MOREIRA, Felipe. Thinking love through abled-bodiness: an impossible otherness? *RBSE Revista Brasileira de Sociologia da Emoção*, v. 17, n. 50, p. 101-111, agosto de 2018 ISSN 1676 8965.

ARTIGO

http://www.cchla.ufpb.br/rbse/

Thinking love through abled-bodiness: an impossible otherness?

Pensando o amor através do corpo não-deficiente: uma alteridade impossível?

Felipe Moreira

Recebido: *30.04.2018*
Aceito: *28.05.2018*

Resumo: Este ensaio traça questões sobre os citos corpos não-deficientes e sua relação com nossas construções identitárias, expectativas e expressões de amor. Vivendo em um ambiente cultural que pouco faz para respeitar e potencializar a diversidade, aspectos estruturais de nossa sociedade podem influenciar nossos desejos e ações, em níveis coletivos e íntimos. Repensando tal cenário através de uma antiga relação, pretendo refletir sobre a deficiência física de meu ex-companheiro, e como nossa relação aponta para as dinâmicas de afeto entre pessoas deficientes e as ditas hábeis, contornando, neste processo, a construção da expectativa do corpo capaz. **Palavras-chave**: abilitismo, corpo não-deficiente, deficiência, antropologia das emoções

Abstract: This essay connects questions about abled-bodiedness and its relation to our identity construction, expectations and expressions of love. Living in a cultural environment that does very little to accommodate and potentialize diversity, structural aspects of our society can inform our desires and actions at social and intimate levels. Rethinking such scenario through a former relationship, I intend to reflect my ex-lover's disability, and how our relationship can point to the dynamics of affection between abled and disabled people, contouring the construction of abled-bodiedness in itself along the way. **Keywords**: ableism, able-bodiedness, disability, anthropology of emotions

Forewords

Our encounter was through a gay dating app, a not very romantic or alluring medium but a helpful tool, especially in a new city. We were both newcomers with few months apart, from different states. He didn't tell me he was disabled (and did so quite reluctantly) until our meeting the next day, afraid of some backlash for not disclosing beforehand. We've been together for one year, on and off, and the subject of disability only came once or twice, when discussing his accident and the way other prospect lovers considered his identity as a disabled gay man. From our conversations, he rarely talked about disability as an identity, regarding it through a medical take on the body.

In this essay, I intend to reflect on aspects and situations of our relationship in order to think ableism as a structural aspect in our society. The many crossings disability has with economical, psychological, social and all different facets of our lives impede us from grasping diversity as a cohesive and intelligible scheme, but pinpointing and developing such reflections can give rise to such dynamic of power and corporality, exploring the dynamics of how to think ableism through our own practices, in a critical (and yet always incomplete) way. To think critically is not to ignore emotions at bay but to take them into account when doing such a reflection. That is to say, recognizing the interplay of one as emotionally affected and invested in understanding its implications.

Introduction

Ableism can be defined by direct or indirect attitudes and social discourses, demeaning and/or restrictive to access and well-being, through perceivable or imaginable bodily and/or mental difference. Diniz (2007) believes that ableism is acritical as it fails to recognize that corporalities are always diverse and that what defines one's possibilities or success in performing a task is the expectation of the task itself. In other words, the pre-defined environment which is constructed by, around and for normalised/normative corporalities. Such is the view on the social model of analyzing disability, through the need to go beyond the "skin" and locate how institutions shape our social environment, privileging some and rigging other people's possibilities.

The allegedly natural abled-bodiedness, ignoring historical contingencies on the way we perceive nature and culture to create the illusion of spontaneity and growth (Le Breton, 2011) goes beyond the most obvious corporal differences[1]. As is the case with hysteria and its survival in modern day biological arguments about women's rationality (Springer-Sullivan, 2013) or scientific post-war eugenics that still echoes on social imagery of ethnic groups (Gilman and Thomas, 2016), the logic of abled or "complete" bodies surpass itself, disseminating as a conceptual armory for many a situation. For Ingold, the germ of such assumption can be located in Western thought and its forced divorce between nature and culture, where nature is that uncontrollable force that needs to be subdue, survived, dominated (Ingold, 2000) – where one must be in total control of himself and possess the body to do so.

