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## Leveling up with empowerty girls: identities mobilized as discursive practices in Samira Close's streams

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## Abstract

The transmission of games carried out on game streaming platforms has proved to be a locus for queer people to enunciate themselves and problematize identity aspects. In this scenario, drag queen and streamer Samira Close violates heteronormative rationality in the media sphere of games. Considering this context, this article aims to understand how LGBTQI+ subjects mobilize identity traits in their streamer practices. The data are configured as five statements of the genre streams, and the analysis, of a qualitative-interpretative character, has an epistemological anchor in concepts such as discourse, identity and performance. The analysis showed that Samira Close performs identities in its streams, re-elaborating stylistic-linguistic aspects located in each type of game from *pajubá* and the daily language of LGBTQI+.

### Keywords

Identity; Performativity; Queer Game Studies; Streams; Samira Close.

## Another day, another slay<sup>1</sup>

To think the processes of identity building in the contemporaneity, in a society connected through and by media culture increasingly hybrid, becomes of the most importance to the fully comprehension of the individuals: in the way they represent themselves, relate to each other, do and undo bonds, identify and keep away from certain social groups, what they talk about and what they want to say in their own discursive practices. One example is our research outline: the streamer and drag queen Samira Close – a queer body belonging and mediator of the LGBTQI+ community when presenting the gaming live streams through the platform of game streaming, Facebook Gaming.

Such practice, breaks with the ideal that molds/directs determined behaviors, language and environments to gay people, travestis, drags, non-binary, among other queers; highlighting that diverse social traces and layers, like the gaming sphere, can be important to the construction of identity meanings of these bodies. In this perspective, this space-time of the streamers not only enables affirmation and resistance, as well as it breaks with heteronorms that incide over prejudicial and limiting points of view of these bodies. In this sense, in this research we will discuss about the concept of identity through the Cultural Studies by Stuart Hall, going through the performatives of gender as a problematic of the production of identities as seen in Butler (2003, 2013, 2015, 2019) and Preciado (2014, 2018); se we can reflect over the queer subject in the gamer sphere, field named queer game studies by Ruberg & Shaw (2017).

Thus, we have as a goal to understand how LGBTQI+ individuals mobilize identity traces in their streamer practices through the analysis of the performative acts by Samira Close in the Facebook Gaming platform. To that end, we did a time outline of five streams – between November 2018 and February 2019 – that were analyzed, considering the marked identity traces in the speeches and performances by Samira Close: visual production, title of the lives, game stream layout, among other aspects consistent in the audiovisual context that, on two moments, makes the player in real time and the transmission of the actions in the game hybrid – constituting an important social practice and symbolic mediation to the LGBTQIA+ community.

## Shoot to the sky because we are criminals

The concept of identity has always been a central theme to philosophy as the quest to outline the individual goes through discussions from the *archés* of the pre-socratics. In contemporaneity, Hall (2006) problematizes one of the key questions linked to the notion of identity: essentialism, in other words, the idea that identities are unique and unchangeable. To the author, the post-modernity had a the role of decentralizing the identities and the human being, through social-historical movements<sup>2</sup>. The weaving of life in a net, amplified by the processes of the cyberculture in contemporaneity, reconducts many questions interlinked with the way that individuals constitute themselves socially and symbolically in a world mediated by the web.

The inter-relational processes in cyberspace enhance the rupture of the geographical borders, allowing that, even at a distance, the people could organize themselves in groups and establish bonds regardless of nationality, gender and social layers. Castells (2003) reinforces that this type of interaction broke with a historical process, in which occurred "the disengagement between locality and sociability in the formation of a community: new patterns, selectives, of social relations replace the territorially limited

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<sup>1</sup> All the titles were cut from the language of streamer and drag queen Samira Close.

<sup>2</sup> Hall (2006) cites some historical periods and philosophical-theoretical movements that had this function of fragmenting the subject: 1) Marxism; 2) Freudism; 3) Saussurian structuralism; 4) Foucauldian studies and 5) feminism.

human interactions" (Castells, 2003, p. 98).

Thus, it is necessary to have an identity aspect in common in order to form this group. Belk (2013) when talking about the co-construction of *self*, points out some key-points to the identification and unity of people from determined groups, for example: artifacts, heroes, places, symbols, brands, colors, collections. Gee (2000) also theorizes through the same bias when he discusses identity through affinity: there is a possibility of bonds between individuals constituted by the experience that they have in a determined group, even if they are scattered through a wide geographic space such as, for example, different countries or classes. These are people that participate in specific practices that provide different experiences in a common interest to each member of the group (for example, entrepreneurship groups, motorcyclists, *gaymers*, among others).

The concept of identity, throughout the years, went through a type of reassessment by the Human Studies, and also by the cultural studies. The problematization regards the rupture with the idea of a standard subject, pre-determined, or even the idea of a "complete" subject in meaning when it is part of a culture or group. In this discussion, the own notion of culture was diluted socially from a meaning of "high culture" (that which represents the accepted as better in a society or nation), going through the bad characterization of what is popular (popular culture, mass culture and people culture) to a certain vision of culture as shared values and collective organization (Hall, 2014; Martín-Barbero, 1997).

