

FLUIDS AND BOUNDARIES:

Public restrooms and trans population. The hygienic history of a social device and some notes of Argentinian and Brazilian experiences

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Abstract

The following paper reflects on the symbolic and material boundaries of the contemporary public space based on a key space such as the public toilet. The increasing debate about public toilets and trans population expresses a profound social process of changing political recognition of the subjects, who not only demand formal recognition but also a symbolic and objective place in the world, understanding that this population still disputes a place in society while living in segregation and urban exclusion.

The fortuitous encounter of hygienist technologies and materials, the development of capitalism and Victorian morality of the 19th century, added to the realistic discussions of the incipient labor laws, resulted in a novel space that today we know as public restroom, mostly organized from a heteronormative criteria, and that has kept discussions stable for at least 100 years.

The public restroom represents a borderline (public/private, man/woman, inside/outside, dirty/clean) and thus, it emerges nowadays as symptomatic of a changing significant economy that structurally modifies the social organization mostly from the pressure of new political subjects.

Therefore, we understand that the dialogue between urbanism and feminist architecture, the intersectional point of view and the growing production of transgender studies can help to understand the current transition dynamics that societies are undergoing.

Mainly from a historical analysis of the social genesis of public toilets, but also from specific bibliography on the subject, a series of key social science concepts, and field work based on interviews and surveys in the cities of Córdoba, Argentina, and Florianópolis, Brazil, an effort is made to add another voice (in discussions almost monopolized by the central countries of English speech), to understand the experiences of Trans people, when visiting the restroom, not only enter a sanitary machinery but also enter a device of gender control.

A brief state of the art

Although the so-called critical studies of architecture and urbanism from a feminist perspective have begun to question the "neutrality" of space since the 1960s (Jacobs, 1961), it was only in the late 80' and early 90' that this issue began to spread and to have relevance and influence outside the restricted scope in which it was born (Altman and Churchman 1989; Berkley and McQuaid 1989; Dandkar 1993;greed 1994;; Rose 1993;Spain, 2001, 1992; Sprague 1991; Weisman 1992; Wilson 1991). The work of Beatriz Colomina, *Sexuality and Space* (1991) finally emerges as the feminist cornerstone of a paradigm shift at the end of the century in the field of sexuality and

space studies. At the same time, intersectional views began to get systematized, mainly from the contributions of Kimberlee Crenshaw¹ (1989) after a great critical effort of the "Western" black feminism. Therefore, and in this intersectional expansion, the critical movement of architecture initiated in the 1970s challenges spaces for the first time from categories such as sexuality, gender, race, class, etc². And it is in the consecrated architecture of the twentieth century that there is a dialectically opposite response (with rationalism and architectural functionalism) to the preceding symbolic saturation subordinating, in a utopian and radical way, "form to function"³. This is how at the end of the twentieth century a series of works were designed to demonstrate how space is laden with meaning and not only reflects a social structure (in the end, unequal and oppressive) but sometimes reproduces the same order. This view from a feminist point of view has chosen to understand the spatial structure divided into male / female binomials⁴ (Fanck & Paxson 1989, Hayden, 1997, 1984, 1980; Rose 1993), and soon began to worry about issues such as security (Gordon and Riger 1989, Grabowsky 1995, Stanko 1987), or transportation (Rosenbloom 1978, 1980, Law 1999, Coleman 2000, Njoh 1999), among others.

In this framework of feminist urbanism advancement, we can also observe the birth and growth of transgender studies in international level since the late 80 's (Stone 1991[1987]; Just, 1998; Bornstein, 1994; Talwar, 1999; Feinberg; 1992, 1996, 1999; Currah et. all, 2006; Spade; Striker, 2008; 2011; Fabrikant 2013; Mock, 2014; Whittington, 2016), with an important regional version in Latin America (Bento, 2012, 2006, 2004; Berkins, 2007; Pelúcio, 2012, 2007, 2006, 2005; Silva, 1993; Barbosa, 2010; Benedetti, 2005; Câmara Vale, 2005; CARRA et Vianna, 2006; Cutuli, 2011, 2010, 2009, 2008; Fernandez 2004; Leite, 2000; Moreno, 2008; Oliveira, 1997; De Oliveira, 1994; Patricio, 2008) that allowed the development of a small subfield of studies called *queer urbanism* in recent years (Heynen, 2018; Oswin, 2010, 2012; Binnie, 2004; Kogan, 1996, 2007, 2008, 2010; Overall, 2007; Gershenson & Penner,

¹ Although the intersectional view has been gaining traction for a quite time, there is broad consensus in granting Crenshaw formal recognition of the term in 1989 in "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics". The University of Chicago Legal Forum. 140: 139-167. The intersectional gaze has an origin in black feminism that began in the 1960s in the United States as a response to the sexism of the civil rights movement and racism within the feminist movement. In the late 1980s and early 1990s figures such as Crenshaw managed to denounce that violence and oppression of women was also heterogeneous.

² "Space, like language, is socially constructed; and like the syntax of language, the spatial arrangements of our buildings and communities reflect and reinforce the nature of gender, race, and class relations in society. The uses of both language and space contribute to the power of some groups over others and the maintenance of human inequality." (Kanes Weisman cited by KOGAN, 2007; 8)

³ form ever follows function, and this is the law (...)" (SULLIVAN, 1896; 408)

⁴ "(...) critical architectural theorists have explored how certain architectural dichotomies have historically been associated with the masculine and the feminine: the unadorned and simple as masculine, the adorned and ornamented as feminine; the public and outside as masculine (and heterosexual), the private and inside as feminine (and homosexual); hard surfaces as masculine, soft surfaces as feminine. Men have been associated with planning and building spaces, women with decorating and making those spaces livable. Men have been associated with urban spaces, characterized by oppressive and inhuman skyscrapers and straight streets; women have been associated with rambling suburban spaces" (Kogan, 2007; 8-9)

2009; Gersherson, 2010; Penner, 2003, 2005; Longhurst, 2003; Case, 2010; Jeffreys, 2014; Kopas, 2012; Cavanagh, 2010, 2011; Molotch, 2010; Blidon, 2006; More 2008; Chibnall & Norén, 2010; Allouch, 1987, 2003; Damon, 2009).

