MAKING SENSE OF IT: WHY DEMOCRACY (AND FEMINISM) NEEDS TO GO BEYOND BINARY CITIZENSHIP*

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Abstract: This text assumes and departs from three basic premises: 1) identities are not born but constructed through repeated performative actions that are in turn informed by existing social constructions of gender; 2) analysing and understanding the ways in which gender is shared and historically constructed can lead to a construction of gender that goes beyond the binary system on which heteronormativity depends; 3) feminism is inherently democratic and entails the consolidation of the very conception of democracy. If feminism wants to remain so, it concludes, it cannot but embrace the theoretical framework and action of non-binary citizenship conceived by Queer Theory.

Keywords: Citizenship, democracy, feminism, identity, non binary, Queer Theory.

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> "We are a movement of masculine females and feminine males, cross-dressers, transsexual men and women, intersexuals born on the anatomical sweep between female and male, gender-blenders, many other sex and gender-variant people, and our significant others. Our lives are proof that sex and gender are much more complex than a delivery room doctor's glance at genitals can determine"
> (Feinberg, 1998)

> -First, we believe that each person has the right to define their own identity and demand that society respect them. This also includes the right to express our gender without fear of discrimination or violence.
>
> Second, we hold that we have the exclusive right to make decisions regarding our own bodies and that no political, medical or religious authority should violate their integrity against our will or impede the decisions we make in this regard.
> (Koyama, 2000)

> Todos los orgasmos que he tenido esta semana me han permitido acceder a Dios y me han revelado premoniciones detalladas del futuro y de lugares que no existen en esta dimensión. Mi abuelo me observa mortificado desde la puerta de la cocina. La familia entera me escucha indignada, extremando las medidas de incredulidad
> (Tilsa Otta, 2021)

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1. INTRODUCTION

During the last decades, the irruption of Queer Theory has meant an important challenge both for the agenda of gender studies and its epistemological principles and for the political and philosophical order of contemporary democracies. If feminism has been perceived as a main driving force in the democratisation of democracies, it in turn should perceive to what extent Queer Theory has relaunched and deepened that process of "democratic democratisation".

This paper argues that democratic theory, hence also gender studies, must incorporate Queer Theory's main assumption: i.e. the need to go beyond the modern gender binary. To this end, it is divided into two large parts. In the first one, it exposes how the concept of patriarchy, in its modern (neo)liberal version as "total ideology", has consciously couched the construction of gender in predetermined binary terms, and has provided the necessary mechanisms to prevent any deviation from this predetermined ideal. It also shows how, despite the often conflicting relationships between some strands of feminism and the queer agenda, so-called Queer Theory provides grounds and mechanisms like no others for questioning patriarchy in its binary roots and must hence be incorporated in mainstream feminist agenda and gender studies. The second part develops a critical approach to democratic theory which argues that queer stands for democracy at its purest and must be embraced by feminism in order to widen the demos and the democratic ethos. It also links this democratising attempt to the process of decolonising the main assumptions underlying Western democracies. It shows how non-binary axioms can help critical reflections on capitalism and open new horizons when debating on the notion of pleasure within it. The last section offers some concluding thoughts on Queer Theory as a democratic and hence feminist utopia.

2. SOME CONSIDERATIONS ON GENDER AND (TRANS) FEMINISM

2.1. Patriarchy, gender and identity

The social construction of gender is arguably the most effective mechanism of socio-political control. The binary division between male and female enables subordinate relations over more than half the world's population. While other mechanisms of social control, such as race, social class or religion, are capable of partially subordinating important population groups, and while these mechanisms often work intersectionally with gender, gender in itself is of unmatched power.

Male patriarchal thought has focused its ethics on the value of law and justice, indeed a highly relevant value, yet one that is frequently cold and distant and, worse, non-operative and unfair. Some strands of feminism have, on the other hand, highlighted the value of caring, as complementary to justice and as based on feelings such as compassion, solidarity or responsibility (Gilligan 1982). Reason and feelings feed each other, talk to each other; furthermore, it is feelings, not reason, that ultimately motivate behaviour. Thus, only an approach to knowledge that harmonises reason and feelings, that gives both of them their place, can lead us to act as moral agents, to assume moral responsibilities.

