



“I THOUGHT IT LOOKED A LITTLE QUEER”: TURNING REALITY INTO FANTASY AND VICE VERSA *THROUGH THE LOOKING-GLASS AND WHAT ALICE FOUND THERE*

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ABSTRACT: In order to provide a new epistemological approach to Butler's (1993) notion of "queer sociality", this article relies on Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking Glass and What Alice Found There* (1871) because of his geniality in providing alternative structures for the human psyche by deconstructing normative definitions and functioning for such psyche. This process is among the main axioms of most queer theorists thought, and can taken as the pillar which explains why the field is interdisciplinary. Because of the limitation of the institutional management of disciplines there is a risk of taking interdisciplinarity as methodological rather than thematic. Pivotal or not, such matter is problematic because the risk is that interdisciplinarity remain merely thematic rather than epistemic in a queer approach on textual evidence. Despite the whole subjectivity that seems to embrace the entire range of sexual desire, queer counter-pleasures have the seed for disrupting the stability of identity categories, and break into individual subjectivity as well. When the individual is no longer categorized under a specific qualification of character, desire, or performativity, but given a power to "free feel" inclined to the boundary relation s/he wishes to commune with, queer dismisses the racialized erotics through fantasized exploration of our contours. In fact, rather than communed with or, on the contrary, transcended, the boundary relation is disrupted and destabilized by the queer epistemologies of sexual fantasy, making solipsism unsustainable.

KEYWORDS: *Alice Through the Looking Glass*; Lewis Carroll; Queer.

RESUMO: Para propor uma nova abordagem epistemológica à noção de Butler (1993) de socialização *queer* analisamos o livro *Through The Looking-Glass And What Alice Found There* (CARROLL, 1871) devido à genialidade de Carroll na proposição de estruturas alternativas para o pensamento humano através da desconstrução de definições e funcionamentos normativos para tal pensamento. Este processo está entre os maiores axiomas da teoria *queer* e consiste em um dos pilares de sua interdisciplinaridade. Devido às limitações do gerenciamento institucional das disciplinas existe o risco de se pensar disciplinaridade como algo metodológico ao invés de temático. Central ou não, tal questão é problemática devido ao risco da disciplinaridade se tornar

algo puramente temático ao invés de epistêmico na abordagem *queer* de evidência textual. Apesar de toda subjetividade que parece envelopar toda questão de desejo sexual, os “contraprazeres” *queer* plantam a semente para romper com a estabilidade de categorias de identidade e para libertar a subjetividade do indivíduo. Quando este indivíduo deixa de ser categorizado sob uma qualificação de caráter, desejo e performatividade específica e recebe o direito de estabelecer quaisquer tipos de relações que desejar, *queer* desabona a erótica racializada através da exploração fantasiosa. De fato, ao invés de ultrapassada ou transcendida, a relação fronteira é desestruturada e desestabilizada pelas epistemologias *queer* de fantasia sexual, tornando o solipsismo insustentável.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Alice Through the Looking Glass*; Lewis Carroll; *Queer*.

Behavior is the mirror in which everyone shows their image.

-Goethe

A QUEER SOCIALITY THAT MATTERS

In her masterpiece “Bodies That Matter” (1993), Judith Butler offers interesting arguments which do not aim solely at convincing the reader that the bodies are socially and culturally constructed but at making the reader rethink how such a construction takes place. Her arguments are very plausible if applied for instance to the binary view which contemporary society tends to direct towards those who deviate from normative sexualities; these are two groups based on antagonist premises that put forward very simple solutions for “nonnormative” behaviours: the first pathologise people who do not convey the sexuality they should, and thus suggest their medicalisation as to cure their disease; for the second group nonnormative sexual behaviours are determined by cultural and social processes, and thus imply that sexuality is a matter of choice.

