

**Geontology and the neoliberal arts of government: educating bodies
beyond the carbon imaginary ¹**

***Geontologia e as artes neoliberais de governo: educar os corpos para
além do imaginário do carbono ²***

Alexandre Simão de Freitas[Ⓞ]

[Ⓞ] Universidade Federal de Pernambuco – UFPE, Recife, PE, Brasil. <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0982-6581>, alexshiva@uol.com.br

Abstract:

Inspired by Elizabeth Povinelli's essay *Geontologies: a requiem to late liberalism*, this paper problematizes the current conditions of neoliberal governance, through an expansion of the Foucaultian concept of biopolitics. The intention is to rethink the educational processes on the margins of biontology deployed by the entrance into the Anthropocene to disable the imaginary of carbon. This is a speculative essay organized in two axes. First, the paper reflects the conditions under which certain populations and, more specifically, certain bodies suffer from differential exposure to injustice, violence and death. Then, discuss the possibility of activating other ways of life capable of resisting the neoliberal arts of government. In the limit, the purpose is to indicate some reasons why the pedagogical field has inflated the issue of education as a self-enterprise and deflated the concern with self-care and care of the others, defending an opening of educational theories to other figures and subjects of education as part of a powerful criticism of the excesses caused by the imaginary of carbon in our systems of thought.

Keywords: geontology, neoliberalism, government of life, bodies in flow

¹ English version: Viviane Ramos - vivianeramos@gmail.com

² References correction and bibliographic normalization services: Andressa Picosque (Tikinet)

Resumo: *Inspirado na obra *Geontologies: a requiem to late liberalism*, de Elizabeth Povinelli, este texto problematiza as atuais condições do governo neoliberal expandindo o conceito foucaultiano de biopolítica. Procura mais amplamente repensar os processos educativos nas margens da biontologia desdobrada pela entrada no Antropoceno, a fim de desabilitar o chamado “imaginário do carbono”. Trata-se de ensaio especulativo organizado em dois eixos que articulam noções foucaultianas, tematizando as condições pelas quais certas populações e certos corpos sofrem pela exposição diferencial a injustiças, violência e morte. Em seguida, discute-se a possibilidade de ativar outros modos de vida capazes de resistir no contexto das economias do abandono e das políticas queer de migração. Ao final, busca-se evidenciar algumas razões pelas quais o campo pedagógico inflacionou a questão da educação como empreendimento-de-si e deflacionou a preocupação com o cuidado-de-si e dos outros, defendendo uma abertura para outras figuras e sujeitos da educação como parte de uma crítica potente aos excessos provocados pelo imaginário do carbono em nossos sistemas de pensamento.*

Palavras-chave: *geontologia, neoliberalismo, governo da vida, corpos em fluxo*

“Philosophy faces a time of temporal caesura”.

“A filosofia atravessa um período de cesura epocal”.

Fabián L. Romandini

This text unfolds a type of analytical fiction on the so-called “neoliberal arts of government”, inspired by the work *Geontologies: a requiem to late liberalism*, of Elizabeth Povinelli, questioning the current liberal government conditions through the expansion of the Foucauldian concept of biopolitics. The broader intention is to rethink the educational processes on the banks of biontology opened by the entrance on the Anthropocene,³ so as to handicap the “carbon imaginary” and its processes of ontologically marking, distinguishing, and declassifying.

³ The term “Anthropocene” was proposed by Paul Crutzen and Eugene Stoermer in 2000, during a meeting of the International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme. It refers to a new geological time that followed the Holocene, which started with the Industrial Revolution and intensified after the Second World War (Danowski & Viveiros de Castro, 2014; Viveiros de Castro, 2012).

The argument has an intentional speculative tone and was organized in two intersected analytical axes. The first connects a series of fragments from classes given by Michel Foucault, in 1978, during the course *Security, territory, population*,⁴ to show how, starting in the 16th and 17th centuries, sovereignty “capitalizes a territory”, the disciplinary power “structures a space”, and the mechanisms of security “create a medium” due to a “series of events” that needs to “to be regulated within a multivalent and transformable framework” (Foucault, 2007, p. 35). The second analysis axis relate to the conditions through which certain populations and, more specifically, certain bodies suffer different exposures to injustices, violence, and death. In this moment, it is discussed the possibility of other ways of life capable of resisting the arts of the neoliberal government in the context of the *queer politics of migration* (De Genova, 2015).

Together, both analytical movements aim to evidence some of the reasons through which the pedagogical field inflated the issue of education as venture in itself and deflated the concern with self-care and the care of others, defending an opening of educational theories to other figures and education subjects, so as to conspire other ways to form human beings, guided by an *otherwise*⁵ and decolonizing posture of our thought systems.