In a more dedicated reading to the texts by Hall from the 1970's and 1980's, we would already find problematizations regarding this. In Notes on deconstructing "the popular", Hall (2002/1981) used to conceive society as a cultural battlefield in which the subjects, in a relational way with the world, used to constitute themselves in a process of "resistance and acceptance, but also overcoming"<sup>3</sup>. Thus, the concept of identity to the cultural studies always gathered an absorbing and open meaning. "To affirm that two individuals belong to the same culture is equal to say that they interpret the world in a similar way and that they can express their feelings in a way that they understand each other" (Hall, 2016 p. 20). Thus, there is a shift in the comprehension of the processes of identity formation of an individual that has symbolic-social marks. In the sense Hall (2014) in *Who Needs Identity?*, points out that the term identification would be more suitable to denote the movement of the individuals when forming themselves socially – joining to certain groups and its respective representations and languages –, but also the full state of intersectioning and mixing meanings, letting go of some traces, in a continuous search for new meanings and experiences. Thus, one is in a continuous process of construction of its own identity, which is provisionally constructed and unfinished.

The reading of the poststructuralist philosophers and the reading of feminist literature contributed, according to Hall (2006/1992), to the decentralization of the individuals, especially by the questions regarding gender. As shown by Bozon (2004) it was only at the XIX century that biology began to distinguish the "man category" from the "woman category", because in previous times there was the idea of the *uno* gender, in which the woman was an inferior version of the man. "To be a man or to be a woman meant to possess a social role, take on a cultural role, and not only different bodies" (Bozon, 2004, p. 36). In this sense, these theoretical approaches report and problematize the medical-scientific, social and cultural chains that used to ideologically mediate "what is to be a woman", "what is to be a man", "what is to be straight or homosexual" – "sexual identities"<sup>4</sup> linked semantically-discursively with social

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<sup>3</sup> "I think there is a continuous and necessarily uneven and unequal struggle, by the dominant culture, constantly to disorganize and reorganize popular culture, to enclose and confine its definitions and forms within a more inclusive range of dominant forms. There are points of resistance and acceptance; there are also moments of super session" (Hall, 2002/1981, p. 187).

<sup>4</sup> Sexual identities, here, in quotes, to give the dimension of what Judith Butler calls compulsive heterosexuality. If a baby in his mother's belly is identified as "a boy," he will soon have to wear colors like blue, play with a stroller, be the financial provider of the house, and be straight, among other norms that will be imposed on him.

practices, determined behavior and dressing codes, jobs, among other spheres: from family organization to the institutional political hierarchy of society.

The question that Butler (2003/1990) approaches in *Gender Trouble: Feminism And the Subversion of Identity* is that these discussion regarding the genders would be grounded in a dichotomy of sex/gender. To the philosopher, this was, therefore, a point of view that answered to "(...) the thesis that, even though sex seems to be untreatable in biological terms, gender is socially constructed: consequently, it is not a casual result of the sex, neither it is so apparently standard as the sex" (Butler, 2003, p. 24), in other word, the implication of gender roles as "social construction" was also a way to limit the individuals inputting culture as the only defined destiny to these bodies. Her vision of open gender, in a state of come to be<sup>5</sup>, enables an approximation with a vision of identity as a performative act, an individual that is energized by language elements and by discursive reinteractions materialized through signs, sayings, and body materiality; enabling a identitary management in the different stages of life.

Butler (2003) uses the subject drag to theorize the gender as a parody of the heteronormative standard, a politically and socially regulated performance, a theatrical imitation of the genders<sup>6</sup>. In this path, Butler (2013, 2019, 2015) distinguishes performance from performativity. She "[...] finds, in an analytical of the language, the main grammar to understand how the body in movement absorbs norms and rises as a cultural normative project of sex/gender/desire/sexual practice" (Colling et al., 2019, p. 6). In this perspective, the queer individual becomes "the heart" of the performativity – because they are the ones that escape the rules and stages of the power from the core of the heteronormativity. Butler & Athanasiou (2013) reinforce that the individuals do not "possess" their gender, thus, "I am a woman", "I am gay", "I am a cis-straight man", do not exhaust and conceive everything that one can be. Thus, the queer term covers all types of unlabeled and marginalized bodies, in pure state of come to be, such as drag queens, travestis, non-binary, *yags* gays, standard gays, feminine gays, hermaphrodites, asexual, among many others, many times intersectionated, that produce a certain sense of "self" by the repetition of performative acts with no inoculated values, discourses, languages, but also capable of reorganization, breaking and reflection over meanings.

In this process of subjects questioned by the social statutes, but that also that announces and outlines itself identitarily with other and/or new *ethos* when thinking about the relation gender x identity in contemporaneity, we bring the theoretical discussions from the *Queer Game Studies* – field that studies the language practices from queer subjects intersectioned with the gaming sphere (Ruberg & Shaw, 2017; Ruberg, 2019, 2020). Even Butler (2003) reinforces the idea of thinking gender considering social marks such as class, race, geographical space – which allows meanings such *gaymer*, *transgaymer*, *queergamer*. In other words, neologisms and classifications used by LGBTQI+ gamer to reassure this identitary intersectionality with the digital gaming world.

