

# The Persistence of Desire

Gay Men Online and Queer Visuality

## LA PERSISTENCIA DEL DESEO LOS HOMBRES GAYS ONLINE Y LA VISIBILIDAD QUEER

### ABSTRACT

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Queer forms of sociality online have been established as a research field for many social studies that contributed to our contemporary comprehension of new geographies of sexualities. Such a task required a cautious review of existent methodologies and conceptual tools, especially when sexuality comes up as an axis of investigation. In this paper I explore the persistence of the category of “desire” for the study of dissident sexualities online. Although a critical approach to desire is present in queer scholarship, my argument relies on implementing theoretical queer and/or feminist formulations of desire. It has been a problematic standard to combine theories on queer desire without reflecting about the field in which such theories may be applied. *Desire* as a category has also to do with the dismantling of cruising geographies and with the errant aspect inherent to cruising practices. This paper, by discussing theoretically the relationship between “desire”, “visualization”, and the “digital” points out the disruptive aspect of desire in relation to online ways of seeing and performativity.

### Keywords

Desire, Digital, Visual, Sexuality, Online dating, Queer, Performativity.

### RESUMEN

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Las formas de sociabilización queer en línea, se han establecido como un campo de investigación para muchas investigaciones sociales. Estas han contribuido a nuestra comprensión contemporánea de las nuevas geografías de la sexualidad. Esta tarea ha requerido una cautelosa revisión de las metodologías existentes y de las herramientas conceptuales, sobre todo, cuando la sexualidad surgió como un eje de investigación. En este artículo, exploro la persistencia de la categoría “deseo” para el estudio de las sexualidades disidentes en línea. Aunque una aproximación crítica del deseo está presente en los estudios queer, mi argumento se basa en la implementación de formulaciones teóricas queer e/o feministas sobre el deseo, ya que ha sido una problemática común el combinar teorías sobre el deseo queer sin reflexionar acerca del campo sobre el cual se puede aplicar esta teoría. *El deseo*, como una categoría, también tiene que ver con el desmantelamiento de las geografías del *cruising* y con el aspecto errante inherente a esta práctica. Este artículo, al discutir teóricamente la relación entre “deseo”, “visualización” y cultura “digital”, señala el aspecto perturbador del deseo en relación con las formas de ver en línea y la performatividad.

### Palabras Clave

Deseo, digital, visual, sexualidad, citas en línea, queer, performatividad.

## 1 INTRODUCCIÓN

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The development of digital media has opened new forms of sociality. This has changed our actual perception of time and space, making it possible to connect people from different cultures very quickly and to exchange information. Many spheres of social life are susceptible to the appeal of the digital era, the era of connectedness: to be globalized is to be connected, to be in motion, to trade in new cultural maps, to get in touch with other languages, other ways of life, etc. The sphere of intimacy has also been modified in the digital era and, for many people, the possibilities inaugurated by this new social space have brought the opportunity to experience fewer social constraints in the way people interact than before, the Internet being described as a place where people experience more freedom.

In this paper, I would like to address what is new and worth exploring about researching queer sexualities online. In part, this consists in the new performances of gender and sexuality that individuals assume when they become virtual subjects, where the digital body plays with the online and offline codes of gender and sexuality. Here, we are not only in the field of representations, but also in the field of movements, of translocations of actors producing virtual maps of search, moving between languages, and crossing cultural borders, and, consequently, facing processes of differentiation. Thus, it has been possible to create new bodily markers, cross-dressing gender to draw people's attention, editing one's own body virtually using digital media. In the context of online gay dating culture, the body is at the core of actions that produce new online performativities of gender and sexuality.

In addition, I would like to raise some questions about the importance of desire through the visual appeal present on digital media, specifically observed during my research on hook-up websites and apps: how vision can be problematized theoretically from a queer perspective on situated knowledges/actors (Haraway, 1991); and, what sense desire assumes in the process of the production of "otherness" by performing sexualities online. For the scope of this paper, I am striving to substantiate some theoretical guidelines for the research on gender and sexuality online, which deals with the problem of articulating desire with the digital forms of visualizing sexualities.