In this context, the following work tries to add another voice in the discussions almost monopolized by the central countries of English speech. Most of the marked traces (whether they feminist urbanism, transgender studies or queer urbanism) find the production center in English-speaking countries, so the contribution of the present work, centered on cities in the southern cone of Latin America (which articulates urbanism and transgender studies) can enrich the debate, not only by providing a specific perspective, but also by providing data on an issue not yet explored locally.

In this way, the present work, focused on transgender people and a selected key spaces (public toilets) and tries to understand the exclusion, discrimination and violence suffered by the transgender population in two important cities of Argentina and Brazil: Cordoba and Florianopolis.

THE BATHROOM AND THE URBANISM⁵

Firstly, and making a brief summary of the development of this subfield of studies centered on the bathroom⁶, it is important to start with Lacan's isolated contribution in the 60s, understanding this as the most remote antecedent, at least by the researched so far, on the thematic (profoundly taken up later, and which we will go back to shortly), from the small and secondary, but powerful, concept of "urinary segregation". From there, it will take several years to observe a collective production disaggregated in the late 1980s and early 1990s (where we highlight the Lacanian continuation of Jean Allouch⁷), to finally observe a systematic production and collective dialogues in the coming of the XXI century. In this small context, but equally significant, of studies dedicated specifically to the subject (of, according to Molotch "*toilet studies*") we saw France and we will see the English-speaking universe (United States, England, Australia, New Zealand) leading theoretical production. True pioneers such as Terry Kogan or Barbara Penner were already working on the issue in the 90s to consolidate, shortly thereafter, important advances in relation to the historical dimension of the phenomenon (deeply related, both in the United States and in England, with a

⁵ Normally, the first association between bathrooms, sexuality and gender is made from the classics, pioneers and central works dedicated to homoeroticism in bathrooms. From the classic and influential work of Laud Humphreys *Tearoom trade: the impersonal sex in public places* (1970), to the present time in our region we see works on the subject, in Brazil as "bathroom pickup" or in Argentina the so-called "teteras" (PINÓS DA COSTA, 2005; OLIVEIRA E NASCIMENTO, 2017; OLIVEIRA, 2016; RAPISARDI, 2001; SCHULTZE, 2012; INSAUSTI, 2018).

⁶ As we have already pointed out above, for reasons of space, volume and quantity of material, we have not resumed all the work since the 1970s in relation to studies on homoeroticism in bathrooms. To begin with, we understand that Lacan in the 1960s already started to work in symbolic terms, focusing on the specificity of what interests us here. Secondly, although we could incorporate the works on homoeroticism to the production marked according to Molotch as "Toilet studies", we decided for the gigantic volume of this specific line, and due to the impossibility of a serious approach, to leave aside those discussions, centering here what was produced more focused on Trans identities, and classification of political subjects based on male/female biocriteria

⁷ ALLOUCH, J. (1987). *Un sexe ou l'autre, sur la ségrégation urinaire*. Littoral 3-25. Paris.

shocking Victorian morality with a growing capitalism in the transition from the 19th to the 20th century). There, we already observed a displacement of the more theoretical questions about the subjective dimension, for a more empirical intention with solid consequences. Finally, the discussion, as noted above, has opened up immensely in recent years in a collective production that is not limited to isolated articles, but in a work that finds collections, books, and even events aimed strictly at the subject⁸.

The field became so heterogeneous that polemics arose from within the same feminism. Voices of so-called TERF (Trans radical feminist exclusionary) or TWEF (Trans women exclusionary feminist) feminism from feminists such as Sheila Sheffreys (critical history of the Trans and queer movements) produced material defending “urinary segregation” arguing women's vulnerability in societies contemporary⁹. However, we must recognize that production in general remains centered on the progressive effort to incorporate the new political subjects into an architecture that expresses, like an archaeological vestige, a world that is constantly changing. In the beginning, the division of the public bathroom obeyed a nineteenth-century Victorian subject who has little to do with the new political subjects that have emerged in recent times. Maybe that is why Beatriz Preciado (one of the few Spanish voices in the debate, and with a lot of weight in recent years within feminism) will define public restrooms from a Foucaultian perspective as “mini-panoptics of gender” (PRECIADO, 2010;2). In this way we observe that, despite the production centered on bathrooms being currently diversified both in optics and objectives, the initial look of that “first wave of architectural or geographic feminism” remains intact, in the sense that the fundamental question remains to understand how the space produces and reproduces social inequalities. And it is in this line that the present work tries to approach the question.

BATHROOMS: THE SEDENTARIZATION OF “NEEDS” IN THE 19TH CENTURY

Dessa estreita relação entre o saber médico e o poder, resultou o caráter eminentemente urbano da medicina formuladora de uma teoria da cidade que pressupunha vigilância constante. A saúde pública era essencial para o bom funcionamento do Estado, e tanto a medicina quanto a engenharia sanitária deveriam defender o homem da desordem que ele mesmo provocava, levando os médicos a se envolverem na teoria e no planejamento urbano, procurando, através da intervenção, obter uma cidade submetida à norma do conhecimento nas malhas do poder, o que significava impor ao pobre o modelo a seguir. Esse poder identifica a elite

⁸ In 2007, the conference “Outing the water closet” was held at the University of New York, which finally gave way to the influential collection “Public restrooms and the politics of sharing” edited by Laura NORÉN and Harvey MOLOTCH in 2010.

⁹ “I will argue that the ‘right to gender’ and the ‘right to gender expression’ promoted by transgender activists are problematic in themselves, and do not create a good reason to degender the bathroom. I shall suggest reasons why women have needed, both in the past and in the present, good, copious and segregated facilities suited to their needs” (SHEFFREYS, 2014; 42)

como sendo produtora da sujeira e dos maus odores, e culpa somente "o outro" como marca da alteridade.

GERBER, Diana: "O saneamento em Florianópolis..."

To understand the constitution of the contemporary public bathroom, first as architectural materiality, and then as a gender boundary¹⁰, it is necessary to observe the meeting of, on the one hand technologies, materials and hygienist paradigms, and on the other hand, the development of capitalism and the Victorian and bourgeois morals of the nineteenth century. It is only from this multi-causal encounter, of different variables, that the bathrooms will finally be structured in a heteronormative division, to constitute, a century later, one of the gender frontiers that had occupied more space in the public debate.

