

# Formative and professional narratives of a transsexual teacher

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## *Narrativas formativas e profissionais de uma professora transexual*

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### ABSTRACT

In this text, we reflect on the formative process and the professional performance of a transsexual teacher, based on the policies of bodily subjectivity and gender inscribed in the field of education. As for methodology, a qualitative post-critical approach was used, through the accomplishment of narrative interview. The narratives contribute to the beginning and/or development of the deconstruction of educational practices marked by the principle of normative regulation, stating that education can also be a field of (dis)learning of gender regulations, through the insertion, permanence and destabilization that transsexuals, as people, perform.

*Keywords:* Teacher training. Gender identity. Transsexuality.

### RESUMO

Neste texto, refletimos acerca do processo formativo e da atuação profissional de uma professora transexual, a partir das políticas de subjetivação corporal e de gênero inscritas no campo da Educação. Metodologicamente, utilizou-se uma abordagem qualitativa pós-crítica, através da realização de entrevista narrativa. As narrativas contribuem para o início e/ou desenvolvimento da desconstrução de práticas educativas marcadas pelo princípio da regulação normativa, uma vez que a Educação também pode ser um campo de (des)aprendizagens das regulações de gênero, mediante a inserção, permanência e desestabilizações que pessoas transexuais realizam.

*Palavras-chave:* Formação docente. Identidade de gênero. Transexualidade.

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## **Introduction**

In this text, we present the story of Adriana Lohana dos Santos: brunette, curly hair, 29 years old, with transsexual as a gender identity, heterosexual, with a major in Language and Social Work and elementary and high school teacher. The narratives we present could be similar to several others already disseminated by researchers who seek to reflect on the education field, the processes of teaching and the construction of knowledge. But they are not. We prefer to go further, and tell the story of Lohana, her meanings, her representations and senses. We bring questions about the way a transsexual teacher perceives herself being trans; how the process of training a transsexual person in the face of transphobia; how the body of a transsexual teacher is seen, lived, faced, questioned, persecuted and sometimes injured in the school/university/work triad. We confess that this is not an easy task, because we speak of a place of comfort, of someone who has never lived transphobic experiences or scenes. However, with much respect and scientific vigor, we intend to bring and broadcast the voice of those teachers who, for a long time, have been anonymous or excluded from the production of knowledge, both as producing agents and as research object. The narratives of teacher Lohana have been submitted to translation and adaptation by the author of this article.

As the body is existential, situated and temporal – according to Le Breton, 2007 –, it goes through processes of resignification, producing new senses, new forms of representation, new discourses, in accordance with the social, cultural and educational environment. From this fluidity, it presents itself as a “problematic object to the construction of human knowledge, both in terms of its definition and in epistemological terms” (DIAS et al., 2015, p. 145), Covering the most varied problems and disciplines, it has a very close link with education.

In demonstrating Lohana’s process as a student at school and university and, later, as a elementary and high school teacher, we can use it as an example to discuss how a trans body becomes “foreign” in the educational field, which proposes mobility, fluidity and fragmentation in the representations and imaginaries of hegemonic masculinities and femininities to the school agents.

Reflecting on her narratives, it is also possible to understand that questions about body, gender and sexualities in the curriculum, school practice and teacher training have always been a challenge for educators — according to Dias et al. (2015) —, since they propose the debate, deconstructions and destabilization of male and female images based mainly on heteronormativity.