To start: against State coups to have sedition and turmoil

In the class of January 11th of the course *Security, territory, population*, given in 1978, Michel Foucault, after presenting the global perspective of the course and defending an analytical differentiation among legal system, the disciplinary mechanisms, and security devices, give a broad characterization of the two last, taking as an example the organization of urban space between the 16th and 17th centuries. Based on this, Foucault concludes that the

⁴ Translator’s note: the quotes from the course *Security, territory, population* were taken from Senellart, Michel. (2007). Michel Foucault: Security, Territory, Population. Lectures at the Collège de France 1977-78.

⁵ As discussed later, the notion of *otherwise* points to a radical displacement in the antro-po-philosophic understanding of difference when considering, beyond social marks, the cosmologies that refuse the univocity of western onto-metaphysics. Thus, the *otherwise* safeguards or reactivates an ontological concept beyond the absolute distinctions between life and nonlife.

demilitation needs a set of *possible events* which refer simultaneously to the temporal scope and one of randomness what allow to singularize the space of security, called by him as the “milieu”. This notion had emerged in Biology with Lamarck and in Physics with Newton and was essential, as it aimed “to account for action at a distance of one body on another” (Foucault, 2007, p. 36). In fact, this notion is “the medium of an action and the element in which it circulates” (p. 36), indicating a certain number of effects that acted on all bodies that live there, “it is an element in which a circular link is produced between effects and causes” (p. 36).

The medium would be a privileged field of governmental intervention as instead of acting over individuals, understood as a group of subjects with rights and capable of voluntary action, or even as a multiplicity of bodies able of performances, the medium would affect them as a population, that is, a “multiplicity of individuals who are and fundamentally and essentially only exist biologically bound to the materiality within which they live.” (Foucault, 2007, p. 56). Thus, he articulates, on one hand, a groups of “natural givens” (rivers, marshes, and hills, for example) and, on the other, “artificial givens” (as the agglomeration of individuals), what raises, in the terms of Foucault a technical problem, as the milieu would be inseparable of the outburst of the problem in the “naturalness of the [human] species within the political artifice of a power relation” (p. 37).

But, before finishing the class, as it is common in his teaching rhetoric, Foucault indicates a text and an author, virtually unknown, unread or, if read, not highlighted, but who he believed to be the first great report of biopolitics. It is the *Studies on population* by Moheau, in which Foucault (2007) finds ideas such as: “It is up to the government to change the air temperature and to improve the climate; a direction given to stagnant water, forests planted or burnt down, mountains destroyed by time” (p. 37).

In fact, Moheau,⁶ supported by a verse of Virgil on wines that freeze inside the barrels in Italy, defends that it would be a governmental task to intervene in nature as a medium (geographical, climate, etc.), in constant association with human species and its multiple tasks. The ruler should, therefore, exercise his power precisely “at that point of connection where nature, in the sense of physical elements, interferes with nature in the sense of the nature of the human species” (Foucault, 2007, p. 38). This exact point is the one in which the medium

⁶ On the identity of this author, considered an enigma or even a myth, see the note 39 of the editors of *Segurança, território, população* (Foucault, 2007, p. 37-38).

becomes a constitutive determinant of a given nature, what makes us stumble, Foucault reminds us, the vital axis of security devices, which compose a project and a political technique addresses to the medium as the target of regulation, since population does not configure as a primary data, but depends on a number of variables.

The population varies. It varies with climate, the material environment. But it also varies with the intensity of commerce, with the laws, the habits, moral values. Summing up, the medium unfolds a new way of posing the government issue, as a natural phenomena cannot change through a decree, what does not mean that the population “is an inaccessible and impenetrable nature, quite the contrary” (Foucault, 2007, p. 100).⁷ We have a population exactly when its “nature” becomes the target of “reflected procedures of the government”.

Population is constituted by a series of elements that, on one hand, is part of the “general regime of living beings”, and, on the other, offers a “a surface on which authoritarian, but reflected and calculated transformations can get a hold” (Foucault, 2007, p. 104). From the moment that we do not call the men of “human genre”, but evoke a “human species”, only then man can “appear in its first biological insertion”. More: population would emerge from a synergistic confluence between human species and the public. About this last one, Foucault highlights that the word is not new, but its use is, having in mind that, in the 19th century, the public becomes the “population seen under the aspect of its opinions, ways of doing things, forms of behavior, customs” (Foucault, 2007, p.105), among which stand out its fears, prejudices, discontentment, requirements, and over which one acts through education or through convincing.