For this second group Butler asks: “why is it that what is constructed is understood as an artificial and dispensable character?” (1993, p. xi) Indeed this is a very good point, it is not because something is constructed that it is superficial or, worse, a matter of choice. Notwithstanding the endless discussions about innate or cultural sexuality, scientific studies demonstrate how human beings are far from understanding what is genetically determined and what is socially constructed inasmuch as since we are in our mothers’ womb our genetic and social experiences already become pretty difficult to be disentangled. Like Rubin (who is to be addressed afterwards),

Butler also emphasise the political use of sexuality as to reinforce normative behaviours and problematise deviant ones: “the regulatory norms of ‘sex’ work in a performative fashion [...] to materialize the body’s sex, to materialize sexual difference in the service of the consolidation of the heterosexual imperative” (1993, p. 2).

Rodríguez, in the article “Queer Sociality and Sexual Fantasies” (2010) articulates a sage critique demonstrating how the future of queer marginalised peoples have no chance of becoming the present of hegemony; according to the author such a comparison is inadequate since, in the contemporary world, for those who are not part of a select few “any sense of the future is tied discursively to a moment of current sacrifice, a perpetual spiral that spins us back to a present moment of further repression, discipline, and control” (p. 331). Judith Halberstam provides us with a definition of these people as representatives of a queer time and space, and we decided to bring some of her axioms as to contribute to Rodríguez critique.

Both authors do not limit their queer analysis to the sexual sphere, amplifying the queer atmosphere; and in the article “Queer Temporality and Postmodern Geographies” (2005) Halberstam argues that “A ‘queer’ adjustment in the way in which we think about time, in fact, requires and produces new conceptions of space. [...] By articulating and elaborating a concept of queer time, I suggest new ways of understanding the nonnormative behaviours.” Regarding the definition of “Queer space” the author explains that it “refers to the place-making practices within postmodernism in which queer people engage and it also describes the new understandings of space enabled by the production of queer counterpublics” (p. 6).

Our purpose in the following analysis, then, is to establish a dialectically reasonable approximation of *Through The Looking-Glass And What Alice Found There* (CARROLL, 1871) with Lacan’s “The Mirror Stage as Formative of the I as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience” (1977) and queer fantasies in order to discuss the queer problematisation of normative identity constructs. Notwithstanding the possible failure in the attempt, we shall proceed with the persuasions that every signification performed by language “in the real world” has its origins in the reflections of a kind of mirror surface within the mind – a sort of looking glass. As Jacques Lacan affirmed, “all sorts of things in the world behave like mirrors” (1977, p. 11); That they behave like mirrors seem, here, to imply a delusion for the author. Bearing this in mind, there comes to us now the incumbency of articulating textual evidence from “Alice’s fantasies” with the queer social frameworks, or projected manifestations, present in our contemporary society.

The mirror stage, simply put, is: a baby in the anal phase, that no longer identifies with the mother’s breasts, and that is somehow aware of the difference of

its body and the otherness out there, views itself in the mirror. The baby then sees something coherent, coordinate, and rather attractive, and recognizes itself as the object of the mother's desire. This idea provides the perfect metaphor for a concrete view on the issue of "otherisation" – for us to realise how the self is constructed through its experience with the other. The inherent need of a social mirror to build one's own subjectivity provides us with the epistemological threshold for picturing how people who are inserted in the queer condition are forced into a model wherein there is no possibility of future, since they are intrinsically part of something that, different from the hegemonic normative pattern, has no possibility of thriving nor evolving. Halberstam argues that: "The constantly diminishing future creates a new emphasis on the here, the present, the now, and while the threat of no future hovers overhead like a storm cloud, the urgency of being also expands the potential of the moment and [...] squeezes new possibilities out of the time at hand" (2005, p. 2). Unquestionably, the future of some is not the same future of others. According to Rodríguez "Futurity has never been given to queers of color, children of color, or other marginalized communities that live under the violence of state and social erasure" (2010, p. 333).

