

NOTES ON PLAYFUL UN-DEVELOPMENT: EXPERIENCE, MEANING, PROFANATION AND TECHNOPOLITICS

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ABSTRACT: We consider leisure as a conceptual framework through which we can understand the process of playful involvement. In this sense, this essay aims to problematize the idea of development based on Arturo Escobar's anthropological criticism. In a second moment, we delve deeper into the domain of playfulness supported by the philosophy of Walter Benjamin, Giorgio Agamben and the feminist studies of Paul B. Preciado. Playfulness is approached in its possibility of meaning, profanation and subjectivation, also considering the issue of tradition, territory and the technopolitical regime. We suggest some clues that can work as guides for the therapeutic and socio-educational task of enhancing leisure through playful involvement. We bring excerpts from extension and teaching practices illustrating the scope of such constructs.

KEYWORDS: Leisure. Playfulness. Culture. Occupational therapy.

NOTAS SOBRE O DES-ENVOLVIMENTO LÚDICO: EXPERIÊNCIA, SIGNIFICAÇÃO, PROFANAÇÃO E O TECNOPOLÍTICA

RESUMO: Consideramos aqui o lazer como uma espécie de moldura conceitual através do qual podemos compreender o processo de envolvimento lúdico. Neste sentido, este ensaio tem como objetivo problematizar a ideia de (des)envolvimento a partir da crítica antropológica de Arturo Escobar. Em um segundo momento, aprofundamos no domínio da ludicidade apoiados na filosofia de Walter Benjamin, Giorgio Agamben e dos estudos feministas de Paul Beatriz Preciado. O lúdico é abordado em sua possibilidade de significação, profanação e subjetivação, considerando também o a questão da tradição, do território e do regime tecnopolítico. Sugerimos algumas pistas capazes de nos guiar na difícil tarefa terapêutico e socioeducativa de potencializar o lazer a partir do envolvimento lúdico, trazendo recortes de práticas extensionistas e de ensino capazes de ilustrar o alcance de tais construtos.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Lazer. Ludicidade. Cultura. Terapia ocupacional.

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Introduction

Occupational therapy, although leisure is an important object of study and intervention, has been very timidly placed in this interdisciplinary construction when we analyze national and international productions. Since 2008, academic works in the area have been taking on this effort, sometimes guided by traditional theories of leisure based on the antithesis of work and leisure (sometimes proposing dialogues with contemporary theories of a sociocultural, phenomenological and post-structuralist nature).

The study of leisure can be enlightening regarding the relationship between culture and human activities or occupations. We disagree with the concept of leisure as a type of recreational activity or occupational domain delimited by self-motivated parameters in free time from work, as expressed by the American Occupational Therapy Association, an institution with considerable normative force in Brazil and other Latin American countries. Instead, we consider leisure as a kind of conceptual framework through which we can understand the cultural process of playful engagement related to human activities.

The purpose of this article is to present the theoretical bases that support this proposition, bringing excerpts from extension and teaching practices in occupational therapy capable of illustrating the scope of this construct. To this end, we will follow an argumentative path that first touches on the problem of (dis)development in light of Arturo Escobar's anthropology. We will see, at this point, how the involvement implied with otherness could serve as a horizon for occupational therapeutic practices and interventions based on leisure; then, we will delve deeper into the domain of playfulness

itself based on the philosophy of Walter Benjamin, Giorgio Agamben and the feminist studies of Paul Beatriz Preciado and other complementary references.

We consider it relevant to write a paper that combines theory and practice, because if leisure studies have already made significant progress in understanding the role played by leisure in contemporary society, we need to make further progress in systematizing methods that are consistent with the outlined assumptions.

About Un-Development

The term “development” deserves special attention from professionals working in the field of assistance and education, especially when it refers to the humanizing forces of culture. Creative development, human development, community development, cultural development, etc. There are multiple uses and meanings for this word, but what interests us is the evolutionary discourse disguised as “good intentions”, and which for this reason, leaves the colonizing desire camouflaged between the lines.

