

“My body my weapon”: the female body as a discursive materiality in FEMEN’s protests

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ABSTRACT : This paper intends to demonstrate how the naked body can be understood as a discursive materiality (discursive body), insofar as it destabilizes meanings historically produced about women, their bodies and sexuality. We will use the theoretical perspective of the French Discourse Analysis of Michel Pêcheux, in order to analyze a protest performed by the feminist group FEMEN, against the implantation of Sharia in Egypt after the events of the Arab Spring in 2012. With this reflection, we aim to show that the naked body, when covered with statements that question the control of the female bodies, produces different meanings, as it displaces the bodies of the protesters from pre-determined positions constructed by the religious discourse.

KEYWORDS –FEMEN, French Discourse Analysis, Naked female body, Michel Pêcheux, Religion

I. INTRODUCTION

This paper aims to reflect, through the French Discourse Analysis (AD) perspective, on the meaning effects produced by the protest images of the feminist group FEMEN, in order to understand how the naked female body is used as discursive materiality opposing the current discourse on femininity, denouncing social practices of control over the woman's body.

The FEMEN¹ group emerged in Ukraine in 2008 to protest against the country's sexual exploitation. In the beginning, the group used to protest in a traditional way, without removing their clothes, but it was through the strategy of protesting half-naked that FEMEN got the attention it wanted. In 2012, the movement started to internationalize, and currently it is present in several European countries, in the Americas and also in some Muslim countries such as Turkey and Tunisia.

The "FEMEN Warriors", as the feminist group protesters call themselves, covered by the slogans they paint on their bodies and crowned by flowers, define themselves as activists who use their bare breasts as weapons. Under the slogan "My body my weapon" the group fights against patriarchy in its three forms of action (commercial and sexual exploitation of the woman's body, dictatorial regimes and religions), becoming the target of numerous aggressions during its protests, for exposing their bodies. For FEMEN, all functions of the female body are controlled and regulated by patriarchy, transforming the body into an object of exploitation (sexual, economic, familiar).

We chose this feminist group as the *corpus* of this research, precisely because of the way they protest, using the body as a discursive materiality, or, as stated by Orlandi (2004) [1], the body as a material place of meaning in which the “letter”, the “drawing” mean. In addition, the reaction that these naked bodies provoke in their “interlocutors”, the meaning effects produced by these bodies instigated our interest in investigating how

¹ Available at: <https://femen.org/about-us/>. Last accessed on: Jun. 20, 2020.

the aggression suffered by these protesters could be justified, in addition to analyzing how different discursive formations² (FDs) [2] would make possible the production of these meanings.

Finally, we understand feminism³[3] as a movement of resistance, of struggle for regaining the control of the female body, the failure that produces ruptures within the stabilized discourse, promoting changes, resignifications. In this sense, FEMEN, when using their naked bodies in their protests, promotes a political act, questioning, denouncing practices that interdict, control, and restrict the woman's body.

II. THE FUNCTIONING OF A PROTEST: NAKED BODIES IN EVIDENCE

After the events of the Arab Spring[4] in 2012, Egypt has its first democratically elected president, Mohamed Mursi, who called a referendum in order to implement Sharia law (Islamic law) in the country. Islamic law (ALI, 2012) [5] consists of a set of norms (rules or principles) that aim to regulate the behavior of subjects in all spheres of society. According to the author, Islamic law is composed of norms extracted from the Quran (revelations made by God to prophet *Mohamed*) and the Sunna (teachings, practices and sayings of the prophet), that is, for Muslims Sharia (literally “the voice”[5]) has a divine origin and is a model of conduct to be followed. It is up to the human being only the task of interpreting the sacred texts, finding out these norms and applying them.

Motivated by the moment of rupture, produced by the manifestations of the Arab Spring, the Egyptian blogger Aliaa Elmahdy posted a nude photo (Fig.1), on her blog⁴, as a protest against the control and the aggressions suffered by Egyptian women, and from which she herself was also a victim in her own home. In the photo posted on the internet, Aliaa wore only knee-length black stockings, red shoes and a red flower in her hair. After death threats by Islamic extremists, the Egyptian protester had to flee her country, seeking political exile in Sweden⁵.

