



The Hidden Face of the Moon: Unveiling the Minutiae of a Black Woman's Experience on the Streets

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Abstract

The homeless population is mostly male. When it comes to the female presence, especially when considering the markers of race, gender and class, the invisibility and delegitimization are even more insidious. The aim of this article is to identify the singularities of a black woman living on the streets and to understand them based on the relationships she establishes with the territory. The method used was the case study of a homeless black woman, constructed through body map storytelling. Thematic analysis of the empirical content was used in the light of decolonial criticism. Luna, the protagonist of the story, reveals in her narratives, the multiple dimensions of the presence of the female body on the street, the process of taking care of oneself and the other, considering the intrinsic relationships with the territory, with the use of drugs and with the male figure. Thus, unveiling society's views in relation to the place of invisibility of these women and creating strategies to face the colonial, racist and patriarchal logic of valuing knowledge is what Luna makes explicit with her trajectory of struggle, survival, and resilience on the streets.

Keywords Woman · Black · Street situation · Care of self · Body map

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A face oculta da Lua: desvelando riquezas da experiência de uma mulher negra nas ruas

Resumo

A população em situação de rua é majoritariamente masculina. Em se tratando da presença feminina, sobretudo quando considerados os marcadores de raça, gênero e classe, a invisibilidade e deslegitimação são ainda mais insidiosas. O objetivo do artigo é identificar as singularidades da mulher negra em situação de rua e buscar compreendê-la a partir das relações que estabelece com o território. O método utilizado foi o estudo de caso de uma mulher negra em situação de rua, construído por meio do mapa corporal narrado. Utilizou-se a análise temática do conteúdo empírico à luz da crítica decolonial. Os relatos de Luna, protagonista da história, revelam as múltiplas dimensões da presença do corpo feminino na rua, do cuidado de si e do outro, considerando as relações intrínsecas com o território, com o uso de drogas e com a figura masculina. Assim, descortinar os olhares da sociedade em relação ao lugar de invisibilidade dessas mulheres e criar estratégias para enfrentar a lógica colonial, racista e patriarcal de valorização de saberes é o que Luna explicita com sua trajetória de luta, sobrevivência e resiliência nas ruas.

Palavras-chave Mulher · Negra · Situação de rua · Cuidado de si · Mapa corporal

El rostro oculto de la Luna: desvelando las riquezas de la experiencia de una mujer negra en las calles

Resumen

La población sin hogar es en su mayoría masculina. Cuando se trata de la presencia femenina, especialmente cuando se consideran los marcadores de raza, género y clase, la invisibilidad y la deslegitimación son aún más insidiosas. El objetivo del artículo es identificar las singularidades de las mujeres negras que viven en la calle y buscar comprenderlas a partir de las relaciones que establecen con el territorio. El método utilizado fue el estudio de caso de una mujer negra sin hogar, construido a través del mapa corporal narrado. El análisis temático del contenido empírico se utilizó a la luz de la crítica decolonial. Los relatos de Luna, protagonista del estudio, revelan las múltiples dimensiones de la presencia del cuerpo femenino en la calle, del cuidado de uno mismo y del otro, considerando las relaciones intrínsecas con el territorio, con el uso de drogas y con la figura masculina. Así, desvelar las visiones de la sociedad con relación al lugar de invisibilidad de estas mujeres y crear estrategias para enfrentar la lógica colonial, racista y patriarcal de la valoración del conocimiento es lo que Luna hace explícito con su trayectoria de lucha, supervivencia y resiliencia en las calles.

Palabras clave Mujer · Negra · Situación callejera · Cuidado de sí · Mapa corporal

The homeless population is usually characterized as mostly male, extremely poor, with a history of broken or weakened family ties and without conventional housing (Ministry of Citizenship, 2019; Dias, 2021). However, the phenomenon cannot be reduced to poverty since a series of other elements such as unemployment, violence, health problems, and public policies enter the scope of analysis. Exclusively economic solutions do not reach the complexity inherent in the socio-historical and cultural process that Brazilian society (Jannuzzi, 2014), whose slavery heritage from the colonial period is reissued in the most diverse forms of subordination of black bodies, especially female bodies, has experienced.

Although the heterogeneity of the homeless population is a common feature to more than 222,000 people who, according to national estimates, are in this condition (Natalino, 2020), the presence of women in these spaces is still invisible. Multiple barriers challenge women daily to live and survive on the streets. Among the obstacles are those that simplify the category of woman and place those who are on the streets in a mass grave, invisible and silent, disregarding the singularities of their existence, as clearly expressed in this quote: “The street helps us denaturalize an idea of universal womanhood so marked in health sciences and practices, and shows us all the time that being a woman and being on the street is significantly different from not being so” (Andrade et al., 2019, p. 30).