In the theoretical sphere, our reflections are influenced by post-critical and post-structuralist studies, since the processes of signification influence the

production of knowledge – as mentioned by Silva (2013) –, problematizing the norms and constructions of pre-established ideas. As for methodology, we used a post-critical qualitative approach in accordance with Meyer and Paraíso (2012), based on the narrative interview as proposed by Andrade (2012), because we believe that the work with narratives in research in the education field can contribute to “[...] researching on teachers and researching with teachers or researching at school and with the school[...].” (LIMA; GERALDI, 2015, p. 19). That is, research *on* transsexual teachers *with* transsexual teachers. In this sense, we conducted the narrative interview with Lohana in the first week of September 2015, for a period of approximately two hours, in the study room of the Graduate Program in Education of the Federal University of Sergipe. We also emphasize that the research was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the Federal University of Sergipe, with protocol number CAAE 46779715.6.0000.5546, in compliance with legal procedures determined by the Resolution 196/96 of the National Health Council on the ethics of research with human beings. The participant also signed the Term of Free and Informed Consent and granted the use of her name and image, according to Resolution No. 466 of December 12, 2012, of the National Health Council.

## **Training process of a transsexual person and the facing of transphobia**

“I used to be beaten by my classmates; they used to say that I was a ‘faggy’, that I was a little girl, they even put my head inside the toilet. I remember as if it was today, that a guy kept lowering his pants to show his sex organs.” With this passage of Lohana’s narrative, we begin to go through the questions about the formative process of transsexual people, already making it clear that our intention is not to use their experiences, their senses and their meanings to affirm that all the institutions of education carry out regulatory or prejudiced conduct. But we intend to contribute to the beginning and/or development of the deconstruction of educational practices marked by the principle of normative regulation of gender, understanding that the education field can also be a field of (un)learning these regulations, starting from the insertion, permanence and friction that transsexual people perform. In this way, to suffer symbolic and physical violence in the process of being “picked on” and mocked seems to be the fate of Lohana and of many students who challenge themselves to live their own gender and sexual identifications that subvert norms based on heteronormativity. Such norms tend to construct generalized body images, which

are destabilized by the bodies themselves in performances in the in-between, according to Louro (2015).

Reflecting on how the transsexual individual is seen, faced and experienced in the school space and which images are built about them is challenging, because for Lohana, high school has been excluding for people like herself. Like her, another transvestite classmate also went through a foreclosure process and did not return to school. According to her, it was common for both of them to ask themselves: “but, girl, are we going to have to go to that hell again?!” They perceived school as “hell” in their lives, because they knew there would always be a classmate who would bother them, move and question their deviant bodies in that place. These scenes from Lohana’s daily life are close to Foucault’s (2004) reflection on knowledge and power. For him, institutions hold knowledge and power discourses. He recognizes the school as one of these institutions, as it develops normative discourses for bodies from the relations of power. In the case of Lohana and her friend, this knowledge/power developed different influences, as one of them continued to face violence to become a teacher, but the other could not bear it, giving up her formative process.

High school was excluding to Lohana, because, every time she was beaten, she always complained, looking for the school’s counseling staff. What she got in return were pats on her back, telling her that it was normal: “son, take it easy, it happens.” Over the time, with these “normal” statements, Lohana realized that the perpetrators did not suffer any punishment, while she continued to be assaulted, having her rights being mowed down and being victimized by homophobia.

We can see that, in developing a naturalization of violence or making it normal in school, Lohana’s school administration also developed the dichotomy between “normality” and “abnormality”, proving the reflections of other studies that show that some schools ratify a pattern of violence. “Normality” reigns, transsexuals and transvestites end up being classified as “abnormal” and, as a result, suffer through various kinds of violence, even exclusion of the school environment, as mentioned in Alonso and Zurbriggen (2014). In addition, Lohana went through a process of governing her body developed by the school, since the creation of “normality” is the development of norms imposed on bodies. The transsexual individuals’ presence proposed a stretching or “undoing” of the gender, from the subversion of it to the regulatory norms. This process embarrassed Lohana, because, whenever she sought a response from the principal and the rest of the staff, she did not get one.

When she finished high school, Lohana continued to pursue her dream of becoming a teacher. Those regulatory and homophobic experiences had stayed behind. The university would not be a problem for her, because it was a place

of knowledge production, and as such, it would receive and form her. Thus, she underwent two experiments: the first one was the major in Portuguese teaching in the semi-distance learning modality, which was held in a campus destined to such purpose, on weekends, offered in the city of Aquidabã by a private university of the federal state of Sergipe. Her second major was a bachelor degree in Social Works, in the same institution, modality and campus; both were taken almost at the same time.