The best way to understand the phenomenon that we are trying to analyze here, at least in the Western world, is based on the analysis of Victorian England, which symbolizes the height of the industrial revolution. In terms of architecture and urban planning, it is known that the incorporation of crystal and steel represented technical advances that would mark modern becoming. It is no coincidence that in 1851, at the inauguration of the Universal Exhibitions, the Crystal Palace in London¹¹ was built to house "the progress of the world".

In this context, sewage and water systems¹² began to appear after major medical advances in response, mainly, to cholera epidemics (which would finally enable the birth of epidemiology¹³). Although the physician John Snow has spread his hypothesis since 1849¹⁴, the world will have to wait for the London epidemic of 1854 to reach the conclusion that it is water, in this case the Broad Street well, that is mainly responsible for the spread of the disease.

Nevertheless, even though Snow managed to get the political support to close the well and thus end the outbreak, he failed to convince the scientific community at the time that the cause of the disease's spread was what he called "morbid matter" in the

¹⁰ For a more detailed analysis of the bathroom as a frontier we suggest: Páez, J. (2018). Public toilets: boundaries of gender. *Social Iberoamerica: red magazine of estudios sociales IX*, pp. 94 - 110. Retrieved from <https://iberoamericasocial.com/banheiros-publicos-frontiers-dogenero>

¹¹ On steel architecture and the symptomatic emergence of universal exhibitions Walter Benjamin, reflecting on the passages, will express: "In this way the passages are presented, the first realization of construction with hierro; this is where the universal exhibitions are presented, whose coupling with the recreational industries is significant"(BENJAMIN, 2005 ;50) and it is not simply a use of "neutral" materials that capitalist technique will develop. Precisely for Benjamin, those materials, such as crystal, in these spaces would create new forms of sensibilities, pedagogically orchestrated in a domesticated proletariat: "The exhibitions universales were in the high school where the masses, which were separated from consumption, learned to identify with what they were. the exchange rate. «seeing everything by not touching anything" (BENJAMIN, 2010; 54)

¹² "Es en la segunda mitad del siglo XIX cuando nace la edad de oro de la fontanería y Europa en su conjunto aprende de la escuela inglesa". TARTARINI, 2002; 21)

¹³ CERDA J.L. & VALDIVIA G.C. (2007) John Snow, la epidemia de cólera y el nacimiento de la epidemiología moderna. In: *Revista Chilena de Infectología*. Pp. 331-334.

¹⁴ The views here explained open up to consideration a most important way in which the cholera may be widely disseminated, viz., by the emptying of sewers into the drinking water of the community (...). SNOW, J. 1849) On the Mode of Communication of Cholera disponível em: <https://collections.nlm.nih.gov/ext/cholera/PDF/0050707.pdf>

water. Only from Pasteur's microbiology will it be possible to drastically modify the paradigm and the perception of the spread of diseases¹⁵, discoveries that will drastically change urban landscapes in the course of modernity.

At the same time, in the 19th century, a concept, and then a movement, originated in the Greek goddess Higía¹⁶. Until then, what we now call hygiene did not exist, and among the practices of “care” or “maintenance” of the body, water only appeared more related to games and recreational and leisure practices, than to health care¹⁷.

In this framework and since the end of the 18th century, Foucault (1976) observes well, a new political power is developed based on medical knowledge. It is this innovative intervention that will drastically modify the urban landscape¹⁸ with the objective (or pretext) of public or collective health care¹⁹ that finally in the 19th century moved from the “tout à la rue” (all to the street) characteristic of the middle ages to the “tout-à-l'égout” (all to the sewer).

The hygienist movement and its achievements spread a new paradigm of body care largely anchored in water supply. Thanks to the arrival of water networks, architecture will finally allocate a specific space to the physical needs inside the house. Roger-Henry Guerrand (1985), another of the greatest referents in the matter, masterfully reports the arrival of the “W.C. à l'interieur”. That is because it has to be understood that until now the practices, actions, rituals, functions, etc., which today unite the restrooms, were disseminated in the space in a sort of “excretory nomadism”. The bodily waste circulated in containers, pans or small pots that soon, if not flown through the window, would reach the latrine at the end of the courtyard (usually shared

¹⁵ Geroges VIGARELLO (1985) masterfully reports the shift that represented the bacteriological revolution and the new place of water in public hygiene. From the "paradigm" prevailing during most of the Middle Ages where diseases were transmitted through the air entering the pores, and where water (dilating the pores) represented a threat, "the morbid matter" in Dr. Snow's water was proven, and the practice of bathing began to occupy a hygienic technique as we know it today: «Lorsque, à la fin du XIXe siècle, Remplinger effectue, jour après jour, une énumération des microbes dans l'eau de son bain il montre à quel point la microbiologie pastoriennne a pu transformer depuis 1870-1880, la perception du nettoyage (...). L'essentiel pourtant n'est pas dans le chiffre. Plus profondément, c'est une représentation qui importe : l'univers bactériologique, dont Pasteur a largement amorcé l'explication, transfigure l'image du lavage. L'eau efface le microbe. **Le bain a un nouvel objet : faire disparaître une présence crépusculaire.**» (VIGARELLO, 1985:217).

¹⁶ Um mot qui, au début du XIXe siècle, occupe une place inédite: c'est celui d'hygiène. Les manuels traitant de santé changent de titre. Tous étaient concentrés jusqu'ici sur l' «entretien» ou la «conservation» de la santé. Tous deviennent maintenant des traités ou des manuels d' «hygiène» Tous définissent leur terrain par cette dénomination auparavant très peu usitée (GUERRAND, 1985:182).

¹⁷ “Il faut reprendre les scènes d'étuves au Moyen Âge et s'y attarder pour mieux évaluer les pratiques que le XVIe siècle va lentement effacer. La finalité y est d'abord le jeu, voire la transgression, l'eau y est d'abord festive. Autant dire que le lavage n'y est pas la réelle signification du bain” (VIGARELLO, 1985 ; 37)

¹⁸ “Hablar de la historia del agua es, también, examinar la evolución del concepto de higiene urbana, desde la Gran Aldea hasta la gran metrópoli (...). Es, en suma, comprender hasta qué punto su utilización racional implicó la reestructuración total del mundo subterráneo y también aéreo, de la ciudad.” (TARTARINI, 2002:29).

¹⁹ (...) il faut noter (...) un (...) processus, c'est l'apparition de la santé et du bien-être physique de la population en général comme l'un des objectifs essentiels du pouvoir politique.” (FOUCAULT, 1993; 4).

by several families), which had to be emptied from time to time by the “vidange”²⁰. It was during this period that the bathroom was incorporated into the architectural structure of the domestic space as we definitely know it today.