The social and historical construction of the naturalized and normal body is a complex matter, receiving wide attention in academia, thinking beyond pathologization and through the social/interactional dynamic (McRuer, 2006). I shall present here some reflections on how ableism can be thought through our romantic and individual relationships, without denying how structured spaces influences and constricts our livelihoods. Locating myself as "non-disabled", I can only theorize as my experiences are not his. I will limit myself to reflect on some of our distressful situations as a couple and take a step back to think my able-bodiedness and its connections with love, affection and emotions.

The Otherness in us

Anthropology's conception of otherness is the proverbial hand that can both feed you and bite you. A powerful and tricky concept, allowing us to exercise our desire of self-knowledge through a mirror that, in exchange, have the power to change how we look and act – to be affected (Favret-Saada, 2012). Such change does not come (if it comes, at all) without struggle and conflict, as our need for structuring is only topped by a resistance to change, as any alien element can potentially render our beliefs useless, cracking our certainties through contagion (Mary Douglas,1991). One powerful restraint for otherness' practices in writing about diversity is not to exotify but try to understand how things are enmeshed and connected, not always through the same direct line or not always sharing the same beginning or finish line (Latour, 1994).This writings are one of those exercises, exploring love, affection and able-bodiedness through a double-

---

[1] I'm talking about different corporalities or of non-hegemonic corporalities or perceived disabilities in order not to reinforce the idea of a "disabled body", whilst being able to talk about disability as a social concept, beyond one's potencies.

otherness: through my perceptions of my ex-partner’s disability and through our dynamic as a couple, in its conflicts and disagreements. Such an attempt will, hopefully, provide a basis to explore some of the dynamics of able-bodiedness as that mirrored otherness.

While last years has seen a flourishing of critical enquiries on disability studies, from different disciplines aside from the medical/rehabilitation guidance (Davis, 2006, p.257), we still struggle to transform academic field into a more welcoming place. There is little space for inventiveness, a bit of roughness to knowledge production and certainly little room to discuss emotions or indulging personal accounts. So, there is still resistance to accepting an emotional approach as serious or sufficient in itself, to be the core of discussion and not just a starting point or referential, to account the politics of personal life, not only in its historicization and structural approaches. Still a Hanische a dream: “Political struggle or debate is the key to good political theory. A theory is just a bunch of words— sometimes interesting to think about, but just words, nevertheless— until it is tested in real life.” (Hanisch, 1970, p.76-78).

Struggling with our emotions and taking them into account is a good exercise in alterity and self-knowledge, as theories tend to feed out of them and many other aspects in our life but when crystallized, ignores its fragile origins.

For Sara Ahmed (2004) it is a disputed terrain where emotions not all of them and not in all cultural contexts) represents both highly praised enactments but also as a tie with passivity and lack of rationality, a blurring of perception, impelling us to act in a non-objective way. Anthropology’s attempt in the fields of emotions are somehow dubious as it indeed access sentiments and personal thoughts but usually as prelude to theorizing or attempting to understand its historicalness and social genesis through a functionalist approach (Coelho and Rezende, 2010).

Applying the same inference above, that emotivity has little space in serious social analysis and how disability studies has been rising to a field of critical studies, we meet Myriam Jimeno (2010) in her acknowledgement that emotions, as a political language (and also as intimate feelings) are important for politics of identity, especially as she analyses the construction of “victim” as a concept, echoing with disability studies’ developments in understanding (and resignifying) the perception of disabled people as unfortunates, stricken by uneventful maladies and in need of constant help (Monbeck, 1973).

How able-bodiedness and the construction of such identity affect relationships and intimacy, expectancies of emotion and reciprocity? Is going beyond the concept of ableism as structural, to see how it affects our intimate life, an exercise worth doing? With all that said, such an exercise can’t be developed without assuming his own contradiction: to talk about an otherness that is completely attached to my romantic expectations and emotional involvement, with all assumptions being made here through a place neither rational nor innocuous for assuming its malleability.