According to anthropologist Arturo Escobar (2020), the idea of development, updated after the Second World War, assumes a process directed at the regions of Asia, Africa and Latin America to reproduce the conditions that characterized the most economically advanced nations in the world. The underdeveloped world, that is, those nations and peoples in a state of economic and technological dependence, and who for this reason occupy the periphery of capitalism, would need to follow this one-way path towards their salvation. The antidote to economic and social problems would be to copy the European model of industrialization, politics, urbanization, education and technification. See that the promise is based on a single historical path—the European—from which all the answers to the "civilizational backwardness" would arise. From the

center of the world, values and principles of modernity would be exported, capable of taking the periphery out of its state of infancy, through the adoption of specific forms of order, rationality and behavior.

Well, the ideologists of development do not talk about the dark side of modernity, nor do they say at whose expense the so-called European progress occurred. The thing is that development, as a continuation of colonial logic, implies both the recognition and the violent denial of the difference that exists in the third world.

We can denounce some contemporary phenomena based on this serious relationship of developmental otherness. Grada Kilomba (2019), for example, when addressing everyday racism, realizes that the black subject is treated as the Other, exotic, forcing him to relive colonial scenes at all times. The author explains that it is from this need for differentiation that whiteness emerges, that is, as a social and libidinal construct, based on the desire of the white subject not to resemble what he fantasizes about the Other. The same social thinking affects the history of Brazilian education. Freitas (2005) identifies that, alongside research that highlights the value and complexity of everyday knowledge, there are other studies that focus on the eradication of the “illiterate”: the target of republican public schools to overcome their own colonial roots. What the author denounces in this examination is not the democratization of education and access to school, but rather the discursive construction of the caricature of rustic childhood by those who work in the care of poor, migrant, rural, indigenous children and young people, that is, all segments considered archaic in the universe of urban schools.

Returning to the issue of care and educational work based on leisure, what we want to denounce is the representation of the underdeveloped Other, who is represented as

someone who needs to be saved/healed/taught within an arbitrary cultural universe, even if this requires their material and cultural erasure.

There is much violence committed in the name of development. Beyond the purely ideological sphere, the development project pursues very concrete objectives, such as the insertion and accentuation of the dependence of countries and communities on world economies and the subordinate transformation of local cultures in tune with modern standards and trends.

Porto-Gonçalves (2004, p. 39) emphasizes that

[...], to de-develop is to take away the involvement (autonomy) that each culture and each people maintain with their space, with their territory; it is to subvert the way in which each people maintains their own relationships between men (and women) among themselves and between them and nature.

Therefore, in times of deterritorialization, migration, poverty and cultural annihilation, it would be valid to work for the increasing involvement of people and collectives, within a logic contrary to development. Autonomy and freedom are born from involvement.

The cultural paradigm of involvement, as we can see, invites us to rethink the purpose of interventions aimed at leisure, beyond the intermediate outcomes related to each profession. “Defamiliarization” with the dominant references that guide us can be an interesting way to increase involvement by reaffirming the value of alternative, emerging experiences, placing all of this as an exercise of power and the creation of ways of life.

In order to transfer such ideas to playful involvement, we will need to answer the following question: what is playfulness?

Playfulness

Playfulness is an element that stands out in leisure theories (Bracht, 2003; Marcellino, 1990), often being linked to the world of children and playing, or even becoming an object of idealization as an instance of pure pleasure, fun and subversion (Bruhns, 1993). In this regard, Silva (2001 apud Gomes, 2004) states that values such as freedom, gratuity, creativity, fantasy and mystery can represent playfulness, however such references must be understood within a dialectical relationship that also includes conflict, pain and alienation.

According to Gomes (2004), the work *Homo ludens* written by philosopher Johan Huizinga (1999) has been cited in a large part of the academic works that deal with playfulness. The central thesis of this work is that the game is an original reality, from which culture is born, in the form of ritual and sacredness, language and poetry. In other words, culture is "played" in its archetypal state and, little by little, the playful gives way to the sphere of the sacred.