After the initial euphoria upon enrollment, Lohana said that she would like to be called by her social name, receiving immediately the refusal of the director in charge of the campus. According to him, that would be impossible, since her documents presented the name Adriano dos Santos and so it would be registered in the institution's database; however, she could address this matter directly with each teacher. This was a "reality shock" for the girl, as she realized that it would not be so easy socializing there.

Upon arriving for her first day of class, she met a student in the water fountains. The latter, realizing that a transvestite – a transsexual, a foreign body, deviant from what represented femininity for him – had passed by, publicly questioned her: "here, what are you doing here?" "Like every student, I'm here to study," Lohana answered. The student continued to question her: "but what are you doing nowhere near 'Cruz da Donzela'?" she immediately responded, "instead of going to 'Cruz da Donzela', I had the courage to go through secondary school, to suffer prejudice, and I got here. And today I'm a student just like you." This was the first moment of prejudice she had experienced inside the university, for there she was being questioned, as if her transsexual body did not belong there, but rather in a place like "Cruz da Donzela", prostituting herself. It is noticeable that, for the other student, the university was not a "social" place for Lohana, because her body was a body with femininity deviant from the gender regulatory norms.

From the scene of her first day, we could see how the genders were constructed, guided by heteronormativity, to mark the bodies and places of men and women in society, excluding those that do not fit in these patterns or those that are at the border, as mentioned in Butler (2010). We saw the development of a normative discourse; not only as it involves the two extremes of gender, but the way it is put into practice, aiming at the standardization of the masculine and feminine bodies, according to Louro (2010). There is also a possibility of reflection on the policies of coping with prejudice, as well as on the needs of transsexual people, since the absence of public inclusion policies results in exclusion, as say Franco and Cicillini (2015).

Lohana told us that she felt like an "extraterrestrial" being in the university during the beginning of her training in Social Work. She would sit in the first

front seat in the corner of the room, waiting for all possibilities of prejudice to show themselves, because “[...] everyone leaves their rooms to see the beast, the cross-dresser, the transvestite, the foreign body in the university [...]”, also affecting the coexistence within the classroom. In doing group work, students would get together, and she would always be alone, because no one wanted to join that “strange” being. According to Louro (2015), a queer body is a foreign body with “deviant” sexuality (homosexuals, bisexuals, transsexuals, transvestites, drag queens), that is, “a way of thinking and being that defies standard regulatory aspects of society, which assumes the discomfort of ambiguity, of ‘in-between’, of the undecidable. The queer body is a foreign body that bothers, disturbs, provokes and fascinates.” (LOURO, 2015, p. 7-8).

The days went by and Lohana felt like a strange being in that place. Break time was the worst possible hour for her, as a simple trip to the university’s mini shopping mall was uncomfortable.

They all looked, pointed, prodded, whispered. “*Look! It’s the transvestite who is majoring in social service, there in Block B. Look there! That is the cross-dresser.*” So I would always hear this, nudges, strange looks, as if I were an extraterrestrial in that space. (Interview with teacher Lohana, done in March 15th, 2016, transcribed and approved by her.)

Despite feeling this way, she erased representations of what it is to be a male and or a female in the university; hers was a body that needed to be civilized and governed, but it was also a body that made subversions possible.

So far, we have pointed out the Lohana’s feelings and signification about her inclusion in university, but in her academic life the second big problem would soon appear: the use of the bathroom. In the school where Lohana studied from Monday to Friday as a high school student, even though she still considered herself a homosexual being, she used the women’s toilet; she felt like a woman, dressing herself androgynously. It was the same school that, in the weekend, would forbid her from using the women’s facilities, since, in time, that school would become a university, and for the institution it was Adriano dos Santos that was enrolled there, not Adriana Lohana dos Santos. From there, her challenges of confrontation began, because, in her own words: “strangely enough, I had more problems with my sexuality, regarding respect for my gender identity, in the university than in high school.” According to her, her story is unlike that of many other transsexuals, since she only really perceived herself as transsexual in higher education, being in transition in elementary school and finishing in high school.

