Moral consumption and fujoshi fetishism among boys love (BL) series fans in Brazil[1]

Consumo moral e fetichismo *fujoshi* entre fãs de séries boys love (BL) no Brasil

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RESUMO

Boys love (BL) names a set of literary and audiovisual productions of male homoeroticism. Since the emergence of this genre (initially as fan texts and then as television series) there have been intense and tumultuous debates about the representation of gay men and consumption practices considered fetishistic and hypersexualizing. In the case of the Brazilian BL fandom, through the digital ethnographic method, with systematic and individual participant observation among fans, I will show that surveillance of other people's consumption has become intrinsic to the consumption of BL series itself, a phenomenon that I call *moral consumption*, which involves other relations of distinction, specifically between *fujoshi* and *non-fujoshi* Brazilian fans. This differentiation produces a symbolic reductionism that is intrinsically associated with orientalist discourses and practices, which I name *fujoshi fetishism*, another concept that I will address in this article.

Keywords: Boys love series, Brazilian boys love fandom, *Fujoshi* fetishism, Moral consumption.

ANTROPOLÍTICA

ABSTRACT

Boys love (BL) nomeia um conjunto de produções literárias e audiovisuais de homoerotismo entre homens. Desde o surgimento desse gênero, primeiro na forma de textos de fãs, depois na forma de séries televisivas, há intensos e conturbados debates sobre representação de homens gays e práticas de consumo consideradas fetichistas e hipersexualizadoras. No caso do *fandom* BL brasileiro, através do método etnográfico digital, com observação participante sistemática e individual entre fãs, mostrarei que a vigilância sobre o consumo alheio se tornou intrínseca ao seu próprio consumo das séries BL, fenômeno que denomino de *consumo moral*, o qual envolve outras relações de distinção, especificamente das fãs brasileiras não *fujoshi* das *fujoshi*. Essa diferenciação produz um reducionismo simbólico que está intrinsecamente associado a discursos e práticas orientalistas, o qual nomeio de *fetichismo fujoshi*, outro conceito do qual tratarei neste artigo.

Palavras-chaves: Consumo moral, *Fandom boys love* brasileiro, Fetichismo *fujoshi*, Séries *boys love*.

INTRODUCTION

Boys love (BL) names a set of literary and audiovisual productions of male homoeroticism. Originating in the early 1990s, this expression initially has as its precursor the term yaoi. Appearing in Japan in 1979, *yaoi* was coined by female writers and their readers as an acronym for Japanese phrases *yama nashi, ochi nashi, imi nashi*, which can be translated as "no climax, no point, no meaning" (McLelland; Welker, 2015). It qualified parodic texts, adaptations of already published commercial works (e.g., anime, manga, light novels), produced by fans, typically self-published in the form of manga called *dōjinshi*[2] or *yaoi dōjinshi*. Usually circulated among small groups, these texts existed before the publication of *yaoi*/BL narratives (at the time called *shōnen'ai*[3]) in the *shōjo*[4] manga (in the early 1970s) and its consolidation as a genre from the

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2 Zine publications, works considered amateur, produced for group sharing. It can be individual or collective, original or re-readings.

3 The expression combines the words "boy" (*shōnen*) and "love" (*ai*).

4 "*Shōjo* manga is a category encompassing a wide range of comics that ostensibly target female readers from preadolescence to almost adulthood [...]" (McLelland; Welker, 2015, p. 4, emphasis in original).

late 1970s onwards[5] (Fermin, 2013; McLelland; Welker, 2015; Prasannam, 2019).

In Thailand, despite being present in the country since 1990, the *yaoi*/BL culture only rose in the 2000s. From 2004 onwards, a variety of *yaoi*/BL products, such as manga, light novels, and series emerged. However the BL boom only occurred from 2010 onwards. Since 2015, the BL series industry has shown signs of growth. With Thailand as the main producer, followed by South Korea and Japan, these series have become an international and transnational phenomenon, with emphasis on their popularity in the West (Prasannam, 2019; Torres, 2023). The circulation of tBL series and the attainment of fans around the world emphasize the "transnationalization of cultural fandom" (Lee, 2014, p. 195). In light of this process, the "consumption experience" (Pereira; Siciliano; Rocha, 2015) of foreign content can promote an approximation of international fans to the nuances and cultural singularities of the producing country (Lee, 2014). However, especially when it comes to Western consumption of Eastern productions, this approximation will not always be harmonious and will often be mediated by the practices of both national and international fandoms.

In this sense, since the emergence of the BL genre (initially as fan texts and then as television series) there have been intense and tumultuous debates about the representation of gay men and consumption practices considered fetishistic and hypersexualizing (Ishida, 2015). In this article, I will analyze an aspect of the "consumption experience" (Pereira; Siciliano; Rocha, 2015) of BL series by the Brazilian fandom, discussing the moral regulation of how fans should behave in relation to these productions, their characters, and their actors. Through ethnographic scenes and the analytical lens of two proposed concepts, namely *moral consumption* and *fujoshi*[6] *fetishism*, I will demonstrate how this moralization of consumption is linked to practices of differentiation from the Asian fandom, particularly the Thai fandom. These practices are often accompanied by orientalist discourses[7] (Said, 2003), which create a hierarchy of values between Brazilian and Asian fans, attributing a disciplinary posture to the former in relation to the latter.

As for its methodological character, the research that originated this article has a qualitative and inductive approach, and a basic and exploratory nature. I used the digital ethnographic method (Hine, 2020; Miller; Slater, 2004) and interpretive analysis. As for the technical means

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5 For a deeper reading about *yaoi* and BL culture, see Angles (2011); Levi; Mcharry; Pagliassotti (2008); McLelland *et al.* (2015).

6 *Fujoshi* is the word used to refer to some *yaoi* readers and writers, and BL series fans, by themselves and by others.

7 I address "orientalism" in the terms employed by Said (2003, p. 2): "[...] a style of thought based on an ontological and epistemological distinction made between 'the Orient' and (most of the time) 'the Occident'." "Orientalism" is then a set of Western discourses that construct representations about the East and its population, generally placing them in an inferior position compared to the West from moral and cultural perspectives (Said, 2003).

for conducting the investigation, I used systematic and individual participant observation (Marconi; Lakatos, 2003) in an entirely digital field. The data on which the analyzes are based were obtained through interactions with fans in profiles and groups on Twitter[8] and Telegram over nine months of fieldwork (from June 2021 to February 2022). For ethical reasons, I have given anonymity to the fansub groups and to all the people[9] who I mentioned in this article, and I have also been careful to rephrase quotes from tweets to avoid embarrassing the direct and indirect contributors to this work.