First, I depart from the problematic relationship between visual schemes and bodily practices according to authors such as Haraway, Foucault and Deleuze. Given that, the study of hook-up apps means to deal, in a broader sense, with visualization regimes and technologies which encompass subjectivisation practices to the extent that individuals are produced as online subjects to be seen. In the particular dynamics of these sites, we can find ways of seeing and of capturing subjectivity that lead to Deleuze's idea of the panopticon as an optical machine, according to his reading of Foucault (Deleuze, 1998). In this sense, when it comes to the connection between human actors and machines, I am not conceptualizing in abstract what those encounters between them are, but very specific attachments in which gender and sexuality play a role. In the digital culture of cruising, gender and sexuality are marked by visual schemes of perception. This second point guides me to Haraway's (1991) thesis that the ways of seeing, either with our own eyes or with the use of apparatuses, shape visual machines producing positionalities. According to her, despite the idea of a feminist epistemology that gives up any pretension to objectivity, another kind of scientific perspective is possible, when we assume that the condition for every objectivity always comes from a *positioned* vision. There is no objectivity that totally forecloses subjectivity. Upon that principle, it is impossible to think

of a 'pure' knowledge when one always deals with actors marked by gender, sexuality, race and other axes of difference. In the case of hook-up apps and platforms, (sexual) desire insists as a transversal axe of difference, by positioning subjectivities, which brings me to the second aspect of the discussion I am doing here.

The second aspect I am exploring here is the relationship between desire and otherness as it arises from the differences between Lacan's (1998) consideration about the gaze and Butlerian concept of performativity (1990, 1993). Both authors differ from the conceptions of identity and otherness available in the epistemology of representation. They share a deconstructive bias that advocates for a decentralization of identity in order to comprehend subjective dynamics of desire that institute sexual difference. I follow them up to the point that the category of identity is not central for this work and that another way of thinking about the relationship between otherness and desire can be sought. My work differs from some recent investigations on hook-up apps which have a strong focus on identity/psychological features and the ways users describe themselves or their strategies of self-presentation (Miller, 2015). Like Jaspal (2016), I also share the view that focusing investigations on the conscious management of identity in the use of hook-up apps is not enough to explain the complex dynamics between vision and desire found therein. I am working within a deconstructionist perspective that puts those aspects in a more complex web of relations that involve not only conscious but also unconscious aspects of desire in the production of identity. In that sense, this paper is closer in theoretical approach to recent works in the field of queer theory and geographies of sexualities that deal with digital sexualities (Brickell, 2012; McGlotten, 2013; McLelland, 2002; Mowlabocus, 2010; Nash, Gorman-Murray, 2016). Butler and Lacan, like other post-structuralist authors, opened the path for a sophisticated theoretical background which does not reduce the study of otherness to simply identitarian perspectives. Although following these theorists may lead to much critical theoretical discussion, this choice is justified because my study focused on the performativities of gender and sexuality online by discussing how space and the visualization of bodies play a role in this process beyond the agency of individual actors.

Shared codes in the hook-up apps and platforms sometimes appeal to stereotypes on gender and sexuality. However, it is necessary to analyze this material from a theoretical perspective if one is seeking to understand how desire (and here desire emerges linked not only to a set of representations but also to affective practices) embodies knowledge, sensations, and perceptions that cannot be read from a perspective which deals only with the self-reflective position of human actors (for example, Jaspal 2016). In its dialogue with psychoanalysis, the concept of performativity by Butler is directed critically to the inevitable necessity of an ontological subject for feminism. With the concept of performativity, Butler takes a legacy from poststructuralist scholarship by claiming a comprehension of subjectivity beyond representation, inasmuch as the gendered subject is a surface effect of regulative devices.