By contrast, the dominant hegemonic approach to knowledge imposed by the modern socio-political project, especially since the last quarter of the 19th century, attempts to separate economic motivations and psychology from all the other interests that make up social reality. As such it is, in Karl Mannheim's terms, a "total ideology". It presents reality through a merely functional, aseptic, neutral description, as a reality "concretizing itself to an objective description of the structural differences of the mentalities that operate on a different social base" (Mannheim 1941: 51). However, as Gramsci has already pointed out, the construction of any hegemonic *apparatus* that intends –that is even required– to conduct human behaviour also needs to consciously and intentionally recreate a whole new ideological field (or fields), to introduce a whole reform of the consciousness and produce a precise form of knowledge and socialisation in that knowledge (Gramsci 1975). Regarded in this light, the construction and expansion of liberalism should not be seen as a historical accident, the accidental product of the evolution of humanity through alleged progress towards a goal determined in advance. It is rather a highly structured ideological project, one concentrated on the will to create truths. It is all about a meta-project of domination, a complete hegemony, a supposedly secular theology, at the same time as a teleology that prefixes, announces and builds the way forward. The project creates truth through sets of inclusions and exclusions. Nothing exists beyond these sets, beyond their classifications of good versus evil, correct versus deviant. Truth devices require a logic of meanings that appear to be so inescapable as to be indisputable. These standardised truths become so entrenched that they deactivate and even erase in advance any attempt to question them, any proposal of otherness, to the point of diluting the very "will to truth" (Foucault 1999). The power of the State is thus transformed and refined into biopolitics.

The above gives rise to a kind of neoliberal governmentality based on an alliance-fusion between the State and the market. Together they exert an all-encompassing power of control, coercion and punishment, a much more efficient mechanism for the production of truth than the 19th century liberal state and, of course, than monarchical absolutism, Roman imperialism or any other legal-political form of control to which we can go back. "For this will to truth, like the other systems of exclusion, is supported by an institutional support: it is both reinforced and accompanied by a dense series of practices such as pedagogy, such as the book system, publishing, libraries, like the societies of wise men of yesteryear, the current laboratories" (Foucault 1999: 10).

Even when "the other" is impossible to hide, it is (it must be) interpreted as a deviation from the normal, a failure with respect to the model to be followed, an inadmissible alterity against which there are mainly two strategies. On the one hand, there is the recovery of the deviant and their return to normality. The mentally sick, the homosexual, the non-Western savage, the shameless nationalist of a state minority ... all are offered the opportunity to redeem themselves and redirect their behaviour to fit within the limits of what is accepted, what is acceptable. On the other hand, there is the denial, expulsion, marginalisation of all those who are intrinsically different in biological and / or cultural terms, their placement without possible redemption forever at the outskirts of normality. Among them are women, trans and non-binary people, those who are racialized as non-white, as well as, of course, those belonging to non-human species, the other "animals".

From here on, the modern project of the Enlightenment can be seen as a control machinery, in Foucaultian terms, as a "normalizing" mechanism that naturalises as unquestionable truths whatever it conceptualises as "normal". This includes dichotomies such as male versus female, white versus non-white, Western versus others, wealthy versus poor, "capable" versus "incapable", productive versus non-productive, hetero versus homo, cisgender versus trans, humans versus animal beasts.

In this monitoring framework, identity is one of the most effective mechanisms for the creation and reproduction of binary dynamics and the relations of exclusion and domination deriving therefrom. It is so in as far as identity is interpreted as an impregnable and inescapable pattern of being for humans. The normalisation of certain identities against others has been the main instrument of subordination, exclusion and denial safely relied on by Western states at least since the 18th century, when the imposition of normalised identities starts to be more easily recognised. Western identity parameters will then be exported, transferred and imposed without negotiation to the rest of the territories, at the cost of denial of their original ones.

From both a philosophical and an epistemic point of view, however, identity is not inborn but rather constructed through repeated performative actions. These are in turn informed at their core by existing social constructions of gender. When analysing and understanding how gender is shared and historically constituted, it becomes clear that it can be produced in a variety of different ways, including ways that go beyond binary patterns. This idea of diversity underlies the very notion of the "sex-gender system", which Gayle Rubin enunciated as a social construction in 1975, in "Traffic in women: notes on the political economy of sex", notably as "a set of agreements by which society transforms biological sexuality into products of human activity, and in which these transformed sexual needs are satisfied" (Rubin 1996: 44). In this line, and in the words of Jeffrey Weeks, identities are "necessary fictions" for us to understand our relationship with our body, with other people and with the environment. Far from stemming from some 'natural' essence, they are but social constructions that link us to a community and are built through the affirmation of differences (Weeks 1995).