Los adelantos de la ingeniería sanitaria - que ya llevaba un dilatado proceso de experimentación en Europa y Estados Unidos- permitieron en el medio local [la Argentina] un progresivo control de las condiciones de provisión, eliminación y aclimatación del agua dentro las viviendas. Este proceso recién se va a consolidar a fines del XIX, cuando la dispersión de las actividades de aseo y cuidado del cuerpo, se concentre en el “cuarto de baño”. Por su parte, las letrinas serán reemplazadas por el “water-closed”, ya no externo, sino interno a la vivienda, aunque su ubicación original se extenderá hasta avanzado el siglo XX. (TARTARINI, 2002; 41)

These experiences spread quickly, and the English influence was not only in Europe, but quickly arrived in peripheral countries such as Argentina (in the modernizing process, of economic growth and establishment of the nation-state²¹) as well as in Brazil (in the same modernizing process, revolution of urban centers and demographic growth²²), as we shall see below.

²⁰ This reality that Guerrand comments on Paris is repeated with its particularities both in Argentina and Brazil. In Brazil we observe: “O início da intervenção coletiva para a solução dos problemas de saneamento da cidade do Rio de Janeiro data de meados do século XIX. Até aquela data o abastecimento da cidade havia sido feito por carregadores escravos e/ou bicas públicas associadas a captações isoladas, como as dos rios Carioca Comprido e Maracanã. O esgotamento, por sua vez, havia sido efetuado através dos ‘tigres’, escravos que, à noite, carregavam tonéis de excretas das habitações até o mar, lancando-os em frente ao largo do Paco.” (Marqués, 1995;55) In the other hand, in Argentina: “El uso de pozos ciegos que una vez llenos se vaciaban con carros atmosféricos, seguía siendo la alternativa más difundida en las casas más pudientes, mientras que en las de menores recursos, la usanza era cavar un segundo pozo, inmediato al primero, destinado a recibir el sobrante de éste. Hubo casos en que llegaron a abrirse hasta once pozos negros debajo de una misma casa, a pesar de que estas “sangrías a las letrinas” habían quedado expresamente prohibidas por el municipio en 1871. Recién en 1895, la comuna prohibió la excavación de pozos negros.” (TARTARINI 2002; 30)

²¹ “*Gran Bretaña, marcaba en la década de 1880 -tanto por sus emprendimientos como por sus innovaciones en materia de artefactos- el rumbo de la ingeniería sanitaria y la mayoría de los países europeos seguían sus pasos. A comienzos de la década de 1870, para el proyecto y ejecución de este vasto plan sanitario, del estudio del ingeniero inglés John F. Bateman (...) constituye una prueba de estos anhelos que recurrían a la experiencia y el saber de los países más avanzados en el tema. No obstante, fue sólo al final del siglo XIX, cuando, salvados innumerables contratiempos e interrupciones, el plan trazado comienza a dar sus primeros resultados. Precisamente en el inicio del proceso de metropolización a que se vio sometido Buenos Aires en aquellos años.*”(TARTARINI, 2002; 30).

²² “*A medicina social do século XIX esquadrihou a cidade, indicando ao Estado o caminho do controle das epidemias e da produção de uma cidade higienizada e ordenada. Utilizando a feliz expressão de BEGUIN (1991), o higienismo preparou a implantação das ‘maquinarias inglesas de conforto’, introduzindo as formas sutis de exercício do poder características da sociedade moderna. No caso específico do Rio de Janeiro, a importância da ação organizadora crescia enormemente. Tratava-se de cidade portuária estratégica para a economia agroexportadora, núcleo da gestão administrativa, porta de entrada do Império e centro incontestável do país sob os pontos de vista ideológico e simbólico.*” (MARQUÉS, 1995;57)

In short, or as we have already mentioned, the 19th century changed from the “tout à la rue” characteristic of the Middle Ages to the “tout-à-l'égout”, an underground icon of modernity²³. The works of urban health historians focus on the first advances in Latin American capitals such as Rio de Janeiro and Buenos Aires, but thanks to some good works from the history of urban health in Florianópolis and Córdoba, we can get a good idea of when it will arrive there this technology that will modify daily hygiene practices, and that begin to center practices, rituals, symbols, senses, etc., in a space determined from a concept of privacy (and corporeality) also particular and new, until that unprecedented moment²⁴. In this sense, we can have a very clear idea about the arrival of these changes in our researched cities. The works of Adrián Carbonetti (2007) and María Luisa TORRES FLORES (2008, 2010) on the situation of Córdoba from the 1880s to 1910, as well as the works of Diana GERBER (1998) and STEFANELLI (2016) regarding the situation of Florianópolis from 1890 to 1930 documented and placed the first large works of water supply and creation of sewers (often meter by meter, or kilometer by kilometer). These works report in extreme detail how the advance of invisible networks that changed our daily hygiene, impacting new forms of body care, and thus, as we can see in the research of Georges Vigarello, a new intimacy. At that moment, the city is not only faced with a new form of water circulation, but also with a new form of circulation of the senses. In this way and understanding this material history, but also symbolic history, between steel and the goddess Higiá, between health and disease, between water and pores, the fluids, practices, and rituals are located in this space that we know today as the bathroom. But in order not to deviate from our debate, it is important to understand that it is at that time (between the mid and late 19th century) that the hygienist paradigms propelled the great engineering works that allowed in England, France, the United States and even Argentina and in Brazil (and here specifically in the cities of Florianópolis and Córdoba), “sedentarize” needs.

Now we will see how this new space for caring the bodies is reconfigured in the tension between Victorian morality and the advance of capitalism, when women arrive in the public space, and how this measure is representative of the inclusion/exclusion logic, and how at any given time, an “inclusive” measure (because of its own segregationist logic) also generates specific social exclusions.

