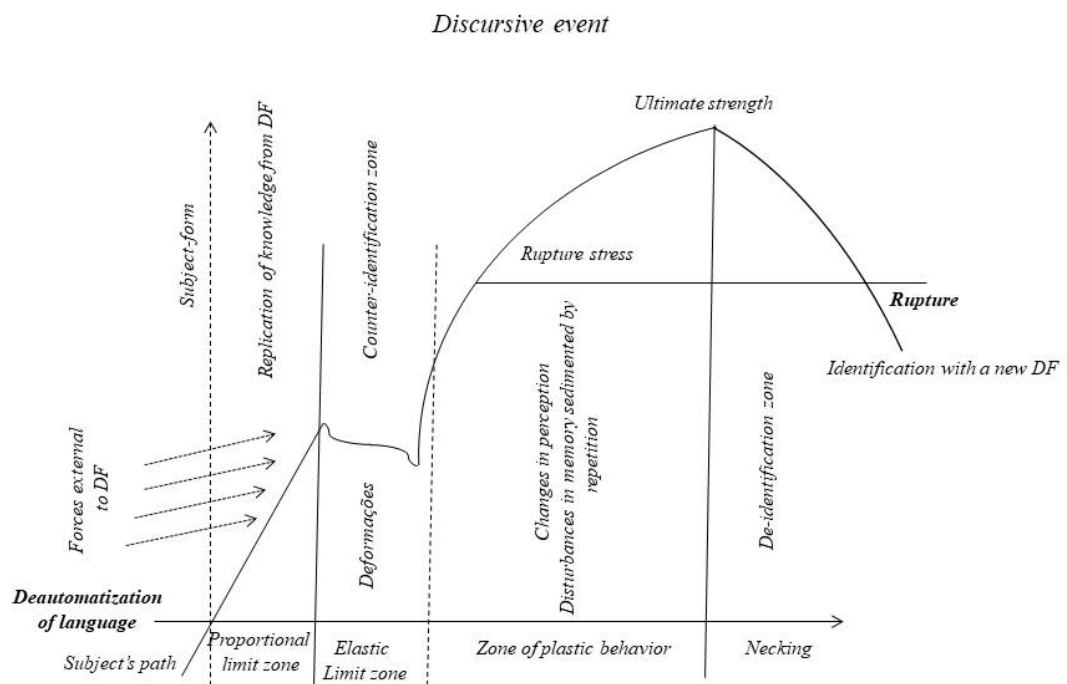


Figure 2 – Diagram of Discursive Event.
Source: The graph was prepared by us.

For Marx and Engels (2001), producing the obvious is a particular expression of one of the functioning mechanisms of ideology, which is: the naturalization of historical and cultural facts, and their marking as normal, trivial or inevitable. In the case at hand, the settling of the possible meanings for art, to which Lara (2016) refers, is a side effect of two factors from the same exponent: a) evidence that there is a naturalized language for art, and b) recognition of the need to breach that language in order to validate art as such. The idea that it is only art when there is rupture accompanies a yearning for the new, a specific type of desire that is at the root of how almost instantaneous obsolescence works, and which governs modern commerce, based on the manufacture and continuous exchange of objects², thus driving consumption. This ideological action in art, punctuated in the production of the obvious, is possible because art presents itself as a language – the concrete counterpart of discourse which, in turn, materializes ideology; moreover, in the capitalist conjuncture, art is considered a cultural and economic product, whose consumption has historically been associated with the dominant classes.

As a reflection of the relationship between art and capitalism, from the new necessary arises the affirmation of the critique³ that painting died with Cézanne, music with Mozart, poetry with Eliot, and so on. From this perspective, the *true artists*, theoretically exempt from the perversions of spectacularization and market, broke away from the forms established up until that point and initiated new discursivities. Their masterpieces were seen as discursive events, vanguard genesis, unprecedented discursive formations to which subsequent artists subscribed, producing, at most, counter-identified positions. In this scenario, there are two conflicting points between these critical affirmations and the perspective that I adopt in this study. In the first place, art can be seen as a specific torsion of language, a gesture that subverts the sedimented structure with the intention of producing a prolongation of perception through estrangement. As a gesture of language, art is not excluded from the socio-historical and ideological determinations that are at the base of discursive functioning, so much so that it would be impossible for an artist to be unaware of the conjuncture in which he or she is inserted. No subject escapes the network of significations established by consumption and assured by State apparatuses – sometimes subjecting him/herself to domination, at other times resisting it, but never indifferent, since this would mean being outside the social formation that gave rise to it.