2.2. Feminism and Transfeminism

As the preceding reflections make clear, expanding the feminist subject beyond cisgender women is central to the feminist agenda of the 21st century. It is what Carolina Meloni has called the turn of feminist consciousness, a turn marked by its opening towards what she has termed eccentric subjects, broken and resituated, multiple and non-binary. With this turn, women as a political category redirect the debate on the subject of feminism to a new dimension, a non-biologic dimension (Meloni 2012). This breaks the unidirectional connections between sex and gender that weigh traditional sexuality, with a view to liberating and pluralizing it. This in turn questions the physiological limits of bodies and connects us with a new consciousness of what she terms "the technique", the mechanisms of subordination institutionalised (hence normalised) by modernity. This epistemic turn places us, in sum, in a type of *Trans Feminist Standpoint*, one that embraces Queer Theory.

Queer Theory is about questioning and subverting existing sex-gender categories (see Foucault, Sedgewick, Butler, Lauretis and others). Traditionally, feminist theory has only been concerned with issues affecting (cis)women and (cis)women's empowerment. The subjects of Queer Theory, on the other hand, are diverse. They include women, homosexuals, transsexuals, and those considered to be sex-gender deviants. At the beginning of the 1990s, in a series of highly notable works, such as *Transgender Liberation: A Movement whose Time has Come* (1992), Leslie Feinberg defined "transgender" people as people who challenge the gender binary construction, as established mainly by white heterosexual males with the capacity to generate power discourses. The term "transgender" would then be about setting in motion a counter-history of sex-gender identity for the present and the future, as well as re-claiming oppressions of the past.

Teresa de Lauretis is one of the first to have used the expression *queer* when speaking of both the post-feminist and trans-feminist condition of the feminist movement and practice for the century to come. At her basis is the epistemological turn begun by decolonial feminism and the theories of intersectionality, which have now become the object of academic philosophical reflection and social concern more broadly, as shown through cultural products in cinema or literature (1987).

Eve Sedgwick Kosofsky, with her *Epistemology of the closet* (1990), also questions the gender binary in sexuality and sexual relationships, noting that the meanings of sex and sexuality are difficult to understand from a hetero / homo sexual perspective. The conception of sex is as varied as individuals and, of course, goes beyond heteronormative patterns where the male must be explicitly active, while the female corresponds to the opposite attitude.

In *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990), Judith Butler sustains that gender is in any case a philosophically diverse space, one that does not require unity to make itself visible and understood. What is queer, what is strange, what is deviant, what is degenerate, what is twisted, what is not conformed, what is not regulated ... all of it is perceived as gender, thus posing a challenge to the patriarchal and androcentric apparatus as a whole. Even more noteworthy, they also pose a challenge to the historical foundations of a significant sector of feminism, mostly to that which has institutional weight and is therefore close to institutionalised power.

In order to understand gender and its diversity we must go beyond the psychological or cultural imprint of biological or chromosomal sex. We must understand gender as a permanent and structured discursive practice, one that has been constructed in its hegemonic form around the concept of heterosexuality, understood as the norm of human relationships. The body itself is, in this sense, a "signifying practice"; it is or expresses a social practice insofar as the perception of sex (biological-genital) creates and manifests a certain social value. Queer Theory radically de-essentialises, or deliteralises (as it is also said), the categories of sex and gender. As such, it has served as a theoretical foundation and as a political tool to legitimise a series of groups classified (in the past) as "sexual minorities", who (together with women) were, and continue to be, excluded, segregated and stigmatised by binary gender norms.

What is queer (cuir in an accepted Castilianized version) is revolted against the order of the (inherited) patronymic discourses, not only in the field of sex-gender-sexuality relations, but very especially within it (Alabao 2020: 129-131). Hegemonic narratives are imposed by means of institutional violence, through the creation of legal and social norms, often also through physical violence. Emphasising the plurality denied and repressed by the constraints of hegemony, queer brings out the multidimensional layers of oppression. This is why Queer Theory is essentially and primarily intersectional. Like intersectionality, it draws on the experience of black feminist thought and decolonial feminism, to expand into an intersectional critique that includes dimensions such as ageism, ableism, migrant-local confrontation, and the radically important Eurocentrism-native people's opposition. Like Queer Theory, in turn, intersectionality explores the universe of possible combinations to present us with multiple polysemic subjects, subjects changing in identity, but also traversed and questioned by plural forms of oppression. They both universalise and particularise received feminism at the same time (Hill Collins and Bilge 2016).