Therefore, population is everything that spreads between the “biological rooting by the species” and the contact surface materialized by the public. Curiously, in this point of analysis a word is recurrent in Foucault’s classes, but he says its is not purposefully: the word “government” itself, thought as a new look in the direction of a certain level of reality, a new technique. In his terms, “this inversion of government and the reign or rule” (Foucault, 2007, p. 106). This is the new reflexive prism in which appears the issue of State in his political analysis.

⁷ In fact, Foucault (2007) insists that the population composes itself as a set of elements in which we can note “regularities even in accidents” (p. 104). This belief allowed innumerable analyses by physiocrats and economists, and all types of utilitarian thinking.

A question that would be inseparable of the context dramatized, that is, the problem of the “theatrical practice in politics, or again the theatrical practice of *raison d’État*” (Foucault, 2007, p. 347). Dramatization would be, itself, a way of manifesting the power of the State and the sovereign while the legitimate keeper of the new administrative power. An intense dramatization, as it is pervaded by intrigues, misfortunes, treasons. Then, ‘governmentalization’ of power emerges inseparable of a whole political theater, especially to the “representation of a *coup d’État*”. This dramatization is responsible for opening a new governmentality, which Foucault calls undefined governmentality, that intends to be infinite and aims the “permanence of states that will have neither final aim nor term” (Foucault, 2007, p.347).

It is about discontinuous States, no doubt, but fated to have a hopeless history because they are organized not by a reason whose law is not one anymore one of intrinsic legitimacy, but one with the urgency to face always uncertain coups, even if minutely concerted. Coups that would tragically aim to achieve a scene that is its own reality. It is in this context that the great “pastoral promises” which made us diligently stand all miseries, including ascetism itself, unfold this “ theatrical and tragic harshness of the state that in the name of its always threatened and never certain salvation, requires us to accept acts of violence as the purest form of reason, and of *raison d’État*.” (Foucault, 2007, p. 348).

In this moment of his argument, emerges two notable texts found by Foucault: the text of chancellor Bacon⁸ entitled “Of Seditious and Troubles.” What is its importance?

The text, Foucault argues, presents the “great probability” immanent in the calculations of the endless governmentality in which we are nowadays: the seditious to avoid. Seditious, says Foucault, repeating Bacon, are the catastrophe beside any government- they are “are like tempests” (p. 349). As the sea, they secretly swell. They are signs. Therefore, even if one theatricalize, as a tragedy or a farce the *coup d’État*, it is not possible to eliminate from the own reason of the State, its immanent virtuality: to have sedition and rebellion.

⁸ A text so “notable” that Foucault even says: “I am not much in the habit of giving you advice concerning university work, but if any of you wanted to study Bacon, I don’t think that you would be wasting your time” (Foucault, 2007, p. 348).

This shows that the new governmental order is incapable of eliminating all possible effects of a rebellious storming of the word by the same subjects excluded by governmental calculations. So, the urgency to pay attention to certain “signs” or “semiotics of revolt” (Foucault, 2007, p. 349), which would allow to glimpse in the core of liberal and neoliberal rationality the emergency of a new war. A war against the bodies that embody the others in this sovereign reason. A way that aims to get, permanently, rid of, or at least, neutralize indefinitely the *popular illegalities* that, from time to time, manifest themselves as a possibility to return a future revolutionary event.⁹ The revolted masses would become from now on a concrete place of somatic threat to the established powers.

The political experience of sedition points to the same truths that lay in the root of all philosophical and pedagogical activities which want to up rise new ways of life committed to the corporeal work of freedom. In 1977, Foucault himself had noticed “something of commoner” immanent to each riot. To him, commoners do not refer to a part of society, as a social level, but “something” that is diffusely and variably present in all of us.

[Something] in the social body, in the classes, in the groups, in the individuals themselves, escapes, in a way, the power relations; something that is, not the raw material more or less docile or contrary, but a centrifugal movement, an inverse energy, a slip. “The” commoners, without a doubt, do not exist. But there is “something of” commoners. There is something of commoners in the bodies and souls; there is something of this in the individuals, the proletarians, the bourgeoisie, but with an extension, with forms, with energies, and with diverse irreducibilities (Foucault, 2006, p. 245)

The commoners would be less the exterior of power relations than its opposite, its limit, its counterpoint. That is why Foucault (2006) says, in an apparently paradoxical formulation, that the commoners do not exist, however there are commoners. As every sedition would have a process of deconstitution, a dismembering on the relation truth- power-subject, embodying

⁹ As we know, since 1978, the decline of the Revolution as key to think politics led Foucault to other directions. It is possible to speculate that it was through sedition that subjectivity (not those of the great men, as he highlights) introduces itself in history. The rebellions would cross modern societies as something else; something whose obscure presence continues silenced, even if renewing fears and disseminating moral myths. Thus, in the course *The Birth of Biopolitics*, 1979, we find a precise report on the reason of modern State, a restless display on the emergence of rebellious bodies (Freitas, 2017).

in the bodies in sedition a radical desire of divestment, a will not to fund, but to subtract. The seditions expose small corporal innervations, conceived in a low body belly. The spirit of sedition moves aspiring a world in which there is space for many *other* worlds, where equality is the difference and where the multiplicity of life forms is recognized. Foucault is emphatic: sedition restores commoners' dissidences and their infernal heritages.