The use of the bathroom became a major problem when Lohana attended the third period of the Social Work course. The university sent her a legal representative to forbid her from using the women's public facilities. The discourse of the representative of the university was based on the premise that the registration number 2067890532 belonged to the student Adriano dos Santos and that, in that space, the students were simply names, and in their enrollment was the name of a male student; therefore, Lohana should use the men's toilet to avoid disciplinary sanctions. This speech was also reproduced by the leader of the students in the classroom, exposing her to embarrassment, according to her words: "Look, here says that the student Adriano dos Santos, from today, will use the men's bathroom. It is forbidden to use the women's bathroom, this was said in public". Soon Lohana, with her coping attitude, replied that she would continue to use the women's toilet and they might as well kick her out. According to Butler (2010), the body's anthology is subject to the social anthology from the cultural regulatory modes, because it is exposed to socially and politically articulated forces, as "well as sociability appeals — including language, work, and desire — which make possible the persistence and flowering of the body" (BUTLER, 2010, p. 2-3). From this understanding, dealing with unconventional expressions of body, sexuality and gender, as well as identities that escape heteronormativity (DIAS et al, 2015), is a challenge for professionals in education.

The university went on to develop regulatory regulation of biopower and governance in Lohana's body. For Foucault (2015), biopower is exercised in the flesh, in the biological, in the body, through disciplinary mechanisms. In that case, the ban on the use of the women's facilities. According to Le Breton (2007), the construction of the discourse on the masculine and feminine body always implies judgments of value, situated socially and culturally. Masculinities and femininities were constructed to mark the bodies, gender, and places of men and women in society, excluding those who do not fit into these patterns. Miskolci (2013) warns of architectural orders — such as the bathroom — insofar as they are "technologies" of gender construction and discrimination. The ruling of Lohana's body would be a way to manage and conduct her behavior, to reframe her where she should be. However, she proposed a denaturation of her body from resistance, since, for her, to use the women's facilities, besides being a physiological need, was a political act. In her report, she pondered and questioned: "I realized that my all life was about the use of the bathroom. How are we going to sort this out? How are you going to get into the bathroom? So let's change my name."

To remedy the issue, she filed a lawsuit demanding a change of name. Soon, she realized that it would not do much good, because changing her name would not guarantee her the use of the bathroom, as its use was based on biological

sex. As a legal strategy, she filed another lawsuit requesting, in addition to the name change, the change of sex without surgery, which, according to her, was the first of such cases in the northeastern region of Brazil. She wanted to change the name of Adriano dos Santos to Adriana Lohana, and change her sex from male to female, establishing herself, in her words, a “woman with a ‘dick’ in legal Brazilian.” After six years in the courts, in 2012, she was able to change her name and sex without surgery, but she had already finished her major and was out of the university that forbade her to use the women’s public facilities.

The third outstanding moment in her university life was her performance in the curricular component supervised internship. In this discipline, the students majoring in Social Work develop supervised activities in several institutions of the external community, during which they are accompanied by professionals who work in these places. In this phase, Lohana went through the experience of transphobia once again, since none of the social workers wanted to supervise her. She told us about one of the social workers’ speech: “I will never receive him as a trainee apprentice. A man who wants to be a woman at any cost, what will people think about it? What a joke! I’m going to be here with a cross-dresser attending my clients.”