²³ On the changes in Paris at the beginning of the 19th century, Vigarello comments: “*La transformation n'est pas immédiate. En 1832, par exemple, l'hésitation demeure grande entre investir dans les architectures monumentales et investir dans les machineries invisibles. Le luxe édifiant des façades contre le luxe plus secret, t parfois plus couteux des conduits cachées.*” (VIGARELLO, 1985 ; 194)

²⁴ Or, ce que montre aussi une histoire de la propreté corporelle, c'est que l'enjeu est d'accroître une intimité du corps. Une dynamique existe, confirmée déjà à la fin du Moyen Age : alourdissement insensible des autocontraintes « conduisant » la netteté physique au-delà du visible, développement d'un travail de civilisation affinant et différenciant les sensations jusqu'aux moins explicites » (VIGARELLO, 242)

PLACING THE DIVISION: THE CREATION OF THE “FEMININE” BATHROOM (AND ITS EFFECT, THE “MASCULINE” BATHROOM)

Understanding the material becoming of the bathroom, we understand its inclusion in the “interior” structures (domestic and public, in Guerrand's words “WC à l'interieur”), but this still does not explain the current division of bathrooms, where we can begin to ask how it works the division empirically throughout history?

Here the developed works of Barbara PENNER (2001) on the installation of public toilets for women in the early 20th century London, and of Terry KOGAN (2007) on the origin of legal separation of toilets from the 19th century labor laws in the United States, as well as the indispensable “Queering Bathrooms”, of Sheila Cavanagh, may perhaps help us to understand the same phenomenon in the cities surveyed²⁵.

In all three authors, we observe a starting point that precisely (and in agreement with Lacan's proposal of 1966 moves away from the objectivist perception to understand the issue from a more symbolic perspective. In the first two proposals, the authors seek to move away from the substantialist perception of the phenomenon by trying to trace the foundations of the current state of contemporary architectural structures in the symbolic structures of a given period (in the three cases in Victorian morality). But, before moving on to a more epistemological discussion, we will try to better understand the issue and be more specific in the proposal: it is the meeting of, on the one hand, the technologies, materials and hygienist paradigms (reported above), and on the other, the development of capitalism and the Victorian and bourgeois morals of the nineteenth century, that finally the toilets will be structured in a heteronormative division (in the female/male dialectic). But let's slow down and come back soon, especially in the examples of Penner and Kogan.

The arrival of toilets (with the arrival of underground water) took place in a process together with a growing capitalism that, at the same time as it created separate ideological spheres (from the separation of the locus of work and housing), demanded a proletarian organization²⁶ for better working conditions, especially for children and women. This is how, as Terry Kogan (2007) well reports, in the course of labor laws that sought to limit the bourgeois exploitation of women and proletarian children, toilets

²⁵ We tried to find material about the countries or cities surveyed, but so far it was impossible to find sources and documents from the time on the regulation of the division of bathrooms in the countries and cities surveyed, which, in addition to exceeding the objective of the present work, would represent a survey in yourself. We understand that the material produced in England and the United States allows us to clearly understand how the development was in general terms and also allows us to imagine the movement in our regions (especially considering that in the modernization process the "peripheral" countries looked from close to all the movements of the “core” countries. This is not to say that it is enough to hypothesize the process only from research carried out in England and the United States, but we understand that for the purpose of this work, these works allow a general understanding of the phenomenon.

²⁶ As we will see below, fundamentally from the works of Terry KOGAN (2010), it is in the packages of the first labor laws that division is generated, with the main objective of “taking care” of women and children from capitalist exploitation.

will be regulated in the United States, dividing their use based on a body reading (that is, a biological reading of bodies, dividing them between bio-men and bio-women)²⁷. But it is the process of growing capitalism together with a realist paradigm, plus the Victorian morality about the “true condition of woman”, that the toilets will compartmentalize from the “biology”, above all through the “hegemony” of the ideology of the “spheres separated”. The process is complex, but the discussion is actually about political subjects and public space. What is the place of women in the new society? The tension between those discourses (Victorian morality, the realist paradigm of the time, and the advance of the production system) it seems to find a simple solution by creating walls that aimed at a series of symbolic borders:

(...) the first laws mandating sex separation of workplace toilet facilities at the end of the nineteenth century were rooted in the "separate spheres" ideology of the early century, an ideology that considered a woman's proper place to be in the home, tending the hearth fire, and rearing children. By the end of the century, the separate spheres ideology had been filtered through the science of the realist movement, the public health concerns of the sanitarian movement, and the vision of modesty embraced by late Victorian society. Nonetheless, the legal requirement that public restrooms be sex-separated owes its origins to the early nineteenth century ideology that advocated a cult of true womanhood, a vision of the pure, virtuous woman protected within the walls of her domestic haven. (KOGAN, 2010; 5)

An analogous argument about the “female condition” is found in the scandal that represented a public women's restroom in the case of the Camden Town neighborhood of London, a case that is reported by PENNER (2001) in the beginning of the 20th century. Let's imagine that it is precisely in England, in the cradle of “plumbing” (with a growing suffrage movement), where these tensions also begin to emerge. As KOGAN (2010) also rescues from the ideology of “separate spheres”, for Penner the Victorian ideal of women imposes strict divisions (fundamentally expressed in public and domestic spaces), which ultimately functioned as forms of urban segregation, strongly driven by a architecture that tries to objectively resolve the symbolic organization of the time. And this is not a “minor” problem, but, in the

²⁷ The concept of “biocriteria” comes from the proposal of B. Preciado about the concepts of “biomen” and “biowomen”. Basically what we have designated so far as “men” or “women” are bodies socially classified based on biological criteria (biocriteria). In this way, the possibility of another type of men or women not necessarily contemplated by science or classical biology is relativized. According to the author: “Lo que yo llamo biohombre y biomujer son aquellos hombres y mujeres que han sido asignados como tales al nacer, y que por tanto no han cuestionado esa situación.” (PRECIADO, 2017; 2)

background, we observe a great political debate about public space and political subjects:

If we accept the role of everyday space in shaping personal and collective experience, then the fight over the construction, location and visibility of the Park Street lavatory does not appear marginal or unimportant. Instead, we see such a debate as being necessarily political, involving issues such as access and mobility, as well as a more complex set of social relations. On a basic level, as the Vestrymen well knew, the presence or absence of a female lavatory on Park Street sent local women a powerful message about their right to occupy and move through the streets of Camden Town. Moreover, by its very nature, the debate over the lavatory's construction contested prevailing cultural notions of privacy, decency and femininity, concepts which are not stable but are open to redefinition within certain, historically specific limits. (PENNER, 2001; 37)