Gaia's sedition: the Anthropocene and the (dis)connections between kill and die

In this section, we follow the second thread in the speculative fiction unfolded in the margins of the *neoliberal arts of government* understood by Foucault, in 1978, as a way of governmentality that believes itself, that wants to be, endless but that cannot purge from itself the seditions and unpredictable counter behaviors.

Returning the seminal idea defended by Peter Sloterdijk (2012) according to whom the call for an active life turned Modernity into a technical era by excellence, marked by a new *metanoetic* imperative. Target to all and to who is given multiple and, sometimes, different answer, this imperative mobilizes a wide “collectivization and unspiritualization of a set of exercises and technics to produce the subject by itself, a governable subject” (p. 427, our translation). Among the privileged mediators would be “the modern State and its adequate school”, which, together will call us for a global exercise of fitness (p. 427, our translation).

In the ascetic perspective of Sloterdijk, the creation of active subjects is in the center of dispositions that act in the biopolitical control of populations, since the modern individual is fundamentally a coach-player. Nowadays, however, the current imperative became the permanent transformation through the action of the individual itself, thus it is anymore about a subject that defines itself in the midst of fixed identities to recognize a space in the social field, but a subject of shifting and flexible identities that are permanently self-produced through chosen techniques.

The issue is that in the own sequence of exercise- coaching- business one can perceive vectors producing multiple crisis (Binkley, 2009; Negri, 2016).¹⁰ The crises are triggered, in a great measure, by the current conditions of governance in the life of populations, which engineer crises produced by the own security devices they intended to avoid.

More recently, human and social sciences face themselves with an astonishing crisis developed by the neoliberal arts of government. This crisis expresses the catastrophic effects provoked by the entrance in the so-called “Anthropocene”. Déborah Danowski e Eduardo Viveiros de Castro (2014), among other authors, advert: human history has see many crisis, but the “global civilization”, an arrogant name for a capitalist economy based on the technology of fossil fuels, has never faced a threat like the one on course now in our globalized societies. The critical diagnostic point is far from running out on the clichés about the ecological disasters, climate change, etc., but pointing, at first, at a *process* of intense and accelerated degradation on the conditions that preside the emergence of human life itself. Beyond the panic dystopias (catastrophism) and enthusiasm (accelerationism), the Anthropocene indicates a time in which *time itself is out of its axis*, producing a *leak* of culture over nature.

As a result, binary and oppositional categories, typical of modern philosophical thought, would not, any longer, allow us to understand and, above all, intervene in the changes we are going through. In the terms of Stengers (2015), the transformation of humans in *geological forces* by the deregulated technic-scientific progress has been paid by the intrusion of a violent alterity, *the intrusion of Gaia*, which has modified the classic ways of human self-understanding, as a *historical subject, political agent, or moral person*. The communication of the geopolitical with the geophysical ruined the fundamental distinction of modern *episteme*- the distinction between cosmologic and anthropologic orders, separated since, at least, the 17th century.

We should note that the term “Anthropocene” is not unanimous. Some as Jason Moore (2015) and Donna Haraway (2016), advocate for the term “Capitalocene”, understanding that the Industrial Revolution started in the beginning of the 20th century is a consequence of a socioeconomic mutation that engendered capitalism in the “long 16th century”.

¹⁰ In what measure we effectively live the conditions of a generalized crisis of governmentality or if the crises establish themselves in subtle mechanisms of biopolitical control is a question that we will not problematize now (see Comitê Invisível, 2016, p. 23-46).

However, the critical diagnosis continues beyond the linguistic debate, because the Anthropocene, beside and beyond the metaphors on the end of the world or the apocalypse, is permeated by important philosophical ideas. As highlighted by Günther Anders (2007), “the failure of geocentric cosmology finds itself suddenly compensated, in the modern thought, by an anthropocentric absolutization of history, that is, by the ‘historical relativism’” (p. 22). However, the atomic era relativized this absolutization: the “end of History” becoming a mere “meteorological, an accident with a set date a time” event (Anders, 2007, p. 22). Thereby, *the senses and connections between die and kill are lost*, opening an abysmal inflection in the debate about the neoliberal arts of government.