Although the bluterian thinking, as well as the bulge of critics and reworks that comes with it after 30 years, is essential to think the subjects – especially what is socially understood as gay, travesti,

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<sup>5</sup> "Gender is a complexity whose totality is permanently deferred, never fully exhibited at any considered conjuncture. An open coalition, therefore, would affirm alternatively instituted and abandoned identities, according to current proposals; it would be an assembly that allows for multiple convergences and divergences, without obedience to a normative and defining telos" (Butler, 2003, p. 37).

<sup>6</sup> In this sense, preserving the Bluterian understanding, a drag queen who is not accepted by her family practices a masculinized type of performance at home and can transition to a feminine performance in another environment, with no obligation to at some point choose or define herself in categories. However, performing between feminine and masculine is also a way of reinforcing the sex/gender dichotomy. This use of the drag queen to theorize queer theory has been criticized, for example, by Preciado (2014) who claims a certain neglect of the social in the performative analysis of the drag queen. Preciado (2018) in *Testo Junkie* also reinforces her critique by asserting a certain disregard by Butler (2003) of the materiality of bodies and the pharmacological impacts on performative acts.

drag queen, queer<sup>7</sup> – the author does not provide sufficient elements to the analysis, to our concern, when this bodies that are so different, specific, unlabeled build up in social groups, consumer groups, political groups; fact that makes us reintroduce to the discussion the identification such as reworked by Hall (2014)<sup>8</sup>. Besides that, according to Colling, Arruda and Nonato (2019), the notion of performance itself (staging) and performativity (act of power ensured by speech), when not taken as equal, can both be as important to the production of these queer bodies' identities. To this end, it is necessary to mention the thought by Halberstam (2017) that mobilizes use to think about a perspectives that search for the queer shapes and ways to play. “Since the worlds as we know it was not designed for queer subjects, the queer subjects have to hack straight narratives and insert their own algorithms for time, space, life and desire” (Halberstam, 2017). We will see these problematizations when presenting our object of analysis: the live streams by the drag queen Samira Close.

## Gamer Girl

The live stream (or game streaming) is a live transmission of games that allows the interaction between the streamers, games and viewers that watch it online – may could be used not only to games, but to any other end. Live transmissions already have been on the internet for the past 20 years, however, with the recent advances in broadband access and new services of the web, it has become democratic, enabling any person to transmit whatever they wish (Smith et al., 2013; Taylor, 2018). One of the fields in which streaming grew the most was the real-time transmission of games, mobilizing big enterprises of the internet to buy or create exclusive platforms, such as Twitch TV and Facebook Gaming. In this path, the streaming as a wide concept of transmission and sharing of on demand videos: the transmission is named stream; streamer is the player and/or professional that does the transmission and *streamar* is the verb, capable of tense, that structures all the action by these streamers (example: today I will *streamar*; I am *streamando* this game; last month, *streamei* this many hours)<sup>9</sup>.

To this end, the stream can be understood as a discursive practice, an audiovisual text composed by two sets: the first, in which the gameplay is shown and, overlapped, the second that the streamer is viewed in real-time – that besides playing, interacts with the audience, asks for donations in money, answers questions made by the followers through the chat in the game stream platform. This way, the textuality of the stream is not only to transmit gameplays, but it is also important as a symbolic mediator to the LGBTQIA+ community, because it reinforces the sense of community and belonging, besides breaking with a normative *telos* of prohibition queer bodies, specially, the prohibition of bodies that transit the

<sup>7</sup> In theory, queer encompasses all bodies that do not follow the heteronormative matrix. In a broader view it can encompass all kinds of marginalized bodies. However, in Brazil, the name queer has become more of a category and an instrument of body politics, often being the place for those who "do not identify" with any gender, being the letter Q for LGBTQI+. Furthermore, we adopt, as do authors of queer games studies such as Ruberg (2019, 2020), LGBTQI+ and queer as synonyms.

<sup>8</sup> Judith Butler strongly opposes the theoretical current called constructionism, the idea of the social construction of identities. Stuart Hall is one of the main authors attributed to this current. However, as we have already stated, Hall (2014) has retained certain "open" aspect as theorizes queer theory, in addition to criticizing certain interdiction of the term identity claiming that several currents of the Human Sciences have endeavored to problematize or even "stick a stamp" of outdated concept on "identity", but without proposing a new concept. Preciado (2014) claims that one of the main distancing factors from "constructed identities" lies in the fact that they retain an idea that sex is an instance prior to gender, given naturally and marked by biology.

<sup>9</sup> In Portuguese, the suffix "-ndo" marks the gerund, indicating a continuity in action, equivalent to the gerund marked by the suffix "ing" in English. On the other hand, the suffix "-ei"/"-i" is a morpheme that indicates an action in the past tense of the first person singular, equivalent to the suffix "-ed" in the English language. Ex: streamando = streaming; streamei = streamed; streamar = to stream. Thus, based on the flexibility of grammar, Brazilian streamers make lexical neologisms, creating new terms, from the conservation of part of the English word with the union of these Portuguese grammatical suffixes (especially the morphemes of tense, person and number).

gaming circle, overcoming, this way, the gamer stereotypes such as man, Caucasian, upper class, nerd (Shaw, 2010, 2012; Condis, 2018; Goulart & Nardi, 2017). This occurs because:

[...] despite the fact that women, queer people, people of color, and others who are often perceived as "different" have been playing and playing video games for decades, games and the cultures surrounding them have a long history of underrepresentation, misrepresentation, and sometimes fostering open hostility toward those who do not fit the image of the white, straight, cisgender, male "gamer" (Ruberg, 2020, p. 2).