² Pêcheux (1982, p.112) [2] defines *discursive formation* as “that which in a given ideological formation, i .e., from a given position, in a given conjuncture, determined by the state of the class struggle, determines 'what can and should be said [...]'. This amounts to saying that words, expressions, propositions, etc., obtain their meaning from the discursive formation in which they are produced [...]”.

³ The term refers to the “different forms of women's movements, liberal or “bourgeois”, radical feminism, marxist or socialist women, lesbian women, black feminism and all the categorical dimensions of current movements” (HIRATA et al., p.144, 2009) [3]. In other words, movements in which women mobilize themselves with a single objective, whether aiming equal rights or aiming the liberation of women. In this work, the terms feminism, feminist discourse formation, and feminist movement will be used in the sense of any manifestation of women by the claim of rights over the female body.

⁴ Available at: <http://echoingscreams.blogspot.com.br/>. Last accessed on: Jun. 6, 2020.

⁵ Der Spiegel online. Available at: <https://www.spiegel.de/international/world/the-price-egyptian-aliaa-elmahdy-paid-for-posting-nude-photo-online-a-939541.html>. Last accessed: Jun. 6, 2020.

Figure 1 – Aliaa Elmahdy’s photo



WOMEN PROTEST - ALIAA ELMAHDY
USA FACEBOOK.COM

Source:Der Spiegel online(<https://goo.gl/TsUu3b>). Last accessed on: Jun. 6, 2020.

Aliaa, already in Sweden, meets the FEMEN protesters to perform a protest against the proposal to institutionalize Sharia in Egypt. This protest takes place in front of the Egyptian embassy in Stockholm. The photo (Fig. 2) below materializes the first moment of this protest, recorded in the documentary “*Nos Seins Nos Armes*”⁶, produced by Nadia El Fani and Caroline Fourest and shown in Brazilian television in March 2014:

Figure 2 – Against Sharia adoption in Egypt, 2012



Source:<https://goo.gl/HKzaN6>. Last accessed on: Jun. 6, 2020.

In the protest image (Fig.2), the three naked protesters stood in front of the embassy entrance, with flower arrangements on their heads and holding three books covering their genital area. Each of the books

⁶ At the documentary, we can see Aliaa’s image at 39:18 min, and the protest itself at 56:19 min. Available at YouTube.com: <https://goo.gl/D5mCix>. Last accessed on: Jun. 6, 2020.

represents the sacred texts⁷ of the three major religions in the western world: the Bible of the Christianity, the Torah of Judaism and the Quran of Islam. On left side of the image, the first protester, holding the Torah, has the phrase “*Apocalypse by Mursi*” painted on her body, in black. On the right side of the image, the second protester, holding the Bible, has painted on her body, also in black, the statement “*No Islamism Yes Secularism*”. And the third protester, which is Aliaa Elmahdy herself, in the center of the image, has the statement “*Sharia is not a constitution*” painted in red on her body while holding the Quran and an Egyptian flag. There is, therefore, in this image an interdiscursive relationship between a discourse of a religious nature and another discourse contrary to it (which we may call secular, atheistic or profane discourse). This confrontation is materialized in the image, not only through the statements (which will be explored throughout this analysis), but mainly by the naked bodies of these women which produce a rupture with what is being determined by the religious discourse.

Pêcheux (1982, p.113) [2] proposes “to call interdiscourse this ‘complex whole in dominance’ of discursive formations”, representing what is external to a FD, and returns, within it, in the form of what has already been previously said elsewhere. The interdiscourse refers to discourses of different natures, but which are retaken by each other. It is something that has been said “always‘ before, elsewhere and independently””. It is the discourse that is produced by an FD that we wish to reject or fight against. It establishes a polemical and confrontational relationship between different discourses inside the complex of the ideological formations.

The religious FD⁸, represented in the protest by the three sacred books, is characterized by determining the subjects' positions in society, their social relations, that is, what “religion” expects from these subjects. The FD that opposes religious thinking is characterized in this protest by the statement that religious morality should not interfere in matters of state, either, in sexuality and especially in female bodies.