Such a matter is not mitigated but empowered by the neoliberal politics of contemporary society since, as stated by Halberstam, "to all different kinds of temporality we assign value and meaning [...] according to the logic of capital accumulation, but those who benefit from capitalism in particular experience this logic as inevitable" (2005, p. 7). This is why Rodríguez introduces the idea of thinking about a "queer sociality": "the queer sociality that I am trying to conjure is at its core an attempt at recognition. It is a utopian space that both performs a critique of existing social relations of difference and enacts a commitment to the creative critical work of imagining collective possibilities" (2010, p. 332); only then can the temporal and spatial situation of distinct cultural productions be understood as part of our present, and not of our past.

LEWIS CARROLL AND THE REPRESSIVE HYPOTHESIS

In the text "Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality" (1984) Gayle Rubin demonstrates effectively how sex has been politically applied in order to reinforce normativity and repress behaviours which deviate from it in Western society. The author emphasises how the social norms that institutionalise sex are not determined by biological matters but conceived as a mould wherein "normal"

behaviours are to fit, and how such a mould is not universal but historically constructed due especially to Christian standardised beliefs. He suggests the existence of an “erotic pyramid” which comprises sexual behaviours in distinct categories organised hierarchically.

There are many parallels between Rubin’s text and Foucault’s *The History of Sexuality* (1978), especially concerning its chapter “The Perverse Implantation” in which he poses that “canonical law, the Christian pastoral, and civil law [...] determined, each in its own way, the division between licit and illicit” (p. 37) and shows how the sexual behaviours “contrary to nature” (p. 38) have been pathologised – argument that later Rubin would apply anew. We find Rubin’s comparison between sex and capitalism very pertinent, and agree that “like the capitalist organization of labour and its distribution of rewards and powers, the modern sexual system has been the object of political struggle since it emerged and as it has evolved. But if the disputes between labour and capital are mystified, sexual conflicts are completely camouflaged.” (RUBIN, 1984, p. 171)

Therefore, and as for us to provide a new epistemological approach to the idea of “queer sociality”, we are persuaded by the writings of Lewis Carroll because of his geniality in providing alternative structures for the human psyche by deconstructing normative definitions and functioning for such psyche. His ability to talk about the repressive states of identity his characters face, and how this search for recognition and self-assurance is portrayed in his books, give enough food for thought concerning the liberating idea that our fantasies allow us to be “who we really are.”

Actually, nonetheless, whether this idea is liberating or not it depends on the notion of freedom on which one draws his/her analysis, since the concept of “freedom”, per se, will be tackled here as being necessarily contingent. Carroll did not have the same love for adolescents as he had for little girls, especially Alice Pleasance Liddell, the Oxford Dean’s daughter, whom he met in 1856. Speculations apart, Carroll’s early years were full of the same kind of Victorian repression which we find in Alice, an identifiable aspect between author and character. Seemingly, this impinges directly on Foucault’s critique of the repressive hypothesis.

The chapter “The question of social transformation” in Butler’s work allows the reader to see how paradoxical normativity is: “We see the ‘norm’ as that which binds us, but we also see that the ‘norm’ creates unity only through a strategy of exclusion.” (2004, p. 206) Consequently, it is not easy to liquefy the traditional categories which establish who belongs where, determining the ones who fit in the hegemonic patterns and stigmatising those who do not. But the fact that it is not easy does not mean it would be impossible. Regarding, for instance, the film *Paris is Burning*,

Hooks has sagely observed that “had Livingston approached her subject with greater awareness of the way white supremacy shapes cultural production [...] perhaps the film would not so easily have turned the black drag ball into a spectacle for the entertainment of those presumed to be on the outside of this experience looking in.” (1992, p. 152)