It is also possible to look at the problematizations by the queer games studies regarding sexism, homophobia, transphobia, besides the heteronormative way of thinking, being immerse in the game structures, regulating notions about the world about "girl games" and "boy games", formulating processes of exclusion, toxicity and interpellation that the players may or may not play (and what to play) (Halberstam, 2017; Ruberg, 2019, 2020) inside the gamer community.

Games such as *Super Mario Bros* (1989) reinforced, to an entire generation, the narrative about saving the princess, pictured in a pink dress, polite and delicate awaiting for rescue, the image of the passive woman without any action in the game. Since the classic street fighter game *Final Fight* (1989-1995), in a gesture of transphobia, altered the gender of the characters Poison and Roxy to *newhalf* (pejorative reference to travesti), this solving the problem of the game about showing women getting beat, because, when turning these feminine characters into *newhalf*, it was possible to maintain them in the fights through the understanding that trans women are, biologically, men, being, thus, being subjected to getting beat and fighting in alleys and subways of the game equally to the male characters.

Although there were some advanced in the industry of game regarding the representativeness of minorities, according to Ruberg (2019, 2020), this heteronormative logic that pervades society still structures this bond of certain types of games to determined gender identities: for example, shooting, race, soccer, fight games are, in general, linked to the male circle, as for games of changing doll clothes and games with "easy mechanics" are framed in the female scope. In this path, these "distinctions" alluded by Ruberg (2020), besides not being represented in games, are understood as hard, of high performance and socially associated with manhood.

When these queers, that were never linked with this social dichotomy and that always played the most varied games – from the doll clothes to the male *FIFA* (1993-2021) or *Counter-Strike* (1999-2012) – start to manifest and affirm themselves in these gaming spaces, occurs what Hall (2002) names of cultural battle between minorities and the hegemonic groups. In this sense, harm and violence against women, blacks and LGBTQI+, such as travesti and trans, are recurring in the gaming interaction spaces as a form of silencing, interdiction and oppression to keep in the margin of the gamer universe (Shaw, 2015; Fragoso et al, 2017; Rost & Souza, 2019; Nemer & Inocência, 2019). In this scenario, the report by Globo Esporte, *Women talk about insults and stalking in digital games* (Maciel, 2020), shows how women are susceptible to slurs, "cat-calling" and phrases such as "go wash the dishes". The same thing occurs with the queers, that suffer with diminishing comments regarding their sexualities, pejoratively tagged as "faggot", "little girl", "travesty" besides of attacks that reinforce them as abject, "deviators" of the moral, religious and biological-scientific standards.

For all these reasons, the affirmation and the search for representation of queers in the realm of games can be understood as an act of resistance. In this context, one of the queers who inhabit and break the binary heteronormative relational system of the gamer sphere is the streamer and drag queen Samira Close, who has about 750,000 followers on her Facebook page and approximately 300,000 views per live streaming<sup>10</sup>. Almost always armed with her wig, calling herself a "gamer girl" and sitting in her gamer chair,

<sup>10</sup> As the streams are stored and made available on these platforms, the audience numbers tend to incre-

Close broadcasts games that transition between horror to shooting, whilst simultaneously interacting with other players, fellow queer streamers and her fan-base.

In this scenario, Samira Close circulates and broadcasts a great diversity of game styles and themes, transgressing this sectional scope of the gamer universe. There are live streams in which about five games are played, swapping and taking turns in the middle of the transmission. The streamer justifies her choices in the following way: "I'm looking for games, it's just that there are games that are not very cool, I don't want a game to play with my face up, I want a game to have fun" (Samira Close, 2018). One of the main linguistic characteristics of Samira Close is the use of the *pajubá* dialect<sup>11</sup>. In this way, the streamer creates an environment in which gay, transvestite, transgender, and other queer bodies feel comfortable consuming and interacting in the live stream (Ruberg, 2019, 2020), either by group affinity (Belk, 2013; Gee, 2000), of style, of the game that was played, or by other aspects of identification (Hall, 2014) made possible by the contemporary conjuncture of media convergence in the cyberspace (Jenkins, 2011) that allows symbolic exchanges, performances, and performative acts in this large social auditorium integrated by smartphones, video games, software, and other networked devices.

Once this presentation of the object was done, the objective of this research was to understand how LGBTQI+ subjects mobilize identity traits in their stream practices through the analysis of Samira Close's performative acts on the Facebook Gaming platform. To this end, a four-monthly cut between November 2018 to February 2019 was carried out for data extraction. From a diachronic perspective, we established as selection criteria the variability of games transmitted over the four-month period in order to map nuances and changes in the identity mobilization of Samira Close. In this time frame, we selected five streams totaling 17h49m23s of video transmission. The following table details the tabulation of information and the storage of samples.