The statement “*Sharia is not a constitution*” brings to the image the secular FD (which supports the separation of religion and State) as opposed to the religious discourse, producing the meaning effect that this religious-based text (Sharia) could not replace a system of laws, or determine the functioning of a government. That is, in a society in which individuals are interpellated in subjects by different FDs, the State should ensure the right that these subjects have to act in accordance with what is determined by these FDs. In this sense, religion should not interfere in the legislative and judicial systems, as these have the ability to regulate the lives of all subjects.

For Pêcheux (1993, p.165) [6], the ideological interpellation, or the subjection of the individual, is an “calling” from the ideology, inviting the subject to share what is socially placed, a set of discursivities that precedes him/her. In this way, the subject (woman or man), at birth, is interpellated to identify him/herself with a complex discourse that defines what it is to be “woman”, for example, and that constitutes this subject. This ideology, despite determining the subject, is not perceived, it is masked, erased, by the effects of the forgettings, leaving the subjects “blind” to their action.

The statement “*No to Islam Yes to Secularism*” has the effect that the State should be secular⁹[7], that is, there must be a separation between State and Islam (religion). This statement, however, silences the fact that it is not only in Islamic States, in which Sharia is adopted as a law, that religion interferes in political, legal, and legislative issues. Even in secular States, religious FD interpellate the subjects, when it is present in legal and legislative decisions as in the case of discussions on the legalization of abortion, the adoption of the death penalty, the right to euthanasia, the right to same-sex civil union, or blaming the victim in cases of rape and violence against women, etc. In other words, even though there is a separation between State and religion, the beliefs and patterns of behavior determined by religious FD are present, prohibiting changes or allowing laws that perpetuate religious ideology.

⁷ The expression “sacred texts” refers not only to the main books, but also to a set of texts (sacred books, official documents, prayers, apocryphal texts, texts in the original versions, etc.) on which these religions are based.

⁸ In this paper, we understand the religious FD as the ‘whole in complex’ of the religious discourses that compose this FD and that determines what can and should be said, the subjects' thoughts, behaviors and positions.

⁹ According to Dullo (2012, p.383) [7], *secularism* is the “political doctrine that sustains the secular world and is opposed to religion, being described by some as an ideology and, by others, as a worldview”. Available at: <http://www.scielo.br/pdf/man/v18n2/06.pdf>. Last accessed on: Jun. 6, 2020.

It is worth mentioning that the sphere of control, exercised over bodies, by religion (religious morality) or by the State (legislative, legal) operates in different areas in secular societies. Religious control is more concerned with the question of sin, the impurity of the body, linked to a promise of "salvation" through the redemption of sins and obedience to religious discourse. Legal control, on the other hand, takes the form of an interdiction, an impossibility for the subject to decide on his own life, such as, for example, prohibitions on life interruption practices (right to abortion or euthanasia). However, as previously discussed, this is due to the crossing of religious FD in the constitution of the subjects. In religious societies, as in Islamic State countries, the crossing of religious FD is evident insofar as the legal system explicitly takes religious-based texts (as in the case of Sharia).

Image 3 below (Fig.3), depicts a second moment of the protest, in which the protesters held up signs with the words "No Religion" and "Religion is Slavery". These statements support a clearly anti-religious discourse that is manifested by the belief that there is no need for institutions that propagate religious discourse. As the group defines itself as atheist, on its page, this gesture can be understood as produced by an atheistic FD with which the protesters identify themselves.

Figure 3 – Against Sharia adoption in Egypt, 2012



Source:<https://goo.gl/4intfB>. Last accessed on: Jun. 6, 2020.

The bodies of the protesters, completely naked, constitute instruments of a discourse of resistance to the religious FD, insofar as they do not behave according to what can and should be "said" (or performed in this specific case) in a public space, in the position of women, determined by this FD.