Intersectionality, like Queer Theory, thus becomes an indispensable element in the fight for women's rights, whatever their condition, thus overcoming the essentialising binary homogeneity originating from second wave feminisms (Crenshaw 1991). Through questioning the gender binary, they both also question the very concept of traditional liberal citizenship. As the citizenship of cisgenderism is being questioned, so is the possibility that gender occupies a different place within citizenship, as this can no longer be accounted for in the traditional dichotomous man / woman categories. The very notion of gender could even become dispensable in identity documents, an idea that is now being proposed in some countries, like Argentina.

3. WHY IS QUEER THEORY IMPORTANT TO DEMOCRACY

3.1. Widening the "demos"

Inclusiveness or inclusivity is (should be) the most characteristic feature of a literal conception of democracy. Democracies, however, have historically been constructed upon the exclusion of certain subjects from the idea of demos (Losurdo 2005). In the most positive analysis, the liberal narrative of the history of democracy has mostly focused on the gradual appearance of new individual rights as a distinctive and defining feature of the expansive character of democracies. Narratives of democracy, however, would be incomplete if they stayed within the realm of rights and their recognition, relevant though this is, without enquiring into their subject. The object of analysis should be expanded to focus not only on the content of the rights, but also on the construction of right-holders through dynamics of inclusion / exclusion of different people as legal subjects. The debate, both historical and contemporary, has prefixed a group of individuals capable of holding and exercising rights, while depriving others of such possibility. Historically, the wealthy, white, male historical subject has been the predominant one. Progressively, the notion of the democratic (political) subject has been broadened to include, albeit often only partially, women, other ethnic-racial groups and other "outsiders", generally regarded as colonised. There remain, however, many areas of exclusion, groups "disabled" by the State. These

notably comprise migrant population, "undocumented" and invisible people, all of them equally supportive of the economic and socio-political functioning of our societies. They also comprise queer or, more generally, LGTBIQ+ people.

The inclusion of LGTBIQ+ remains disputed in many places and areas; many remain non-existent for the administration. Yet democratic citizenship is not consistent with leaving sectors of the population beyond its bounds. Where the opportunities for partaking in participatory dynamics are hampered either legally or through political or social practice, it is not consistent to speak of a system as democratic. Discrimination of LBTBIQ+ people encompasses many areas. Following Surya Monro (2005), this starts with language as a tool for creating and communicating knowledge and identity. The very ability to name others and ourselves presents important obstacles when referring to trans people, as these challenge the traditional pronouns in most languages. The inclusion of "others" as a genre does not solve the situation, since it seems to pigeonhole in a general sack everything that is not normative, that does not belong in the "point of reference", thus confirming the very normativity it tries to confront. The very process of linguistic labelling thus comes into question. Do we name ourselves to recognise ourselves or to take control of ourselves? Closely related to this are the bureaucratic mechanisms of demographic census and the statistical tools of the state, part of every state's control of its territory and population.

Other forms of non-democratic exclusion of the non-binary are explicitly material. It is the case of economic exclusion. It is also the case of the spatial violence implied in the absence of standardised spaces for the non-binary in public or private spheres or institutions (schools, parliaments, toilets...). There is, furthermore, no total discrimination without legal support (Monro 2005: 51-52). Trans people are excluded from the direct protection of the law and are generally penalised by it in more or less explicit terms (Sharpe 2002). Other areas of exclusion, abandonment and expropriation have been, and continue to be, medicine, education or the media (Whittle 2002; Center for American Progress 2020). The representation that the latter make of trans persons, as a whole as well as of single individuals, tends to range from contempt, rejection, disgust, or distance, to other perhaps less violent but equally damaging attitudes, such as condescension, paternalism or compassion, if not the self-serving commodification of a certain progressive aesthetic attires.