Scales of love and care

It is not possible to dissect a person’s psychology layer by layer in order to understand all its social markers. The dynamic I experienced of never knowing when, in my former relationship, I was reading J.’s disability as the sole player in our disagreements or fallouts, resonates with Fichten and Robillard in their perceptions of disability as the whole denominator of their beliefs and attitudes: “[...] negative attitudes toward a handicapped person's disability are often generalized to non impaired characteristics of the individual and finally to the entire person.” (1983, p.199)

Not only is that problematic in itself, it pushes our limits on patience and our ability to suppress our own desires and expectations, creating an elusive sense of empathy towards a "victim", who needs support. Whilst not positioning or thinking myself as a career, some analogy can be draw here.

J. discourse about being afraid that I'd be "fed up", as if he were somehow stagnating my life, is reminiscent of such a dynamic. I've found myself quite often being overzealous and torn between the place of lover and the place of the "politically engaged" researcher. In what ways could that obfuscate my openness in learning from him, with his experience and our relationship? As McRuer (2006) states, when we think positively about disability/non-disabled experience, we see it in our own frame of thought as abled-bodied people. We can empathize, but never in a realistic exchangeable relation where both parts can be transformed through contact. Even when ableist paradigms are shaken, they soon regroup -only the surface's scratched, not the core.

Knowing that he lived away from his family, in another state, and have been on his own for some time, still located me in a strange place: that of a lover, especially in a dynamic where structural power hovers above the relationship. That we change our behavior when in a relationship goes without citing and saying, but in a relationship with different instances of power and possibilities (as are all, to some extent), "proving your worth" as a lover is a dangerous action. I will discuss a little bit more about the idea of worth and notions of western romance, but for the time, it's interesting to start such a reflection. In that place of lover (and J.'s ideas and expectations of what a lover should do/feel), a conflicting position appears. Being the abled-bodied partner in a privileging able-bodied city/environment, it seems that able-bodiedness is always praised: you can help and you can't help, each way, we, as able-bodied people, get to the podium – not to help is to encourage autonomy; to help is to be lenient and compassionate. As Wagner Roy (2012) states when talking about the invention of a notion of culture and how its discovery, when acclaimed and widespread, become the site of privilege and power to those who have actually invented it as a narrative. Such strategy of lenience towards diversity, if diversity displays no threat to the powers-that-be, is one I we carry in ourselves as abled-bodied people.

Talking about the interrelational aspect on the ethics of care, Ward (2011, p.172), analyzing the role of social careers and people with learning disabilities, says we need to be aware not to incur in an exaltation of a paternalistic role (and in opposition, the passivity of the "receiver" of that care) and understand such dynamic as mutual:

> [...] using an ethic of care analysis to critique this perspective, and to highlight aspects of interdependence (rather than autonomy) and reciprocity, disrupts the discourse that creates such binaries and the drivers that compartmentalize and essentialize people either as care givers or care receivers; it provides a space in which to demonstrate interdependence and to unmask the artificial boundaries of care.

An analogy can be drawn if we are to think about equal partnerships in that sense, for the politics of care is also informed in our society in romantic, affective and sexual relations. In a common (and idealized) sense, to love or to be in love with someone usually reads as tending for that person, taking care, caring for them. It is not a concept that comes easily into reality and actual practice, especially when we have a society with groups inhabiting different places of power and legitimacy. In that sense, Ward's call for attention to the interdependency of caring is even more insightful for thinking about relationships with disabled people, in all their diversity.

Love, sexuality, romance and abled-bodiness

When writing this paper, I've found myself thinking whether it is better to expunge the idea of care or resignify it. Not reaching any conclusion, it is helpful to understand a little bit better on how such notions intersect with disability.