Board 1 - Construction of the corpus of the analysis

Name	Time	Date	Views	Comments	Games transmitted
HOLIDAYS ARE COMING	03:58:02	Nov. 14th 2018	124 thous.	13 thous.	League of Legends; Friday the 13 th; Deceit
ONE FEAR, ONE TERROR, ONE KPOP	03:39:31	Nov. 20th 2018	103 thous.	29 thous.	Outlast; Friday the 13 th; Deceit
LET'S KIKI	03:26:38	Nov. 25th 2018	78 thous.	18 thous.	League Of Legends; Overwatch; Fortnite; Deceit; Friday the 13 th
HIEEEEEEEEEE	02:34:49	Jan. 15th 2019.	58 thous.	15 thous.	Deceit; Friday the 13; Dead By Daylight
Estela Fritz - Saving lives	03:50:23	Feb. 5th 2019	103 thous.	28 thous.	Grand Theft Auto V

Source: The authors, 2020.

To perform the analysis, our focus fell on the streamer Samira Close, the ways she performs identifications and, finally, the thematic-valorative content that constitutes the streams. In this perspective,

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ase over time. Samira Close started doing live streams in 2014, and, with the growth of the audience over the years, she used several game streaming platforms until she reached Facebook in 2018. In the middle of 2019, as a way to stream content and confront other platforms that have in this segment larger market shares, such as Twitch TV and YouTube, Facebook launched the Facebook Gaming platform (Cury, 2019; Reyes, 2019), thus affecting a work contract with Samira Close. A boom of other gay and trans streamers erupted, as can be exemplified by Rebeca Trans, Wanessa Wolf, Mandy Mess, Syndrel.

<sup>11</sup> *Pajubá* is a dialect used by the LGBTQI+ community to communicate and demarcate themselves symbolically in the social fabric. The linguistic processes of production mobilize borrowings, neologisms, metaphors, loanwords, lexicalization, among other processes coming from the African Yoruba. *Pajubá* circulates socially in other spheres of conviviality of these queers - family environment, work, media. A broader view of *pajubá* and the importance of this dialect for the LGBTQI+ community can be found in Barroso (2017) and Oliveira (2017).



we established the following criteria: 1) Samira Close: discursive characteristics that demarcate the performativities of the live streamer, expressed in her look, in the scenario, in verbalizations about her own intimacy; 2) Platform: characteristics of identity demarcation present in her profile on the Facebook Gaming platform, in the way she names the calls of the lives, texts and layout of the stream; 3) Thematic-valorative content: materialization of verbal enunciations in the act of the stream with the clipping of some enunciations that point to identity traits.

From this methodological path, we proceeded to the analysis of qualitative-interpretivist nature that, according to Creswell (2003), allows the researcher to analyze social phenomena from a closer contact with the object. In this methodological approach, we watched the samples one by one in order to map, in the streams, discursive, identity and performative aspects based on the criteria listed. In this path, we made descriptions to contextualize the analysis. In the next section, we present the results of the analysis, in which we articulate images, discourse segments (SD's) and descriptions of these samples, considering the theoretical framework.

## Leveling up with empowerty girls

The analysis of the picture of Samira Close's profile on Facebook Gaming (Figure 1) reveals the instance of drag expressed in the way she presents herself, wearing a blue wig and makeup, alluding to the universe of assembling herself symbolically by producing a certain elegance reverberated in makeup, clothing, and the pose she strikes for a picture. The cover features pinkish colors and lamp-like texture that dialog with the discursive field of drags and with a nocturnal climate – in general this is the time when drag queens work in nightclubs, parties, and other social events. The word "close" in gay slang means to take a walk or poke around in a certain environment. The excerpt "Hi, I'm your favorite Gamer Girl. What are we going to play today? ;)" reinforces the hybrid identity position of being a gamer at the same time queer, something also expressed when we visualize her yellow gamer chair in her profile picture:

Screenshot 1 – Samira Close's page layout

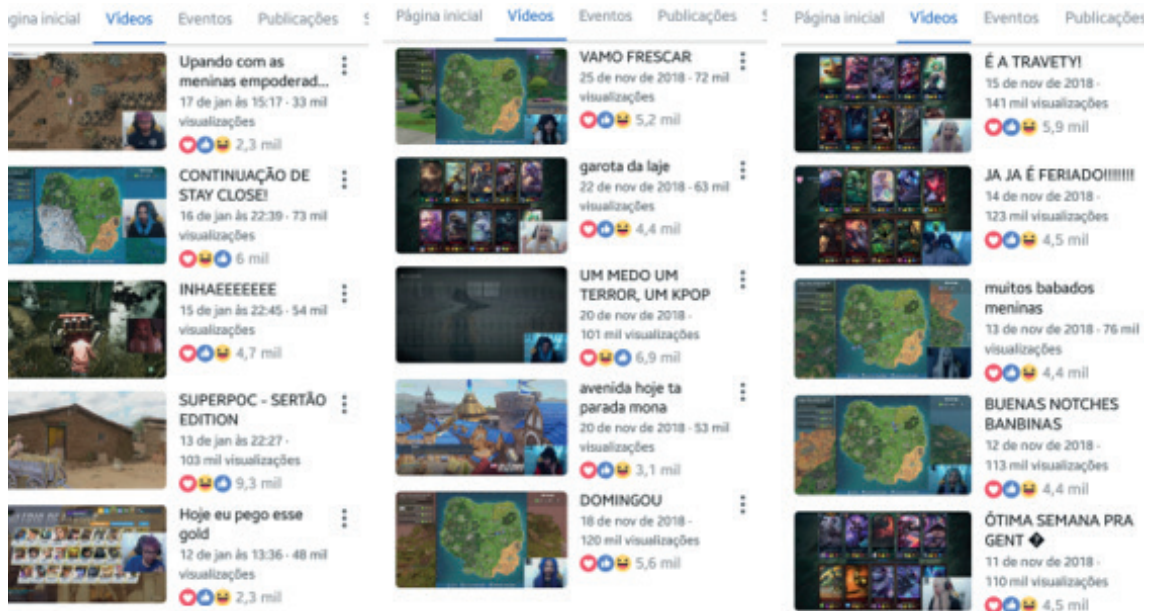


Source: Samira Close (2018-2019)