It is from this perspective that we can think of the division of the public bathroom as an icon of a time that, at the same time that it resolved major changes in the face of new modern societies, tried to reconcile a rigid morality with values that were beginning to decline and with new rhythms of production and social organization of the productive and consumption forces (the circulation of political subjects in the city). The historical perspective reveals, or at least helps to understand, that some of our practices and spaces were the product of some debates and decisions of a particular historical situation, and which in the same way that they were created they could be easily modified. Somehow it is surprising that structures created almost by chance, at a given time (and recent in our history), demand so much effort to be modified today. In other words, bathrooms that solved a cyclical problem of tension between Victorian morality and the productive and consumption forces in the early 20th century, continue to create and recreate rigid gender boundaries:

Eventually public toilet facilities were built for women in the late 1800's and early 1900's. Although public lavatories for women enabled the so-called 'genteel' sex to frequent the city streets of London and Paris for longer periods of time (and to shop, as retailer Timothy Eaton of Toronto insisted women needed to do for capitalist accumulation and profit in the early 1900's), they functioned to create a rigid, architecturally imposed

gender divide that is still with us today (CAVANAGH, 2010; 28).

Finally, it is interesting to observe a logic that could easily be observed in other spaces (or that points to a problem for any “emancipating” political movement). The bathroom division follows a great effort to include women in public space in the coming of the 20th century. That emerging political subject that will consecrate shortly afterwards, with the suffragist movement as an icon of the first wave of feminism, the advance in the public space (a space for which it fights until today), currently implies a segregation of other emerging political subjects such as the Trans or not binary people, understanding that the irruption of women in the public space meant questioning the “masculine universal”, but proposing a dichotomous alternative. These populations, these political subjects that escape, or try to escape the binary logic, are still not contemplated today and, paradoxically, it seems that they are fighting for the same right to the public space that women fought in the last century. That is why, in this framework, the position of some lines of the so-called TWERF or TERF feminists, which we rescued at the beginning of the work, is contradictory. In the name of women's "safety", or taking the bathroom as an icon of a female battle won (no doubt) against patriarchy, they exclude (or try to exclude) from the public space a segment of the population that is probably the most affected by segregationist structures and violent acts of the patriarchy. Somehow a “hegemonic” political subject in a masculine beginning finds a battle against another “hegemonic” political subject (within minorities), who speaks in the name of the feminine universal, and does not contemplate a victim of patriarchy who is not a woman, in the same terms as the patriarchy designated it.

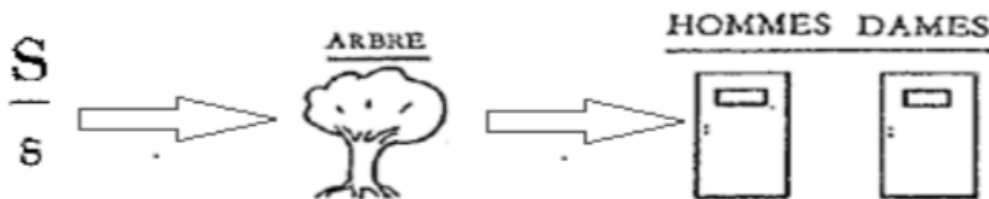
Based on these contributions, perhaps Beatriz Preciado's (2010) reflections on public restrooms as mini-panoptics of gender are clearer. If one of the fundamental reasons for the creation of toilets separated by sex was a sense of a true feminine condition (and in opposition to a true masculine condition), it is understandable that in these spaces bodies, rather than disposing of garbage, became gendered. Finally, the question is where people who do not fit the original criteria for classifying the “true female condition” or “true male condition” will go. What is the fate of these people?

TREE=BATHROOM

Until now our analysis has been based on an empirical look, from which we observe the historical and material development of the bathroom, to arrive at the current structures (architectural, but also symbolic structures). Now we would like to rescue some more symbolic reflections on the heteronormative division of bathrooms, which, in accordance with the historical development previously proposed, allow us to get to the field material and analyze some of the effects of these structures, which are far from being simply neutral walls, and adjusted to “natural” needs (if it is possible to use these terms), producing and reproducing social inequalities in the exclusion of some subjects. In this sense, and starting with one of the most influential thinkers on

the issue, we want to start with Lacan's reflections in his classic 1966 “L’instance de la lettre ou l’inconscient depuis Freud”.

It is known that in his Saussurean stage, Lacan broke with the idea Freudian theory of the unconscious as a place of instincts, of the irrational, of the “primitive”, and where a non-law reigns, to understand it as a symbolic universe regulated by the same rules of language, and in fact understand it as a language. This conception of the unconscious will lead, in this search, to the most remote antecedent of “toilet studies” in the classic “L’instance de la lettre...” where Lacan asks himself about the relations between the signifier, the meaning and the sense development, and it is in this context who, by chance, propose the example based on what he calls “ségrégation urinaire”²⁸. The classic and foundational structuralist figure of Saussure S/s (Signified/signifier), Lacan superimposes the tree under the word “tree”, to immediately draw out the “Linearity” of the meaning production from a design of two exactly identical doors , which are only differentiated by the words above, alternatively designating “man” and “woman” (in a “universal” portrait of male and female western public restrooms):



In this way Lacan breaks with the idea that a given signifier (tree) designates a specific concept (the tree), and the ultimate idea that a system of signifiers will agree with a system of meanings. Lacan thus exposes how a particular mechanism creates meaning: it is from the significant opposition from above the doors that the meaning from below is created, thus regulating public life based on the “ségrégation urinaire” laws. The concept of “door” doesn’t matter in the example, to give place to the superior distinction between “men” and “women” (two symbolic and thus political statuses with specific consequences). This is how the signifier does not refer to “reality”, the signifier “enters” in the meaning, even producing a reality (that of urinary segregation). It is true that Lacan had little interest in the phenomenon, but we must recognize in it, as we pointed out in the introduction, and even randomly, the isolated inauguration of the reflections on bathrooms as strategic spaces that reveal structures (in this case symbolic, but also political, aesthetic and spatial). Choosing to begin the reflections in this chapter with Lacan it is not simply to pay tribute to the acclaimed thinker, but to recover how efficient the contribution is that allows us, even today, to understand how the *ségrégation urinaire* can be understood more as the product of a symbolic