From this narrative, we can see that the discourse of heteronormativity, which puts Lohana’s behavior as a deviant state of the norm, is an “aberration”. Therefore, to deviate from the norms of gender “is to produce the aberrant example that the regulatory powers (medical, psychiatric, and legal, just to name a few) can quickly exploit to leverage the rationality of their own continued regulatory zeal” (BUTLER, 2014, p. 267). Lohana was left with the noncompliance with this curricular component, the veto to the initiation of professionalization; more than that, the government or the management of her was exercised as far as it could be, based, mainly, in certain truths about her body.

These behaviors and attempts to fix her in the gender regulatory norms begin to be developed in their formative process explicitly and implicitly insofar as gender is a norm that operates with subtlety and significant effect — as says Butler (2014). In Lohana’s case, the norm was evident, being the price to pay for disturbing the rules. If we assume that gender will always have meanings of “masculine” and “feminine,” we will lose sight of the critical point of this production, since “this coherent and binary production is contingent, it had a cost, and gender permutations that do not fit into this binary are as much a part of the genre as its more normative example.” (BUTLER, 2014, p. 253)

From a strange, eccentric, uncivilized, deviant body, Lohana proceeded to dislocate, destabilize, and problematize the fixed and binary gender norms at the university. Although she underwent several situations of prejudice, as we have narrated so far, she also caused subversions in the university’s formation process.



She confronted the compulsory heterosexual system by proposing spaces of socialization that crossed borders, the “in-between” or “living for being” and, mainly, resignifications, simply by positioning herself there.

## **The way the body of a transsexual teacher is seen at school**

Lohana finished her major in Social Work almost in the same period that she took a teacher’s degree major in the semi-distance learning mode, and the latter gave her the opportunity to enter the education field as a teacher. Irony of fate or not, she went to work at the same school where she had studied. She returned to the classroom as a temporary teacher and there started her dream of teaching, meeting some students who had been her classmates and who had stayed back, as well as the transvestite who had stayed in the second year of high school.

Returning to that school as a teacher was a magical thing for Lohana, as she had studied there and gone through many situations of prejudice — but now she would have the pleasure of coming back, of teaching and of being who she had always wanted to be professionally. However, she wondered how things would be. Had those situations of homophobia been left behind? Could there be a new reality configured in that school? She soon realized that things had not changed much, because the prejudice she had suffered as a student she now suffered as a teacher; the prejudice of her co-workers, who in the past were her instructors, continued. According to her, “[...] some still looked funny at me, some still called me Adriano, and limited their company, the principal and counseling staff had kind of messed up with the process, but the great prejudice at that moment was coming from my colleagues [...].”

Although acting as a teacher, Lohana continued to be questioned for her deviation from heteronormativity, since teachers reproduced this discourse naturally and continuously in the day-to-day of the school. As Butler (2014, p. 267) states, “[...] to deviate from gender rule is to produce the aberrant example that regulatory powers (medical, psychiatric, and legal, just to name a few) can quickly exploit to leverage the rationality of their own continued regulatory zeal.”

Lohana told us that, in the exercise of her work, there was a situation of prejudice equal to what she had lived in the past and that now as a teacher the time had come for her to make a stand:

Lohana: *One day I was in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year's classroom when a student arrived shouting.*

Student: *Run, teacher, run, teacher.*

Lohana: *What happened, girl?*

Student: *Run, run to the 6<sup>th</sup> years', there's trouble there.*

Lohana: *OK, fine. When I got there, there was a student with a lipstick, some feminine things in hand, and I was told that there was another student at the principal's room. The student there was the transvestite student, who had come with a wig and make-up to school, and another student had hit him, taken the wig and his things. I thought I would find the aggressor inside the Principal's room, but I met the assaulted.*

Lohana: *Yes, principal, what's going on here?*

Principal: *It's because he has to understand, eh, teacher? That it is not like this that his classmates will adapt. He has to be calm and he cannot come dressed like that, it's complicated if he comes dressed like that, and I'm trying to explain it to him.*

