



MEGG RAYARA GOMES DE OLIVEIRA: FIRST BLACK TRANSGENDER PhD OF BRAZIL

Gustavo Augusto Assis Faustino¹

Abstract: Megg Rayara Gomes de Oliveira was born on October 8, 1975, in Cianorte, in the countryside of Paraná. As she says, she was a “fag” with a “silly” sexuality, so at school, she was introduced to these rules in a very violent way. Artistic production appeared in her life as a possibility of transgression and communication with manifestations of her inner self. She entered the Licentiate Degree program in Drawing and Plastics and, after failing four times in the master's degree, she was aware that the academy had its standard features. In 2017, she became the first black transgender to obtain the title of doctor in Brazil. In 2019, she was appointed as a Professor at the Federal University of Paraná (UFPR) and is currently the coordinator of the Center for Afro-Brazilian Studies (NEAB) at UFPR.

Keywords: Megg; black transgender; education.

MEGG RAYARA GOMES DE OLIVEIRA: PRIMEIRA TRAVESTI NEGRA DOUTORA DO BRASIL

Resumo: Megg Rayara Gomes de Oliveira nasceu em 08 de outubro de 1975, em Cianorte, no interior do Paraná. Como ela conta, era uma bicha portadora de uma sexualidade “disparatada”, por isso, na escola, foi apresentada a essas normas de maneira muito violenta. A produção artística apareceu na sua vida como uma possibilidade de transgressão e de comunicação com manifestações de seu íntimo. Ingressou no curso de Licenciatura em Desenho e Plástica e, após ser reprovada por quatro vezes no mestrado, teve a consciência de que a academia tinha suas características normatizantes. Em 2017, tornou-se a primeira travesti negra a obter o título de doutora no Brasil. Em 2019, foi nomeada como professora da Universidade Federal do Paraná (UFPR) e, atualmente, é a coordenadora do Núcleo de Estudos Afro-Brasileiros (NEAB) da UFPR.

Palavras-Chave: Megg; travesti negra; educação.

¹ Graduation Student in Chemistry at the Federal University of Goiás, member of the Black Collective Ciata of the Research Laboratory in Chemical Education and Inclusion (LPEQI / NUPEC / IQ / UFG). Scholarship holder of the Institutional Scientific Initiation Program - PIBIC in Affirmative Actions (PIBIC AF / CNPq). Editorial assistant to the Magazine of the Brazilian Association of Black Researchers (ABPN). Chemistry technician from the Federal Institute of Goiás - Campus Inhumas (IFG). He works in the area of Chemistry Education, African and Afro-Brazilian history, black feminisms, and the decolonization of the science curriculum. E-mail: gustavoaugusto531@gmail.com



MEGG RAYARA GOMES DE OLIVEIRA: PRIMER TRASGESTO DE DOCTOR NEGRO EN BRASIL

Resumen: Megg Rayara Gomes de Oliveira nació el 8 de octubre de 1975 en Cianorte, en el interior de Paraná. Como ella dice, era una queer con una sexualidad “tonta”, por lo que en la escuela le presentaron estas normas de una manera muy violenta. La producción artística apareció en su vida como una posibilidad de transgresión y comunicación con manifestaciones de su yo interior. Ingresó a la Licenciatura en Dibujo y Plástica y, después de reprobado cuatro veces el máster, fue consciente de que la academia tenía sus características normativas. En 2017, se convirtió en la primera travesti negra en obtener el título de médico en Brasil. En 2019 fue nombrada profesora de la Universidad Federal de Paraná (UFPR) y actualmente es la coordinadora del Centro de Estudios Afrobrasileños (NEAB) de la UFPR.

Palabras-clave: Megg; travesti negro; educación.

MEGG RAYARA GOMES DE OLIVEIRA: PREMIÈRE TRAVESTI NOIRE DOCTEUR DU BRÉSIL

Résumé: Megg Rayara Gomes de Oliveira est née le 08 octobre 1975, à Cianorte, à l'intérieur de Paraná. Elle était une enfant pédé porteuse d'une sexualité bousillée. À l'école, elle a été présentée aux normes de genre d'une façon très violente. La production artistique est apparue dans sa vie comme une possibilité de transgression et de communication avec des manifestations de son intime. Elle est entrée à l'université pour faire le cours de Licence en Dessin et Plastique et, après être réproposé 4 fois à l'examen pour faire le master, elle savait que l'académie avait ses caractéristiques normalisées. En 2017, Megg est devenue la première travesti noire à obtenir le titre de docteur au Brésil. En 2019, elle a été désignée comme professeur de l'Université Fédérale de Paraná (UFPR) et, actuellement elle est coordinatrice du Noyau d'Études Afro-Brazilien (NEAB) à UFPR.