A second point that merits attention in this criticism refers to what was mentioned as the anatomy of the discursive event, or the observation of it as a process. In the diagram provided, the work of art participates at a first stage of the event in which the deautomatization of language is found through the ways in which it enables estrangement. This object, conditioned by the proportional action of forces external to the Discursive Formation in relation to the subject's limits (proportional, elastic and of strength) may or may not escalate and reach a rupture point. In other words, this object could be limited to torsion and stagnate in counter-identification, or even, before that, pause in the zone of the proportional limit and replicate the knowledge of discursive formation in which it is inserted. This characteristic of presenting itself as reinforcing a certain set of knowledge, and then destabilizing it, is inherent to the dynamics of the “[...] functioning/discursive process” (Lara, 2016, p. 206), to which the artistic object is subjugated, given its relationship with the subject of discourse. On the reception side, the prominence of the subject's role in this

scheme is translated by the perception of the artistic object, its estrangement; at the other end of the archetype, through the bias of artistic expression, the positioning of the subject in step with the gesture of language deautomatization produces a point of drift in meanings that prolongs the duration of perception, playing with the plasticity of language, time and space, also being transposed by discourse.

The Subject and the Performance

The positioning of the artistic subject seems particularly important in performance, due to the imbrication between subject and work of art, at the center of the constitutive composition. The relationship occurs “[...] between artist-artwork/artwork-artist/time-space, that intermingle, become confused, and in-differentiate at the very moment of the artistic practice, which is simultaneously a discursive practice” (Lara, 2016, p. 197). To discuss this question, I would like to look at the performance in *Helena terrorista de gênero* (2018), which took place at the IX Symposium of the Discourse Theory Group (GTDIS), in Caxias do Sul. The presentation consisted of Helena performing three songs by Linn da Quebrada (2017a; 2017b; 2017c): *Submissa do 7º dia*, *Bomba pra Caralho* and *Bixa Travesty*, besides a paraphrased quotation from Linn, in an interview given to the news outlet *Jornal Nexo*, in 2018, “I’m Linn da Quebrada, multimedia artist, singer, performer, gender terrorist... not an actor, actress or *actross*” (Nexo..., 2018, n. p.).

Helena's characterization, as announced in the title of the performance, sought to undermine the normalization of the gaze that seeks to designate gender by image and associate it with sex. The immediate effect of interweaving signs from the universe socially marked as masculine, such as the beard that Helena was sporting, to signs historically belonging to the female stigma, such as the dress she was wearing, is the implosion of the binary conception of gender through the demonstration of the space-between, the blurring of boundaries that the categorization man vs. woman has constructed. The position in which Helena inscribes herself reduplicates the knowledge from the discursive formation that defends gender performativity over heteronormativity as the key to interpreting gender identity. These words are intended to dissociate gender from biological sex and to elicit it as a settlement of social performativities, so that under the condi-

tions of performative discursive formation, gender is defined on the basis of how it is represented by the subject, and does not necessarily correspond to the designation of biological sex. Separated from genitalia, gender performance subverts heterosexual coherence and reconsiders the place of the masculine and feminine, in addition to the “[...] naturalized categories of identity and desire” (Butler, 2018, p. 240).

Helena’s gender performance and artistic performance are traversed by the same discourse and participate in the same discursive-formation, but do not share the same dynamics. For Butler (2018, p. 202), gender performance is associated with “[...] elocutive acts that, repeated, become consolidated practices and, finally, institutions”. This conception is closer to the performative speech acts of Austin (1962), which foresee a practical action associated with what has been enunciated, as in marriage ceremonies – I declare you husband and wife. The fundamental difference between the two performances, in these terms, would be based on repeatability – while the gender performance results from repeated elocutive acts, the artistic performance is marked by its fleeting, unrepeatable character since, as an artistic gesture, it involves a torsion in the time and space in which it is situated, besides the immediate interaction with the audience. As such, repeatability settles on certain meanings, automatizing them. In short, the distinction between the two performances is the disarray they provoke in the established meanings, the way in which they twist language. This designation reinforces the initial argument that the identification of art lies in the deautomatization of perception.