As a general rule, the playful element gradually fades into the background, with most of it being absorbed by the sphere of the sacred. The rest crystallizes in the form of knowledge: folklore, poetry, philosophy, and the various forms of legal and political life. The original playful element is thus completely hidden behind cultural phenomena (Huizinga, 1999, p. 54).

According to Huizinga (1999), play is the manifestation of the playful, with some characteristics: i) it is free: people can choose to participate or not; ii) it introduces an order in the time and space where it is practiced, from the players' perspective; iii) it has an end in itself; iv) it provides an escape from real life to a temporary sphere of activity; v) it is an experience marked by enjoyment, transient tension, spontaneity, and is external to immediate material interests and the individual satisfaction of biological needs.

Disinterest or evasion of material reality are criticized issues, as they lead to political emptiness and alienation (Gomes, 2004). As we will see later, playfulness in its pure state does not exist. If it existed, it would be like the episode where Pinocchio goes to the “land of toys”: time would be paralyzed in favor of the “excessive dilation of a single festive day”, causing the destruction of the calendar. Thus, it is worth saying that playfulness cannot escape material and symbolic reality, which is always conditioned by power relations, availability of artifacts, needs, social norms, sanctions, traditions, etc. (Gomes, 2004).

Based on the contributions of the philosophy of Walter Benjamin (1987), Giorgio Agamben (2005), and the feminist writings of Preciado, we will try to advance the idea of the playful experience by considering three correlated dimensions: linguistic, aesthetic and technopolitical.

Ludicity is the Linguistic Experience of (De)Structuring Everyday Time

Based on the dialogue of Agamben (2005) with the linguist Émile Benveniste and Walter Benjamin, we can affirm that playfulness is a language experience that is rooted in the oppositional relationship between ritual and game. Agamben raises the hypothesis that there exists: “a relationship of correspondence and opposition at the same time between game and rite, in the sense that both maintain a link with the calendar and with time: the rite fixes and structures the calendar; the game, on the contrary, we do not yet know how and why, destroys it” (Agamben, 2005, p. 84).

The transformation of rite into game and vice versa is never complete, since one is inscribed in the other. Life completely taken over by the game is a utopia (Silva, 2019). Playfulness thus emerges as a “desire for fun”, a joke about what is habitual and

obligatory. It is the time when one can play with history and its heritage that sustains cultural continuity and, at the same time, update something of it in the present in a discontinuous time. Between “no more” and “not yet” there is the risk of experimentation, desire without guarantees, anarchy, knowing that this operation can occur within very predictable and ordinary limits when playfulness competes for strength with everyday sameness.

Play is an Experience, Therefore Significant

With Walter Benjamin (1987), we learn that experience is a kind of link that connects us to the past through tradition, to everything that belongs to it as socio-historical-cultural heritage. Originally, the term used by Benjamin is *Erfahrung*, a German noun that refers to events experienced by subjects and which are perceived by themselves. *Erfahrung* (experience) has to do with the meaning of "life experience", the totality of all the experiences that a person has accumulated in his/her existence (Aquino, 2014). And by bringing something into experience, we become wiser through the expansion of intuition, perception, sensation, and knowledge gained on the basis of acquired knowledge.

The experience is organically linked to the narrative that arises from the practice of knowledge exercised and fixed in everyday existence itself. Events that touch us, impress us and take on social form when narrated. Experience (*Erlebnis*), in turn, is of the order of the practical, automatic, unreflective instrumental world, incapable of generating reflexivity.

On a normal day in the metropolis, we take care of our personal hygiene, use public transportation or a private car, quickly prepare our lunch box or eat at a fast-food

restaurant, send in our resumes when we are unemployed or work while waiting for Friday, go through the subway turnstile, travel along the avenues and streets competing for space with cars, etc. There is nothing to be said about these routine practical activities, as they are insignificant experiences - due to the impossibility of meaning - within a society whose activities are necessarily alienating.