In the way she titles the videos, Close demarcates traces of the LGBTQI+ community by using words and terms of *pajubá* in the reworking of the gamer language, being this a strategy to establish a bond of belonging with the gaymer community itself, signaling that the streams are a space of queer symbolic exchanges, a comfortable and safe environment, of problematizations and experiences of these bodies (Ruberg, 2020) that identify themselves according to Hall (2016) by several representational codes of language – being *pajubá* one of these codes. In Screenshot 2, it is possible to verify this use of language

in titles such as "let's kiki", "the avenue is dead today sis", "many gags girls". In "upgrading with empowered girls", for example, there is already a hybridization by using expressions characteristic of gamers, because to upgrade in the gaming culture means to improve the attributes of the character in a particular game.

Screenshot 2 – Titles of the streams



Source: Samira Close (2018).

In sample 1, entitled "holidays are coming," published on November 14 th, 2018, the political and identity discourse that points to a discursive practice of contestation and resistance is evidenced. When referring to the villain Jason in the game Friday the 13th, she says: "I took this axe to hit in the face of chauvinists" (SD1). From this speech, Samira situates herself in a confrontational relationship with the discourses of hate (sexism, homophobia, transphobia) - which come mainly from the patriarchal and heteronormative structure on which Western societies were settled (Butler, 2003; Bozon, 2004) and that are materialized massively in contemporaneity, especially in Brazil and in the scope of gaming interactions, due to a "conservative wave" that is evidenced and has been addressed by vast theoretical referential (Messenberg, 2017; Cioccarri & Persichetti, 2018; Dourado, 2020). These disputes are conceived by Hall (2002, 2016) as a cultural battlefield, a discursive game of the linking situation of establishing identities at the same time as differences, of positioning and moving in the political network on which hegemonic and minority groups tension each other.

Still on this sample, there is an identity demarcation when a player tries to hide from the villain Jason in a closet (screenshot 3) and Samira - who adopts a performance (a theatricalization) of survivor - uses this element of hiding to discursively insert herself in the LGBTQI+ environment, because "coming out of the closet" is a practice related to several bodies that make up the LGBTQI+ group of revealing, to family and society, aspects of sexuality, it is a moment of "liberation" from a underground state and hiding for gays, transgenders, lesbians, etc. Samira says: "Hey psiu, that's tight. I'm already out of the closet, I'm already a transvestite. There is no way to go back to the closet, my mother already knows" (SD3). Soon, the reinsertion of the statement "coming out of the closet" produces and mediates elements of identification of the majority queer public involved in its streams (Ruberg, 2019), reintroduction of a representational code as theorized by Hall (2016).

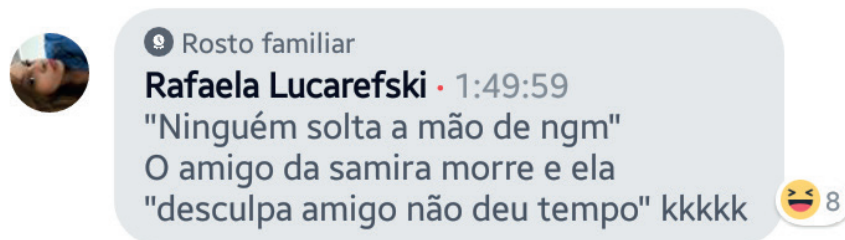
Screenshot 3 – Player getting in the closet in the Friday the 13th game



Source: Samira Close (2018-2019).

The second sample, titled "A fear, a terror, a kpop," was streamed on November 20th 2018 gathering 29,000 interactions with comments. Close is wearing a blue wig, introduces herself and starts by inserting songs she likes while preparing the elements of the stream: camera setup, game choice, broadcast care. She is once again dedicated to the game Friday the 13th in which she, along with other players, escapes from the villain Jason in order to survive. In this perspective, Samira performs and creates a survivor identity, screaming when she sees the tormentor, calling for help, and communicating to create a strategy to win. Upon seeing one of her classmates cross her path, Samira comments, "Look at that abused friend, she's gone," negatively valuing her playmate's attitude. Samira Close's audience interacts by commenting and responding to her lines, attitudes and wrong moves. In one comment, one of the internet users expresses themselves:

Screenshot 4 – Fan comment



Source: Facebook Gaming.