Lohana: *Tell me, teacher, when it happened to me back there I used to come screaming your name out here in the room, what did you use to say to me? The same thing you're saying to her. Nothing has changed. Now, it's interesting, now I'm going to tell you what I've always wanted to and never had the guts: the aggressor is in the classroom, I went to see, boasting that he had hit a 'faggot', and that he took the wig from a 'faggot'. The one who should be told off at this moment, who should be here is him, but you are victimizing him, once again, you are once again blaming the assaulted... How will his classmates get used to him as a transvestite if he gets here dressed as a man in the classroom? It gets a bit complicated. So they have to respect him if he wants to come as woman to class. And you should be here with the aggressor, telling him off, not with the assaulted, I do not agree with this, I think it isn't right. You will have to put her in the classroom, take her wig from the aggressor and, yes, the one who will have to be punished is who was struck, and not who was beaten.*

Principal: *Yes, but a teacher is not like that, people do not adapt so fast, you have to be calm, you have to slow down, I do not know what ...*

Lohana: *But how? So you mean, that you would get used to me as a transsexual if I were dressed in a suit and tie? Never! You would be seeing me like this. (Interview with teacher Lohana, done in March 15th, 2016, transcribed and approved by her.)*

We note that Lohana's intervention, in this case, contributes to the debate about homophobia and transphobia in school and the issues of gender and sexual diversity in school. However, it is necessary to highlight some important points

of the scene. The first is the position of the principal; by focusing his attention on the attacked transvestite student, he victimized her and naturalized the violence as a reaction towards a sort of divergence that needs to be considered and respected by the school community.

The second would be the position of Lohana, who, having lived through the same process of prejudice, focuses on the aggressor; it also presents serious problems, because it does not contribute directly to the deconstruction of the androcentric and sexist culture as told by Alonso and Diniz (2008), since, if isolated, the aggressor is kept in an inferior position. If the principal decided to carry out an intervention based on the dialogue between the aggressor and the assaulted, simultaneously, it would be an isolated one, which would eventually silence and hide the case from the school community, increasing the probability of more cases of homophobic violence.

In this line of reflection, in addition to actions with the assaulted student and with the aggressor, we defend the development of new postures in the school. The interventions of teachers, managers and other professionals of education would turn the space into a place where children and young people can live together with more tolerance of differences, that is, the development of a *queer* pedagogy and curriculum. According to Louro, it would be:

[...] they would be focused on the process of producing differences and would work, centrally, on the instability and precariousness of all identities. By putting into question the ways in which the “other” is constructed, they would question the close relations of the self to the other. (LOURO, 2015, p. 49)

Of course, reliving those scenes of homophobia would be difficult for Lohana in that place, and to see others going through the same situations could no longer be tolerable. She would have been there to defend the student; although she did not have that herself, now all of her students had a transsexual teacher there to defend them and face all cases of homophobia in school. More than that, the time had come to discuss these questions in school, to talk to teachers who often did not even have access to the subject matter during their formation, and so on.

Because if I had trained teachers, who knew what that was in my day, someone would have come to defend me as well. If at the university, we

had had a class of inclusive education, which not only discussed inclusion of people with special needs, but inclusion of all human beings, access and permanence of all beings in school, this would not be happening, because teachers would be in the classroom knowing that that human being was a transsexual person, not because he is naughty, but because he was born like that and then life would be different. (Interview with teacher Lohana, done in March 15th, 2016, transcribed and approved by her.)

Lohana draws our attention to the importance of discussing issues of gender identity and sexual orientation, as well as respect for difference, in a broader perspective of teacher education, including not only respect but also didactic-pedagogical forms to work on these themes. Dealing with student prejudice is easier for her, because, when such a situation occurs, she can explain the meanings of what it is to be a transsexual, and generally everyone continues to live with the idea of her without problems. However, with her colleagues, the same does not happen, since the same prejudices that she went through as a student, she also goes through as a teacher, although in different proportions and forms. According to her, students are more tolerant of transsexual teachers than her own co-workers are — maybe because they are in daily socializing with the transsexual teacher, creating affective bonds.