This is the poverty of experience in modernity, accompanying urbanization, commodification, the diffusion of technology, the growing technologization of the word (Aquino, 2014). According to philosopher Olgária Matos (2007), living in metropolises, we have the impression that time is increasingly short, there is no time for anything. It becomes increasingly difficult to linger on something in order to experience it. There are novelties consumed (in Benjamin's words (1987), galvanized) without openness to the apprehension of the new. The consequence of this is a state of general boredom due to the qualitative contraction of time and the predominance of insignificant experiences (Matos, 2007).

In image 1, we illustrate this issue with a crochet workshop that took place in a public facility aimed at young people. The therapeutic-occupational intervention took place at a time when the territory was in conflict between criminal factions involved in drug trafficking. Traffic through the neighborhoods was limited by the imminence of violence and shootings. Nothing could be said about it, especially because many of the drug dealers were known to the young participants. There was fear of talking too much, which is not what should be said. In that context, we noticed a poverty of experiences that fueled the trivialization of violence and silence. Throughout the workshops we produced important experiences through the spontaneous narrative of everyday life. We

seek to extend time, giving room for reflection and sensitivity using a relatively simple and time-consuming technology: crochet.

Image 1: Crochet workshop



Source: Collection of the Observatory of children and youth in Espírito Santo project.

Where does the playful fit into this? Playfulness is an experience, therefore, simultaneously of a psychic and social nature. It is not a skill or a subjective phenomenon, as it occurs through a complex relationship with tradition, with the rite rooted in the territory. At this point, playfulness can be seen as a primary experience, a position occupied by the subject who symbolizes and plays with the world by manipulating culture and history.

Agamben (2005) addresses this issue when he argues that “childhood” represents this way of being human, when the experience with language is different, what we call here playful experience. Childhood does not refer to an age group, to the child itself. Rather, it is a mode among many of being a subject in language. It is no coincidence that the prologue of the work “Childhood and History” is called *Experimentum linguae*. Childhood is, as defined by the author, an experience of language, a hypothesis. (Silva, 2019).

Thus, there would be different subjective positions due to the relationship between the subject of the experience and the culture materialized in the territory. There is the player for the toy, the archivist for the document, the historian for the monument, the collector for the antiquarian object. Each of these four objects would symbolize different ways of dealing with the past in the present.

For in no place, like in a toy, can we capture the temporality of history in its pure differential and qualitative value: not in a monument, which preserves its practical and documentary character over time (its objectified content, as Benjamin would say), an object of archaeological and scholarly research; not in an antiquarian object, whose value is a function of quantitative antiquity; not in an archival document, which derives its value from being inserted into a chronology, in a relationship of contiguity and legality with the past event. (...) The toy is a materialization of the historicity contained in objects, which it manages to extract through particular manipulation. While, in fact, the value and meaning of the antique object or document depend on its antiquity, i.e., its ability to present and make tangible a more or less remote past, the toy, by dismantling and distorting the past or miniaturizing the present (...) presents and makes tangible human temporality itself, the pure differential residue between the 'once' and the 'no longer now' (Agamben, 2005, p. 86-7).

Only the player (infant) would bring forth the experience of recreating a "potential" of history when tradition, values, and knowledge are transformed into a kind of toy. This linguistic position reveals "the transformative and also anarchic power that the childhood of man possesses. The toy thus does a dual work with time: it first de-temporalizes the function of the object and also re-temporalizes it in the 'now it is like this'" (Silva, 2019, p. 101).

Playful Involvement Produces Uniqueness

From an aesthetic point of view, the growing experimentation of oneself and of things bears resemblance to what we name as involvement in playful experiences. This is what qualifies the playful as an instituting act, an experimentation that escapes the "boxes" of identity, habit, routine, and what is already known. It arises from wonder, from the strangeness faced when something stops being familiar.