The literature on homeless women has been growing but is still incipient. The last census conducted with the Brazilian homeless population pointed out that women make up 18% of the total, a valid minority (Ministry of Citizenship and Fight Against Hunger, 2009). The context of the homeless situation itself is already permeated by violence and violations of social rights, women facing this condition present even more vulnerabilities. The literature in the field points out that women have high rates of sexual violence (Biscotto et al., 2016; D’ercole & Struening, 1990; Rosa & Brêtas, 2015), besides being more vulnerable to physical violence that forces them to bind to partners or protective groups to enable their life on the streets (Rosa & Brêtas, 2015; Tiene, 2004). Studies show that homeless women cannot meet their basic hygiene needs (Biscotto et al., 2016) and present psychological suffering for not being able to fulfill the social role of mother (Biscotto et al., 2016; Moreira et al., 2021). In general, the homeless population has difficulty accessing health services (Barata et al., 2015; Weber et al., 2013), they are more exposed to the violence of hygienic nature (Biscotto et al., 2016), they have significant rates of psychiatric problems (Bonugli et al., 2013; Nielsen et al., 2011), and they are more susceptible to drug use and involvement in drug trafficking (Rhoades et al., 2011; Riley et al., 2015).

Historically, the dimension of care has been relegated to women, a recurrent problematization in feminist and gender studies. With the advent of capitalism and colonialism, patriarchy was consolidated in hierarchical layers in which men are the lawmakers while women occupy passive and submissive positions. This is what Lugones (2014) calls the “modern colonial gender system”, a structure of designation and articulation of race and gender markers that characterizes non-white productions as primitive, starting from this valuation to the unequal distribution of social places. In the slave period, the actual care — of the house, the children, the masters, the slaves, the plantation, and the food — was performed by black women.

However, the home's command was under the reins of white women, wives of the colonists, who outsourced the domestic care to the enslaved women. With the abolition of slavery, black women could not enjoy any reparation policy or valorization of their labor force. Instead, they were assigned labor activities of low socio-economic value, such as domestic employment and caring for others. These functions re-edited the figure of "mucama", loaded with symbolism and abnegation for the sake of caring for others, or the black mother or "nany", a figure of resignation and passivity. Gonzalez (2018) recovers the Lacanian concept of *infante* to describe the place of inferiority attributed to non-white women who, like the infant, are not subjects of their own discourse, but spoken by others. Unrecognized as subjects, they are expected to take on multiple roles. While white women have gained some independence with jobs outside the home, their children and homes are again left to the care of black and brown women from less well-off social classes. It is at this time that the seminal ideas of the white feminist movement germinated. In counterpoint, even today, self-sacrifice for the sake of caring for others is one of the main themes addressed by black women when discussing their experiences and those of other women around them (Abrams et al., 2014; Hogan et al., 2018).

The figure of the maternal, healthy and peaceful white woman is created as a contrast to the black witch, degenerate and incapable of the feminine fostered by European culture, interdicting even the notion of family (Vergès, 2019). Motherhood has always been a critical argument to justify the absence of women in public spaces, as well as their supposedly docile nature, which are necessarily intertwined with caregiving tasks. Feminist movements have been emphatic in making it explicit as a transformative experience, but also physically painful, emotionally unsettling, and socially lonely. When looking at women living on the streets, most of whom are black, other little-explored issues come to the surface, including the impossibility of exercising motherhood. The absence of public policies, the compulsory removal of babies by the State, family abandonment, the early death of children due to untreated diseases, police violence and gentrification processes are some of the reasons behind this impediment.

Faced with the complex and slow work of subverting imposed subordination, the inexorable fate of living on the streets was what presented itself as a viable alternative for many women. Factors such as domestic violence, extreme poverty, drug dealing, and mental disorders the women go through the experience of living on the streets. Where is the perspective of care for these women? Will they be able to guarantee some self-care in such an inhospitable context? These questions tell us that living on the streets can be interpreted as an act of carelessness, neglect, abandonment of oneself and others, which is absolutely incongruous with the roles assigned to them. This extreme measure, however, can show the opposite. The abandonment of their own can be understood as cultivating their autonomy and the acceptance of their own plans. Foucault (2004) presents the concept of care of the self as that in which the subject rules for themselves: how the subject relates to themselves and how they make themselves in relation to the other. In the Foucauldian perspective, the ethics of the care of the self is a set of rules of existence that the free subject creates for themselves, in opposition to the social dictates, and that leads to an aesthetics of existence.