How to account for that equableness in practice, especially when feelings of responsibility, desire and moral perspectives are involved? Sankowski (1977) discusses how Western thought is multiple and historically changes its perceptions of people's responsibility as moral figures, social actors and individuals who desire and feel, never finding common ground and being contextually mutable. Through social media and personal blogs, a lot of discussions toward emotional responsibility have been made, specifically heterosexual women pointing out how most men tend to feed a potential partner's desires and doesn't take action for the involvement, expectancies and emotional distress it might have caused on someone[2]. That shows much of our society's gendered education and how attitudes deemed despicable can be overlooked or tolerated depending on who originates them.

A question that poses for me when thinking about my involvement with J. is how to balance that overzealousness in a non-patronizing way, accepting that what I perceive as flaws or a lack of attention in fulfilling any need I might have, might come from different places aside from his disability (or inasmuch such aspect of his life not being totally responsible)? Such politics of care discussed earlier shows us that double aspect of romantic involvements: holding one's accountable for perceivable failures in a relationship and self-policing yourself not to be unjust. Such dynamics of what I perceive as love and intimate relationship is very paradigmatic when I think about the nature of my first encounter with J., our expectancies and how things developed. It tells us about our socialization as men, as gay men, as abled-bodied and disabled person and our romantic aspirations.

Being in a place of someone who researches and have an interest in disability studies can make you feel overzealous, going against our expectancies of romance as spontaneous and thriving. Analyzing love as a discourse through the ages, Giddens (1992) shows us how we carry contextual social structures when "enacting" our love, through the reflective dynamics on how to feel and respond to the target of our love-as-passion or love-as-romance[3]. In that sense, we are not equipped to deal with diversity as a true aspect of a person and being open to that otherness, as McRuer stated above. We inhabit a mixture of privileges, unconscious perceptions on other people and, due to very little geo-social integration with disabled people, little experience in the field of social relationships and, consequently, at a more intimate level.

Romantic partners already have to deal with clashing of different social markers as gender, class, race, etc., if one is to undergo a relationship who accounts for some degree of otherness. Disabilities inter-cross as well as any other markers but in different ways we are yet to discover. Disabilities and psycho-motorial diversity is only now being taken into account as a "serious" social marker (intersectionality), together with affectivity and sexuality taken as concrete realities on disabled people's lives (Mayers, 1978). To deal with otherness through a cautious approach can have the opposite effect, as sometimes my self-conscious was perceived by my ex-partner and clashed against his expectations on romance as that spontaneous development one should expect. Such

---

[2] A simple but illustrating one can be seen here: http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/katie-heindl/speaking-out-against-sexism_b_4079721.html

[3] Which he states, in fact, they're hardly separable and do account for each other at different times and through different forms.

conundrum made me think once again about that place of power we can refuse to inhabit as able-bodied people: only those in power can enact the illusion of abnegation as you need to have a place of prestige in order to abandon it. The intersection of power, (allegedly) dependency, sexuality and reciprocity, manifested all the time in our relationships, in ways that this paper will hardly cover.

Giddens also believes that the discourse of romantic love detaches ourselves from larger social contexts/institutions (or at least makes us feel we do), threading a more atomistic path for a life with our desired person. Not being totally possible to disconnect ourselves from such institutions, disability, as much as other social markers, is present in such life-threading, but interwoven with many other aspects, such as gender and sexual orientation.

Between theory and factuality of emotions

We both shared what is sometimes labeled as “gay promiscuity” – quick sexual encounters through the app. We intersected through different livelihoods, permeated by a same oriented sexuality that developed through different forms: combinations of desire, lust, romance and self-contained desires. Such an intricate dynamic is, by itself, a source of discomfort in most encounters, which, in our case, had his disability as a new variable. Later on, he would talk to me about his experience being a disabled gay man looking for sex and some iconic encounters he had. A so-called gay promiscuity and the relation between being disabled and its effect on potential relationships showed up in some of our talks. He said he was “successful” on the app, as having many encounters, but their negotiation were sometimes distressful or ended up in self-deprecation. Some would state “I’ve never been with a disabled person”, making him a token as a “different sexual experience” that would serve as subject for someone’s talk with his group of friends at the pub – rarely culminating into a meaningful relationship.