Finally, I would like to emphasize that I do not intend to argue that people should not speak out about situations that cause them discomfort, that fans cannot take a stand in defense of their idols, or that we should not hold someone accountable for actions and speeches that morally offend or cause physical harm to people and social groups. Another line of analysis would suggest that the practices of the Brazilian fans analyzed here stem from an intense affective engagement and care, from a strong moral character, expressed in the questioning of practices considered symbolically violent, offensive, and disrespectful of the moral integrity of their idols. This critical approach is associated with a growing politicization, on digital platforms, of issues related to privacy, harassment, and symbolic violence. Certainly, what I bring can also be read from this angle. One dimension does not invalidate the other, the same phenomenon can have multiple meanings.

However, moving away from this more superficial analysis of the "social situations" (Gluckman, 2010) presented here, my interest revolved around what the response to these reproached attitudes incites in the context of Brazilian BL fandom. How far can the practice of fans who intend to maintain a common morality and respect for the moral integrity of others go? What can it materially and symbolically produce? What power relations can operate on it and from it? With that being said, I do not intend to offer a homogeneous image of the Brazilian fandom of BL series. What will be discussed here refers to some discourses and practices

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8 This social media platform was renamed X by Elon Musk on July 24, 2023.

9 The research data were obtained through various interactions with fans, sometimes more directly through dialogues, and at other times as an observer. Not all individuals in the research were direct interlocutors, as I also had indirect collaborators whose interactions through posts and comments on BL content on Twitter and Telegram I observed. With that being said, I was unable to gather enough data to create a sociological profile for each interlocutor or collaborator, and that is the reason why some individuals cited in this article have a sociological description and others do not. Furthermore, given the difficulty of obtaining some personal information, pseudonyms were assigned to the individuals mentioned in this research considering different aspects. When possible, I aligned the pseudonym with the individual's pronouns and names as displayed on social media platforms. For example, if someone was named Pedro or Ana and had "he/him" or "she/her" in their profile, I opted for using a "male" or "female" pseudonym respectively. If the person did not provide their pronouns but had a "male" or "female" name, I also chose a name which fits their displayed name. If the person did not provide their pronouns and did not have a name in their profile, I chose to use a neutral pseudonym such as Ranthe. These choices were made to respect the gender self-determination of individuals and to avoid misgendering.

(which should not be generalized to the entire fandom) among many others of a heterogeneous, complex and contradictory social group.

TOXIC FANS AND CRITICAL FANS: THE PRODUCTION OF ANTAGONISMS AND CLASHES BETWEEN FANDOMS

On January 30, 2022, the *Destiny Clinic Good Health & Skin Beauty: Chinese New Year 2022—Ohm X Nanon Live Seacon*[10], took place in Bangkok. Attended by Ohm* Pawat Chittsawangdee[11] and Nanon* Korapat Kirdpan, the event was broadcast on the aesthetic clinic's Facebook account. Some Brazilian and other international fans watched the event. However, something happened with which they were not satisfied. Those who watched the livestream noticed that, when Thai fans took pictures with the actors, there would supposedly be an asymmetrical distribution of attention. According to them, Nanon was being more frequently requested for photos than Ohm, causing him to be ignored by the Thai women during the session. Estela (a Brazilian fan who was in direct discussion with other fans, both Brazilian and international) tweeted a video clip (45s) and argued that Nanon would have noticed that some fans asked to take a picture with him, and observing this, would have refused to leave Ohm behind, pulling him so that there was an interaction between them and the two. The gesture was interpreted as a form of care by Nanon towards Ohm in the face of what was perceived as the insensitivity of the Thai fandom.

Estela claimed to have been dragged into the discussion because her videos were used in the conduct of criticism and responses to what would have happened. The quick sharing of this situation in the Brazilian and international fandoms forced Thai fans to take a stand, as was the case with Hanna:

> Don't draw conclusions from a video so easily. Just like a translation, you know the meaning but you don't know the context. The same way as the video, you've just seen what's in it but you don't know the exact context. You could ask before assuming for yourselves and creating misunderstandings (Jan. 30, 2022).

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10 A promotional event by Destiny Clinic, a Thai aesthetic clinic that commonly features actors from BL series in their advertisements.

11 Names followed by an asterisk are the nicknames by which actors, producers, and directors introduce themselves and are popularly known by the public. The asterisk will only be indicated in the first entry of the name of someone with a nickname throughout this article.

The fact that fandom is a phenomenon with an international scope entails these difficulties that she compared to those of a translation. Both in language and, more broadly, in culture, this type of difficulty is common and can lead to misinterpretation of what others, socially, culturally, or physically distant, say or do. It is very rich to think about these semantic slips that occur in fandom when moving from one segment of it to another, especially when different nationalities and languages are involved. The geographical difference, in line with the western orientalist imaginary (Said, 2003), primarily impacts the production of biased translations, ignoring the context of the text to be translated. In this case, the interaction and the translators' own context are ignored, without the slightest self-reflexivity about their implication in creating the very situation that is being criticized.

One comment caught my attention as it illustrates what I argue about the differentiating practices of the Brazilian fandom compared to the Thai one. Ranthe (a French consumer of BL series) criticized the international fandom in general, which helps us reflect on the implications of the Brazilian public in the phenomenon:

> I've been following the Thai industry for about four years now and I've often seen international fans make assumptions just by seeing what's on social media or in short clips. Seeing the Thai fans so relaxed here on Twitter made me believe that there was nothing wrong with today's event (Jan. 30, 2022).

Ranthe also retweeted Estela's tweet with a demand: "international fans, please stop making your own assumptions if you don't know the whole situation or don't even attend the events, or else we will be toxic fans sooner or later" (Jan. 30, 2022). In this observation, they proposed a very interesting detour: they redirected the expression "toxic fans" to international fans, highlighting the practice of disparaging and persecuting the Thai fandom. The "toxic fan" category was commonly used by Brazilian fans to refer to Asian fans as a way of placing them on the spectrum of negativity and immorality, vehemently repudiated by "non-toxic" or "critical fans." The label of "toxic fan" was generally attributed both to fans who invade the actors' privacy and/or chase them, and to those who like or value erotic aspects in the series, commonly accused of being "fetishists." Often, the categories "toxic fan" and "*fujoshi*," as accusatory statements, were mixed up, as if they were synonyms, being mobilized alternately by different fans with similar meanings or even jointly, resulting in categories such as "toxic *fujoshi*." Ranthe appropriated the category and filled it with a new meaning, pointing out that toxicity would not be an intrinsic element for Eastern fans. Instead, it could be alternated and imputed to other behaviors that extended beyond the taste for themes or practices around

shipping[12] or fanservice[13]. This reframing emphasized that toxicity was related to the broader relationship between fandoms and power dynamics, as well as to the practices and discourses that constitute these interactions.