Nonetheless, this notion of performance as language practice, argued by Austin (1962), is expanded by the performance theory of Schechner (2004) who, beyond the rites and ceremonies, encompasses within the performing act processes of artistic production and routine performativities “*in everyday life*”, from “*sports*” to “*theater, dance, ceremonies, rites*”, and finally, “*performances of great magnitude*” (Schechner, 2004, p. 18). Schechner (2004) identifies five basic categories to define performance, namely: 1) *process*, which refers to something that happens here and now, listing time and space; 2) *consequential*, the irremediable, irrevocable facet of performative language, which does not lend itself to rectification or mimicry; 3) *contest*, the dispute for meaning established between the performer and the audience; 4) *initiation*, a change in the participants’ status, the alteration of state

they undergo before, during and after the performing act; and, finally, 5) *space*, which situates the organic use of space surrounding those involved in the act. To these categories, as per Merleau-Ponty (1999) on the manner of the subject being in the world, I would add a sixth dimension, a fundamental characteristic of artistic performances, centered on the perception and position that the subject occupies in the discourse.

The perceptive action understands that the body of the subject is, at the same time, the means by which the sensitive experience is processed and the instance that first establishes a relationship between the object and the subject, also making the body of the subject an object of this relationship. This definition resignifies the sensitive, extrapolating the limits of sensation and feelings by attributing to them a relational load mediated by the symbolic, which accompanies the constitution of the subject. Without limiting himself/herself to the feeling, the subject in the performance perceives himself/herself in so far as he/she reads himself/herself and his/her relationship with the space in which he/she is situated, entering into synergy with it through the body. In this process, he/she directs gestures towards the audience that affect both the performer and the audience, twisting the automatized language. The performer deals with his/her own sensitive data as a representative of an ensemble integrated by the feeling of the other, rearranging this chain with the plurality of experiences in action, weaving a sense into him/herself by doing, building *pari passu* with his/her position in the discourse. This is how Helena disarranges the audience's conceptions of her identity in the same proportion that she identifies with performative formation, since the knowledge that characterizes the discourse of gender performativity comprises the destabilization of the binary system. The manner in which Helena's gesture affects us, the deautomatization it causes, is the matter of which her position-subject is constituted: the sensitive response issued to the artist, who receives it and then transfigures it, increasing the duration of the perception.

Within the limit of the proportional zone, reduplicating the knowledge from the performative discursive formation, Helena's performance thus recovers the memory of complaints about abuse committed against transvestites, above all in the characterization of *Submissa do 7º dia* [7th day submissive]. In the song, which is translated from the original Portuguese below, Linn, an LGBTQIA+ activist and defender of transvestite

visibility asks about the motive for being persecuted – *I'm looking, I'm trying to understand / What is it in me that upsets you so much?* While listing the features of the body itself, *the eyebrow, the breast / The beard, the hips*, the subject is marked in the space between the masculine, *the beard*, and the feminine, *the breast*, further alluding to the *scratched knee propped up on the tiles*, a marking associated with a sexual act. Sexuality is also evidenced in lines like *That leaves a taste in the mouth, lips / Saliva, desire*, in reference to a specific behavior of the persecutor in projecting the other as object of desire, thereby desiring what is despised. Inconsistent with the self-image of the persecuting subject, this sexual act is committed in a confessional tone, in the place where *they say their prayers*, hidden, *kneeling in front of urinals*, their *canines and mechanisms sharpened*, who *kneel and genuflect*. Scorned, persecuted and abused, it is the humanity of the transvestite, considered the *Bitch created at night*, who dies and for whom *Seventh day sub-mission* (the mass for he/she who is under, below) occurs.