In fact, the Anthropocene made inevitable to question the commitment of the philosophical discourse in modernity with the many catastrophes in course. After all,

if the Anthropos (understood, as an educated men, western-European-white, or almost...) is the “only citizen of the world”, “an end in itself” (Kant, 2006, p. 21), what would he, as the elected species-people could fear?! If the climate scientists are not “catastrophists” of bad faith, the populations considered traditional, incapable of “broaden the scale” of their supposedly precarious way of existent, the people of the streets, vandals, apolitical, when the philosopher, fully lucid as to the self-funding conditions of his institutional knowledge, should take the responsibility for someone else’s chimeras and transform his own way of thinking? (Valentim, 2014, p. 4)

And more:

if one considers the modern philosophical discourse in the light of its immanent impact over other peoples, humans and non-humans, that he had also kept excluded and simultaneously subjected to the production of sense “in general”, one can hardly scape of the evidence that transcendental thought consists of a spiritual device of “ontological annihilation” of the other (Valentim, 2014, p. 5)

In the analysis of Marco A. Valentim (2014), “the exemplar modern proposition...the ‘metaphysical isolation of men’...is, from Kant to Heidegger, tacitly ethno-eco-cide” (p. 6). The spirit of the “cosmopolitan people” would reveal a potential catastrophic in itself, that, even if dissimulated in its own discourse, is manifested when we think under the perspective of the Other. In this scenario, modernity reveals itself as an explosive source of the common world, which becomes guided by a police peace. The Anthropocene represents then a type of supernatural double of modernity.

In this sense, to take Anthropocene seriously means to avoid the fallacy, at the same time speciesist and racist, of the idea of men as a natural species or a metaphysical essence, considered separately from the various people which are differently human and the non-human,

questioning the devise of a great division that has contributed to the depoliticization of cosmic relations, starting a uncontrollable “war of worlds”. A “war between wars”, wars of State, but also against the State, as a shamanic war of Indigenous against the White, in which unfolds conflicts in which the living and the un-living, spirits and machines imagine and counter-imagine one another.

We find here an image of a thought radically opposite to the consciousness of western philosophers (Costa, 2016). The maximum rule of academic decorum, state by Kant, to which all objects of experience have necessarily to regulate themselves by the concepts of human understanding and agree with them. However, after many centuries of active censorship, the Anthropocene frees the answer of those who practice the so-called “wild thought” – this phantom figure, amongst many others created by the European philosophical racism.¹¹

Educating the bodies in flow beyond the carbon imaginary

Has the time finally arrived to abandon the ship, to betray the species? The question addressed t friend in an invisible and disperse “committee”, emerged where the world catches fire (Comitê Invisível, 2016).¹² From a pedagogical perspective, the questioning faced us with the fact that the founding structures of political economy of education were naturalized. Even if the treatment given to the “rights of minorities” have incorporated aspects that show some sort of tolerance, recognition, and appreciation, the current normative system has system was little influenced by the understanding of these same minorities on the implied senses, for instance, of forming a human being since the educational praxis. The pedagogical theories continue to make invisible other cosmologies and ontologies.

¹¹ That is why Valentim (2014) emphasizes that it is no exaggeration to suppose that modern Anthropocene tried to actively “ignore” its monstrous double. This active ignorance supposes a speculative exorcism, aiming to neutralize the “various adversities” of nature to subjugate it. In this perspective, Davi Kopenawa created an ecopolitical critique of pure/white reason, based on an inverse principle to the objectivist epistemology of western modernity (Kopenawa: Albert, 2015).

¹² The Invisible Committee is a French collective which became known in 2009 during the Tarnac Nine case, when its manifest *The Coming Insurrection* was considered a proof of involvement of the group in different acts of sabotage. More recently, its work *To Our Friends* (published in English in 2015 and 2016 in Portuguese) draws an ironic diagnosis on the development of the crises of power and capital.

This situation allows us to infer, according to Vladimir Safatle (2017), that one of the main axes of neoliberal government processes also consists in managing invisibility, creating grey areas in which lives and bodies “disappear without a trace” (p. 62).

A clear effect appears when we cross the *migration studies* and the *queer studies*. Commonly, migration studies presuppose that migrants are a mass of heterosexual subjects that migrate for purely economic issues, equating migrants to workers (Teixeira, 2015). There are rare studies that see the so-called *queer migrations*. In the international legislation, for example, only 19 countries recognize that sexual orientation and gender identity can be a specific point for an asylum application. In most countries, there is no specific legislation regarding the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transvestite, and transgender population, as a populational group that needs a specific protection.