That negotiation between promiscuity, objectification and gender connect to the ways we construct our masculinity. Alsop et al. (1994) discusses how some masculinities are deemed marginal and need to create their own spaces outside the “mainstream” of hegemonic male identities. J.’s been in a car accident which paralyzed him from the chest down, more than ten years ago. He inhabits two different places, a masculinity-project that was aborted and a developing identity as a gay disabled man. Obviously, being gays, we would never satisfy the criteria for hegemonic maleness, but our positions and identities create different paths and possibilities. As seen with Ingold (2000), the idea of able-bodiedness encompasses the growth into a fully-developed person capable of bending nature into culture –if have a “male” body, even better. That aborted masculinity project entailed loss of a certain autonomy and he was mainly cared for by his mother.

What I am trying to see here is how little we know about such dynamics, even though sharing a lot of situations and upbringings, able-bodiedness still can inhabit such societal expectations, allowing us to overlook many important angles. Being disabled, being cared by his mother, constructing a sense of gender that is new (not only as an identity but also to disability studies) and experience pleasure and love as a gay man: how does desire works in tensioning all those variables? A maternal figure, embodying stereotypical notions of care, a somewhat common mediatized view of an automatic closeness to gay men and their mothers. Such assumption tends to crystallize expectations of womanhood/motherhood (as careers, comprehensive people, always ready to sacrifice themselves for a loved one) and also puts the weight of acceptance on them and excuses society’s structuring heteronormativity: all the onus falls on the mothers (Cramer and Roach, 1988).

Such identification gay sons have with their mothers can make one think on how would a psychoanalytical approach deal with such fact. Not only in the sense that mirroring a female figure of care in a homosexual relationship is already troubling in itself (i.e. expectations about womanhood) but also the conflict that it can arise if such polarization (now reflected on a male partner) is flawed, with the person being mirrored refusing to accomplish such an expected role of abnegation and ready-promptness (Irigaray, 1985). The dichotomization of gay sexual relationships also makes its way into how we need to think disability intersectionaly, as roles of passiveness or protagonism are embedded in the division top or bottom (the gay who penetrates/the gay who is penetrated) through apps and gay narratives, echoing what we discussed about the discourse of paternalization of disabled-identities.

It is hard to separate sexuality from love, especially through the interactions between disability and sexual orientation. Shuttleworth (2012, p.55) talks about the lack of discussion on sexuality and disabled people's access to sex and intimate. At the same time, especially through apps (since sex-places in gay community do exist but few have accessibility politics for disabled people), gay men can navigate more easily through promiscuous encounters (Ahlm, 2016). Our idea was to have a rapid and fleeting sexual encounter. The dynamic of that easy access to sex, at the same time that he felt objectified or object of sexual curiosity, made me wonder how that could have affected his romantic expectations[4]. So, a conceptual division was created, extending disability in a broad sense: how does the gay sex life seen as "liberating" relates to ideas of romantic love discussed here and connects with the motherly figure of care reflected on a partner?

My idealization could not handle diversity in a broad sense as well, for I'm also informed in my decisions and thoughts as an abled-bodied person. Sharing a common socialization asa gay man was not enough and it actually showed the limitations of dealing with disability. We can't expect that only "love" or willfulness can handle a structured society in which disabled and non-disabled people rarely share the same space. Not even as strangers in an urban space, as they are separated through lack of accessibility, unwelcoming environment and many other restrictions that operate such a geographical, social and romantic separation (Simmel, 1971). Kaja Silverman talks about such idealizations as impossible if they still operate inside culturally defined norms. While I'm hopeful in believing that people from different backgrounds and social markers can maintain relationships based on equality, that is far from being the norm (Fichten and Robillard, 1983). As Silverman states,

> It is equally imperative that we learn to idealize outside the corporeal parameters of the self. To do so would be to escape from the vicious circle which leads inexorably from the aspiration to perfection to the experience of corporeal fragmentation, and which makes the subject irreducibly aggressive toward anyone who seems capable of approximating what he or she cannot. (1996, p.37)