The bodies and subjectivities that flow online are not separate from their local contexts of origin, their offline settings (Löw, 2001, p. 105). Race, sexuality, gender, and local representations are embedded and mutually imbricated in the production of virtual bodies. When talking about hooking up, it is important to stress that these practices do not have their emergence with the advent of the Internet. The search for partners in the context of gay culture dates back historically to the control and persecution of non-hetero sexualities (Chauncey, 1994, Mooshamer, 2005).

In contrast to straight culture, these practices recover narratives of subversion, subculture, and resistance. Following the discussion by Sedgwick (1990), her analysis of “coming out of the closet” (the expression for the public assumption of a deviant sexuality), the closet is a regulating device imposed on gays, lesbians, and everyone else in the realm of non-heterosexual sexualities. Such individuals live a strained relationship between public and private in a society in which sexuality is the target of political strategies of subjectivation and control (Foucault, 1990). In a markedly heteronormative culture, dissident sexualities have to devise other forms of appropriating space to act and express themselves. What happens when we move from the offline, material spaces of cities to the virtual spaces of chatting and dating? How is desire being produced on the screen?

## 2 GAY MEN ON SCREEN

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The ‘eyes’ made available in modern technological sciences shatter any idea of passive vision; these prosthetic devices show us that all eyes, including our own organic ones, are active perceptual systems, building in translations and specific ways of seeing, that is, ways of life. (Haraway, 1991, p. 190)

On screen, actors can experiment with another corporeality, combining details and producing a profile to their liking within the possibilities that the website gives them. The digital body is endowed with a specific agency of materialization, which lies in the spatial disposition of the body as a website profile (one page address is conferred for each profile). On Planet Romeo ([www.planetromeo.com](http://www.planetromeo.com)), for example, the profile becomes an entity disconnected from the user’s *bodily hardware*, because, even offline, away from the computer, individual profiles exist as individual parts of the website, being seen and searched by others in a kind of agency that is beyond what Foucault (1995) defined with the model of the *panopticon*. In the model of Foucault’s panopticon, individuals incorporate discipline because the panopticon is at the same time both an optical and spatial apparatus.

The interesting research question here is not to reconcile Foucault’s panopticon model with the screen gay men face by hooking up, as it has often been formulated, in an attempt to equate any control-based disposition of individuals with the panopticon, but to strive to understand the innovation of Foucault’s analysis, namely, that it extracted from the panopticon its social and political applicability as a technology. In this context, “technology” means that individuals are produced by the very techniques, which control the disposition of their bodies in space and the organization of time, with technologies being social because they arise from the social interactions that define power relations. The term coined by Deleuze (1988), *optical machine*, brings precisely this power to think the specificity of the panopticon as architectural and political technology. What kind of *optical machine* could be found online by researching hook up apps and websites?

As commented before, there is a *persistent* visual appeal on the website in the manner in which bodies are displayed and how actors search for partners. The screen differs from Foucault’s panopticon as an optical machine because of the *uncertainty* created by the panopticon through the unawareness of whether the subject is being seen or not, and by whom, which forces the subject to internalize the disciplinary effect of the device. In contrast, the optical machine of

a gay dating website plays with the connection: the subject is free to decide to join the online gay dating community or not, and in the affirmative case, to create a profile (or more than one; as many virtual identities are also possible) which can then be changed or deleted whenever its owner decides. On the website, as a community of access, the optical machine functions like a visualization of bodies and subjectivities where the *certainty of being seen* is intrinsically imposed. They are rather integrated parts of a visual machine, where everyone sees everyone else from singular points: another kind of optical machine that does not mean a totalitarian perception of surveillance through vision, but a fragmentation, multiplication, connection of diverse individual eyes in an optical machine that is at the same time collective and individual. Every minute new profiles are created and users upload new material. A difficult task, then, for administrators and support users of the platform is to review all the time the content and ensure no inappropriate matter is posted and no rules are breached. Navigation through the website is an exercise of vision, an intensification of a multiple vision.