The interpretation of the fan meeting video with Ohm and Nanon is personal and very subjective. It is possible to read it in many ways. There is very little evidence that attests, leaving no room for doubt, to the idea of an alleged imbalance of attention between one actor and the other. It is possible to interpret the entire context as a voluntary and agreed change of place. Gradually, they got used to the atypical situation of having to take pictures with a plastic health safety barrier separating them from the fans, preventing physical contact. Both were displaced. While it made it difficult for them to interact with the fans, it also demanded creativity in their poses, to guarantee the least distanced interaction possible in terms of engagement in the photos.

However, the emotional involvement of some Brazilian fans with Ohm and Nanon led to an overdramatized interpretation of a situation that was already subjective. Additionally, it lacked contextual elements for those watching, such as the time limit for taking the photo(s), the audio, and the translation of what the fans said to the actors. This intense emotional connection, coupled with a tendency to discredit and diminish the Thai fandom, culminated not in a negative reading of the behavior as something that could happen regardless of the agents, but rather in a negative perception of the Asian and Thai fans themselves. I came to this conclusion in view of different "social situations" (Gluckman, 2010) that will be addressed in this article and by analyzing the discourses of Brazilian fans on the subject, as well as the responses of Thai and Western fans, such as Hanna and Ranthe, who allowed me to achieve the discursive effects of such criticism.

It is not about claiming there is awareness behind these stances, as if there was a deliberate intention among Brazilian fans to create moral divisions between one fandom and the other. Certainly, if confronted about their practices and discourses as I am doing here, they would vehemently deny being orientalists (Said, 2003). However, the set of positions suggests less a conflict between fandoms based on the good intention of protecting their *favs*[14] [faves] and appreciation for the actors, and more a power relation based on "orientalism" (Said, 2003). I am also not interested in whether there was an imbalance of attention during the event, although

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12 "Shipping consists of pairing fictional characters or media personalities (actors and actresses, singers, etc.), placing them into sexual or romantic relationships, or supporting already existing pairs […]" (Torres, 2023a, p. 25).

13 "In the context of the Thai BL industry, it consists of an entertainment product for fans and a commercial and promotional strategy adopted by companies in the field." (Torres, 2023a, p. 25).

14 Abbreviation for "favoritos" in Portuguese, used by Brazilian fans, which means "favorites." It refers to people in whom someone has a higher affectionate interest than others, usually celebrities of whom they are a fan.

my analysis leads me to, if not deny this hypothesis, leave it in suspension. I am interested in observing how part of the Brazilian fandom took advantage of this event to differentiate itself from the Thai fandom, making moral judgments and teaching (a pedagogy) the latter how to correctly be a fan, since, as Estela tweeted, summarizing the opinion of other people, "they lived my dream, but in the wrong way" (Jan. 30, 2022). The "social situation" (Gluckman, 2010) described above was not the only one to characterize what I am calling *moral consumption*.

Constant criticism of different aspects of BL series marks this phenomenon. Gender and sexual stereotypes reinforced in the *seme* (top/dominant) and *uke* (bottom/submissive) dichotomy, in the use of the term เมีย (which means "wife") in reference to one of the partners in the relationship, and in the antagonization and villainization of female characters were points that did not go unnoticed among part of the Brazilian audience. This audience not only pointed out the recurrences but also noted the new investments in less stereotyped narratives. These tropes were not reproduced in the series *Bad Buddy* (2021), which received praise from both Brazilian and international fandoms and magazines[15] for its deconstruction of them. The investment in lesbian representation with a secondary couple, in the open family discussion of sexuality, and in the affirmation of a sexual identity, avoiding statements like "I'm not gay, I only like you," were other points highlighted by the fans, further promoting the debate on these issues. Although these changes were not extensive to many productions, nor were they determinant for the positive reception of the fandom in terms of engagement with a BL series, these updates emerged from a history of demands for which the international fandom (including the Brazilian one) credits itself. Once these changes were being put into action, Brazilian fans saw them as the result of active listening to them by Thai producers and directors.

The international expansion of BL series and the transnational expansion of its fandom, as well as the increase in consumption by the Western LGBT+ public would be the main reasons for these transformations, since the incongruity of certain representations and discourses with the Western ideology of gender and sexuality would have led to criticism of the Thai BL industry. For example, reacting to comments about *Bad Buddy*'s (2021) low ratings in Thailand as proof of its alleged low quality, someone brought the following explanation: "everyone knows that the Thai public is very toxic and fetishistic, that's why Mame's series are successful. The fact that

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15 See Floretta (2021) and Burt (2022).

Bad Buddy (2021) became the biggest act of 2021 in Brazil explains a lot."[16] (Nov. 21, 2021). Thus, according to the Brazilian fans, in their self-attribution of credit and responsibility for the transformation of representational politics in BL series, the Brazilian fandom, in particular, and Western fandom, in general, LGBT+ or not, would be heard much more than Thai fans. The explanation was that Thai fans, being an audience mainly made up of heterosexual women, from the point of view of Brazilian fans, would have a greater inclination towards sexual fetishism and would contribute to the maintenance of stereotypes, as long as they satisfied their fetishes, instead of influencing the change of tropes in the genre. By making this correlation, some Brazilian fans were minimizing the agency of Thai fans and reducing them to a homogeneous whole without nuances or contradictions (just as they do to the Brazilian fandom).

In this way, being a "critical," "non-toxic," or "non-fujoshi" fan involved exhaustive criticism of recurring representations that were considered stereotypical in BL series. These labels operated as a means of qualitative distinction between fandoms, and one fandom claimed a greater moral and political enlightenment over the other. Criticism then becomes an element of conduct that must be apprehended by others for their supposed moral elevation and consumption.

DIGITAL VIGILANTISM, MORAL INSULT, AND CONSUMPTION REGULATION

"If I followed you it's either you or someone you follow." Accompanied by the follow from the @ExposiçãoBL account on January 26, 2022, these words were the prelude to the

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16 Some fans brought up variables such as effectiveness and efficiency of dissemination and views on YouTube to question the correlation between low ratings on free-to-air TV and production quality. They claimed that GMMTV had not done a good promotion and that the number of views on YouTube (since all parts of the episodes of the series have more than four million views) would demonstrate the success in the international fandom. I suggest that the last variable should also be considered to question the notion that low ratings on TV prove Thai fans were not consuming the series because they preferred more toxic, hypersexualized, violent plots or because they were not attracted to the aesthetics of the actors. This was because the consumption habits of the BL consumer population in Thailand were not deeply known. Based on speculations like the ones above, it could not be said that they only consumed series through traditional media. A fact that directly challenged the argument of Brazilian fans was *Bad Buddy*'s (2021) first place on WeTV Thailand ranking released on November 15, 2021 (4 Series [...], 2021; It's strong [...], 2021). On Reddit's BL forum, also in November 2021, in view of the publication of the ranking, users commented on the preference of the Thai audience to consume the series via streaming to the detriment of network television. These comments reiterate the information provided by Tauan, a Brazilian who has lived in Thailand for over three years and one of my direct interlocutors, that Thai youths primarily consume media on streaming services. Other arguments, such as the priority of the ship and the aesthetics of the actors, brought to justify the argument of low ratings on Thai network television, revolved more around abstractions than material evidence.