3.2.   Decolonised Cosmopolitan democracy

At the core is the project of decolonizing democracies, of stripping it of a long list of basic tenets that are both western and male, yet that have been constructed as global and neutral (Güven 2015). This entails a project to open democratic citizenship to those whose sex-gender-sexuality identity options have been subject to mechanisms of exclusions. Non-binary citizenship is in this sense decolonial, because it blows up the binary mechanisms that have helped to articulate (cis / hetero) male colonial Eurocentric thinking. As has been pointed out from the ranks of Critical Studies, more specifically in Decolonial Theory, Black Feminist Thought and more recently in Critical Race Theory and Intersectionality Studies, the logic of the gender binary does not differ in essence

from the biological essentialism successfully claimed by modernity, and which even today survives in many ways: the essentialism that differentiates between the humanity of white beings and the animality (non-humanity) of blacks and, by way of extension, of all non-whites. All differentiations revolve around this first one.

As Elsa Dorlin has highlighted in *La Matriz de la Raza*, heteronormative control devices have required, on an imperialist scale, the presentation of non-white and non-male bodies as pathologised beings. Western medicine has long contributed to presenting non-white, non-straight, and non-cisgender bodies as caustic deviations from the initial prototype (Dorlin 2020).

The process of historical inquiry, however, brings us closer to old "new" conceptions that break with the *digital* relationship of opposites and excluding categories, as proposed by Agueda Gómez (2010). There is an abundant literature of *analogical* "sex / gender" relationships, understood as those where none of the values or meeting points of the imaginary are by definition excluded. These are more transitive identities, which can take multiple forms, which are not defined in exclusion and which do not have to have total durability (Prigogine 1999).

Queer Theory has revealed the discursive, fluid and transitory possibilities of "sex-gender" systems which have existed for centuries in other scenarios, mostly pre-capitalist and pre-Columbian contexts. Think for example of the Rrámuri model, the Bijagó model, the Hindu model of India, the Zapotec model or the pre-Hispanic Mayan model (Gómez 2010: 81-86). The ancestral thus becomes a point of reference from which to question the totalizing universe of the liberal capitalist. In most of these models, together with the traditional categories of man and woman or masculine / feminine, there exist other sex-gender combinations that are also institutionalised as possible. This shows a diversity of gender roles and a scope of relationships, identities and sexual preferences that is more flexible and wider than our predetermined and socially accepted (binary) ones. Although these are mostly patriarchal societies, they rest on a much more elaborate, complex, multiple and plural development of sexual intersectionality. It is for example the case of the muxe in the Zapotec model, the hijras in India or the reneke / ropeke and nawki categories in the rarámuri people (Gómez 2010: 76-81). They rest on a kind of social functionalism based on diversity.

All this comes to show that the normalisation and biologisation that characterise Western essentialism is nothing but an artifice and a discursive construction. As such it offers no further evidence of its foundation, it is not in accordance with human nature, nor is it consistent with physiological and affective diversity sex of the species as such. The performative character of gender makes it possible and urgent to generate transnational alliances, as cosmopolitan forces, across the excluded for reasons related to sex, gender and/or sexuality, just as alliances have been promoted transnationally on the basis of class consciousness. Queer demands for recognition must be acknowledged and vindicated beyond the construction of the legal frameworks of the nation state, particularly as these are built upon structurally excluding pillars. In order to deconstruct and replace these pillars for inclusive ones, international solidarity is in order.

3.3. Democracy as pleasure

The dominant model aspires to control the different forms of pleasure, enhancing some over others, as long as they are controlled by the market. Normative sexual acts are attached to concrete situations and circumstances accepted and permitted, protected by respectability and morally shared. Both law and custom, as well as traditions, function as mechanisms to avoid deviation from the frameworks of normative (monogamous and heterosexual) relationships, most commonly within the bosom of the cisgender couple / family. While the erotic is commodified, while it is assumed as an acceptable object of consumption, there is an important rejection of the most personal and everyday forms of pleasure as a force for change, fulfilment, opposition and protest, also as it was conceived by Audre Lorde (1978).

The market also subjects sexual forms according to the time (the nights after long and strenuous work days) and the places (generally the private spaces of private homes) stipulated for them as proper. Following Gayle Rubin's words: "Modern Western societies appraise sex acts [and pleasure] according to a hierarchical system of value. Individuals whose behavior stands high in this hierarchy are rewarded with certified mental health, respectability, legality, social and physical mobility, institutional support, and material benefits" (Rubin 2006: 158).