Such aggressiveness could be perceived through self-deprecating thoughts. Between our emotional fragilities and his aware as a dependant person, I nurtured selfish thoughts that, far from spontaneous (even though they were acritical), made social constructions evident as arguments of power – "Am I not enough? We share our

---

[4] It's also worth pointing that he owned a car, which is a way to access non-legal places to have sex (cruising grounds, etc.) and meet people in a more autonomous way – a privilege not all disabled people can have, due to the costs and mechanical adaptations needed.

personal experiences and how deceitful people can be, I'm not deceiving, I'm doing my best, making him feel loved and assuring him that I love him, independently."

I couldn't give in to that place of selfishness without conflict, a place we can go to legitimate our dissidences. As a partner, I had to constantly prove myself and, when failing to show such love and desire, feelings of inadequacy came to me and had to be fought off as I tried to be comprehensive to the fact that, not only we were in a new relationship, but I had to account his disability as the source for his insecurities. Fichten and Robillard also (1983 *apud* Zola) believes that lack of social representation and acknowledgement of sexuality in disabled people account for a lot of self-hate and difficulties in affective integration between disabled and non-disabled people.

Such comparisons point to what Eva Kittay (cited by Mello and Nuernberg, 2012) regards as intersectionality between gender and disability - that we are all dependent somehow, in some way. Some ways are more "accepted" socially; others are not that easily diagnosed and as much, are ignored or not taken seriously. A way we can think about able-bodiedness through such reflection is understanding how our expectations are informed not only by a construction of masculinity that corroborates (at least tries to) capable means to deal with that otherness (as nature is the unknown needed to be brought to cultural light) but how sexuality can progress out of that sense of capability to account for other levels of security. As an intersectional factor on a person's life, disability permeates areas of economic, social and personal contact, always with different crossed results, as people's attitudes towards disability varies in a broader way than with abled-bodied people[5].

The expectancy of ableism beyond physical need, the encrusted myth of openness to love and affection, are able-bodied narratives that failed to integrate in disabled people's lives. The notion of the self needs cultural support in order to avoid conflict with self-awareness as social beings in a positive spectrum (Mauss, 2003). How to deal with such a conclusion, knowing that some conflicts with your beloved might come from an ableist society, when dealing with your own emotions? That was the dilemma dragged through our relationship. The policy of self (Foucault, 1987),as an effective way to make me believe such logic would work for the "good" of our relationships, as such awareness disguises all of our pre-conceptual framework regarding disability in a way to make it look like it's a critical stance, to be aware of one's emotions.

How could I share all that thinking with him without making him feel patronized, as if such assumption of vulnerability was not already patronizing in itself? We create this romantic fiction that daily nurturing of the relationship and the verbalization of your fondness towards a person will trump years and years of an unequal socialization, making it very hard not to feel frustrated when it does not. The projection of love rarely accounts for all the interconnectivity of a person's life with many a situation, even so with the case of disability, as the variable of "sexuality" or affection rarely does come into play in the interrelational lives of disabled people (Fichten and Robillard, 1983). When/if it does, it is usually centered on the idea of care and family. J. nurtured such feelings at the same time he felt that it would be a burden I wouldn't be able to handle and would eventually leave him due to his allegedly "high-maintenance". He would often say to me, especially in times of trouble "Your life will be easier without me". That enunciation teared me apart every time. "You will just give up, eventually" was also a constant in our disagreements. None of us could predict what

---

[5] When it does, is through the optics of care or in a close relationship where we have to account disability as a reality in a able-bodied persons' life – but never with the intensity one experiences as a disabled person.

would be the outcome, we were both committed and in love but couldn't foresee the future.

Final considerations

The inhabiting of different places but always as disabled. He could be appraised for having a public well paid and respected job but always viewed as disabled – so it triggers something pertaining our ableism: as we never have to worry about identification in a sense of a "working set of physicalities", more of our energy can be drawn to objective matters – what one does add up to his preoccupation list when mobility, bathroom use, and social skills have to always be negotiated?