Watching the film and reading the texts concerning its production and reception one can assume that it had potential enough to challenge the norms, if this were its intention. However, even though the existence of deviances can be ignored no longer and the controversial nature of normativity is being repeatedly debated in contemporaneity, the traditional norms are still a pivotal part of the system’s structure; and as long as they remain there any step forward might depend on very complex and entangled matters. According to Butler “norms seem to signal the regulatory or normalizing function of power, but from another perspective, norms are precisely what binds individuals together, forming the basis of their ethical and political claims.” (2004, p. 219)

But a question still remains unanswered: if the ever-increasing materialist tradition of our capitalist contemporaneity has been able to transform religions, literature, medicine and many other realms into commodities is *Paris is Burning* to blame for its Imperialist character? In other words, if we have made art a product that has to be “effectively” sold, and if it needs to endorse questionable norms in order to do so—pathologising, exoticising or ignoring their deviances—how can we expect it to do the opposite?

This question makes one rethink about labeling the film as the responsible for prejudiced and biased perspectives, inasmuch as such perspectives had already been gradually inserted in the minds of those who watched it. The fact that people started to laugh during serious scenes bothered Hooks: “The laughter was never innocent. Instead it undermined the seriousness of the film, keeping it always on the level of spectacle. And much of the film helped make this possible.” (1992, p. 154) Cultural productions, as continually emphasised, are able to defy hegemonic norms, and we agree with the argument that since its purpose has been to sell the documentary had to attract the attention of an audience who had a different agenda.

LOOKING FOR A QUEER EPISTEMOLOGY

Queer Theory attempts to provide the world with plausible explanations within the realm of identity as performance and as overtly socially constructed –

inviting over for open discussions of gender, sexuality, performativity, agency, and desire, among many other things, inasmuch as “queer” is undoubtedly pretty interdisciplinary. Queer theory, therefore, is not about “the queer world” but about the production of normativity. This is among the main axioms of most queer theorists thought, and can taken as the pillar which explains why the field is interdisciplinary.

All these terms, still unusual, unknown, or even ignored by the majority of the heteronormative hegemonic society, constitute a real challenge that claims an intervention that no longer regards anthropological nor humanistic issues. Because of the limitation of the institutional management of disciplines—a proliferation of discourses, of para-disciplines in areas which call themselves “studies”—there is a risk of taking interdisciplinarity as methodological rather than thematic. Question is: Is management limited because it does not succeed in controlling? Or is it limited because its existence depends on doing so? Pivotal or not, such matter is problematic because the risk is that interdisciplinarity remain merely thematic rather than epistemic in a queer approach on textual evidence. However, and as to rephrase such point more properly, it is important to say that some studies offer “more of the same.” Nevertheless, as Rodríguez points out,

Into this politicized space of meaning, queer theory inserts itself to offer theoretical interventions that ask us to consider the role of queer social bonds, community futures, and the relevance of sex at this precise historical moment, a moment where the demands of neoliberalism emphasize individual exchange and benefit absent of an analysis of differentiated social relationships to power. (2010, p. 332)

When the politicized space of meaning is not strong enough to engage queer social bonds, the desire encapsulated in dreams or fantasies may furnish an outlet for the expression of these social relationships of power. Such desires are engendered by their very repression (or “forged from a through a state of siege”); process which is very different from the expressive hypothesis implied in the words “liberation”, “outlet”, etc. It is in existing in one’s psyche that these fantasies become a surface of reflection that serve as a mirror (of both the regime and normativity) to others, whose posthumanist³ conceptions have demystified the imperialist humanism in the hope of a bigger set of connections “within the articulatory struggles of those specific identities forged from and through a state of siege” (BUTLER, 1999, p. 127).

Human thoughts are a semiotic structure, like language, not language itself. This means that the very thinking process of the human mind is the signifier, where the materiality of bodies can perform without being attached to a single set of signifiers,

and where the body follows no signs. The body and the signs are forged in hidden epistemological structures that sustain a certain practice of the humanities – a certain idea of what constitutes the image of thought (what we exactly do when we think, and who is that “you” that does the thinking). As the individual recurs to her/his own fantasies, s/he is “doing her/his private and personal thinking”, he/she enters the delusion of unconstraint, where nothing is restrained.