I log out of the website and unplug my computer, but my profile is still there, subjectivity archived in the virtual domain. My body is there, a *virtual materiality* (Súnden, 2003) disconnected from my bodily hardware. These hook up apps and websites function well as a large virtual optical architecture, articulating collective and individual ways of seeing.

To understand the register of vision implies thinking of the register of subjectivity in relation to alterity and desire. What would be the place and status of vision in online gay dating? At first, vision plays a selective role not only in the search for partners to chat, but also in the production of a scopic eroticism through (dis)identification with the object of desire. The gaze ties up subject and object; it is a positive mark of difference through affective, intensive, conscious and unconscious criteria in the moment of seduction. How can we make a queer sense of identification in order to achieve a queer perspective on desire and visuality online? A first step towards such a position can be found in the work of queer scholars who have proposed categories like “disidentification”:

To disidentify is to read oneself and one’s own life narrative in a moment, object, or subject that is not culturally coded to ‘connect’ with the disidentifying subject. It is not to pick and choose what one takes out of an identification. It is not to willfully evacuate the politically dubious or shameful components of any identity. It is an acceptance of the necessary interjection that has occurred in such situations. (Muñoz, 1999, p. 12)

### 3 GLANCE AT THE OTHER: PERFORMATIVITY AND DESIRE

In order to problematize the relationship between gaze, desire, and otherness I would like to refer back to the psychoanalytic theory of Jacques Lacan in two moments that seem to be important to that relationship, because it is precisely in the juxtaposition of these three elements that the notion of “gaze” developed by Lacan occupies a central function in the structuration of subjectivity. Lacan (2002) conceptualized the mirror stage as the moment when the child recognizes him/herself as a subject who has an image, an image that the child seeks to imitate and becomes his/her ideal “ego”. The child passes from one body that was hitherto perceived as a fragmented body in pieces to a total body image, a *Gestalt*. In the mirror stage, the fragmented body prior to the register of the symbolic order obtains a full shape in its projection in the mirror

so that the child's assumption of that image constitutes a fundamental moment, according to Lacan, in which the child differentiates his/her body from others and tries to identify with the *similar*. The pursuit of this identification with the other has a formative effect on the imaginary register prior to the symbolic order, given here as the intervention of culture. At first, the place occupied by the imaginary order is allocated between nature and culture, between the fantasy of completeness, in which there is a fusion of one's own body with the world of objects, and symbolic intervention, understood as the threat of castration. It is precisely on account of being recognized as one image that the "I" becomes frustrated when faced with the world of objects, of what is not *me*, causing anxiety for the "ego". This frustration addresses the Other, who is not me. In this dialectic process, desire arises as the desire of *something else* rather than the proper "I", once the narcissistic passion results by itself in the annihilation of "I" as an entirely differentiated entity (Lacan, 2002, p. 78). Vision, in this moment, occupies a key position, as Grosz points out: "The primacy of the visual in this phase is not altogether surprising, if we understand the genesis of the ego as a specifically social process, one that is culturally and historically variable in its structure. Of all the senses, vision remains the one which most readily confirms the separation of subject from object. Vision performs a distancing function, leaving the looker unimplicated in or uncontaminated by its object" (Grosz, 1990, p. 38).

The subjects of the mirror stage and the gaze were repeatedly reformulated in Lacan's theory. Later in his seminar *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, the notion of gaze appears much more sophisticated than that one he presented in the text on the mirror stage. This elaboration could be articulated with one of the main points of discussion on the mirror stage raised by Butler (1993), and help me to discuss the persistence of vision in the context under investigation. Butler questioned the pre-discursive, pre-symbolic condition of the body in the mirror stage:

But this analysis still needs to take into account why it is that the body is in pieces before the mirror and before the law. Why should the body be given in parts before it is specularized as a totality and center of control? How did this body come to be in pieces and parts? To have a sense of a piece or a part is to have in advance a sense for the whole to which they belong. (Butler, 1993, pp. 81-82)