Meanwhile, in around 80 countries, homosexuality is still considered a crime that, in 6 of them, can even be punished by the death penalty. This situation forces mobility and the crossing of frontiers in a type of “sexsylum” which we know little about.¹³ Nevertheless, in these cases

the interrelations and intersectionalities of gender and sexuality with national, racial, ethnic, and diasporic identities are clear, as well as how the circuits of travel, migration, and displacement, and the subsequent politics of migration, asylum, and citizenship, [and their connections with] hegemonic and counterhegemonic ways of globalization with the movement of bodies, ideas, and capitals, [and] the global and national systems, and places of inclusion/exclusion. (Vieira, 2011, p. 52)

Therefore if, on one hand, migrants have been “objects of an increasing and unusual atmosphere of securitization” (De Genova, 2015, p. 47), as still “nameless” figures and ultimately “unarticulated” of political agency, on the other, the presence of *queer* migrants lasts invisible and unheard, what only amplifies a stronger regulation of their bodies in flow, obstructing the access to basic citizenship goods, while feeding the global networks of human trafficking.

¹³ According to Paul-Beatriz Preciado (2008), sexpolitics is one of the dominant forms of biopolitical action in contemporary capitalism. According to her, sex (the so-called “sexual” organs, the sexual practices, and also the codes of masculinity and femininity) enter in the calculations of power, making the discourses on sex and the technologies to normalize sexual identities an agent of life control.

Living on the limit spaces of the body, the sexual fields, and the State-Nation, the *queer migration* constitutes scape line that are still not assimilated by our theories and philosophical-educational approaches to government. One of the reasons for this, according to Beatriz Preciado (2008), is that the theoretical analysis of biopolitics seem to stop when they reach the “waistline”, ignoring the relevance of sexuality in the dynamics of advanced technocapitalism, whose ways of governmentality are guided not only by a cooperation of brains.

The result is: the *queer crowds* continue to be treated as an “ontological exception”, caught in a type of limbo and, paradoxically, submitted to stabilization processes of their own invisibility. Their bodies and lives visible in their obscurity, feeding a dynamic of civil war through the generalization of a *modus operandi* in which *governing means to make disappear*. Elizabeth Povinelli (2016) claims that this way of governing, typically neoliberal, emerges inseparably from the alleged univocity of a certain physical and metaphysical order of things (its own). This order keeps us prisoners of an ontological concept funded in a specific type of being: the living being and, more specifically, the being that removes its difference from the demarcation of an absolute difference between living and non-living beings.

Elizabeth Povinelli (2016) calls the “carbon imaginary” the set of metabolically processes – birth, growth/reproduction, and death- which western epistemology attributes to the biological life. The carbon imaginary creates the assumption that there is an abysmal separation between organic and inorganic, ignoring as mere inert matter devoid of agency and intentionality all other ways of existence that do not seem to go through those metabolic processes. The author expands the concept created by Foucault affirming that biopolitics is not only the one that aims to rule over life, but also the one that creates and maintains the division between life and no-life, through which neoliberal States rule the differences.

Segundo Povinelli (2001), the ontological priority of carbon metabolism is based in an ontology defined by questions as being or not being, finitude and infinitude, the one and the multiple, creating and presupposing a specific type of entity-state, of knowledge, of life. Therefore, either on the natural sciences or on social science, even on philosophy, the notion of life acts as a foundational division. Actually, western ontology would be a biontology, whose main political power is transforming a regional existence, i.e., the western understanding of life, into a global arrangement with universal intentions.

Oposing this biontology and the biopolitics that supports it, Povinelli (2016) proposes the concept of *gerontology*, which consists on the openness to other concepts of world that are not marked by the duality between life and nonlife, and the notable distinctions between humans and animals, or between animals and plants, or even between plants and rocks, giving an ontological dignity to multiple beings.¹⁴ She is emphatic when affirming that, in the last decades, the States and the neoliberal capital were benefited by the formation of a biontology power, the serious ecopolitical disarray nowadays allowed the emergence of gerontology as a formation of power capable of disabling the carbon imaginary. This happens because biontology, far from establishing an organizational universality, presents only *one* world, even if very powerful.

Thus, the current crisis opened up the space for the new concepts of knowledge in which life and no-life are not the standard operator of ontological distinction. Hence Povinelli's interest in an *otherwise anthropology*. The *otherwise* is a condition of possibility of altering determined arrangements of existence (Costa, 2016), highlighting the diverse geontologies that have been subjugated by the alleged universality of western biontology focused on the carbon imaginary.