To illustrate, imagine someone visiting a city for the first time. Attention and senses are open to encounters and details. There may be some strangeness in relation to the new territory, perhaps even risks and problems. There are those who intentionally get lost while walking through unfamiliar streets, like a flâneur, because they do not want to reach any destination. Interests arise from what is seen, the body vibrates, and unusual sensations provoke us. We can think of this same nomadism in our daily life, as well as infinite variations in the intensity of this experience. When we challenge our sensitivity through the lenses of a camera, when we play with words in a rhyme battle, or even when we escape from our usual tastes – or, as a researcher, when I feel driven to create projects and new ideas despite the demands related to academic productivity. This occurs because in the playful, there is a state of passage, a temporary dwelling, a strangeness in the face of experiences that disturb our certainties. That is why it is possible to assert that the playful is always a threat to the everyday. Or as Agnes Heller (1972) would say, its subversion due to the possibility of suspending the automatic, mimetic rhythm, somewhat predictable, and with reduced expenditure of physical and mental energy.

It is worth mentioning that the feeling is not always "good", as escaping what we know can result in anxiety, anguish, and new questions. At this point, we perceive the micropolitical power of playfulness in creating history and subjectivity.

This does not mean that having many recreational activities, such as attending parties, bars, or traveling, signifies strong playful involvement. As shown earlier, in order to be involved, it is necessary to suspend devices that capture the experience in search of autonomy over time in the use of territory. This is the concept of leisure we have applied in extension projects, research, and in the teaching of occupational

therapy. However, every playful experience in the contemporary world tends to occur within very narrow and uninteresting standards due to guided consumption, ready-made, limited by economic, aesthetic, and moral possibilities. Notice that there is no romanticized promise in the playful if there are no forces of involvement. The paradigm of involvement is emancipatory insofar as it anticipates the decolonization of subjectivity and the growing autonomy of individuals and collectives.

In one of our experiences with youth, we explored some body techniques in groups to highlight the biographical differences of each participant. Circular dance (Image 2) was part of the closing of the meeting, when we thought of the service as a kind of quilombo of resistance to the oppressions of class, race, gender/sexuality, and ability that are so present in daily life. It was also a moment in which the group should critically connect with family and territorial traditions, creating values of coexistence based on the ethics of difference.

Image 2: Dance workshop “*olhar das diferenças*”



Source: Collection of the Observatory of children and youth in Espírito Santo project.

The Power of Playfulness is in the Profane and Collective Use

Based on Agamben (2007), in the text *Elogio da Profanação* (free translation: The Praise of Profanation), we understand that the political power of the ludic lies in the profaned use of the social world, close to the notion of involvement discussed in the text. We call it power because in this use there is possibility, experimentation, differentiation, without guarantees of solution or synthesis.

The “profaned use” refers to the experimentation with existing elements in the territory, including the individuals themselves. By profaning, nothing in society is placed as a sacred, untouchable, and mysterious object. The world ceases to be seen as something ready, ahistorical. There are no shepherds, nor hope for salvation or compulsory growth in a future we do not act upon.

Thus, the "profanation" of the game is not just related to the religious sphere. Children, who play with any trinket that falls into their hands, also transform into toys what belongs to the sphere of economics, war, law, and other activities that we are accustomed to consider serious. An automobile, a firearm, a legal contract are improvisationally turned into toys (Agamben, 2007, p. 60).

The game driven by ludicity is the operator that makes the passage from the sacred to the profane (the human sphere) through a use (or reuse), considering the close connection between the spheres of the sacred and the game. Many games and play activities originate from ancient sacred ceremonies, rituals, and divinatory practices.

Playing in a circle was originally a matrimonial rite; playing with a ball reproduces the gods' struggle for the possession of the sun; games of chance derive from oracular practices; the spinning top and the game of chess were divination tools (Agamben, 2007, p. 59).