In demanding the right to set one’s own rules, there come to mind the words of Gorefest’s song: “Sanity and insanity walk together hand in hand; but never be afraid on which side of the line you stand. Take the power to get in control; it’s you that rules your life. Break down the walls that are surrounding you” (GOREFEST, “Erase”, 1994). Freedom, in the end, seems to be delusional for it is constituted via the walls themselves; this, in a nutshell, is the poststructuralist insight. The culturist trap of humanitarian imperialist language conditioning social society in different environments with the same code to relate personal but normative realities confronts the most basic feature of the human soul, the power fantasies of queer and others: the notion of property. Again Rodríguez explains:

In our sexual fantasies, we can occupy a space of our own creation, devise our own tactile, visual, and auditory codes, assign queer meanings to gestures and utterances that have preceded our entrance onto the sexual stages we inhabit. In fantasy we can rewrite scripts of sexualized objectification, subjection, and racialized violence. Through sexual fantasy we can name our bodies and their parts anything we want — thick brown cocks and tight little pussies are available to anyone who wants them, without need for state licensing agencies. In our fantasies and in our sexual play we can make familial shame sexy and state discipline erotic. In fantasy, being stopped at the border, strip-searched, and forced to kneel at the altar of militarized American masculinity can seem just the right antidote after a long day butchering it up in front of yet another academic committee that wants to make racial difference disappear. (2010, p. 341)

Perhaps fantasies are the only universal bond, free of civil or moral obligations, that concatenates our humanities, and that allow us to master, to enact sexual objectification; This seems to be the illusion within delusion itself. It is through this (un)institutionalized social frame that the person comes before any identifying brand, and that queer is not deployed with failure. The mirror then reflects a “situated contemporaneous horizon of meanings and intentions” that can actually hide and be protected from the violence and injustice the world outside pushes back into our minds; by hiding from rather than mastering, the mirror image supplements the absent

whole. Inside our fantasies we are on the other side of the mirror. We are on the side we choose to be: where our agency queers all that we find “reverse” or “similarly unfair” on the social realm side of the mirror. Being thus engaged in this somewhat healing process of the self, our objects of desire get to have their tickets punched at every stop on the queer train.

Once there is the need to signify deeper anxieties, frustrations, and misconceptions, fantasies are able to argument (or even augment them, like under a magnifying glass) with the several meanings we are attributed with a force way more powerful than that which language can provide. This may sound nonsense, but there is always a sense in nonsense. Nonsense draws meaning from diverging the language system, and by insisting on differences instead of similarities. Its apparently chaotic nature is actually well thought out and organized, and relies on the particular reasoning and logic its author has proposed (not necessarily its supposed author, but the order of normativity against or within which the subject of fantasy must operate), which is not the case of what is called absurd in modern literature.

In *Through The Looking-Glass And What Alice Found There* (CARROLL, 1871), Alice has a dream in which she crosses a mirror. On the other side of the mirror everything is different: it is a new world. In this new world she finds, although things were similar to those she was used to, things were not quite the same. She had to exercise her awareness and adapt her behavior in order to cope with the demands of accepting and dealing with such a world. The analogy of the glass and its reverse world makes me think of the queer world as something society still does not see as similar enough.

The queer world requires different patterns of thinking and awareness from everyone, even from those who have already “crossed its borders of space and time”, that is, those who have been interpellated or self-identified as queer in a given historical context. Nevertheless, perhaps to discuss the emergence of a “queer world” would not be a very good approach, inasmuch as heterosexuality seems to derive its normativity from homosexuality, which derives its normativity from transexuality, and so on in an unending circle, so there is no such clear frontiers or divisions capable of producing a “queer world”. A “queer epistemology” would, maybe, serve us better.