With the change of her name to Adriana Lohana dos Santos and female social gender held in her registry, she left the school in question to work as a teacher for the public-school system, through her approval in selection processes of tests and titles in the municipality of Lagarto, in the center-south of the state of Sergipe. She had spent two years in that job when one morning a student told her, “teacher, my father said that you are a ‘faggot.’” Until that moment, she was considered by all a woman, since nobody knew of her trans trajectory. She sat down with her students and explained to them what transsexuality was and how had her process of perceiving herself transsexual been, thus solving the situation at that moment.

But that problem would only grow later. Soon, the whole town came to know that this woman teacher was in fact a homosexual individual, that she had been once a man. At that moment, Lohana ceased to be a woman and became again a foreign body, deviant, eroding from the gender regulatory norms. As a result of the increase in intolerance among some students and several parents, she again experienced scenes of homo-transphobia and stopped her activities for 15 days due to depression, according to a medical recommendation.

Returning to work, she received a statement of removal from the school to another much farther away, something unusual, since they were in the month

of September and the removals, when they happened, always took place at the beginning of the school year. As a result, her condition of depression worsened and, once again, she left for medical leave. Before her departure, she told us that, though it was a very difficult time for her, she needed to go back to her class to explain and justify to the students why she was leaving:

Look, teacher's getting sick [crying] because she's going through some problems here at school, but she's going to fight to teach you guys. And the most beautiful part of all this [crying] was when my students stood and clapped their hands. They hug me and said, come back, we want to study with you. (Interview with teacher Lohana, done in March 15th, 2016, transcribed and approved by her.)

After this scene, she left and is still on medical leave to the date of this writing. She tells us that it is very complicated to be considered a "foreign body in society", because, according to her, she only wanted to teach, practice her profession; but the lack of knowledge generates discomfort that is sometimes irreparable.

A body that threatens society, because it is different. This is how Lohana perceives herself based on her experiences, as a body that carries several marks as proposed by Louro (2015). When we think about the marks of Lohana's body, it is up to us to question: where are they? What do they say? How did they come about? What do they mean? How to recognize them? According to Louro (2015, p. 77), the "[...] determination of the social places or the positions of the subjects within a group is referred to their bodies." In this sense, the marks of Lohana's body can be considered an invention of the other's gaze, in that it proposes to classify, civilize and hierarchize, based on gender-specific regulatory meanings. As stated by Le Breton (2007, p. 47), the "[...] body is born and propagates the meanings that underlie individual and collective existence; it is the axis of the relation to the world, the place and time in which existence takes shape through the singular physiognomy of an actor."

Students were not asked, for example, if Lohana was a good teacher, whether they wanted to study with her, whether they were bothered by having a transsexual teacher, if they liked her. She was simply put out of the school, in a movement of control, since the transsexual body threatens the speech of heteronormativity. As Foucault argues (2015, p. 52), society makes speeches that construct a system of truths, that is, "... the kinds of speeches it welcomes

and functions as true.” In her case, a true discourse (that of heteronormativity) was created by school agents in order to control or exclude the representativeness of the transsexual body, or rather, strategies were created to control that deviant body.

According to her, the spread of a discourse against homosexuality goes beyond the walls of schools, since other microsystems of society fully develop, or, at least, are developing, a discourse that watches over and punishes deviant bodies, especially with exclusion. This movement is perceptible everywhere, as the presence of a transsexual person or the transsexual label destabilizes heteronormative norms and patterns. From this perspective, she realizes that her body is not even perceived as “trans”; it would not be the thing itself that creates the strangeness, but the political label of the transsexual person, the transsexual word.