Also, when we think about how these discursivities (religious and non-religious) are sustained in this protest, the statement "Religion is Slavery", in particular, causes the meaning effect that religion is not a choice, as the subject is obliged to follow it, imprisoned by it. In this sense, to be inside a FD (religious or not) means to be interpellated by it, constituted by it, and, therefore, there is no possibility of "choice" for these subjects, since the subject is not aware of the way discourses affect him/her. The subject interpellated by the religious FD says, thinks and lives according to what is allowed by it. What remains silenced however, is that in the same way, the subjects interpellated by a non-religious FD (or atheist in the case of the protesters) would also be in the same condition of "slavery", as the protesters claim, towards what is determined by that other FD. Here, slavery is understood as being unconsciously conditioned to always act according to what is determined by the FD with which the subject identifies him/herself.

In the statement "Apocalypse por Mursi", it is possible to identify the functioning of the transverse-discourse, defined by Pêcheux as an 'articulation' that "constitutes the subject in his relationship to meaning, so that it represents, in interdiscourse, what determines the domination of the subject-form"

(PÊCHEUX, 1982, p.115) [2]¹⁰. The word apocalypse, in the sense of the end of the world, is produced by Mursi through the institution of Sharia, that is, the matrix of meanings of the FD, in which FEMEN is inserted, contains the nuclear statement that would be something like “*Sharia is the end of times*”. Therefore, the sacred origin and the meaning (example of the prophet's life) of this code for the Muslims is erased according to this FD. In addition to the fact that its interpretation and application to contemporary concrete situations is the result of a reading done by subjects inserted in the spheres of power, in order to serve political and economic interests. Thus, the protest produces the meaning effect that the basic texts of Sharia (Quran and Sunna) are the end of times, a reading done by the subjects, without considering the conditions of production¹¹ (CPs) [8] in which the sacred texts were written. This reading transforms those texts into “apocalypse”, according to the formulation of FEMEN, when applied to daily life. In other words, for the AD, sacred scriptures are dependent on an extralinguistic situation, in which they were produced. This situation refers to people's way of life at the time Islam emerged. At that time, many of the teachings contained in the sacred texts were intended to ensure rights and guarantee the fulfillment of duties, with the aim of organizing life in society. As for the current living conditions, in which laws and institutions exist in order to ensure these rights and duties, the discourse produces other meanings effects, displaced from its “original” meaning.

In addition, it is the interdiscourse, between the religious discourse and the discourse contrary to it (materialized in the protest), that allows the construction of these statements. The revelations contained in the Book of Revelations (the Apocalypse) would be premonitions made by Jesus Christ (according to Christianity), and therefore could not be instituted or produced by a human being, in this case, President Mursi. In other words, there is a Christian memory that is resumed by that statement, producing meanings, and it is materialized in the discourse through the presence of these two preconstructed¹² [2] “*Apocalypse*” and “*Mursi*” and the transverse discourse that determines the connection between them.

Aliaa's central position in the protest (Figs. 2 and 3), dressed almost exactly as in the photo posted on her blog (Fig.1), resumes the memory of that initial protest, which denounced the violence suffered by women in Egypt. This violence is materialized in practices of control over the female bodies, exercised by the State and the Family. The highlighted position of Aliaa, the red color used for the painting on her body and the Egyptian flag emphasize Egypt, the Quran and Islamic law in the protest, in the sense of interdicting, prohibiting the law in the country. The statement, painted in red, produces a sense of danger (ORLANDI, 2013) [9], threatening to constitutional rights. On the other hand, the color red in Aliaa's shoes and hair, associated with the black of the black lace stockings and high-heeled boots of the other two protesters, bring to this manifestation the image of the seductive woman, the idea of lust. In addition, the naked bodies of the protesters, which carry statements contrary to the religious discourse, produce meaning effects that displace their bodies from the ideal of Muslim women, determined by Sharia.

The three sacred books, positioned in front of the protesters' sexual organs, produce the meaning effect that the three religions control women's sexuality, which is evoked in this protest by naked bodies, lacy stockings, red shoes, and flower crowns (*vinok*¹³) [10] on protesters' heads. These flower crowns, often present

¹⁰In other words, the *transverse-discourse* is the statement that is implicit and sustains the articulation of explicit statements. It is what allows the same meaning to be produced using other words and which Pêcheux calls *paraphrase*.