Many questions arise from this eccentric positioning: how will nonlife enter in the *demoi*? How do we make or how do we let speak and/or silence other peoples (humans and nonhumans) that inhabit the *polis*?

All these questions demand thinking life outside biological impositions, implying, therefore, a change of perspective, especially regarding human death. Povinelli affirms the need to “dedramatize the human” (Costa, 2016, p. 147). This type of claim aims to question the way we deal with various exclusions that permeates our societies, through a type of “eventification”, that is, its fixation as extraordinary events that momentarily and spectacularly capture our eyes, while leaving on the sidelines small events of “slow death”, the everyday experiences of deterioration to which all beings are submitted under a political and economical neoliberal system.

¹⁴ In the article *Do rocks listen?* Elizabeth Povinelli starts by narrating her participation in an audience during the process known as Kenbi Land Claim, in which the aboriginal people Larrakia tried to have the property rights to the Cox Peninsula in the Northern Territory of Australia. At the occasion, one of the women from the Belyuen, people, who inhabits the area, described to the representatives of the government how a rock called Old Man Rock was able to listen and feel the sweat of its people, highlighting the importance of the interactions among humans, environment, and ancestral totemic beings to the health and productivity of their basic systems of survival. For a deeper discussion on this text, see Costa (2016).

In Elizabeth Povinelli's perspective, the arts of neoliberal government aim exactly to construct and disseminate a broad humanitarian device around the catastrophes and the risks to which significant parts of the population are exposed, creating a type of *economy of abandonment*, which aims to dramatize the 'invisibilization' politics themselves. Therefore, dedramatize the human means, first, that humans as a life form isolated from other existing ones is a chimera; second, that the process of exclusion never reach all humans equally.

In this direction, thinking on the type of political or pedagogical action appropriate to its time is a challenging task. There is always the risk of falling, even with the *best intentions*, into renewed practices of colonialism, as when funding our action in a biontology that strips of value other ways of existing, human and non-human, we end up pragmatically replicating the exclusion we denounce. All politics of resistance against the arts of neoliberal government, including those in the field of education, needs to be able to suspend the habits (bad habits, in fact) that make us believe that we know, in an absolute sense, who we are and that we have a definite sense of what makes us exist.

This type of belief, rarely problematized, starts by reducing the agency and ways of existing of multiple beings and worlds (Latour, 2013) by valuing ways of knowledge that, historically, contributed to the domination of the becomings of 'smaller' people and their counter-sciences, almost always, considered as myth, folklore, and literature. In direct opposition, it is urgent to relearn in terms of other collective agencies of enunciation that do not separate nature and culture, reducing and disqualifying world views external to the modern subject as irrational.¹⁵

This means *to corner* the subject of education that, despite post-structuralist criticisms, is still though as an exceptional form of individual self-consciousness anchored in some form of identity. In the argument proposed here, subjectivity does not forcibly demand a recognized form of *human*. A subject would be established, above all, by the "capacity of taking a position, multiply....a subject that is not a body, does not have a body, nor inhabits a body, but, before all, positions itself in a body that, by definition, inappropriate even in its momentary appropriation (Romandini, 2013, p. 46-47).

¹⁵ To Viveiros de Castro (2015), Western metaphysics has been prodigious in cultivating, legitimizing, and replicating multiple forms of colonialism y not questioning the great divisors of our anthropology, distorting and restricting other narratives which carry within them other types of knowledge and wisdom.

In this context, educating goes beyond the carbon imaginary, beyond the ontological distinction between life and nonlife, it implies an uncommon challenge of critical theorization of education. Can education be up to this thought challenge? Maybe. But, without a doubt, na important step in this direction should start by a contextualization of the arts of neoliberal government, reflecting its concrete effects in the bodies that are set in a flow upon the different political relations between beings and worlds agencied by the perverse *economy of abandonment* (Povinelli, 2016), so as to devise other ways of educating and remember *somebings that we still do not know how to know, that is, somebings that are beyond our desire to know*.

Thus, (not) to conclude...

In the course *Security, territory, population*, Michel Foucault established a pointed contrast on how people's lives as a foundation to democracy had to give way to an analysis of the population. The people portrayed for a long while as the fundament of the democratic liberal difference, however the management of the population became a constitutive source of its legitimacy. Foucault, with this argument, not only removed the focus of his listeners from the imaginary of the kings' sovereign rights, but the popular sovereignty when contrasting the population control and people's seditions.

Who are the people? – he asks. People is something that, in a certain medium, in a given way of governing, embodies the place of all those that are not the sovereigns; the place of those that behave in relation to the population management, in the level of the population, as if they did not belong to it, as if they considered themselves out of it, refusing to be the population, and disturbing the current rationality of the State (Foucault, 2008). People are, simply, who does not obey, who rebels.