The theological language is based on the posthumous fragments of Benjamin, where capitalism is presented as a kind of religion of modernity. Some characteristics sustain this argument, such as: the need for a permanent cult to labor, without dogma or idea; the impossibility of distinguishing between days of celebration and days of work,

as work and celebration blend together; the impossibility of redemption or expiation of guilt, since capitalism generates its own guilt.

At this point, we can already anticipate the scope of Agamben's (2007) arguments, when he recognizes in the game a possible profaner of the capitalist system. The sacralization of capitalism is responsible for creating mechanisms of separation. Something becomes sacred when it is removed from common use and consecrated to the gods. In the author's words, "What cannot be used ends up, as such, delivered to consumption or spectacular exhibition" (Agamben, 2007, p. 64).

Indeed, capitalist subjectivity makes the body, sexuality, language, and knowledge be used within very narrow limits. We only need to recognize the very impossibility of inhabiting increasingly privatized urban spaces, the difficulty of using sex beyond the performances sold by the pornographic market, the state of insecurity and lack of food sovereignty, the deprivation of basic items of clothing and dignified housing despite a country's economic growth. What happens in class societies is restricted and prescribed use within the abundance consecrated to capital.

Image 3: Interventions aimed at mapping the territory and audiovisual production.



Source: Collection of the Observatory of children and youth in Espírito Santo project.

Image 4: Visual narratives of leisure through photovoice



Source: Collection of the Observatory of children and youth in Espírito Santo project.

Images 3 and 4 illustrate the problematization of the use of territory by vulnerable young people. These were moments when we used the talking map technique and photovoice to learn about leisure activities in the area. Questions about police racism, urban mobility and violence came to the fore, as well as the exchange of experiences about activities, groups and collectives existing in that place. At another time, we created a documentary about the territory starring the young people

themselves. In these situations, interventions were based on the following formula: access to use, use to desecrate. The “museification” of the world is currently a fact of reality, separating the working class from the common use that leads to involvement with the spiritual powers of art, religion, philosophy, the idea of nature, and even politics. The “museum” represents a resort accessible to a few, an elitist theater, a private beach, a distant park, the gentrified city.

Thus, the analysis of the playful experience from the perspective of the territory is fundamental, since the experience of leisure presupposes the possibility of using it, inhabiting it and experiencing it.

The Playfulness, Technopolitics, and Subjective Prostheses

We are convinced that it is impossible to talk about playful experience without focusing on the socio-relational coordinates of the territory, as well as the relationship between human beings and available technologies. Preciado (2008) in “Testo Yonqui” talks about the production of subjectivities in late capitalism, which arise from the complex combination of production of symbols, technologies, language, information and production of affects. The focus of the market in the current Western world would be the exploration of all media and pharmacological devices capable of provoking mental states of excitement and discharge, generating a cycle of frustration and the search for new excitement. Preciado describes this regime as masturbatory cooperation, as arousal has become the primary target of capitalism. Here, we can already anticipate the risk of taking pleasure as synonymous with playfulness, detached from historical reality, since the pleasure coming from “masturbatory compulsions” can be the antithesis of the profane experience of leisure.

Preciado (2008) perceives the intersection between capital and pleasure through which there is a kind of industrial-libidinal reproduction through sophisticated chemical and image technologies such as the sale of hormones, pornography, bodybuilding, fashion and all the tricks linked to body aesthetics. In some ways, it can be said that the power predicted by Foucault is no longer just disciplinary, it is also chewed, dressed, danced, applied and taken in capsules.

In the media field, Playboy and the pornography market are examples of profitable exploitation of desire, undermining possibilities of producing playful experiences. We therefore come to enjoy ourselves within a limited framework of sexual performances in erotic films, without any effort of the imagination. Soap operas, films and magazines that entertain and serve as a parameter for good living. Through cinema, the internet and television, images circulate that not only inform about everyday life, but also perform realities. They are coercive forces in the construction of living artifacts (Preciado, 2008).