¹¹According to Gadet (1993) [8], the discourse produces meanings based on its Conditions of Production (CPs). This concept, derived from Historical Materialism, represents the extralinguistic factors on which the language depends in order to be able to signify and produce meanings. That is, the language is not autonomous; it does not work alone, as it is completely dependent on the CPs in which it occurs.

¹²One of the elements of the interdiscourse, “the ‘preconstructed’ corresponds to the ‘always-already there’ of the ideological interpellation that supplies-imposes ‘reality’ and its ‘meanings’ in the form of universality” (PÊCHEUX, 1982, p.115) [2]. In other words, the preconstructed represents the possibilities of filling in the spaces in a sentence.

¹³According to Williams (2016) [10], in the Ukrainian tradition the flower crown and ribbons, known as *vinok*, represents the feminine principle, feminine wisdom, grace, beauty, fertility, virginity, marriage, in addition to representing protection and serving as a mystical artifact capable of conveying emotions and feelings. Its origin dates back to Ukrainian prehistory, a period when it was used in the pagan festival (*Ivana Kupala*), during the summer solstice (solar cult).

in the FEMEN protests, bring to the image the memory of a pagan¹⁴ discourse, in which women's sexuality had different meanings than those acquired in the religious FD. It is not said, however, that this control is not only exercised over the female body, but over all bodies, as the religious FD establishes subject positions for all subjects. But, although it also determines roles and behavior patterns for men, the religious discourse originated from other discourses that already brought the idea of the inferiority of women in relation to men and the need to control female sexuality. In this way, religions contributed to propagate a misogynistic discourse, which privileges the masculine and which sustains patriarchal society.

In "Woman and religions", Vallet (2011, p.475) [11] states that the chronological representation of the feminine in objects (statuettes) and in subjects (venerated) imposes itself in all civilizations in prehistory. These round-shaped images (breasts and womb) were known as Venus of the Paleolithic (Fig. 4) and were found in several regions of Europe, Asia and even Africa or South America, the oldest one dates back 30 thousand BC:

Figure 4 – Venus of the Paleolithic



Source:<https://goo.gl/gciV2v>. Last accessed on: Jun. 6, 2020.

This memory of a female deity belongs to a pagan discourse and it is resumed in the protest, as previously mentioned. However, with the emergence of agriculture (around 10 thousand BC) and, consequently, with the appearance of the first city-states, human societies were organized according to a male order.

According to Stearns (2015) [12], the first human hunter and gatherer groups presented a considerable system of equality between men and women. Without the concept of ownership, the idea of domestic confinement of women, for these nomadic groups, did not exist. As agriculture spread, many societies turned into more stable housing patterns, allowing the generation of a surplus in production, enabling the dedication to non-agricultural activities such as religion and government, and creating the need to maintain land and property. No longer being nomadic, and with greater availability of food, birth rates increased and as motherhood consumed more time for women, men began to assume most agricultural functions. A greater number of children also meant more labor to work in agriculture. In this way, women's lives began to be defined more in terms of pregnancy and childcare. Agriculture started to favor the masculine, progressively deepening the inequalities between men and women. Therefore, discursivities that affirmed the confinement of women, the control of their sexuality and male superiority already preceded the religious discourse, but we cannot deny that religions contributed to increase gender inequalities.

¹⁴The term paganism emerged among followers of Christianity in Europe, during the Ancient Age, to refer to non-Abrahamic religions. In this work, we will use this term to refer to mystical practices carried out during prehistory. Also in Ukraine when related to the solar cult tribe that used *Vinok*.

