

Unlearning Queer of the Tropics:  
Stonewall didn't happen here

By Jota Mombaça

There exists a current narrative on how *queer* emerged in the field of contemporary micro politics, taken from the Stonewall Inn Riot in the United States at the end of the 1960's from the beginning of the 1970's. From this perspective (before becoming a academically-polished global-scale theoretical discourse) *queer* marked a radical political position, problematizing sexual normativity's and gender in the context of liberation struggles taking place in the United States – and in other parts of the world – during the same period.

The *queer* strategy for excellence is the re-appropriation of injury and the consequent affirmation of marginalized difference as a privileged point of view for an anti-normative critic of normativity. Stemming from a radical origin, it is a queer creature – disobedient to gender and a sexual dissident – which positions itself in contemporary body politics, reclaiming the body, the voice, and ethic as completely diverse in respect to the imposition of heteronormativity dominion.

Affirming this narrative, which attributes the genealogical mark that United States *queer* activism has left on theoretical practice currently inundating academic archives of the world, has the effect to decenter the axis of logic in knowledge production. If queer is above all, a term of political action and a principal of conjoining experiences, body's, and lives in the margins of the hetero-capitalist system, **whatever knowledge that comes forth must embrace its unavoidable politicization. Politicization which not only balances the epistemological domains established as theoretical traditions of hetero thought, but also challenges grammars, gymnastics, stances, and life practices designated as the heterosexualized norm of life.**

As an effect of its own internationalization as a central-concept and program of practices and **defiant** discourses against the normativity's of gender and sexuality, *queer*

participated in not one, but many distinct emergences in diverse scenarios. Aside from the already existing official history of *queer*, compulsorily connect to United States genealogy, the ways that this central-concept penetrated multiple local vocabularies created a proliferation of other narratives. In summary: the queer of Pindorama, of the hot south of the tropics, did not emerge from the same processes as the queer from “above.”

## PHOTO

For example, before directly influencing the **everyday** activism of translésbixas people, *queer* appeared in academic spaces here. This does not necessarily imply its total de-politicization, nor does it define in part, the various possibilities of the use of queer in the tropics, but certainly recognizes the academic representation and the institutions as battlefields, a central axis to the fight and *queer* politicization in Brazil. If there was an ‘inaugural’ *queer* activism, it occurred deep within the confines of institutionalized academic spaces.

The queer of Pindorama emerges from a movement inverse to the official story of queer in the United States: which emerges from a theorization of ethics. It emerges prior to an approach to life and its affective geography, the nightclub, the night, the conflicts in the street, the little hellholes and dark corners, the conflicts with the police, and most of the classrooms and corridors of departments in institutions of knowledge production. This queer, wrought by scientific articles and doctorate thesis’s, partially rebelled against hegemonic theoretical entrapments. However, it could not completely escape from the modulations it involves. As an academic perspective, *queer* navigates its network of objectified subjects, projects its framework of theoretical fictions and formulates its own socio-anthropological analysis’s, historic’s, and esthetics. This *queer* projects about the here-now in relationships of gender and sexuality in a new vocabulary, replete of self-proclaimed “correct” taxonomies on how to deal with the phenomenon’s of body-political dissidence in the tropics.

Hija de Perra, in their essay “Filthy Interpretations of how queer theory colonizes our sudaca<sup>1</sup>, third-world, and poor-in-aspirations context, perturbing the humans enchanted by heteronormativity with new constructions of gender”, reflects on the inconspicuous continuities between and colonialism in a Southern-American context (specifically Chilean). The author presents from their personal experience, a critique of the character of interpellation that queer acquires when it comes here. When speaking of themselves as a “a new mestiça Southern Cone Latina who never intended to be taxonomically identified as queer” Perra attributes the responsibility of gender theory to their connection with this classificatory axis. Thereby, revealing how much the proliferation of queer references in our historical context – marked by the effects of colonialism and subalternity – initially depends on the act of labeling as a means of theoretical initiatives which are relatively separated from life experiences; characterized by dissident sexual and disobedient gender experiences in the sudaca world.

Thus, although queer theoretical approaches confront the notion of identity as fixed, guided both by a radical denaturalization of the subject as a relationship of resistance in the face of body-politic impositions and co-ercements, they do not stop to produce effects in its emergence in the tropics. This is what Hija de Perra seeks to highlight, a gesture, simultaneously colonial and troubling, hastening its own demise, before dislodging the order in which it seeks to rebel against.

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<sup>1</sup> Sudaca is above all, a perjorative term used to refer to people from South America. In a large context, it indicates pertinence to third-world contexts of the Global South. Aside from this, the term has been communally reappropriated by activists in Latin American (especially in South America) as a way to demonstrate a position of frontline resistance to the imposed assimilations in the context of the globalized Eurocentric geopolitics.