According to Butler, if the place of the phallus as signifier of desire could not be confused with the penis, how had the penis imposed itself as the founder of sexual difference? If the phallus bears one symbolic function, this function could be represented by any other part of the body. This would imply the possibility, as Butler establishes her argument, of a lesbian phallus to dismantle the primacy of heterosexual normalization of sexual difference. (Butler, 1993, p. 89)

A glance in the mirror would not be totalized by binary sexual difference, but open to the proliferation of new corporealities and other performativities (here, perhaps, may even be found the possibility for a queer approach to visibility). The body would then not be posited as something that precedes the look in the mirror in search of reflection, but it would be an effect of gaze upon a mirror image stated as arbitrary and partial:

The body in the mirror does not represent a body that is, as it were, before the mirror: the mirror, even as it is instigated by that unrepresentable body "before" the mirror, produces that body as its delirious effect – a delirium, by the way, which we are compelled to live. (Butler, 1993, p. 91)

What other *ways of seeing* would then be possible? What other configurations of desire could give way? How could the heteronormative gaze that classifies and marks bodies be dismantled, and how could we open up new spaces for “alternative imaginary schemas for constituting sites of erotogenic pleasure” (Butler, 1993, p. 91)? Lacan (1998) highlights the split between the eye and the gaze, between the subject and the other. In this second phase, the gaze is no longer at the pre-discursive body that turns up fragmented in the mirror stage, but a gaze already crossed by the symbolic order, stated as a failure, as movement of an eye that seeks what can no longer be found (Lacan, 1998, pp. 72 -73). Later Lacan made clear to us the split of the gaze as a place where the scopic drive comes through giving birth to desire. As noted by Lacan, the gaze is always elided, castrated, it is the moment of the encounter with the object through vision, one moment affirmed as simulacrum rather than as revelation: there is nothing to be revealed behind the veil of gaze. The drive manifests itself as the *superficial* effect of a gaze that always looks for the *lost object of desire*, so that this seeking is the productive act of representation, very tentatively to find with language what appears only virtually, so that the difference is the outcome of the repetitive task of seeking for the unattained object.

From the moment that this gaze appears, the subject tries to adapt himself to it, he becomes that punctiform object, that point of vanishing being with which the subject confuses his own failure. Furthermore, of all objects in which the subject may recognize his dependence in the register of desire, the gaze is specified as unapprehensible. That is why it is, more than any other object, misunderstood (*méconnu*), and it is perhaps for this reason, too, that the subject manages, fortunately, to symbolize his own vanishing and punctiform bar (trait) in the illusion of the consciousness of *seeing oneself see oneself*, in which the gaze is elided. (Lacan, 1998, p. 83)

The theme of repetition is present both in the psychoanalysis of Freud and Lacan as in the theory of performativity developed by Butler. The materiality of performativity involves the understanding that there is no subject preceding the action, but the action reiterates and produces *gendered* subjects. Here it is important to stress that Butler talks on social subjects that are not neutral and that do not antecede gender marks: social subjects are materialized as “gendered subjects”. The reality of the performance denies the contingency of a pre-discursive body preceding the action, so that gender gains reality in the reiterative actualization of a virtual field. What concern us here is to think of the gaze as a performative act that creates the seer and the seen. In his classic lectures on “way of seeing” Berger (1972) points out how women are depicted in a different way in the history of art.

But the essential way of seeing women, the essential use to which their images are put, has not changed. Women are depicted in a quite different way from men – not because the feminine is different from the masculine – but because the “ideal” spectator is always assumed to be male and the image of the woman is designed to flatter him. (Berger, 1972, p. 64)

The process of depicting the positions of who is the spectator and who is being seen seems to be normalized by the heterosexual principle: a female body is depicted not for any spectator but for a particular one - the heterosexual male subject. This, however, is still a very heteronormative consideration of our ways of seeing and we need to go back to recent queer critiques of identification processes to dismantle such heteronormativity (Muñoz, 1999).