Pleasure, however, can also become counter-hegemonic, if we manage to endow it with transforming force, as a dimension of the process of personal, social and political empowerment. Detached from the rules of the market, it can become an instrument of transformation. Sexuality is no longer bound to the demands of reproduction, nor is it surrounded by the narrow space of monogamy and the familiar. It has broken through the timelines of productivity and the "productivity racks" through relative and even dissipate time frames. Most importantly, pleasure and sexuality have been disconnected from the duality of heteronormative agents. Subjects become plural in their volitional feelings, which do not have to be bought or sold, but only have to be enjoyed. The actors involved are multiple and the options and manifestations of affections and sex as well. Queer involves us in the pre-constructed, taking up latent drives in some way from yesteryear, while launching a profoundly anti-hierarchical and intersectional challenge. Queer pleasure can be seen as a sort of resistance to the narrow logic of pleasure and eroticism. It is an homage to a politics of radical sexuality and a signal of ways in which a politics of pleasure is actively queer.

3.4. (Trans)feminism, democracy and capitalism

From the dawn of the bourgeois liberal revolutions to the present, both feminist theories and feminist mobilisation in all their plurality have made huge contributions to the construction of democracy. The evolution of the practices and theoretical frameworks of democracies could not be understood without the democratisation that feminism has promoted within them. From diverse positions and in different historical periods, pigeonholed in waves, democracy is what it is thanks in large part to the progressive introduction of more egalitarian demands and visions, a process that

could hardly have taken place outside the framework of feminist theory and practice. However, the possibility of incorporating and broadening the idea of the political subject is stirring within feminist ranks not a few disquieting disagreements and internal contradictions.

This is perplexing. The patterns of democratic citizenship have evolved and deepened very notably thanks to the progressive incorporation of feminist citizenship models, through public policies and regulatory changes that have allowed for a more egalitarian conception of the very idea of citizenship. Yet some sectors of feminism seem to be contributing to some of the difficulties we encounter when defining a more transversal, intersectional and inclusive concept of citizenship. Many of those difficulties stem from the intrinsic connection between (bio)politics and capitalism. The dissolution of the idea of the citizen in the "consumer-rightsholder" duo makes both the theoretical debate and the practical proposals for the expansion of the demos extremely difficult. Capitalist liberal democracies rely on the prototypically cis-hetero normative model of (re)production, which places at its centre the conception of the heterosexual family with cisgender members, who produce-consume and reproduce.

The androcentric-patriarchal hegemonic dominant discourse imposes a logic of subordination specially designed for the submission of every perceived alterity, of the "non-man", to the pattern of what is considered "masculine". This is especially evident in the historical moment of the conjunction of the liberal state and the capitalist economy. As Silvia Federici highlights in her *Caliban and the Witch*, the witch hunt and female sexual repression of early modernity were essential for the development of the new liberal capitalist hegemony, which accentuated the androcentric interests of domination inherited from yesteryear (Federici 2010). The establishment of the nuclear family through marriage in capitalist liberal societies further corroborates the implantation of this model. In this sense, Engels made an important contribution to our knowledge of women's position in society and in history as subjects (objects) under androcentric domination, by underlining the basic mechanisms deployed by capitalist liberalism to establish its model of domination. In this line, he demonstrated that there is a connection between private property, monogamous marriage, and prostitution, while showing the connection between men's economic and political dominance and their control over female sexuality (Engels 2010 -original 1884-).

As all this comes to show, capitalism is not an aseptic, depoliticised and merely economic system; rather it has a clear link with liberal morality. Capitalism is fundamentally the economic structure of liberalism in politics, its superstructure, and has assumed its moral postulates and its conservative idea of family and sexual conception. Libertarian capitalism does not rest on the scenario of moral neutrality it wants to be seen as supporting. Political, social, cultural relations and moral and religious value patterns are not alien to it, but a central part of its essence. The construction of an inclusive concept of citizenship is not part of the value baggage of capitalism. Democracy, however, aims precisely at this, at expanding citizenship to make it all inclusive. This implies moving towards the recognition of inclusive citizenship, in its different and interdependent dimensions (civil, political and social, as theorised by T.H. Marshall), and towards an inclusive construction of the status of rights-holders, of the holders of the rights (civil, political and social) that

enable the enjoyment of the different strands of citizenship, regarded as an indivisible set (Marshall 1949 [1963]).