According to Araújo (1997, p.46) [13], in the view of the misogynistic (Judeo-Christian) society, women transit between the image of the sinful Eve and the Virgin Mary. Due to the myth of the original sin, initially described in the Torah, all the misfortunes, sins, and the evils of the world have their origins in the moral weakness of the female sex. The author explains that for the religious discourse, the woman is a flawed, imperfect being, since the moment of her creation, because as she was made from a curved rib of Adam, she would naturally be the opposite of the straightness of man. And as imperfect animals, women would be more susceptible, more likely to receive the influence of evil (materialized in the figure of the serpent). The woman carries the myth of the original sin, which associates her with lust and justifies the control of religion over her sexuality. Menstruation, according to Del Priore (1997) [14], would be a punishment imputed to the woman for being guilty of expulsion from paradise, and her only function within this discourse would be procreation. Therefore, it is only through motherhood that women would approach Mary - the virgin woman who gave birth to the savior of the world (DEL PRIORE, 1997, p.52) [14]. In this way, Judeo-Christian discourse preaches a total control of female bodies in order to keep women away from the seductive, sorceress Eve and bring her closer to the virgin Mary. This first contact of the woman (Eve) with the forces of evil (serpent) characterizes her as open to transgression, which in the end would lead to the practices of witchcraft and sorcery.

In the case of countries that adopt Sharia law, the control of bodies falls, in the same way, on men, but the interpretation of the holy scriptures of Islam¹⁵ follows the same line as the sacred texts of Judaism and Christianity, thus reproducing the misogynist view on women and meeting the interests of guaranteeing property and inheritance. Some parts of the *Siddur*¹⁶ (Judaism's daily prayer book) materializes examples of this discourse. During the morning blessings, men should say:

“Blessed are You, Hashem, King of the Universe, for not having made me a non-Jew [...] for not having made me a slave [...] for not having made me a woman.”

While women repeat at the last part “ [...] for having made me according to His will”

The evidences of this discourse is also seen in different parts of the Christian Bible¹⁷. Passages found in the Old Testament (text shared with the Torah) as Genesis, 3 - *Narrative of Original Sin*, in which the woman is to blame for the expulsion from the Garden of Eden; in Leviticus, 12 and 15 - *On the woman's impurities*; and in Ecclesiastical, 25 - *On the wickedness of women*. Or, still, in the New Testament, as in Ephesians, 5 - *On the submission of the woman*.

Also in some parts of the Quran¹⁸, which were misinterpreted in order to reflect this misogynous perspective of the society:

“[...] for the male, what is equal to the share of two females.” (The Quran, 4:11 – about inheritance).

“[...] And bring to witness two witnesses from among your men. And if there are not two men [available], then a man and two women from those whom you accept as witnesses - so that if one of the women errs, then the other can remind her. [...]” (The Quran, 2:282 – about testimony).

“[...] But the men have a degree over them (women) [in responsibility and authority].” (The Quran, 2:228 – about obedience).

It is evident that the sacred texts are sustained by the CPs of the moment in which they were produced and by the readings (interpretations) made of the original texts, by the dominant classes, according to the political and economic interests of each era. However, it cannot be denied that there is a misogynist discourse materialized in different passages of these texts, in different religions, and that go through the imaginary of our society, contributing to the construction and maintenance of an “ideal” of femininity.

¹⁵Islamic feminists, such as Zahra Ali [5] explain that the sacred texts of Islam are, in their essence, egalitarian and anti-patriarchal. Misogynistic myths such as the narrative of the original sin or the creation of women from Adam's rib, do not exist in the original text of the Quran.

¹⁶*Siddur on line*. Available at: <https://goo.gl/CVxfVj>. Last accessed on: Jun. 6, 2020.

¹⁷Available at: <https://www.bibliacatolica.com.br>.

¹⁸ Available at: <https://quran.com/>.

Thus, the control over the female bodies is more intense than the control over the male bodies. In addition, the interpretive dimension of Sharia aggravates this fact, maintaining the status quo (patriarchal and excluding) of Islamic societies. Neumann (2006) [15] reports that, in Islamic countries, those responsible for interpreting the laws are always men, since women are not allowed to reach the spheres of power responsible for the *fiqh* (interpretation of Sharia), therefore, a more favorable interpretation of surahs to the female cause is dependent on those men. As the Islamic legislation is based on a subjective reading, the historical, cultural and social context in which the sacred texts were produced is ignored, and its meaning effect is directed according to the interests of the group in power.