In this enunciation replicated by the fan, "nobody lets go of anybody's hand", there is an interdiscursive relation with an already-known saying circulating at the time; the phrase emerged from minorities from the 2018 Brazilian elections in counterpoint to the hate speeches reverberated in the election period. When Samira runs away alone and leaves her own friend to die, she slips the very utterance "nobody lets go of anybody's hand"; an utterance that reinforced these characteristics of togetherness,

especially since this saying also references the fear and violence that members of the LGBTQI+ community suffer on the streets of Brazil; however, this rupture with the statement itself, besides causing humor and irony, is also a demonstration of the provisional character of identity (Hall, 2014, 2016, Butler, 2003), on which, in certain circumstances, subjects move on, abandon, break with norms, rites, and groups to which they have bound themselves.

Sample 3 is dated November 25th and titled "Let's kiki", the post is 3h26m long and has 72,000 views, 18,630 comments, and over 5,000 likes. The interesting thing about this broadcast is the change in Close's performance when participating in a different game. In the game *Overwatch* it is necessary to choose a shooting character to help the team reach the enemy base. Therefore, the language is all performed for this war environment merging with the language characteristics of the player. When being shot down by enemies Close says: Wow! I didn't even see this woman killing me, sis! It was tragic. I didn't see her shooting. I'm gagged! Girl! I only showed my ass and there was already a crowd of people (SD4).

In this excerpt, it is possible to observe how the *pajubá* and slang of the LGBTQI+ milieu are employed such as, for example, "mona", "uó", "pass". Moreover, verbs such as "kill" and "shoot" are verbalized because of the typology of the game, syncretizing with the streamer's sayings. We verified that, when participating in shooting games, the gamer mobilizes a lexicon that is supposed to be a swear word, such as "you killed me little deer" or "I'm going to hunt you down, you faggot". In line with Volóchinov, we understand that "any living curse can become a compliment, any living truth must inevitably sound to many like a big lie" (Volóchinov, 2017/1929, p. 113). This is because meanings are not set; rather, they are constructed in the situation of interaction, i.e., when someone says "faggot" in a prejudiced way to an LGBTQI+ member it is considered an offense, but, when a member of the LGBTQI+ community says it to another, in a given specific communication such as that of streamer Samira Close, the offensive semantic charge is diluted because, this type of utterance is also a representational code of language among queers.

In the game *Deceit*, in which players try to identify who is infected and turning into a monster, Close and colleagues joke about the term "transform." Someone accuses Samira (2019) of being the infected one, "I saw you transformed. You were a drag queen and you turned into a drag queen" (SD5) and she responds "You're having a very strange conversation saying that I transformed (...). Stay here to see that I am not transformed!" (SD6). In this sense, there is a slippage of meaning of the verb "transform" that can refer to the transformation of the players in the monster/villain or the transformation that they (Samira and her fellow streamers) perform when they produce themselves as drag queen to be able to perform their discursive practices in the streams.

In the sample titled "Hieeeeeeeeeee," a reference to how members of the LGBTQI+ community say the "what's up" of everyday life, clipped from January 15 th 2019, Samira is wearing a pink wig. It is worth noting that Samira does not always present herself in a wig, she sometimes uses the male gender expression as in sample 1, a choice that does not alter her language practice. Moreover, even when she presents herself "in drag" she possesses masculine aspects such as the beard. Maiczak (2016) reports in the documentary *Dá um close nelas [Give them a close up]* (2016) that there is a style of drag queen called scar that does not hide masculine features. Two points are important: the first is that the very notion of performance is important in the production of performativity (Colling et al, 2019), in a certain construction of a sense of Samira Close's whole identity, implied in her worldview, in her language that does not change even "disassembled". The second point is that the queer subject is not limited to man/woman, he is a body that orbits inside and outside these heteronormative standards, so that several characteristics incur on the same body (beard, long hair, penis, vagina) among other prostatic and pharmacological elements as Preciado (2014, 2018) points out such as (wig, fake breasts, silicone, hormones, botox).

Screenshot 5 – Side to side of the gender expression between sample 1 and sample 4



Source: Samira Close (2018-2019).

Finally, the fifth sample, entitled "Estela Fritz - Saving Lives", with 3h50m, presents 95 thousand views, more than 7 thousand likes and more than 29 thousand comments. In this cut, we observe a new aspect: Samira creates a character inside the game *GTA V* called Estela Fritz and works in a hospital. Therefore, her language is performed with characteristics of the hospital environment. As we see in: Now I'm going to give you a prescription. Unfortunately you won't be able to wear high heels, young lady. You just had your cast removed [...]. So I will ask you to wear a low shoe, a little shoe, a sneaker, so that you don't force your foot and make it worse (SD8).

The game *GTA V* simulates real life (roleplay) allowing its players to create characters of the most varied types, from policemen to drug dealers, with the possibility of changing their looks and assuming an identity that does not need to be linked to the players outside cyberspace. Estela Fritz is a black woman, a doctor. Samira modulates each identity fragment (Hall, 2006) of this simulacrum, that is, each subject position of Estela, from her own language, allowing the identity of authorship to hybridize with the identity of the character. In Screenshot 6, Estela prepares to save a patient with the Siate car.<sup>12</sup>

Screenshot 6 – Samira performing Estela Fritz







Source: Samira Close (2019).

<sup>12</sup> Siate is a Brazilian emergency service that attends to health-related occurrences. Just like fire departments and hospitals, all you have to do is call Siate and a medical unit will come to the scene to help anyone in need free of charge.