In *Geontologies: a requiem to late liberalism*, Elizabeth Povinelli leads this Foucauldian analysis to the limit. According to her, it is urgent not only to undermine the understanding of people with as the ideological base of democratic liberal difference, in the context of the arts of neoliberal government, but question its use through different times and spaces. Following authors as Achille Mbembe (2014), she enlarges Foucault's analysis on sexuality, race, and power to understand how, in the settler colonies, the biopower disseminated specific techniques of

extermination, of recognition, or of assimilation, culminating with a marginal action from the State.

Police violence in Brazil gives us a paradigmatic case of this morbid state presence, as among us, the so-called *agents of law* operate against the law within the law. There is no doubt, we have to face a State that does not acknowledge the death penalty, but which kills entire populations, under conditions that cruelly replicate the colonial and slave situation, as shown by the studies of *queer migration* (De Genova, 2015). In countries such as ours, we see the continuation of corporal terror under the influx of neoconservative deregulation, disseminating morbid forces of violence, hate, and horror, through technological necropolitics that remain unscathed and naturalized as part of our political repertoire.

As a result, “the types of crime it involves do not make any distinction between internal and external enemy. Entire populations are target by the sovereign... Everyday life is militarized... Executions in the open join invisible killings” (Mnembe, 2014, p. 52-3). In Brazil, the creation of an “opponent” sexualized, ‘genderified’, and racialized concretely exposes the State violence and its policies, expressed through different operational models: special segregation, forced ‘invisibilization’, expulsion from school, epistemicide, systematic exhibition to criminal subjugation.

In the current context, it is difficult to perceive the magnitude of the social hate and State violence. It is important to remember that the contemporary ways of power which subjugate life deeply reconfigure the relations among resistance, sacrifice, and terror. Hence the notion of biopower needs to incorporate new ways of thinking, unfolding repressed topographies of cruelty, as suggested by the reflections of Judith Butler (2011) on precarity. Precarity designating the politically induced condition through which certain populations suffer by the weaknesses of social and economic support networks, becoming differentially exposed to violence and death. However, we need to know that precarity refers exclusively to living beings.

Therefore, throughout this text, we insisted: the division between geological matter and biological life can restrict the practical powers of some living beings.¹⁶ Obviously, we are not proposing a new difference between geological and biological, even less its collapse. The relevant point is the discursive pragmatics in which being, life, and precarity are put into practice. As not all discursive pragmatics is absorbable in the metabolically dynamics of the carbon imaginary rooted in our analytical structures.

For many collectives, for instance, life does not have frontiers and the ghostly limits that birth and death lend to what we delimitate as been life. Thus, a dead body continue to be a body. Therefore, understanding the arts of neoliberal government from someone else's point of view, that is, from the point of view of the multiple bodies in flow through the webs of life, nonlife, and the between-life, demands rethinking the own figures and subjects of education.

Some of these figures and subjects start to be present in the analysis of educational theory, such as the *queer crowds* by Preciado (2011), the critique to the *black reason* of Mbembe (2014), and the theories and practices of transfeminism (Butler, 2003; Koyama, 2003; Serano, 2007). However, we still need an analytics of biopower that starts from a resistant openness to the excesses of governing the carbon imaginary, accepting besides the figures of the animist, the desert, and the virus, analyzed by Elizabeth Povinelli,¹⁷ figures such as the *terreiros* and their *orixás*, the *ayahuasca* and their crystal forest, the “drugs” and their wavelike wanderings.

With this unprecedented gesture, maybe it would be possible to show how the pedagogical field has inflated the issue of education as an end in itself and deflated the concern of caring for oneself and caring for others. In this sense, to open our philosophical and pedagogical theories to other figures and subjects in education can be part of a radical critique to the neoliberal arts of government, creating other ways of human formation guided by a *otherwise* and decolonialized posture.

¹⁶ In many places, certain geological matters are considered animated, alive – and other geological matters can also potentially be. Thus, this geological substrate is the condition of other ways of life and the measure of ethical and social value of many populations. (Latour, 2013).

¹⁷ The animist configures a variety of contrasting positions to the carbon imaginary, refusing not only the hierarchical division between humans and other animals and the life of plants, but the distinctions between ways of existing. The desert configures the existence as existing, but not yet lived, a being that was not animated by *Dasein* - the desert is Mars as the future of Earth. The virus configures the knowledge that the human being, and life itself, is only a small turn of a much broader force of appearing and disappearing (Povinelli, 2016).

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