"exposed"[17] [exposé], public shaming, and persecution that the person being followed (or someone that the person follows) would endure, as indicated in the account's description. This profile was created that month (Jan. 2022), had 43 followers and was following 47 accounts. There was no profile picture. There was no header image. We did not share any followers. And how did I get to it? A random tweet piqued my curiosity. Mônica tweeted that the fandom that reads +18 fanfics, makes, and enjoys erotic edits and fanarts, is the same one that is outraged by a simple drawing. Her tweet already gave me some context: a tension ran through the fandom. As I read the responses, I got a better understanding of what could be happening, but it remained largely hypothetical. What I gathered was that someone had made an exposé of Mônica based on a drawing that she had authored. The account advanced that it had sexual content but did not say much more.

Curious, I decided to visit her profile. I was determined to look for more information, both out of a desire for gossip (to better understand the dynamics and disputes within the fandom) and for anthropological purposes (as it could be important for my research). On her Twitter account, I understood what had happened. My suspicions were correct, but I could not have imagined the intensity or the repercussions of the events. @ExposiçãoBL had followed Mônica, who even retweeted one of the tweets that hinted which account/person would be exposed: "they're an OhmNanon stan and they're not famous" (Jan. 26, 2022). She then retweeted another tweet in which she stated: "guys, I would never sexualize OhmNanon, for the love of god, it was just a drawing game" (Jan. 26, 2022). It was a video that was shared and accompanied a text mentioning her: "this is where the girl that you idolize so much, aka Mônica, comes in! I don't know the user of the others who were playing that day, but people, fgs[18], the girl is drawing this shit and is even friends with this guy who's totally problematic" (Jan. 26, 2022). The video showed a drawing of the characters Pat and Pran[19] naked. The guy mentioned was Nicolas. Both were friends and fans of the actors Ohm Pawat Chittsawangdee and Nanon Korapat Kirdpan. The exposé was made with material resulting from a game between them, in which one had to draw what the other demanded. The drawing of Pat and Pran as stick figures without clothes was Nicolas' request to Mônica, who had to carry it out according to the rules of the game. There were also screenshots of the WhatsApp group of which Nicolas was a part. In these images, he made comments like "Nanon, tired after having ****** all night; the mouth that Ohm kisses, not only kisses but also does other things" (Jan. 26, 2022).

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17 Brazilian netizens generally use the english term "exposed" to refer to the act of exposing someone's misbehavior and the product of this exposure. Considering that the word does not have the same application as a noun in English, the translator and I chose a terminology close to the word used by them.

18 Abbreviation for "for God's sake."

19 Ohm and Nanon's characters in *Bad Buddy* (2021) respectively.

@ExposiçãoBL tweeted a thread exposing, in an accusatory tone, Nicolas' comments about Ohm and Nanon. Based on two videos (one with the drawing, and the other with the audio of a conversation) and five screenshots of WhatsApp conversations and Twitter posts, they tried to unmask him along with Mônica, saying: "welcome to your exposé, Nicolas. While you guys are at it, review who you follow too" (Jan. 26, 2022). After carefully reading the "evidence of the crime," I concluded that there was no valid reason for such an uproar. However, the crossing of the line between imagining the actors and their characters in sexual contexts beyond the fictional setting of the series—"in normal situations," as expressed by @ExposiçãoBL (Jan. 26, 2022)—denoted some implicit danger, subjecting those who do it to a moral judgment. Some fans hinted that this practice and sexualization occupied the same semantic place.

The fandom's stances were divided. Some criticized the accused as "strange," "disgusting," "ridiculous," and "fetishistic" (Jan. 26, 2022). Others criticized the exposé, seeing it as "unnecessary," "messy," and "lack of better things to do" (Jan. 26, 2022). However, the reach of haters seemed to know no limits. Someone close to Mônica received direct messages (DM) questioning whether she would unfollow those exposed from the profile @TwitterUser1, an account that was soon deactivated. Among verbal aggressions, @TwitterUser1 also made a request and expressed a wish: "kill yourself, do humanity a favor. I hope you die, and them as well" (Jan. 26, 2022). Mônica tweeted a screenshot of these messages and asked: "you guys tell people to k1ll themselves[20] on the internet like it's nothing. What's your problem?" (Jan. 26, 2022).

Some time later, I tried to access Mônica and Nicolas' profiles, and the result was non-existent accounts. They had probably deactivated their profiles until the dust settled. When this does not happen, the user (@) can be changed. However, in this case, their accounts showed the same result as that of @TwitterUser1, which was deactivated earlier. Just like Mônica's tweets and retweets along with her account, the @ExposiçãoBL's Twitter thread, with more than 100 retweets and 73 likes, was deleted, leaving only responses from other fans. In view of what has been exposed, there is no doubt that Mônica and Nicolas were targets of "digital vigilantism" (Favarel-Garrigues; Tanner; Trottier, 2020), more specifically, of a "digital lynching" (Freitas, 2017; Gomes, 2020, 2021). Their self-silencing was expected as one of the possible reactions in such situations (Freitas, 2017; Gomes, 2020, 2021; Recuero, 2013). Despite Mônica not refraining from defending herself, her actions did not lead her to a heated discussion. Before

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20 The use of numbers instead of letters in some words has become common for at least two purposes. The first would be to prevent these terms from appearing in searches using the Twitter search tool. I once read a tweet suggesting the use of numbers in some words like "death" and "suicide" to prevent jokes with these terms (e.g.,"I want to d1e" or "I'm going to k1ll my self") from appearing to researchers on these topics. The second, in the case of tags, would be the non-accounting and non-appearance in Twitter Trends. Some people, for example, want to talk about a subject or express an opinion without being subject to offense from those who think differently.

silencing herself, she used her right to defense, putting into perspective the character of the creator of the exposé (who would not be any better than those they were exposing) and the fans who suggested suicide to others and sent insults to her and Nicolas.

As Freitas (2017) observes, and can currently be seen in digital environments, in situations of "digital lynching" (Freitas, 2017; Gomes, 2020, 2021) and "hate speech" (Freitas, 2017) attacks, the anonymity of users is a constant element. The feeling of anonymity guarantees greater agency for these discourses and practices, but it is not necessarily the reason for their existence, as many "hate speech" (Freitas, 2017) agents do not hide their civil identities behind fake profiles and feel free to attack anybody. In this case, @ExposiçãoBL not only deleted all their tweets but also deactivated their account on the same day. It is unclear if this action steemed from a feeling of accomplishment (since they had already publicly demoralized and attacked their lynching targets) or from concern over the intensity and consequences of their actions, fearing they might have to deal with the onus, especially after fans spoke up against what had been done to Mônica and Nicolas.