Mots-clés: Megg, Travesti Noire, Éducation.

INTRODUCTION

Megg Rayara Gomes de Oliveira was born on October 8, 1975, in Cianorte, in the countryside of Paraná. Megg Rayara remembers that, under the age of five, she was a fag child with an absurd sexuality, although she only developed this awareness in adulthood. She played in the street, in the yard, climbed trees, bathed in the river and ran wonderfully everywhere she was allowed to, with a bath towel tied on her head imitating a wig. However, the towel was needed in the home of poor people at bath time, as it was always a “hell”, as Megg Rayara reports. But long hair, even in the form



of a bath towel, was enough to access a conduct considered as feminine and to question, in a merely intuitive way, that a male genital did not guarantee the full existence of a male. Furthermore, she does not recall being retaliated for this.

However, at school, the gender rules were introduced in a very violent way, as it is in the school space that the way of walking and running is controlled, the way of gesturing hands and arms and the way of shaking the head and moving the hair . Through this, she also tried to control her speech and the tone of her voice, in the expectation of being the least visible. Megg Rayara says that normally, children who claim to build an identity that is at odds with biological sex end up in doctors' offices. Being poor and wretched, in her case, was an advantage. She remembers that, when she was nine years old, a neighbour called her mother and said that she should take her to the doctor, because "she seemed to have mental problems". She did not stay close to listen to her mother's response and never asked what she said. Furthermore, she knew that her mother would not take her, since he had no money for it, nor did she want to know what she thought about it. And so, over time, she has been exempting herself from the school environment.

From the back of the classroom, from the last desk, she carefully observed everything that happened and adopted postures that seemed to meet the expectations of the teachers. Megg Rayara went through all elementary school developing coping strategies to continue studying, even though she had to attend to all the normalizing issues of the school context. Thus, her school report, the materialization of a constant staging, was the proof that the adjustment proposed by the school was working.

She says that, between the ages of 12 and 13, she was a frightened child and did not trust anyone. She was afraid of speaking in public, she did not look ahead, always crestfallen, afraid of everything. She loved sanding wood since she was nine years old and, thus, artistic production appeared in her life, as a possibility of transgression and of communication with manifestations of her intimacy.

After her father's death, when she was just 12 years old, any possibility of a future plan was taken from her – the only way out was to enter the job market still very young. It was then that she learned that, in addition to the elementary school, there was a high school and the existence of universities. Her sisters and brothers left school little by little and she insisted on continuing her studies. Megg Rayara had been working



since the age of seven, collecting scrap, selling fruits and vegetables, and sometimes distributing pamphlets in her country town. Besides, she always heard that studying didn't feed anyone.

All this writing life (“escrivência”) by Megg Rayara, in relation to racism and homophobia, was strongly manifested when she went to Curitiba. Soon, she managed to work in a glass shop with drawings, making showcases, bathroom stalls and balconies. Later, her boss explained that he had the final decision to hire her and considered the racial issue and sexuality. The other candidate was white and straight, so he would have more opportunities to be hired than her. Therefore, she would be less absorbed in the job market than the other candidate. At that moment in his life, Megg Rayara observed, for the first time, an affirmative action policy that contemplated her in a very powerful way.

In turn, Megg Rayara worked in several other places and took a theatre course for six months to overcome shyness. And it helped her with the deadlock of speaking to in public; she met many black people and the social movement and always heard that it was important to have a higher education. Entering the School of Music and Fine Arts of Paraná, in the undergraduate Degree in Drawing and Plastics, in 1991, confirmed that teaching was an activity that would accompany her for a lifetime. In 1994, she completed her undergraduate degree, started teaching classes and, right there, entered a specialization in Art History, completing it in 1996. The teacher was teaching, although Megg Rayara was always present.