Lohana’s narratives reveal the discourse of the “foreign body” has been disseminated and impregnated, and is reproduced by children, teachers and other school professionals. In this case, it is necessary to identify and deconstruct the assumptions of school neutrality in the production of “normal” bodies, given the existence/creation of the concept of “abnormal”. According to Bento (2011), it is necessary to understand the reasons that make the school reproduce hegemonic values and, for that, we need to leave school, looking at the ways in which society produces the “[...] truths about what should be reproduced, what gendered behaviors are sanctioned and why others are silenced and invisible, what sexuality is constructed as ‘normal’ and how gender and sexuality are articulated in social reproduction.” (BENTO, 2011, p. 555)

This becomes evident at a time when the school community knows that Lohana’s body is transsexual, because of the truths produced in that place and outside of it. It is said that that foreign body needs to be corrected, and, if it is not possible to normalize it, it should be excluded. Lohana is adamant in telling us that other transsexual teachers she knows have gone and still go through persecution in schools and in the educational networks in which they are crowded:

Trans teacher A has spent nine years with a lawsuit for being taken from the purpose activities (classroom) of a school in the municipal chain of Maruim (SE). Trans teacher B also went through persecution in the municipal chain of Aquidabã (SE), and the latter has already obtained in court the right to return to teaching. (Interview with teacher Lohana, done in March 15th, 2016, transcribed and approved by her.)

Thus, according to her narratives, the public administration creates strategies to exclude transsexual teachers from classrooms, such as transfers, without explanation, to other schools, especially those located in rural areas, where access makes the life of the professional impracticable, as well as shifting transsexual teachers from the final activity (teaching) to secondary activity (school administration).

From this perspective, the path to learning by differences would be initial and continuing training. For Lohana, discussions about sexuality and gender identity in school will only really work when they become part of the whole process of training, from management staff, teachers, other professionals and students; never the opposite.

Although we perceive a strong movement of inclusion of these themes through extension activities and initiation to teaching, carried out by several researchers linked to several institutions focused on the student, without gender and sexual diversity training for the management team and for teachers, classroom actions tend to become weaker.

## **Conclusion**

In this text, we worked with narratives in education research to tell a little of Lohana's life story as a transsexual basic education teacher. Based on the experience of investigating a transsexual teacher, and the professional experience of the transsexual teacher in question, we have come to believe in the activity of dialogical research, bringing to the academic debate and the production of knowledge voices like Lohana, invisible and not recognized in this field for a long time. This is, in fact, the greatest contribution of this text.

We find from her narrative that it is not the transsexual body that creates strangeness in school, but the transgender political label. Thus, she goes through prejudice and is away from teaching due to health problems arising from these situations, because the discourse of heteronormativity developed by the school agents tries to control or exclude her representation. In order to fight this, the path would be the formation in which discussions about gender and sexual identity become part of management staff's, teachers', and other school professionals' training process.

From these results, the writing of some curricular and pedagogical challenges is carried out to increase the complexity of the analysis on transsexuality. The first challenge is to understand the importance and the urgent need to

research more about the transsexual universe so that we can understand their bodies beyond the “strange” and the “deviant.” We need to see trans bodies being thought of simply as bodies that can have diverse possibilities of being in the world, that is, untying transsexuality from the penis and the vagina. The second challenge is the deconstruction of gender approaches based on the roles, behaviors, activities and functions of men and women, for a relational and performative approach to bodies. The third challenge is the development of initial and continued training in gender and sexual diversity for school counseling and administration staff, teachers and other school professionals. We believe that the focus of pedagogical interventions should be on pedagogical management (administrative team), didacticism (teacher training) and intervention (students), so that we can evolve in learning with differences.

At the end of the interview, we asked Lohana what her dreams and plans were. She told us that it would be to return to teaching, to see her students complete the first cycle of elementary school. Being able to go back to the classroom and pursue her master’s degree and doctorate in education would also be good. In her words “... it is education that will change that perspective, because it was in education that I suffered all this. So I want to give this back to the education of my state, of my country.” We hope, Lohana, that you can achieve your goals and continue to contribute to the construction of a less discriminating education.

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