The exposé prompted part of the fandom to take sides, as I mentioned earlier. Those who did not know what had happened looked for information in the tweets of those who commented on the subject. A widespread discussion about the fairness or lack thereof of creating scenarios of sexual intimacy between characters and actors soon spread through the fandom. As Gomes (2021) points out, there is a "moral community" behind the "digital lynching" (Freitas, 2017; Gomes, 2020, 2021), since it is a collective production, and "[...] the level of involvement with a cause (activism) or with a celebrity (fanbase) indicates a greater propensity to lynching and punitive vigilantism." (Gomes, 2021, my translation). Lynching relies, in most cases, on emotional excitement and "excesses of political expression" (NG, 2022, p. 9) of those who participate. As Freitas (2017, p. 153, my translation) argues, a "[...] moral transgression does not always become a public scandal and, when it does, there is always more to it than individual choices, or mistakes." The exposé from @ExposiçãoBL only had the effect of a "moral scandal" (Freitas, 2017, p. 153, my translation) due to the support it found in the fandom, the affective engagement of some OhmNanon fans, and those committed to the *moral consumption* of BL series, usually the same ones who speak out against the fetish and the hypersexualization and criticize the *fujoshi* identity. If it were not for the retweets and responses to the original tweet, the exposé would had no performative force.

There were at least two groups in this discussion. The first stressed that the problem lay in crossing the line between character and actor, as in the case of Nicolas, based on his private comments on WhatsApp and public comments on Twitter. It would not be a problem at all to imagine the characters in other sexual scenarios, but talking about the actors' sex lives, even if fictionally, would be a form of "invasion of privacy" (Jan. 26, 2022). This group was more

dialogical and elaborated discourses about lynching, questioning more the fairness and morality of the exposé than what was being exposed. The second, made up of more inflexible fans, believed that, even when it comes to the characters, a respectful tone should be maintained, which does not overstep what was agreed upon in the script. There should be a moralized and moralizing consumption of BL series. Furthermore, regulating fandom "textual poaching" (Jenkins, 1992) on the characters would also prevent this limit from being exceeded, as there was no regulation of those who commonly performed such practice, even if only with the characters. There was an implicit fear that the eroticization of the characters would lead to the eroticization of the actors, something intolerable, regardless of how the narrative unfolded in the series. A "common ethics" (Jan. 26, 2022), as mentioned by a fan from this second group, prescribes such stances. More organized as a "moral community," this group was part of that punitive expedition (Gomes, 2021).

Ethics should not be taken as something universal or common to all people. Nor does it comprise a normative dimension, but rather a reflective, practical one, which will be better analyzed in the fandom's position not in relation to the denounced (hyper)sexualization, but in relation to the conditions of the exposé, taking into consideration a specific Twitter thread. On the same day of the incident, Silvio (an 18-year-old black boy, who is gay and cisgender) responded directly to the @ExposiçãoBL tweet. His indignation was not at what was denounced, but with the accusation, considered "superficial, with little foundation," a practice that "feeds cancel culture" (an. 26, 2022). Considering that one of the characteristics of "digital lynching" (Freitas, 2017; Gomes, 2020, 2021) is the lack of reflexivity of the agents, for whom "[...] there is no violence, brutality or inhumanity in their acts [...]" (Gomes, 2021, my translation), only justice, he redirected the gaze to the moral conduct of those who denounced, not those who are being denounced. As Freitas (2017, p. 154, my translation) points out, "[...] aggression and rejection, the loss of friendships, social ostracism, humiliation and depression are among the frequently cited consequences, depending on the severity of the situation." In view of this, Silvio questioned the psychological impacts that this action could have on the people involved, the lack of empathy towards them, "who may feel humiliated or rejected by this type of situation" (Jan. 26, 2022).

Contrary to what was done in the exposé, the thread tweeted by Silvio denoted an ethical action that was based on empathy, horizontality, dialogue, and contestation of the place of moral superiority attributed to @ExposiçãoBL by itself and by part of the fandom, as if they were "the hand of justice" (Jan. 26, 2022) that points and sentences, favoring a retributive approach to a restorative one with an appeal to dialogue. It encouraged a reflection on the consequences of that exposé, on the public shaming and the moral judgment, whose impact caused the deactivation of the accounts and the persecution of the two people denounced and considered guilty by the

verdict of @ExposiçãoBL, based on the popular jury of the fandom moved by a *common ethics*.

As Favarel-Garrigues, Tanner, and Trottier (2020, p. 191) argue, "public perception of legitimacy of a denunciation may be based more on ideological context, rather than judicial measures such as proportionality or presumption of innocence [...]." When considering Silvio's arguments, it becomes clear that the defense of a common fandom morality and ethics led to an ethical misstep, as it exaggerated an issue that could have been resolved in a less damaging way. Thus, some fans applied a disproportionate sentence to the "mistake," a central element in "digital vigilantism" (Favarel-Garrigues; Tanner; Trottier, 2020) and "lynching" (Freitas, 2017; Gomes, 2020, 2021). The reaction ended up being much more violent than the behavior denounced and judged. Given the "social situation" (Gluckman, 2010) analyzed, the focus is less on debating whether Mônica and Nicolas (hyper)sexualized the actors or whether they were right in what they did. Instead, it is more about the moral/ethical conduct of the fans who produced the complaint, as this reveals much more about the moral regulation mechanisms of the fandom.

With regard to the possible impacts of Nicolas' statements, although it did not occur directly and was not intended, they could have offended the moral integrity of the people involved (Ohm and Nanon). In the social space of BL fandom, these imaginative productions have been elements of enjoyment and continuity of BL text consumption (e.g., *dōjinshi*, fanfics, movies, games, manga, light novels, series). Thus, intentionality, as part of the context, must also be observed as an element that makes that "social situation" (Gluckman, 2010) singular. The comments were made in WhatsApp group(s) and in the author's personal Twitter account, without tagging the actors, possibly because he felt that expressing himself that way would be possible in these digital environments, since he would feel assured the freedom to express his desires among peers (fans of BL series and the ship). Moreover, one should also consider that the comments came from an account whose tweets did not have enough interactions to achieve a viral effect of any topic, thus limiting the possibility of them reaching the actors' knowledge (which does not mean that it would be impossible for that to happen).

These points certainly do not eliminate the possibility of offending the moral integrity of those involved, but they should be considered, in order to allow us to rethink and avoid excessive measures, especially when punitivism has become a modern neo-archaic value that has guided social practices and impacts phenomena such as "digital vigilantism" (Favarel-Garrigues; Tanner; Trottier, 2020)—or hate, humiliation or cancel culture, as it can also be referred to)—and practices of "digital lynching," "cancelling," and "harassment" (Freitas, 2017; Gomes, 2020, 2021; NG, 2022). As Freitas (2017), Favarel-Garrigues, Tanner and Trottier (2020) point out, these phenomena are the reflection of broader social behavior, which is projected on digital platforms, because before "vigilantism", "lynching" and "hate speech" already existed in the

streets.