Feminism has fought for women's full inclusion within democratic citizenship. In order to be coherent with itself, it has to continue fighting for the inclusion of every woman and everyone left out for reasons related to sex, gender and/or sexuality. The recognition of LGTBIQ+ people as full democratic citizens must be part of this fight. Their citizenship cannot be reduced to their role as voters, in line with classical liberalism, and as consumers, in line with capitalism. They must be recognised as legal and political subjects with full (civil, political, social) citizenship rights. Far from remaining neutral in this struggle, far also from being an emancipatory force, capitalism adheres to constructions of sex-gender-sexuality that support its inner structures, as is the case of the hegemonic binary, while also engulfing affective relationships of which it takes commercial advantage, by transforming them into commodities, into items for consumption (Illouz 2017). Not expanding its subjects to include LGTBIQ+ people makes feminism complicit with the interests of capitalism and its power dynamics, including the subordination of ciswomen.

4. Posthuman Knowledge and Utopia: Concluding Remarks

Critical Posthumanities deal with increasingly different subjects. As Jenny Kleeman has argued, science and technology applied to both philosophical knowledge and technical artefacts accelerate the historical relationship that human beings have been having with scientific-technical advances. It is about overcoming the physiological defects or deficiencies arising, not only from genetic arbitrariness or body wasting, but also from the biological barriers of ascription. The process of sexual (and of course gender) self-determination relies on medicine, biology, cybernetics and other sources of knowledge, to imagine individuals who think with autonomy beyond pre-established strictures of what was received in the lottery of birth (Kleeman 2020). It also invites us to investigate the possibilities of a plurality of masculinities and femininities, of a range of ways of living our lives. This tends towards an implosion of gender as a useful category of analysis, a result of the disentangling of sex, gender and desire (sexuality).

Queer Theory also encourages us to focus on the utopia of a gender-free world (Bornstein 1994). It is worth noting here the importance of the utopian component of queer literature, as well as the relationship between Queer Theory and the poststructuralist literature from which it draws heavily, and deconstructionist proposals such as Braidotti's *Posthuman Knowledge* (2019) or Donna Haraway's seminal works (*Cyborg Manifesto*). As has already been pointed out, since queer generates a generalised rejection not only in the normative field, but also and above all in the field of the visual, the transfeminist utopia is the ideal locus to posit, empower, highlight and strengthen the idea of the strange, the abject, the different and the monstrous (García 2016).

All queer utopian literature shows an explicit rejection of liberalism / libertarianism, as does the more classical utopian feminist literature (think of the work of Haraway, Piercy, LeGuin, Gilman, Russ ...). Far from being libertarian and capitalist (Jones 2013), this is rather a deeply communitarian vision, the view of a world where individuals are members of

a community and conform ways of living much more based on collective care and reciprocal commitments and much less reliant on isolated rational actions (Dolan 2008; Nicholas 2009).

In this sense, democracy could use the idea of a gender-free world to focus its attention on individuals, political subjects who embrace a community ideal regardless of their gender. What matters in this sense is who participates and the democratic ethos which they deploy when they do so, not so much their corporeality or their gender ascription, whatever it may be. This idea somewhat follows the parameters proposed by the notion of post-racial democracy as a way of going beyond the traditional western pattern of democracy. The central focus of democracies would thus be on political agents and any attempt to catalogue and label them would be avoided. A potentially inclusive democracy, in sex-gender terms and beyond, would ensue.

The incursion into the utopian genre of the queer is fundamental for sex-gender transformation proposals, not only for a future way of living, but for our present ones. The trans version of these utopia stands as a stepping stone towards the final aim: the confusion of boundaries / a border war; the fight against biological essentialism and patriarchal control of nature; a critique of heterosexism; the deconstruction of public / private polarities; the fight against historicism in favour of no origin stories. The final goal is the queer utopia. The queer utopia of non-binary citizenship appears, in sum, as a democratic utopia of the place every democracy must aim to reach, indeed one of which we can already find perceptible traces everywhere. It is a place that may never come to be in a fully blown shape, but one that can gradually materialise and gain terrain through the transformations experienced along the way towards it (Sargisson 1996; Muñoz 2020).

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