The connection between human beings and technologies is called subjective prosthetics. How can we consider proposing a reading that is sensitive to current reality, especially with regard to playfulness, without considering the fact that a large number of people use anxiolytics and antidepressants? Benzodiazepines, one of the most abused legal drugs by the Brazilian population, are part of the production of tranquility in contemporary times. Stimulants are power builders, anabolics are masculinity builders, antipsychotics are normality builders. Each of these elements is capable of affecting bodies, participating in the management of feelings, elaborated and stabilized as a social construction.

As you can see, this is a libidinal experiment crossed by the market, with psychosocial consequences. How can we understand the way we feel, think and act without considering the interference of smartphones, apps, clothing, pills, stimulants, the fashion industry, and communication shaped by internet memes? Technological devices have long since ceased to be mere machines, separated from humans, and have become a much more intimate relationship, a kind of subjective prosthesis with the power to condition lived experience, as Donna Haraway said in the Cyborg Manifesto.

Final Considerations or Clues for Playful Involvement

Throughout the essay we try to announce some clues capable of guiding us in the difficult therapeutic and socio-educational task of enhancing leisure through involvement in playful experiences. We said that such experience is anchored in culture, when the subject handles a world produced before he was even born. The playful experience plays with rituals, learning and bringing to the present the story that needs to be rewritten.

Taking a curious and open stance towards the world can lead to important and risky discoveries, including the profanation of what was placed in the divine order of what cannot be used. It is important to say that this subversive attitude must be collective to be emancipatory - in this we disagree with Giorgio Agamben. This occurs when we organize ourselves as groups/society to escape habits, routine, identities and socially expected uses. This is an ethical-political and libidinal experiment.

It is also worth saying that the invitation to playful involvement should never reject the past, history. Contact with tradition, as defended by Walter Benjamin, is essential to the continuity of life and is the material of experiences. However, not

everything should be preserved. The new – and not the “pleasurable” novelty of consumption – must find space to be realized in the current time (Matos, 2007).

When we talk about the new, we are referring to something that already exists as an experience rejected by hegemonic thought. These are the forms of life excluded from everyday life, which were subjected to the operation that “[...] divides, excludes and rejects to serve as a foundation” for the political-legal model in the West (p. 298). It is the operation of exception carried out by the state apparatus and civil society, which separates, rejects and kills human practices and expressions that seem to them to be threatening to the status quo. This seems quite enlightening to us regarding the imperative of increasing the population’s involvement in leisure activities. For many men, for example, the possibility of experiencing dance like vogging is out of the realm of possibility. There is no space even to create interest among the male population. Thinking about the social construction of masculinity in Brazil, cultural practices related to the feminine are almost always devalued to serve as a reference for the normality of heterosexual masculinity. Depending on the context, we can list other elements excluded from daily life, such as orality versus writing, the sensory versus reason, the night versus the day, the profane versus the sacred.

The agent of this exclusion, which can occur through mechanisms of direct violence, or even through institutional neglect, prejudices, and discrimination, is the sovereign, the one who decrees the state of exception. Discrimination, killing, and exclusion can be justified in the name of order and good morals. Sovereign power exists in the despot, but also in the group represented by society, whose power is constituted at the cost of banishing deviant bodies as a means of cohesion and obedience (Agamben, 2017).

These ideas align with the concept of leisure presented here. There are rich forms of life in the ancestry of Afro-Brazilian peoples, with the gestural memory of popular dances, in the oral traditions of the countryside, in the irreverence toward gender norms of trans people, in the cultural organization of samba schools, in the reinvention of verses and words in youth rap battles, and many other cultural manifestations that showcase alternative forms to the symbolic poverty caused by the "barbarism" of modernity (BENJAMIN, 1987). Regarding this, we follow the suggestions of Debortoli (2012, p. 16), who states that "the notion of Leisure provokes, or invites us to make, an inversion in the lens of the world, repositioning at its center expressions and relationships that in the history of Western civilization [have] been progressively relegated to its periphery, such as art, imagination, the sacred, the body, music, dance, poetry, etc. Let us continue with the debate, with no intention of exhausting it.

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