Before concluding this discussion, I must emphasize that when we question the phenomena and practices mentioned above, we must be careful not to also advocate against legitimate forms of social accountability of people for their speeches and actions when these morally and physically harm social groups. In this sense, it is worth understanding the definition of "digital lynching" and the specificity of its functioning as "anti-democratic behavior" (Freitas, 2017; Gomes, 2020, 2021). Accountability via critical questioning calls the accountable party to participate in a dialogue, the conflict is posed in an agonistic rather than antagonistic and polemical way (Foucault, 1999; Mouffe, 2003). Lynching, on the other hand, is the total impossibility of dialogue in favor of punitivism with a stimulus to the moral, material, psychological and physical aggression of the Other.

Considering what was presented and discussed in this and the previous section, I argue that part of the fandom seemed more interested in monitoring how other people consumed BL series (as well as the fanservice and its ramifications) than consuming them themselves. Vigilance over other people's consumption became intrinsic to their own consumption of BL series. I call this phenomenon *moral consumption*, understood as a set of practices and discourses that range from vigilance to the moral reprimand of individuals regarding their consumption of a specific product. It includes the imposition of a pedagogy and "discipline" (Foucault, 2018) on how to be a fan based on specific parameters of consuming a good that are considered correct, regulated, and legitimized by third parties. In this phenomenon, moral regulation is intrinsically associated with consumption, emerging from it and becoming its constitutive element.

FUJOSHI FETISHISM AND THE PRODUCTION OF MORAL HIERARCHIES

The criticism of sexualization signaled a differentiation between Western and Eastern audiences, particularly between Brazilian fans and those from countries like China, South Korea, Japan and Thailand. This discourse reveals an underlying "orientalism" (Said, 2003), as it creates a homogeneous image of a social group based on negative criteria and a perceived moral superiority, which evokes an interpersonal and a geopolitical distinction: Westerners against Easteners. Brazilian fans' discourse often differentiates them from fujoshi fans, who are perceived to sexualize and objectify actors. In contrast, Brazilian fans claim a "critical" consumption approach, opposing the sexualization allegedly originating from the East. This stance is rooted in the belief that Western values are different and superior, and should be

maintained and extended to other countries, encouraging Asian fans to rethink their consumption practices.

For Patrícia Machado (a 28-year-old white, bisexual and cisgender woman, and editor-in-chief of Blyme Yaoi[21]) this kind of thinking reproduced the "white savior speech" (Jan. 28, 2022, private message via Twitter). Implicitly, the Brazilian fans engaged in the sexualization of characters and actors were perceived as acting like the *toxic*, *sick fujoshi*, while those who criticized this practice were seen as upholding the values imposed by the *common Western ethics*. Moralizing Brazilian fans thus extended to moralizing Asian fans. This can be seen in the discussion in the chat of the eleventh episode of *Bad Buddy* (2021), on FSB2, on January 14, 2022. Referring to the scenes in the episode and the OhmNanon ship, some fans engaged the following conversation:

> **Bianca:** Nanon kissing Ohm's cheek is everything to me, fuck u[22].
> **Clarice:** I die when I see it.
> **Ichigo:** and him kissing Ohm off-screen, Ohm's reaction is everything.
> **Clarice:** I'm addicted to watching this stuff on Youtube.
> **Bianca:** Nanon giving him a peck, and Ohm pretending to be disgusted.
> **Clarice answers Bianca:** I watched this video so much to get over my Bad Buddy withdrawal.
> **Clarice:** guys, I feel comfortable revealing that I'm obsessed with watching Bad Buddy edits and videos of the actors behind the scenes.
> **Rosana:** I don't like to do that, I'm afraid to *cross the line* of: I'm a fan of the work of the actors, the actors and the series itself or *I'm becoming a brainwashed fujoshi, thinking they're a couple...* even more so after I saw Max and Tul getting hate from these "fans."
> **Clarice:** I saw Ohm acting in other series doing sexy scenes, I was like: guys, he's a baby.
> **Camila responds to Rosana:** *what's wrong with being fujoshi, man?*
> **Clarice responds to Rosana:** I try not to think that way either, I only watch what I think is cute.
> **Ichigo responds to Rosana:** this reminds me of the actor who played a role in Color Rush, he used to get pissed off when people asked him if he was gay.
> **Marcos responds to Rosana:** oh bestie, I find it very easy to differentiate once you understand the limit. Like, you consume their stuff, it's because it's good to watch and consume.
> **Bianca:** *fujoshi to me is too heavy, pure fetish.*
> **Marcos:** *fujoshi and fudanshi are pure fetishes* to me too.
> **Ichigo responds to Camila:** none, *the problem is being a fetishist and not knowing how to differentiate acting from reality.*
> **Bianca:** fanservice has a limit, but people force it so much, they shit.
> **Camila responds to Ichigo:** yes of course. But I don't think it's possible to generalize that all of them are.
> **Ichigo:** true, not all are.

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21 Brazilian website specializing in the dissemination of BL manga information. Blyme Yaoi, [*s.l.*], ©2018. Retrieved from: https://blyme-yaoi.com. Access on: Apr. 13, 2022.

22 It is used in an exclamatory way, something similar to "holy shit," rather than offensively.

> **Bianca:** it's just that *fujoshi* was the name designated precisely for people like that, right?
> **Rosana responds to Camila:** not with being *fujoshi*, but clearly the world of BL is toxic, especially since I've seen many actors extremely uncomfortable when they invade their privacy asking questions about sexuality, forcing them to do fanservice.
> **Marcos:** oh *but this is about character*, isn't it?
> **Clarice responds to Rosana:** why want to know the sexuality of the actors?
> **Sandro:** admittedly, the heterosexual male standard in Asia is very different from the West, the boys have a more delicate appearance... which here in the West is considered gay. (FSB2 chat messages, Jan. 14, 2022, my emphasis).

As Midori Suzuki (2013) states, and as observed in the Brazilian fandom, the term *fujoshi* transcended the limits of Japanese fan circles and became a transnationally recognized and polysemous word, the object of discursive disputes between different individuals, from those who claim the term for themselves to those who use it pejoratively.

Fujoshi initially designated fans who imagined and created male homoerotic stories with characters from already published commercial works, such as anime or manga. As Suzuki (2013, emphasis in original) explains, the term "[...] indicated a girl or woman who proactively read things in a *yaoi* fashion, discerning romantic relationships between men where such relationships were not originally intended." It would have appeared on the Japanese forum 2channel in the 2000s, where it was used as an insult to *yaoi*/BL fans, meaning "[...] a woman with rotten thought processes [...]" (Suzuki, 2013). The derogatory origin of the term stems from the notion that women's "*yaoi* reading" posed a danger to children, who should not be exposed to such content. This stigma created a sense of shame around these fans because of their literary and creative practices (Suzuki, 2013). The "playful appropriation" (Prasannam, 2019) and the "textual poaching" (Jenkins, 1992) were the elements that marked the creation of the term and its most common meaning.