We often entered dilemmas of where to go to eat or just hang out together. I always felt he was in a conflicting situation which, for me, in retrospect, points to that place of anomaly that Douglas talks about: never being but always be seen as someone who will always be 'estranged', fragmented constantly by social auspice. He sometimes said to me he was sad for he thought most of the places we could go depended on the accessibility there. We lived in a major capital city in Brazil, well appraised for its inclusiveness and for being a wealthy and very "cultural" city. His practical live showed otherwise (and in the process, made me perceive the city in such way as well). He felt as if he was being blamed for not having the means to go where he wanted to go, with who he wanted to, to have a romantic time: the inadequacy and marginalization of spaces incrusted in the victim of the exclusion. That became a big issue, especially when we planned an international trip together and we had to think of innumerable situations and prepare for it, causing such distress to him that we gave up.

By living between and amidst these two conceptions of masculinity and affection, his experience in love and sexuality shows how little we know about the dynamics of disability and love. As non-disabled, I hardly had to struggle with issues regarding mobility or access to public and private places, accounting for less friction or less variables influencing the meshing with all other aspects of my life. I had to confront my growing up as a "man", biological growth, sexuality and many other aspects but always in conformity with an abled bodied perspective for I lived in such society who allowed me to ignore such self-awareness. We need some "social glue" in order to validate our perceptions of our own identities. He lived in the fragments of previous relationships and developed his identity as an abled-bodied person, whilst, after the accident, J. had to learn how to equate with society's new treatment and expectations over him. His own perspective as a burden to his lover makes me think he also lived in another fragmented world, which of one whom even in a place of discomfort, desires for love and affection. Being self-aware of his disability, carrying his experiences and disappointments, tears and happiness throughout his life, conflicts are bound to happen as we live in an unequal society. As dynamics of love are propense to be conflictive, as an abled-bodied person in a relationship with a disabled person, that idea of lover's unreachability doesn't come without the need for a critical reflection.

The idea of reciprocity might as well be informed by abled-bodiness logic, needed to be rethinked and reappropriated if it doesn't account for the diversity of people and their relationships. Ideas and concepts can only live through their regular and social use without their genesis being criticized all the time. In that sense, they are protected from defragmentation at the same time they are fed by the social structures (disparate and non-inclusive, as discussed), reinforcing our daily micro-fascisms (Deleuze and Guatarri, 2004), creating norms and dynamics that work through an abled-bodied perspective. Ableism goes beyond the obvious, it is latent and attaches itself onto our personal relationships, our expectations, informing our inter-sociabilities in ways that are hard to perceive, camouflage is what maintains their aspect of naturality and avoids the perception of their historicity, what would diminish their powers (Bourdieu, 1998).

I eventually decide to end our relationship, not without conflict. I still wonder if I was unhappy and delayed such decision by hoping that we would come to terms and he would see that his "disability did not matter". A naive and romantic yet revealing expectation on my part, as it did matter, still does, in many ways, for me, for us and for many other people around. I can only keep the question open, to be honest: can I really say that his disability, and all it entails in his life history and relations, really didn't influenced my decision to end the relationship? Could we have lasted and lived a healthy and fulfilling relationship if we lived in a society who encourages diversity and love or at the end of the day, some relationships just don't last?

References

AHLM, Jody. Respectable Promiscuity: digital cruising in an era of queer liberalism. *Sexualities*, v. 20, n. 3, p.364-379, 2016.

AHMED, Sara. *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*. New York: Routledge, 2004.

ALSOP, Rachel; Annette Fitzsimons; Kathleen Lennon. *Theorizing Gender*.United Kingdom: Polity Press, 2002.

BOURDIEU, Pierre. *O Poder Simbólico*. 2a edição, Rio de Janeiro: Bertrand Brasil, 1998.

CRAMER, David; Arthur Roach. Coming Out to Mom and Dad: A study of gay males and their relationship with their parents. *Journal of Homosexuality*, v. 15 n. 3-4, p.79-92, 1998.