In the first studies on queer sexualities in cyberspace, the question of how such places can represent a scenario for the production of new subjectivities was already posed (Campbell, 2004, O’Riordan & Phillips, 2007). For example, Wakeford (2000) proposes the term *cyberqueer*, articulating cyber and queer, as the possibility to think new performances of the sexual identity, since cyberspace would allow playing with the codes of anonymity and body editing. This reading, articulated with what I have proposed here to revise some postulates of Lacan and Butler, is also linked to critical readings of queer theory and feminist scholarship that revised the concept of identification in psychoanalysis when this concept tries to essentialize the sexual difference. Such authors propose a deconstructive and nomadic perspective of the sexual difference that mostly reinforce the deconstructionist perspectives in queer theory (Braidotti, 2011, Fuss 1990).

This is the space of performativity where performance and performativity are intertwined. In the very domain of performativity, the objectivity of gender regulation is beyond the understanding of the subject, the social actor. Performativity does not imply the agency of intentional actors. It is another kind of agency that is at stake here: the agency of experience, apprehended as the domain of practice in which regulative devices operate. These regulative devices are composed not only of objective norms represented in discursive statements about sexual difference, but also of feelings, bodily dispositions, affects, sensations. Bringing this to the discussion on performativity, we can argue that the misunderstanding about Butler’s concept of performativity is double-faced: not all things we face are discourse (against the idea of a totalitarian constructivism in her theory), and the realm of practice is neither pre-discursive nor naturalized so that *bodies matter* in their discursive *appearance*. This aspect has been recently stressed by the new materialist feminist scholarship, specifically by the work of Karen Barad (2003), who proposed a posthumanist performativity which argues for an intra-action of matter. Following this, in the next section, I address the relationship between queer performativity of desire and the production of space.

#### 4 RESEARCHING DESIRE: QUEERING GEOGRAPHIES OF SEXUALITIES

Some authors have paved the way for a more-than-representational perspective on cruising and on queer spaces (Brown, 2008; Mooshamer, 2005). According to them, there is a sexualized construction of space which involves the participation of human and nonhuman actors. Oswin (2008) points out that spaces cannot be assumed to be queer per se. It is in a queering production of space that dissident sexualities come up as spatialized. In addition to this, as point by Browne and Nash (2010), the need for queer methods and methodologies must not be based on an ontological perspective; it is often a process of ‘queering’ our research tools to investigate geographies of dissident sexualities.

It is necessary to connect the production of spaces with the queering materiality of sexualities both online and offline. What this perspective contributes to the understanding of the digital is that desire cannot be anticipated or separated from the very materiality in which the production of spaces and the queering of sexualities happen concomitantly.

In other terms, the conditions in which we can problematize desire through its performativity involve the processes that make it matter to us. The question here is to what extent desire matters in the *digital* realm. This raises questions on the visualization of bodies, and spaces

that become digital visualities. For that reason, it is necessary to think about the link between visibility and performativity in order to understand the digital persistence of desire within a queer geography of virtual environments where gay men search for other gay men. How do such environment shape a visual machine at the same time that they articulate a virtual space?

In this analysis we still have to reinforce the idea that individuals are providing fragmented data on their stats (age, height, weight, ethnicity and so on). In the digital geographies of sexuality, ways of seeing point towards a constellation of *dividuals*: fragmented data to be searched. The virtual space works as a vector for a visualization that is not only individual (the off screen dater) but *dividual* (Deleuze, 1992a) as profile and collective as stored digital archive (each individual is a combination of fragmented data to be displayed online as an image). The visual and the spatial are virtually in a kind of assemblage where what you *navigate* is what you *see*.