²⁸ “... dans l'image de deux portes jumelles qui symbolisent avec l'isoloir offert à l'homme occidental pour satisfaire à ses besoins naturels hors de sa maison, l'impératif qu'il semble partager avec la grande majorité des communautés primitives et qui soumet sa vie publique aux lois de la ségrégation urinaire”(LACAN, 1966 ; 500)

distinction than of differences installed in the objectivity, even creating a particular reality. We could even, and radically taking his hypothesis, think that it is through this symbolic mechanism (together with others) that the political subjects called “men” and “women” are created. In accordance with the historical proposal previously developed, it was precisely the intersection between cultural and symbolic structures (Victorian morals and the modern becoming of women in public space) that raised the wall between men's bathrooms and women's bathrooms. This is how Lacan's thinking agrees with the historical developments in the matter. Its theoretical structure allows us to understand how, perhaps, the "significant/s" (the Victorian distinctions of man/woman) do not refer to an objective "reality" (the dichotomous existence in which the totality of social corporeality is reduced), but the signifier, “entering” in the meaning, produces a reality (that of urinary segregation). So we could also say (advancing Beatriz Preciado's proposal) that, for the creation of contemporary masculinities and femininities, bathrooms function as fundamental disciplinary technologies. But the issue is not less in the sense that the proposal does not simply represent theoretical sophistication. What is at stake in the end is that if that reality is the product of a particular social organization that responds to an arbitrary symbolic structure, and in this sense, as reported previously, we insist, to the historical contingency, we understand that it is possible to change this reality (specially when unnecessary problems are generated, such as the violence exerted on subjects who do not fit into the classification system).

As Lacan suggests, and as we follow with the historical material produced on the subject, the *ségrégation urinaire* is a product of symbolic structures that have the potential to create objective realities and, in this way, determine political subjects based on classifications or nomenclatures. And here, starting from this point, we can rescue the notion of Beatriz Preciado when, analyzing the bathroom, she understands it as a “mini-panoptico de genero”²⁹ (gender mini panopticon) since it acts from a symbolic dimension, regulating the objectivity of the circulation of bodies in the public space for the political recognition of “men” or “women”, and thus prohibiting (or at least limiting access) to subjects who do not adjust to the significant economy that organizes social life. And the mechanism acts, like the original panopticon, in various ways, from the “obscenity” of the walls to the “subtlety” of the gaze. In fact, we think that the notion of “panopticon” fits perfectly into the “disciplinary” technology (in Foucaultian terms) of bathrooms, where the distribution of bodies and the control of looks that decentralize power, act almost as described by Foucault on the Bentham's prototype: “Dispositif important, car il automatise et desindividualise le pouvoir. Celui-ci a son principe moins dans une personne que dans une certaine distribution concertée des corps, des surfaces, des lumières, des regards” (Foucault, 2004; 203). What does the bathroom

²⁹ About the opposite and complementary logics of the division in the public bathroom, Beatriz Preciado points out: “*Mientras el baño de señoras opera como un mini panóptico en el que las mujeres vigilan colectivamente su grado de feminidad heterosexual en el que todo avance sexual resulta una agresión masculina, el baño de caballeros aparece como un terreno propicio para la experimentación sexual.*”(PRECIADO, 2010; 3)

do if it is not precisely distributing bodies, surfaces, lights and looks in a concentrated manner?

ABOUT THE EXPERIENCES AND SOME METHODOLOGICAL NOTES

The original research was developed within the framework of the Post-Graduate Program in Social Anthropology at the Federal University of Santa Catarina, and began in 2016, ending in the beginning of 2018. The period dedicated to fieldwork, which results will be presented in this conference, were during 2017 and consisted mainly of conducting interviews and applying questionnaires. Taking into account that the research focused on a space that is difficult to access for obvious reasons (due to the frequency of rotation of people in the bathroom, because it implies an "invasion" of intimacy that does not allow prolonged observations, because women's bathrooms are closed to men and vice versa, etc.), scripts, observations and participation in strategic spaces represented more of a means of contact with people than material produced to be used in the final document (the original dissertation). In other words, the production of data in the research was fundamentally based on interviews and surveys, and rarely the information was obtained from another techniques. As for the interviews, a total of 38 semi-structured interviews were carried out (a mixture of structured questions and improvised questions) that accumulated more than 50 hours of recordings, between the cities of Florianópolis and Córdoba. Most of them were held in Córdoba (a total of 29), since for various reasons it presented a field that was easier to access for the researcher (in Florianópolis, they were held only 8 interviews)³⁰. For this reason, and countless others, it was never the purpose of the work to present itself as a comparative analysis, but rather as an effort to give an account or, at least, to contribute elements to understand the state of the issue in the two cities.

Regarding the surveys, two experiences were carried out, one in each city in situations of concentration of the Trans population: in the protest for the murder of Laura Moyano in Córdoba, on July 25, 2017, and at the LGBT Parade in Florianópolis, in November 19, 2017. In these experiences, a total of 77 surveys were answered voluntarily (47 in Córdoba and 30 in Florianópolis). Of the total, information referring to 9 cases was lost in Córdoba due to problems with the use of the Quicktapsurvey application and the synchronization of devices (phones and tablets). In addition to the loss of a few cases, most of the unprocessed questionnaires (a total of 16, in addition to the 9 previously marked) were underestimated for not responding directly to the needs of the survey,

³⁰ In addition to Argentina being the country of origin of the researcher, he lived for a long time in Córdoba. For this reason, the researcher accumulated more networks of contacts in that city because he had previously carried out research, which saved him work that, in return, he finally had to do in Florianópolis. Thus, the production of interviews was richer in Córdoba than in Brazil, as in the limited time of fieldwork (shared between Argentina and Brazil) the researcher had to develop a whole network of contacts and, in turn, conquer the people's trust. It is important to highlight that since the researcher is a cisgender man, the population's distrust is great, even more so if he is a foreigner. This was, without a doubt, a major obstacle for the production of interviews, where, after all, it was necessary to talk about "intimate" dimensions, which are usually not made explicit.

which had as its main objective the response of Trans people. Here we find it important to highlight that, of all the surveys carried out, only the strictly Trans band and selected questionnaires with safe answers were taken into account to process the data. Questionnaires erroneously applied to drags, lesbians, etc., questionnaires not fully answered, or any other details that hindered the processing were removed.

TESTIMONIES

Towards the end, and if we have time, I would like to present some testimonies collected during the field work, such as the one transcribed below.