FINAL REMARKS: THE CONSTITUTIVE OUTSIDE OF REALITY

The imaginary psychic projection conveys that the sense of one’s own body is manufactured through a self-division and self-estrangement awareness that

sees the contours of the body reflected on the surface of the mirror, despite of the possibility of differentiating one's own body from another, that is, the maternal body. The fact is that cognitive skills reprogram memory throughout history. The reflection that is seen is the projection of what one can see. The articulation of one's own image in the mirror is subjectivized by the act of perception, under the gaze of the other: 'Well, now that we have seen each other,' said the Unicorn, 'if you'll believe in me, I'll believe in you. Is that a bargain?' (CARROLL, 1871, p. 97). Nevertheless, these contradictory views over essence, shape, and names, queer stands for that which "might be any shape, almost", at the same time (CARROLL, 1871, p. 77).

Despite the whole subjectiveness that seems to embrace the entire range of sexual desire, queer counter-pleasures have the seed for disrupting the stability of identity categories, and break into individual subjectivity as well. What remains after all is the politically incorrect erotic desire. When the individual is no longer categorized under a specific qualification of character, desire, or performativity, but given a power to "free feel" inclined to the boundary relation s/he wishes to commune with, queer dismisses the racialized erotics through fantasized exploration of our contours. In fact, rather than communed with or, on the contrary, transcended, the boundary relation is disrupted and destabilized by the queer epistemologies of sexual fantasy, making solipsism unsustainable.

It is in this sense that Rodríguez sees racialization potentially and epistemically undermined rather than dismissed by erotic racial fantasies. The psychic imagination fantasizes that which could not be actualized or that was not actualized yet. It brings possibility of uncensorship and liberation, in an inner social projection of a wishable social living structure. No matter how you hold the queer book of sex, through the looking glass of your fancy mind it will always read right, like Math:

"Humpty Dumpty took the book, and looked at it carefully. 'That seems to be done right—' he began. / 'You're holding it upside down!' Alice interrupted. / 'To be sure I was!' Humpty Dumpty said gaily, as she turned it round for him. 'I thought it looked a little queer. As I was saying, that seems to be done right'" (CARROLL, 1871, p. 81).

The necessity of social reorganization in political movements throws queer into the marginalized space of constitution (institutionalization and control), bringing into meaning a closer relation between fantasy and reality. "Fantasy," says Butler, "is not the opposite of reality; it is what reality forecloses, and, as a result, it defines the limits of reality, constituting it as its constitutive outside" (1999, p. 29). Yet, for queer, like Alice, it still feels like a pleasant dream, a fantasy of a repressed desire burning under the fire of seasons:

A boat beneath a sunny sky,
Lingering onward dreamily
In an evening of July —

Children three that nestle near,
Eager eye and willing ear,
Pleased a simple tale to hear —

Long had faded that sunny sky:
Echoes fade and memories die.
Autumn frosts have slain July.

Still she haunts me, phantomwise,
Alice moving under skies
Never seen by waking eyes.

Children yet, the tale to hear,
Eager eye and willing ear,
Lovingly shall nestle near.

In a Wonderland they lie,
Dreaming as the days go by,
Dreaming as the summers die:

Ever drifting down the stream —
Lingering in the golden gleam —
Life, what is it but a dream?"
(CARROLL, 1971, p. 136).

SENSIBLE NONSENSE: WHICH IS TO BE MASTER?

As we have seen, thus, while nonsense plays with order only, “the absurd is a contrast of systems of human belief, which may lack all logic, and the extremes of a logic unfettered by human disorder”, namely order and disorder (HOLQUIST, 1971, p. 408). As we look at the passage in which Alice is talking to Humpty Dumpty, an

anthropomorphic egg with arms and legs, it is possible to relegate meaning as a system in itself:

'I don't know what you mean by "glory,'" Alice said. / Humpty Dumpty smiled contemptuously. 'Of course you don't— till I tell you. I meant "there's a nice knock-down argument for you!'" / 'But "glory" doesn't mean "a nice knock-down argument,"' Alice objected. / 'When I use a word,' Humpty Dumpty said in rather a scornful tone, 'it means just what I choose it to mean— neither more nor less.' / 'The question is,' said Alice, 'whether you can make words mean so many different things.' / 'The question is,' said Humpty Dumpty, 'which is to be master - - that's all'. (CARROLL, 1871, p. 81)

As a common arbitrary and authoritarian act, the prescription of solipsistic meaning is possible indeed. But this anthological passage has turned Humpty Dumpty into a metaphor of arbitrary meaning rather than of agential meaning, what leads the reader to ask him/herself the following question: Which is to be mastered? Mastered by whom? Queer philosophers have been arguing over these questions for a long time now. In the nonsense of death before the looking glass, the arbitrariness of the reasoning of language places us under a suspended ontology that gives our bodies a name through which to be recognized. Recognition taps into sanctioned ontology which effaces its epistemology. It is when its ontology is not effaced that ontology is suspended and recognition becomes, indeed, a performative effect.

This name we are given, according to Lacan (1977), sustains the integrity and wholesomeness of our bodies. The name is the supplement that stands in for the absence rather than the presence of that which it names. This is very different from sustaining integrity and wholesomeness. The integrity and wholesomeness of our bodies are emulated rather than sustained by the name, therefore haunted by the bodies that don't matter. It is a morphological scheme established through the mirror stage that works the contours of the objects that are produced, positioning our bodies under the paternal law that establishes gender and kinship, and that brings us into this side of the realm.

In other words, this morphological scheme works in the opposing sense of the magnifying glass: instead of amplifying meanings, it diminishes them because it requires control, and control entails epistemological narrowness. Whether we can make words become "contours" that mean so many different things, and the body and its reflection to ourselves and others a matter of "mastering" the Other's object of desire remains intriguing though. Humpty Dumpty seems to agree with Lacan, who offers a critique of Humpty Dumpty's reliance on the supposed stability of meaning

as it can be observed in the following passage:

'My name is Alice, but—' / 'It's a stupid name enough!' Humpty Dumpty interrupted impatiently. 'What does it mean?' / 'must a name mean something?' Alice asked doubtfully. 'Of course it must,' Humpty Dumpty said with a sort laugh: 'my name means the shape I am—and a good handsome shape it is, too. With a name like your, you might be any shape, almost'. (CARROLL, 1871, p. 87)

We finish our analysis endorsing Butler's (2004) view when she affirms this notion of a morphological scheme establishing meaning is problematic because this episteme is marked as masculine, therefore a basis for an anthropocentric and androcentric epistemological imperialism, and also because Lacan's projection of the phallus (despite of his "rearticulation of Freud's penis") during the mirror stage transforms it in the privileged signifier of the symbolic order. The capacity to project a morphe, a shape, onto a surface is part of the psychic (and phantasmatic) elaboration, centering, and containment of one's own bodily contours. As such, it is haunted by containment itself. In other words, self-autonomy or the straight correspondence between signified and signifier is a matter of arbitrary power rather than integrity; it is, therefore, delusional. As Carroll's narrative exposes, what we have had – and what we shall probably always have – is already a floating signifier.

NOTAS

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- ³ Concerning posthumans or posthumanity. 1985 B. Sterling Schismatrix 1 208: "Posthumanist," Wellspring insisted. 1988 T. Maddox Wars of Coin's Two Halves L. McCaffery Storming Reality Studio (1991) 1 325: Shaper and Mechanist name the primary posthumanist modes of being [...]. Technopolitical fusions, they manifest polar strategies of human evolution. 2004 D. Broderick X, Y, Z, T 1 94: Sterling was in the 1980s a (perhaps the) vociferous propagandist for cyberpunk, futurist writing that combined hard-edged, hi-tech gloss with a cynical posthumanist sensibility. Oxford Dictionary of Science and Fiction. Oxford UP. 2007.

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