Queer geographies of sexualities should engage with other research areas such as semiotics and performance studies, for example, in order to understand the production of spaces in digital media. It is necessary to address desire in the production of spaces. Berlant (2012) in her work on Deleuze and Guattari's ideas about desire can be valuable to bring desire into the discussion of queer geographies of sexualities inasmuch as desire can be assumed as a spacing category:

They use the language of “deterritorialization” and “reterritorialization” to describe the process by which desire undoes the zone of its identity and then remakes itself according to the mode in which it lands in a new space and “civilizes” it. In this view desire attaches itself to forms that, in turn, have an impact on the desiring subject, reorganizing its self-relation, changing the form and the space of its desires. (2012, p. 65)

It is while navigating online that gay men become excited to date. It is in this process of visual excitation by texting, sexting, and exchanging pictures that maps of online sexualities are traced. These maps incorporate elements that belong not only to verbal communication, but also to the visual semiotics of the exposure of bodies. New modes of sexualizing come up when one, for instance, touches the screen to amplify bodily parts displayed as images. This repertoire of actions materializes virtuality, not only that immanent to the digital media but that other inherent to every intimate contact (McGlotten, 2013) which makes every navigation a collective and a individual map at the same time. Thus, our contemporary geographies of sexuality are in exchange with domains hitherto not so familiar to many of us because they extend our perception of space to the consideration of intimacy bounds and desires internal to the spatial dynamics that sexualities accomplish.

## 5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS: THE VIRTUALITY OF DESIRE AND THE TRAPS OF OTHERNESS

Referring back to the virtual body and online performativity, Grosz ascertains that “virtuality” is not something new brought by the digital era. The advent of writing had introduced a form of virtuality: “The mail—the physical letter and electronic media—functions virtually. The invention of electronically generated media does not introduce us for the first time to virtuality but rather renders virtuality more graphic. We were already in a certain mode of virtuality when we wrote letters or when we painted and read. The city has never been just anything but an ongoing site of virtuality” (Grosz, 2001, pp. 16-17).

To what extent does the digital body matter in its online performativity? In the mirror of the screen, the performative gaze towards the digital body crosses the virtual and the real in the context of online gay dating. Here, it is not the idea of avatar, of virtual identities interacting regardless of offline realities. Gay daters are constantly crossing between the online and off; the play of dating is built in this movement, in which it is possible to remain virtual. The objectivity of vision is activated as a partial potentiality of every actor connected. This substantiates not only empiric findings but reinforces one perspective that we can only speak of situated subjects, because we are all positioned. The possibility of objectivity relies on the exercise of situated knowledge, inasmuch as every subjectivity is part of that virtual kaleidoscope of desires.

We need to learn in our bodies, endowed with primate colour and stereoscopic vision, how to attach the objective to our theoretical and political scanners in order to name where we are and not, in dimensions of mental and physical space we hardly know how to name (Haraway, 1991, p. 190)

In the play of looking for and being seen, actors perform seduction in a very intriguing way to observe how “otherness” emerges in the negotiation of dating practices, which many times appeals to *intersectional* stereotypes on gender, race, nationality, and sexual practices. A new kind of eroticism is produced online in the globalization of sexuality, where the very social markers of differences such as race, gender, and nationality are intertwined in the process of an online transnational erotic and seductive exchange. At that point, the globalization of sexuality implies a new perspective on social actors, movements, and representations between spaces, constituting an important subject in the scholarship about processes of globalization.

Sexuality is commonly seen as synonymous with the local scale – a natural essence impacted upon by global capital, but it is increasingly impossible to understand global consumption practices (for example) without referring to sexuality and desire. (Binnie, 2004, p. 37)

Finally, it persists because only by problematizing desire one can comprehend the dynamics of performing digital bodies, the embodied practices of actors, which many times are beyond our representational comprehension and which other formulations of “agency”, “movement” and “representation” allow us to observe the contemporary globalized online dating. In this article, I showed the need to think about how the use of new technologies by sexual dissidents allows the production of new corporealities and visualities. Such corporealities and visualities should be examined conceptually as possibilities to reinvent what we think about the body, desire and performance. This is particularly necessary in the new scenarios such as cyberspace beyond an identitarian and representational perspective. For this purpose, a theoretical examination between classic and contemporary theoretical frameworks was necessary to shed light on what still needs to be further elaborated.

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