The first appearance of *fujoshi* occurred in a publication about female fans in 2005, and the writers used it as a synonym for *otaku*, considered its female equivalent. From 2006 onwards, with a series of publications on the subject, the word and the public that was so called became the target of media interest. Its male version is *fudanshi*, meaning "rotten boy," who also consumes and produces BL texts (Nagaike, 2015). Currently, *fujoshi* refers to female fans and/or creators of male homoerotic textual content (Suzuki, 2013). More recently, the term *fujin* has been used as a neutral option for non-binary people, meaning "rotten person," without specifying gender.

Some Brazilian fans interpreted the terms *fujoshi* and *fudanshi* literally and applied them to anyone who sexualized actors and characters. In some contexts, *fujoshi* appeared as an agender term, used exclusively to refer to these "immoral" behaviors. These fans did not want to be labeled as *fujoshi* or *fudanshi*, as that would imply being fetishists and hypersexualizers. This

created a symbolic division between "us" and "them," where no one wanted to be the immoral Other adopting practices from Asian fans (mainly from China and Thailand), supposedly fetishistic heterosexual women. When analyzing antis' persecution in relation to fan shipping practices in various fandoms, Aburime (2023, p. 150) highlights discourses that present "[...] asian fans and creators as being morally deficient and 'much worse' compared to 'western' audiences [...]."

Camila's question ("what's wrong with being *fujoshi*, man?"), far from suggesting any doubt, aimed to discuss the current meaning of the word in the fandom. It was not as if she did not know the supposed problem with being *fujoshi*. She wanted to question the development of this problem, which arises from an orientalist appropriation (Said, 2003) of a term that, for those who reclaim it, goes far beyond the notion of fetish or immoral behavior, even representing a manifestation against this reductionism. Invading the actors' privacy and forcing them to perform fanservice was, before Camila's confrontation, part of the meaning of *fujoshi* for Rosana. Thus, when Marcos stated, "but this is about character, isn't it?", in response to Rosana's previous message to Camila, he questioned the understanding of the *fujoshi* category as a qualifier of moral decay.

To further understand these practices of moral distinction, I would like to highlight some of the tweets from @ExposiçãoBL that can help us better understand this phenomenon and its implications:

> They love to be activists about Bad Buddy not being fetishistic, but in fact they [Mônica and Nicolas] are like that [fetishistic].
> It's one thing to read a fanfic here and there, comment something here and there, but when your mind only knows how to think and relate two actors and characters in normal situations to sex, things get more serious, right? I recommend therapy.
> What sick mind is this that looks at a photo like this and already sexualizes it? For god's sake what a shitty character! (@ExposiçãoBL on Twitter, Jan. 26, 2022).

This sequence clearly shows phenomena such as pathologization and moralistic discourse (e.g., "sick mind," "I recommend therapy," "shitty character") and what Latour (2001) calls "anti-fetishism." Pires (2014) analyzes the conceptual transubstantiation of "fetishism" throughout history in different fields of knowledge, such as Anthropology, Cultural Studies, Philosophy, Psychoanalysis, and Sexual Psychopathology. In addition to the extensive discussion of the different uses of the concept of "fetishism" and "fetish," interested in contemporary and varied uses, the anthropologist asserts:

> In the wake of Marxism and Freudianism (often in the form of various fusions of both) expressions such as "state fetishism," "racial fetishism," "woman fetishization," "fetishism of money" etc. arise, which, in a very general way, stem from an anti-fetishist and/or deconstructivist point of view to denounce the creation of illusions

> (generally politically motivated) that would reduce a complex reality (the State, black people, women, etc.) to an image that simplifies and objectifies it in order to subdue it. Fetishism, in this sense, would be a complex form of *hypostasis*, i.e., the fallacy that treats an abstraction as if it were concrete, an event or a real physical entity. (Pires, 2014, p. 371, emphasis in original, my translation).

As I observed, the discursive movement of the fandom operates this sense of fetish by applying it to *fujoshi* and any other fans who cross the ethical and moral line that *non-fujoshi* fans have established to regulate their BL content consumption experience (whether manga or novels, but mostly series). Pires (2014) discusses the Latourian (Latour, 2001) concepts of "fetish" and "anti-fetishism," which are relevant to the argument I develop in this section. Latour (2001) uses the term "fetish" to critique the asymmetry between scientists and the people they observe, a phenomenon that reinforces the inequality between ways of conceiving and knowing the world, legitimizing scientific knowledge over others (Pires, 2014). The "anti-fetishist" unveils the objective world, going beyond the illusions of the people he researches, and places himself above the veil of the Other's self-delusion. He also attributes to his analyzes the status of truth and scientificity "[...] at the same time that he makes of the constructions of the analyzed mere illusions, projections of their subjective desires only mistakenly seen as objective [...]" (Pires, 2014, p. 375, my translation). The "anti-fetishist" thus proceeds as if his own thinking was not based on a belief system.

Fans' criticism regarding *fujoshi* fans can be considered in terms of "critical-fetish"[23] (Pires, 2014). They tend to inscribe the fetish that they associate with "toxic fans" in the field of immorality, using conservative moral thinking as a parameter—that of *common ethics*, the ethics of modern western scientific thought criticized by Latour (2001)—through which, from the concepts of religious, sexual and commodity fetishism, "the primitive," "the perverted," and "the alienated," all victims and agents of a self-delusion, were instituted (PIRES, 2014). The allegation of a kind of (homo)sexual fetish (not in the Freudian sense) of the *fujoshi*, as seen in the fandom, rather denotes a fetishism of the person making the criticism. In general, it manifests a racial fetish and, in particular, what I will call *fujoshi fetishism*. By denouncing the supposed perversion and immorality of *fujoshi* fans, critics oversimplify a complex reality and identity, confusing the signifier and the signified (Pires, 2014). The "anti-fetish" fans operate the idea of fetish as a moral qualifier that characterizes the Other as backward and inferior, while reinforcing their position as civilized, rational, and "possessing healthy minds

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23 Pires (2014) calls "critical-fetish" the formulations that recognize that the work of the analyst/scientist is in the unveiling of this "objective illusion" through the criticism of the false belief produced by the fetish and fetishism, since these act through "[...] a masking of the process itself that performs it, since it passes through the unconscious and/or through ideological mechanisms [...]" (Pires, 2014, p. 371, my translation).

and good character," in contrast to those with a "sick mind" and a "shitty character," (Jan. 26, 2022) for whom therapy is recommended. In this sense, the critique of fetish is the condition of fetishization. The historical "orientalism" (Said, 2003) of the West (sometimes implicit, sometimes explicit) needs to create a pretext to justify its continuity in different ways.