In this sense, it is a performance that is configured in the demarcation of Samira Close as drag queen, gamer and streamer, because her varied performances that change with each game are densified daily as reiterated acts of a discourse: the performativity that allows us to conceive Samira Close not only with a certain sense of completeness, but also as an unfinished and provisional subject, who energizes herself with languages depending on each type of game. The following table demonstrates the different language practices that Samira Close mobilizes, presenting the game, the game typology and discursive segments that demonstrate how each conjuncture provides a specific identity performance in each stream.

Board 2 – Comparing the language of the samples

Game	Game typology	Discursive segments
	A horror game in which the player must escape from the villain Jason, the language practice is associated with survival, fear and terror.	Jason is coming to get me... Ahhh he is coming to get me, guys [...]. I will hunt these faggots over there, if they stay all together Jason doesn't even need to look, you find one faggot you find all of them, crazy faggots... look at this house, it is everything! (Samira Close, 2018).
	Horror game in which 2 of the 6 players are infected, in addition to the members needing to escape, they need to find out who among them is infected. The language practice hybridizes between terror, survival, and suspicion/distrust.	You are talking shit saying that I transformed [...]. Stay here to watch how I am not transformed. (Samira Close, 2019).
	Shooter/RPG game in which two groups rival each other with the goal of reaching the enemy base. The language mobilizes the field of war and combat.	Wow! I didn't even see this woman killing me, sis! It was tragic. I didn't see her shooting. I'm gagged! Girl! I only showed my ass and there was already a crowd of people (Samira Close, 2018).
	Role-playing game that simulates real life and enables the creation of characters. The creation of Estela Fritz as a doctor interpellated the language practice into the medical field.	Now I'm going to give you a prescription. Unfortunately you won't be able to wear high heels, young lady. You just had your cast removed [...]. So I will ask you to wear a low shoe, a little shoe, a sneaker, so that you don't force your foot and make it worse (Samira Close, 2019).

Source: The authors, 2020 through Samira Close (2018-2019), Friday the 13Th (2017), Overwatch (Blizzard, 2016); Deceit (Baseline, 2017) and GTA V (Rockstar Games, 2013).

In terms of identity, we can think of three main discursive layers interposed in the stream's language practice: the first comes from the queer streamer subject who holds a wealth of experiences, worldview, a socio-historical intersectional constitution – and open – of class, gender, regionalism, race. An example of this layer can be found in the phonetics and use of idioms from Ceará<sup>13</sup>, Samira's home state, as well as the use of *pajubá* to establish herself as belonging to the LGBTQI+ umbrella, untethered from a heteronormative matrix. A second layer comes from the gamer sphere, as a series of actors such as games, characters, developers and studios, fans, players, specialized critics, streamers densify into a certain notion of a global community (members of a gamer culture), triggering codes, symbolic exchanges, and a specific communication. Finally, the last layer is related to the communicative needs of each game,

<sup>13</sup> Ceará is a state located in northeastern Brazil, with Fortaleza as Capital. In addition, the region has its own phonetic and linguistic marks, with sayings and jargons that differentiate it from other Brazilian states and regions.

because each game focuses on a style, a theme, a specific gameplay, which includes its own lexicon, in order to materialize the discursive project of the players so that they can materialize actions and goals in the game as we observed in the performances of survivor, nurse, and war fighter.

In this reflection, the analysis reveals that this queer gaming mode, raised by Halberstam (2017) can be thought of from a reworking that LGBTQI+ people do of stylistic-linguistic aspects necessary for each type of game with *pajubá* and the everyday language of these queer experiences. This process promotes approximation and grouping of various queer bodies around the stream, while breaking and problematizing rules, violence and heteronormative standards that are still pervasive in the sphere of gaming interactions.

## *Buenas Noches Bambinas*

In this article, we seek to discuss aspects of identity in a fluid, fragmented and hybrid perspective, considering that people can assume and perform different identities, moving between them, as well as mixing them. In this conception, cyberspace is an enhancer of this hybridity and mobilizes the debate about new ways of living in networks, interacting and performing identities, often still marginalized and oppressed. Thus, cyberspace, more specifically the gamer interaction, as described here, can also reveal itself as a space-time of clash for different identities; a space of tensioning language around these identities that seek to break with the identities taken as master or central (Silva, 2014).

The LGBTQI+ community has been debating identity issues since the 1960s to break away from cultural marks that permeate the social structure that defines social practices, discourses, tastes, sexuality, and how to dress. In this scenario, streamer and drag queen Samira Close is an example of an LGBTQI+ member who has been broadening the view on the identity of this community by accessing previously interdicted, masculinized, and heteronormative spaces. The results of the analysis reveal several identity positions occupied by Close: gay man, drag queen, northeasterner, gamer.

Thus, the gamer mobilizes different identities, mixing the language of each game with the *pajubá* and the everyday language of LGBTQI+ people, reaching this public in need of representation in the historically masculinized space of gamers. With each game, she adjusts her language in order to mobilize ways of enunciating that place her as a war fighter, a survivor, or a doctor who saves lives in the fictional city of GTA V; subverting the notions of gender by transiting through various demarcated fields of sexuality and gamers' discursive practices.

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