Going back to the analysis of the FEMEN protest, it reproduces the atheistic discourse of the western feminist movement, in confrontation with the religious discourse. For this FD, religions control the bodies of women and, in the special case of Islam in Egypt, the adoption of Sharia extends this control to all dimensions of society. For the protesters, religions must not interfere in political, legislative, legal matters, nor in the sexuality of women who must be free, as in the imaginary of paganism. Religion is a “slavery”, for FEMEN, in which the subjects have no choice or freedom.

However, this discourse silences that choice and freedom are constitutive illusions of the subject. The subjects interpellated by an atheistic FD (for example) think, act, say, see the world according to what is allowed by it. Furthermore, religious FD does not cease to interfere in all spheres of secular societies, and like Sharia, the legal and legislative systems in these states also control bodies. Control is not only exercised over the bodies (and sexuality) of women, but of all subjects. The elaboration of norms and laws that maintain the patriarchal status of societies, or their misogynistic interpretation, is not something exclusive to Islam. As the representation of women in the spheres of power (executive, legislative and judicial) is still very small, these decisions, as in the case of Sharia, continue to be made from a perspective that privileges the masculine.

III. CONCLUSION

For the subjects inserted in a religious FD, the naked bodies of the protesters, the symbols and colors that refer to the woman's sexual freedom, and the texts engraved in aggressive and incisive tones, resume the medieval memory of a body that needed to be trained, controlled by religion. All that in order to fulfill its divine role of motherhood, and to be kept away from lust and witchcraft, behaviors that represent the devil and the forces of evil for the religious FD.

The body, when used as a means to question existing social practices in society, as well as verbal, filmic or imagetic discourse, constitutes itself as discursive materiality. For the AD, there is the real of the language, the real of the story and the real of the subject, as what breaks out, what fails, therefore producing the rupture through unexpected meaning effects. The body, when it does or shows what is not expected, which is not determined, also presents a real. Thus, one can think, according to Ferreira (2011) [16], in a “real of the body”, or *discursive body*, as the impossible to be symbolized, but that somehow is always present, not ceasing to return. The statements slide of the posters in the protests to the bodies of the protesters represents, according to Orlandi (2004) [1], a way to give more power to these bodies. As the subject (protesters) are immersed in a visible space, discursively saturated, they have the need to materialize their speech in their bodies, overflowing the language, bringing to the skin surface all the control exercised over the female body.

When opting for corporeal materiality, FEMEN allows another form of circulation for its discourse, taking it to other spaces, producing unexpected meanings, as these bodies would be displaced from their predetermined "places". Thus, the meaning effect produced by the analyzed protest is of no place, of strangeness, of denunciation, of a mismatch between the female body and the discourse still reproduced about femininity in different areas of society.

In this sense, the bodies of the FEMEN protesters would be out of "place" in different aspects. Out of their physical place, that is, bodies without proper clothing in places considered sacred or public. Female bodies in predominantly male spaces as in public spaces in Islamic countries. Naked female bodies outside their usual commercial exploitation place as in brothels, or commercial advertisements for consumer goods. Or just the

female body, outside its “place” defined by patriarchal society, or outside the ideal of femininity constructed from a male perspective (KEHL, 2016) [17].

The naked female body, claiming control of her sexuality, would be out of the “natural” place destined for women, disconnecting her from the role of motherhood. A body in a coping position, with legs apart and arms raised with clenched fists, shouting aggressive phrases, which moves outside the standard of docility, submission and passivity of this ideal of feminine, built over the 19th century and remains to this day.

In other words, these bodies displaced from the position that is determined by the different discourses reproduced by today's society, cause strangeness, announce inequalities that have been historically propagated, claim changes in the current structure. In this way, the FEMEN group's protest moves the protesters' bodies out of place (both physical and ideological) which is determined by the FD, still predominant, about what it is to be a woman, about what is allowed, accepted or prohibited for the female body. In this sense, the naked body would represent what is missing in the subject, allowing the emergence of flaws in the ritual of ideological interpellation, constituting resistance. In other words, the naked body, when it appears as a mistake (outside the place where it is usually expected), is the point in which the interpellation fails, the point in which this body is no longer what it can and should be “said”, but rather what it is: the real female body.

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