1º "La monja"³¹

La 'Monja' saw her name on the envelope and decided to open it without asking anyone. In this matter of asking, before doing, she didn't have much experience and didn't have to innovate at those times. In fact, she had gained the necessary confidence inside prison to clean up near the nursing room where she went, as usual, to steal some tranquilizers that she would soon sell for a few pesos. But the point was that she had been feeling bad for a while and that day she found herself in front of the results of several studies carried out in the city of Córdoba. When she read that her HIV test was positive, she felt herself fading and ran until she fell unconscious, she says, in front of a ladder. When she got up, the jailers asked her what she had done (they never asked her how she felt) and she was speechless. She knew that she couldn't share the news. Locked up in Villa Dolores Prison, 'La Monja' had no right to suffer aloud. If the jailers discovered that she, without permission, had entered in the nursing room and opened her results, she would not only pay for her insolence, the nurse would pay for her malpractice as well. So, she negotiated with the nurse so that he could seal the envelope again and in a short time she minimized the damage. She called his family to let them know that they would receive news soon, and she suffered in silence once more. In a few days the news would come from the hand of a medical

³¹ Several times I tried to transcribe the interviews that reconstruct the related scene. Nevertheless, it is precisely the calm account of "La Monja", which expresses neither resentment nor suffering, that led me to think that a more literary version could help to resolve the tension between my perception and her experience. Finally, I found understanding in other reference authors on the subject such as Sheila Cavanagh, who after publishing "Queering Bathrooms" (2010) assessed that there was still material that did not fit the academic formats. In this way he decided to pour that potential into a play that he finally wrote. Reflecting on this process, in an intervention at the Congress of the Association for Sexuality Studies in Ottawa in 2015, she expresses: "The neglect as I see it is due to a false binary between fact and fiction. The problem is with respect to the status of truth and the real in academic research. What counts as real matters but truth defies capture before our empirically grounded eyes. There is always something in excess of our research. Let me explain the paradox as I see it. Many trans* participants reported harassment and forceful removal by security guards and male vigilantes in toilets. This finding is not only substantiated by my research but documented by trans organizations in Toronto and throughout Canada and the United States who lobby for gender neutral toilet options (...) But the question of what it means to be excommunicated in public space, notably toilets, is immeasurable and taps into the realm of affect [grifo nosso]" (CAVANAGH, 2015; 2-3)

court, at which point she could cry out his sorrows. Until that moment again, she knew very well, she should shut up.

She knew who it was. She was not the first, and she knew it. 'La Monja' met 'Gringo Pizza' at San Martín's Prison, on a cold morning in August 2010 when 'Gringo Pizza' raped her in the bathroom of that prison. 'La Monja' tells, repeats and insists that it was cold. That they were only given two blankets to sleep on, that the ceilings were too high, that it had no walls, and that it didn't even have windows. As she says, she slept with her clothes to get up easier in the morning. At 6 in the morning the 'toads' (locks) in the cells would open, and she would run to get one of the five hot showers of the day. Hot water was scarce in the Prison, but not because many fought over it, but because who knows which divine power decided that there would only be five hot showers, early, at six in the morning. That Thursday 'La Monja' got up quickly and left his cell (the 30). As she tells it, everyone knew his walk (the rhythm and the sound of his slippers against the floor) so when 'Gringo Pizza' woke up, it didn't take long to leave his own cell.

She was already naked and the warm water crashing against the cold air temperature when "Gringo Pizza" entered the showers to fulfill almost a promise. She heard someone coming in and when she saw the "Gringo" she wasn't afraid, even though she knew what would happen. Without any mediation of words, which in this situation undoubtedly remain, the "Gringo" strongly penetrated the "La Monja". The ordeal didn't last long, she says, as if there was an average length of time for rapes. In fact, when I ask her if she suffered from rape, she says it was like having one more "grain", and quickly clarifies, was another feather in my cap³². It's true, even at that time 'La Monja' had learned to survive in prison (I would say, in the world) which implied a sort of Trans know-how, that is, knowing how to overcome rape among the various daily situations of violence.

But the story doesn't end here. "La Monja", after that rape, had a romantic relationship with "Gringo Pizza" and her memories of him are not charged with suffering or either resentment. In fact, she clarifies between laughs "he only raped me the first time!", as if that was an excuse.

But it is not just academic perversity that leads me to start this work with the report of a rape of a Trans woman, in a prison where she eventually becomes infected with HIV, in a specific setting: the bathroom. These experiences (not to say sufferings) are not experienced by anyone. The social forces behind rape, behind HIV, and behind prison have precise goals that are finally demonstrated by the classic statistics that we could discuss at length. Our societies classify us, rank us, place us, make us circulate, and finally make some of us live, while others (especially others) make die. In this context, the nearly 60-year-old Trans people from Córdoba (such as "La Monja") are survivors: from the beginning of the dictatorship of the 1970's and 1980's (with kidnapping and

³² Spanish translation from "Qué le hace otra mancha mas al tigre?"

torture included⁵), to the HIV of the 1980's and 1990's, to street violence and where, for example, the experience of "La Monja" is no longer possible basically because what was narrated was lived in 2010, before the existence of sectors for Trans people in the Cordoba's prisons. This work is precisely part of a framework of profound changes in gender and sexuality policies, in which even the toilets are at the center of the debate on Trans inclusion (or segregation). Is that entire social structures are in a process of great change and even the way to organize bodily waste is in crisis! By this we mean that social taxonomies focused on the so-called biocriteria have been strongly questioned in recent years. And here the obvious question arises as to why the bathroom imposes itself on the contemporary political agenda? As the multiple specific literature demonstrates, bathrooms appear as spaces that stretch boundaries established from cultural arbitrariness. Bathrooms constantly strain the boundaries established between the material and the symbolic, the public and the private, the objective and the subjective, and so on. At this point, finally to reach the political dimension, the toilets intend any kind of formal equality, denouncing real inequalities, mainly the product of a declining social taxonomy. This is how we believe that in recent decades there has been a profound change in the criteria for the political classification of subjects (the so-called biocriteria) with multiple consequences, among which, for example, the criticism of the current architectural division in the management of bodily waste emerges. The biological reading of bodies seems to slowly no longer occupy the centrality it had until recently, leaving room for other types of criteria, whether aesthetic, psychological, legal, etc. In this framework, the bathroom responds precisely from the concrete, objective, tangible and mainly arbitrary of any border.

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