The classroom was the environment where Megg Rayara had the opportunity to discuss racism, homophobia and other forms of discrimination and prejudice. For seven years, she worked at the Education Department of the State of Paraná, teaching the discipline of Arts. Consequently, she got even closer to the black social movements, realizing that she was able to do a master's degree. Four times, she tried to join the Master's Program in the Graduate Program in Education at the Federal University of Paraná (UFPR), always failing the interview, stating, increasingly, that the academy had its normalizing and normative characteristics. Megg Rayara claimed treatment in the female gender only in 2010, after entering the master's degree, because she understood that she was more likely to get the vacancy. Little by little, she was conquering

academic space and including herself in racial and gender discussions in an intersectional way.

In 2012, she concluded her master's degree by discussing African and Afro-Brazilian art in the state curricular guidelines and in the public textbook of art in Paraná. After finishing the master's degree, she was convinced that she wanted to enter the doctorate. Although she was not very sure, nor had a theoretical basis, she entered in Doctorate's program in 2013, on the first attempt, and was sure that she wanted to discuss her own trajectory, that is, to dialogue with the (r) existence of effeminate, gay men and black fags in education. In October 2016, she made the selection process to work as a teacher of Didactics at UFPR and, in 2017, her career in higher education began.

At the beginning of her career, as a substitute teacher, her thesis was ready, and she was just waiting for the day of the defense. On March 30, 2017, Megg Rayara Gomes de Oliveira became the first black transgender to obtain the title of doctor in Brazil, with her thesis entitled “The devil in the form of people: the (r) existence of effeminate gays, fags and black fags in education”, later nominated to represent the Graduate Program in Education at UFPR at the CAPES award for best thesis of 2017 (Figure 1).

Figura 1: Taken at the day of Megg Rayara Gomes de Oliveira's Doctorate dissertation defense.



Source: UFPR, 2017.

She says that, after defending her doctorate dissertation, her life turned upside down and she started to be invited to give lectures and participate in events across the country, a routine that continues today - she confesses that she loves it. In addition, on May 9, 2019, Megg Rayara Gomes de Oliveira was appointed as an effective professor at UFPR.

She is currently an Adjunct Professor in the Education Sector and a professor in the Graduate Program in Education at the Federal University of Paraná. She is coordinator of the Afro-Brazilian Studies Center (NEAB), also of the Federal University of Paraná. She published eight articles in journals, three books and subscribes to 11 book chapters. Finally, Megg Rayara Gomes de Oliveira wants a more plural society, with gender, race, and sexuality equity, as well as a democratized educational system and a job market free from the presence of chauvinism, racism, LGBTI-phobia, classism and capacitism (Figure 2).

Adupé!

Figure 2: Megg Rayara Gomes de Oliveira.



Source: UFPR, 2017.

BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

BEIJA FLOR FILMES: *Eu existi, Eu existo e vou continuar existindo: o lugar de travestis, mulheres e homens transexuais na arte, na história na sociedade*. 180min20s. Published by channel Beija Flor Filmes. Available in: <<https://youtu.be/yx9D3PeEtvw>>. Accessed in: 20/06/2020.



FACED UFRGS: *Aula 9 - Relações étnico-raciais, gênero e sexualidade e(m) direitos humanos*. 119min36s. Published by channel FACED UFRGS. Available in: <https://youtu.be/aiRY_KT4_dI>. Acesso em: 20/06/2020.

FERREIRA, Michel Alves.; CASAGRANDE, Lindamir Salete. *Megg Rayara Gomes de Oliveira fala aos Cadernos de Gênero e Tecnologia*. Gênero e Tecnologia, Curitiba, v. 12, n. 40, p. 05-12, 2019.

OLIVEIRA, Megg Rayara Gomes de. *Currículo de Megg Rayara Gomes de Oliveira available at plataforma Lattes*. Available in: < <http://lattes.cnpq.br/0966589193883906>> Accessed in: 20/06/2020.

OLIVEIRA, Megg Rayara Gomes de. *O diabo em forma de gente: (r) existências de gays afeminados, viados e bichas pretas na educação*. Tese (doutorado) - Universidade Federal do Paraná, Setor de Educação, Programa de Pós-Graduação em Educação, 2017.

UFPR. *Pela primeira vez, travesti negra obtém título de doutora na UFPR*. Available in: <<https://www.ufpr.br/portalufpr/noticias/pela-primeira-vez-travesti-negra-defende-tese-de-doutorado-na-ufpr/>>. Accessed in: 20/06/2020.

Received in 15/07/2020

Approved in 15/08/2020