We are dealing with an *anti-fetishism* and *anti-fujoshi moral panic* created around the figure of the *fujoshi*, whether Eastern or Western. These phenomena are similar (though not identical) to the concept of "moral panic" (Cohen, 2011), as the moral and symptomatic dimensions (Garland, 2008) characterize the *fujoshi fetishism*. Considering that I am talking about phenomena that do not have the same operation and social amplitude as Cohen's (2011), especially when it comes to the use of mass media to influence public opinion, I will appropriate his concept in a more direct sense to think of *anti-fetishism* and the *anti-fujoshi* sentiment as a kind of expression of moral panic: as a sentiment of fear of and/or contempt for a condition, episode, person or group, that emerges to become defined as a threat to societal values and interests (Cohen, 2011, p. 1; Garland, p. 2008, p. 10).

In this sense, taking the description and specifications above, in the matter of *anti-fetishism* and *anti-fujoshi moral panic*, I argue that *fujoshi* fans, fetishists, and hypersexualizers (categories often conflated into in the *fujoshi* identity) are the group that emerges as a threat to social values and interests (e.g., to *common ethics*, "civility," and "good Western character"). While there is a projection onto the Other of attributes present in those who point them out and criticize them. This action reveals a "denial" (Pires, 2014) that says, "we Westerners are not-not-civilized." The projection of negative attributes onto others is a way to deny their own cultural cracks, which some fans do not recognize in themselves or wish to repress.

Instrumentalizing Cohen's (2021) concept of "moral panic" becomes useful to address the production of *fujoshi fetishism* through *anti-fetishism* and *anti-fujoshi moral panic*. We can draw parallels between some aspects of these phenomena, even if they are not identical. For instance, instead of mass media, *anti-fetish fans* act as "moral and social guardians" (Cohen, 2011; Garland, 2008) who, with the help of digital platforms, present a stylized and stereotyped image of the *fujoshi* and everything they represent. The builders of these moral barricades are not necessarily right-wing but belong to a spectrum of political stances. They assume the social roles of analysts, de-fetishizers, and social and moral critics (Pires, 2014). Public humiliation and persecution, through practices such as "digital lynching" (Freitas, 2017; Gomes, 2020, 2021), are employed as methods to confront those perceived as threats to social values and interests. This *anti-fujoshi* and *anti-fetishism moral panic* dates to discussions that have existed at least since the 1980s in Japan, initiated by gay men who criticized homosexual representation in the works of female *yaoi* writers (McLelland; Welker, 2015), and have since been updated and transnationalized to the West.

As evident in Cohen's (2011) description, two dimensions specifically mark the phenomenon of "moral panic," which justify the adjective and its use in interpreting *anti-fetishism* and *anti-fujoshi moral panic* within *fujoshi fetishism*: the moral dimension and the symptomatic aspect. The first dimension concerns the mobilization of moral discourse in defense of social values and the moral regulation and "discipline" (Foucault, 2018) that it raises. The second refers to the alignment with broader social anxieties that justify the phenomenon through discursive strategies, even if there are no direct links (Garland, 2008). In this sense, the associations of *fujoshi* with phenomena such as pedophilia and rape are not accidental, and although there is no material evidence for these associations, their discursive function is integral to producing *anti-fetishism* and *anti-fujoshi moral panic*, as outlined above. Since the popularization of *yaoi* literature, these works have been seen as fetishistic, immoral, and a danger to children (Suzuki, 2013).

The persecution of so-called *fujoshi* also links with anti-ship and anti-kink movements, which denounce non-normative sexual practices as imminent dangers to youth and children (Aburime, 2021, 2023). Both movements associate their targets with pedophilia, either as possible practitioners or as possible supporters, and focus on attacking pornography as a catalyst for a possible moral deterioration. In many cases, as Aburime (2024) observed in English-speaking fandoms, these movements have led to attacks on gender theories, displaying direct transphobia and sexism. Aburime (2023, p. 136) characterizes this phenomenon as the weaponization of morality, hatred, and sexual conservatism to control marginalized female fans.

Lastly, I would like to point out that the excesses of some Asian fans do not justify the production of an orientalist discourse (Said, 2003). Understood here as a specific and intense concern to discuss and judge moral aspects of social practices, the moral anxiety of the Western audience contributes significantly more to the emergence of this *anti-fetishism* and *anti-fujoshi moral panic* than the phenomenon itself. Instead of concentrating on Thai fans' practices, my focus was on how some Brazilian fans interpret them, produce meanings related to them, and in how these meanings interact with practices and discourses of historical differentiation and moral hierarchization of populations.

CONCLUSION

I demonstrated how power relations in fandom are more complex than we might suppose by accepting a notion of imaginary harmony and homogeneity of whichever fandom is in question. While consuming content of Asian origin, Brazilian fans of BL series managed

discourses and regulatory practices of consumption and moral differentiation among themselves (between anti-fetishists and fetishists) and in relation to Asian fans, those considered *fujoshi*. The pedagogy of fandom, a phenomenon of moral consumption, extends then to processes of disciplining the "consumption experience" (Pereira; Siciliano; Rocha, 2015) through practices of "digital vigilantism" (Favarel-Garrigues; Tanner; Trottier, 2020), "lynching" (Freitas, 2017; Gomes, 2020, 2021), and "cancelling" (NG, 2022). In this sense, we cannot lose sight of the fact that our reception of Asian content is mediated both by desires and interests and by "dispositifs" (Foucault, 2018) such as "orientalism" (Said, 2003), which facilitate the projection of negative values and ideas in relation to the cultures from which these contents come.

I organized these discourses and practices based on two concepts, which I believe may be an initial step towards the analytical framework of these phenomena: *moral consumption* and *fujoshi fetishism*. *Moral consumption* encompasses a set of practices and discourses that range from vigilance to the moral reprimand of individuals regarding their consumption of a specific product. It includes the imposition of a pedagogy and "discipline" (Foucault, 2018) on how to be a fan based on specific forms of consuming a good that are considered correct, regulated, and legitimized by third parties. *Fujoshi fetishism* refers to the discourses and practices of *anti-fetishism fans* who employ the idea of fetish, from an orientalist point of view (Said, 2003), as a moral qualifier that characterizes the Other as backward and inferior, while producing and reinforcing their position as civilized and rational.

With this, I explicitly wanted to draw attention to the reflection on the production and reproduction of moralities as a process and object of power. The adoption of a moral grammar and a *common ethics* presupposes the creation of an evaluative hierarchy of both practices and discourses and those associated with them. Beneath the practices and discourses of Brazilian fans lay Western "orientalism" (Said, 2003), which can also be understood as an ethics, whose moral reflection is not done upon itself, but upon the Other (the East), projecting onto it a moral weakness in the context of consuming BL series.

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