DELEUZE, Gilles; Félix Guatarri. *A Thousand Plateaus: capitalism and schizophrenia*. London: Continuum, 2004.

DINIZ, Débora. *O que é deficiência*. São Paulo: Brasiliense, 2007.

DOUGLAS, Mary. *Pureza e perigo*. Lisboa: Edições 70, 1991.

FAVRET-SAADA, Jeanne.Being affected. *HAU*, v. 2, n. 1, p.435-445, 2012.

FICHTEN, Catherine; Kirsten Robillard. Attributions About Sexuality and Romantic Involvement of Physically Disabled College Students an Empirical Study. *Sexuality and Disability*, v. 6, n. 3, p. 197-212, 1983.

FOUCAULT, Michel.*Vigiar e Punir: nascimento da prisão*. Petrópolis: Vozes, 1987.

GIDDENS, Anthony. *The Transformation of Intimacy: Sexuality, Love and Eroticism in Modern Societies*. Cambridge: Polity, 1992.

GILMAN, Sander; James Thomas. *Are Racists Crazy? How Prejudice, Racism, and Antisemitism Became Markers of Insanity*. New York: NYU Press, 2016.

HANISCH, Carol. The Personal is Political. In: Firestone, Shulie; Anne Koedt (Org.). *Notes from the Second Year: Women's Liberation: major writings of the radical feminists*, New York: New York Radical Feminists, p.76-78, 1971.

INGOLD, Tim. *The perception of the environment: Essays on livelihood, dwelling and skill*. London: Routledge, 2000.

IRIGARAY, Lucy. *Speculum of the other woman*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985.

JIMENO, Myriam. Emoções e política: a vítima e a construção de comunidades emocionais. *Mana*,v. 16, n. 1, p. 99-121, 2010.

LATOUR, Bruno. *Jamais Fomos Modernos*. Rio de Janeiro: Editora 34, 1994.

LE BRETON, David. *Antropologia do corpo e modernidade*. Petropólis, RJ: Vozes, 2011.

MAUSS, Marcel.*Sociologia e Antropologia*. São Paulo: Cosac Naify, 2003.

MAYERS, Kathleen. Sexual and social concerns of the disabled: A group counseling approach. *Sexuality and Disability,*v.1, n. 2, p. 100-111, 1978.

McRUER, Robert. *Crip theory: cultural signs of queerness an disability*. New York: NYU Press, 2006.

MELLO, Anahi Guedes de; Adriano Henrique Nuernberg. Gênero e deficiência: interseções e perspectivas. *Rev. Estud. Fem*. v. 20, n. 3, p. 635-655, 2012.

MONBECK, Michael. *The Meaning of Blindness: Attitudes Toward Blindness and Blind People*. Indiana University Press, 1973.

REZENDE, Cláudia Barcellos; Maria Cláudia Coelho. *Antropologia das Emoções*. Rio de Janeiro: Editora Fundação Getúlio Vargas, 2012.

SANKOWSKI, Edward. Responsibility of Persons for Their Emotions. *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, v. 7, n. 4, p. 829-840, 1977.

SHUTTLEWORTH, Russel. Bridging Theory and Experience: a critical interpretive etnography of sexuality and disability. In: McRuer, Robert; Anna Mollow (Org.). *Sex and Disability*. Durham, N.C: Duke University Press, p. 54-68, 2012.

SILVERMAN, Kaja. *The threshold of the visible world*. New York: Routledge, 1996.

SIMMEL, Georg. *On Individuality and Social Forms*. University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 1971.

SPRINGER-SULLIVAN, Cassie. The Resurrection of Female Hysteria in Present-day. *Berkeley Journal of Gender, Law & Justice*, v. 20, n. 1, p. 67-74, 2013.

WAGNER, Roy. *A Invenção da Cultura*. São Paulo: Cosac Naify, 2010.

WARD, Nicki. Care ethics and careers with learning disabilities: a challenge to dependence and paternalism. *Ethics and Social Welfare*, v. 5, n. 2, p. 168-180, 2011.