Another of the abuses announced by Helena is by the police force against the *poor, black, outraged / Shameless / no justice* population in *Bomba pra caralho* [Fuckin bombs]. Marked in the marginal space, the transvestite fights *to keep the Living-dead alive* and to maintain her position because she is a victim of violence and of *crazies who little by little take everything from others*. This aggression is continuous, shown by the phrase *little by little*, and is employed as a form of repressing a marginalized subject, who deviates from the norm, and is castigated by the repressive apparatus of a State that makes them invisible and tries to annihilate them. Resisting the conditions historically assigned to her class, the transvestite subject through art, albeit via the sieve of eccentricity, will be able to declare herself *Bixa travesty* [Tranny fag], confronting her abusers *You can leave with your dick between your legs / Your empire is finished*, even if she comes out of the fight alone and with *only one breast, Tranny, only*.

This subject seeks to reinforce the marking of her identity, even within the LGBTQIA+ movement itself, which is equivalent to the description that accompanies the noun *bixa* [fag]: *travesty* [tranny]. The transvestite is not any *bicha* [faggot] replicator of social norms (including grammatical), traversed by the discourse of conservatism, and does not participate in the political agreement that tries to restrict its spelling as *trans*; this is a *bixa* spelt without the *ch*. Resistant to compliance, this subject claims a foreign

spelling by putting a *y* at the end, and even if affected by the biology of *XY/XX*, subverts the *y* by self declaring as *travesty*, thereby giving voice to those who are placed to the side both inside and outside minority groups. Despite this “[...] movement to assign names to us, it is to a certain degree always by naming an exception because no-one talks about ‘heteronormative’ music or ‘heteronormative group’” (Nexo..., 2018, s. p.). It is through the non-acceptance, the place of the unsheltered, that belonging in exclusion is affirmed, where the resistant group “[...] makes us connect, and create better conditions and strategies to disengage, but to coordinate ourselves as well” (Nexo..., 2018, s. p.). To say things differently, resist and counter-identify is, above all, to identify oneself with a position one is proud of, accepts and which validates one’s existence in the midst of repression.

Final Considerations

Therefore, the recurrence of the subject’s marking and her social place in the performance accompanies the meaning and is the result of the confluence between subject, body and gesture in the performing act. This link becomes possible from the discursive analysis of the sixth dimension of the performance, here proposed as an updating of Schechner’s (2004) performance theory, in conjunction with Merleau-Ponty’s (1999) thoughts on perception. During the theoretical course that originated this formulation, relations between feeling and thinking were discussed, punctuating the genesis of this split in the separation between art and technological sciences, a place where the marking of feeling and artistic expression as non-rational is evident. With the endorsement of the conceptual opening proposed by Pêcheux (2014a [1975]), when inserting the flaw and the non-systematized of language in the theory of discourse, I proposed revisiting the field of sensitive experimentation, highlighting the theoretical developments of the notion of perception as an analytic act consolidated by the feeling and acting of the body of/by the subject.

Along this path, torsion played a fundamental role in highlighting the deautomatizations exercised by art as a field that twists language, lengthening perception and producing estrangement. Finally, and to end the prospecting to which I referred at the beginning of this text, it is important to emphasize the possibility of torsion being seen as a primary deformation, an integral stage of a larger process that includes the functioning of the discursive

sive event, whose genesis lies in deautomatization, and the culmination, in rupture. In this manner, the conception of art as an event is relativized through the space conferred by the response of the subject's ultimate strength, in order to make explicit the intrinsic relationship between the positioning and the production of the artistic object. The investigation of the subject's positioning in this process finally led us to the reading of the performance *Hélène terrorista de gênero* (2018), which served as a basis for reflection on the forms of imbrication between art, body and subject, and the evidence of discourse as the center of this bond, illuminating the linkage that envelops art and discourse, in articulation with the subject's material substance, his or her body.

Notes

- ¹ The example is from Jean-Jacques Courtine (2013).
- ² The relation of the subject with the object of desire is mediated by the demand, which is from the other. Desire is never sated because it does not reside in the object itself, but in what it holds in relation to the other who brings the object to the subject. The demand is not for a specific object insofar as when the subject gains possession of the given object, this desire migrates to another material form. In Psychoanalysis, this connection is interpreted as the search for the object, which may take on any form and continuously, since the demand for the other does not buffer the constitutive lack that drives the desire. In this sense, capitalism has had great success in exploiting a demand that is inherently impossible, creating infinite almost obsolete objects from the moment they are produced, which will prompt the subject towards constant consumption.
- ³ Art as substrate that inaugurates a vanguard. On this perspective, see Caio Túlio Costa.

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