Deprived of the place of production of knowledge and marked by countless absences, they face this threshold between scarcity and potency, sustaining self-care amidst the crossing of material and moral barriers. While the South rescues narratives and claims equality in the production of knowledge that escapes the white civilization of the West, the streets communicate their knowledge and also resist value indifference. Based on the care of the self, this article intends to unveil some aspects that permeate the universe of women on the streets, recognizing the strategies they trace as producers of care and knowledge. Foucault's perspective on care of self goes beyond moral and narcissistic values, as it evokes the dimension of ethical, spiritual and freedom values. As ethical values, the philosopher is anchored on virtue and character, in the sense of cultivating its existence rather than on socially imposed rules and established laws. He also emphasizes that personal freedom consists of challenging the identities that society imposes on us and the ability to reinvent oneself, based on the possibilities of action and reaction in the face of a threatening context and the current power relations. For this, the connection to spiritual life as a way to go through the elaboration of self; self-examination, that is, a specific mode of relationship with oneself (White, 2014).

In this way, the study intends to present the interconnections identified in this theoretical-practical knot, based on the account of a black woman on the streets, whose life story is narrated through the body map and all the creative tools that it makes possible. From this innovative methodological process, the text will elucidate some paths to resize the perspective of care from the point of view of black women in situations of aggravation and extreme vulnerability, in order to provoke a re-signification of the experiences inscribed in their bodies and reveal the marks of their (non)place in the world. Certain that hegemonic conceptions show different modes of oppression in relation to this population, this work aims to make explicit the counter-hegemonic epistemophilia powers that women in these situations reveal.

This reflection is especially pertinent to psychology as a science that proposes studying and welcoming these people, but has as model individuals of its theories subjects who are male, white, heterosexual, with wealthy economic status, among other characterizations. Thus, psychology must begin to embrace in-depth individuals who do not fit into their hegemonic labels so that it is possible to construct new psychological paradigms that escape from adjusting, controlling and oppressive logics, which this science currently proposes (Costa & Lordello, 2019). Furthermore, a decolonial perspective contributes to reveal the oppression stemming from historical landmarks such as slavery and the colonial period, by which a homeless population was affected and still is. According to Dussel (2015), decolonial thinking produces knowledge that transcends the paradigm that there is a single and universal truth, for him, a knowledge is constructed through the locus of enunciation of those who experience it.

The aim of this article is to identify the singularities of a black woman living on the streets and to understand them based on the relationships she establishes with the territory. The method used was the case study of a homeless black woman, constructed through body map storytelling.

Method: Case Study via Body Map Storytelling

The body map storytelling is a visual and creative tool that promotes deepening and autonomy of the participants regarding their life narrative, re-signifying experiences, building memories and situating the body in the social and political crossings that run through it (Conceição et al., 2021). Created in the late 1980s in Jamaica and then widely disseminated in South Africa and Canada, the body map uses different verbal and non-verbal languages that bring rich contours through the expressiveness of colors, the uniqueness of symbols, the complexity of metaphors and narratives that make up the production of the symbolic, translating the imaginary through corporeality (Moreira & Conceição, 2020).

The construction of the body map storytelling begins with the delineation of the body in real size, with posture chosen by the participant. Subsequently, magazine and newspaper clippings and paintings are used to creatively make the map and communicate life stories (Gastaldo et al., 2012). From that moment on, each of the elements circumscribed on the paper comes together to form a singular work.

People living on the streets, whose existence is routinely disregarded, witnessing their body in focus and their experiences being listened to brings even more complex nuances. As corporality is central in the constitution of subjectivity, this tool becomes very powerful when evoking social relations critically and creatively (Martins & Magalhães, 2021). Luna (fictitious name), a black woman living on the streets, is the great protagonist of this story whose case study will be presented and discussed below through constructing the body map storytelling, sharing her life experiences. The first author carried out a familiarization process with the homeless population with the support of a facilitator. In this process, Luna was invited by the author because she fit the research's target audience criteria.

The meetings occurred in Brasilia, Federal District, in the year 2020, a few months before the pandemic caused by the Coronavirus that spread abruptly throughout Brazil and the world. At the time, Luna, who had been living on the streets for many years and used to walk around the central regions of the city, was invited by the authors to make the body map storytelling through formalized consent. A previously constructed script of guiding questions orients the construction of the body map. The questions serve to assist the application of the map in line with the life history narrative and explore specific themes of interest to the researcher. As a result, three meetings occurred to create the body map, with an interval of up to a week between each meeting and an average duration of two hours. All meetings were attended by two researchers, the first author, and another researcher from the team. The first one guided the construction of the body map and the other supported the participant in whatever was necessary.

Because it is a creative and participatory methodology, an accessible space was reserved, with materials such as paper, cardboard, magazine and newspaper clippings, colored pens, paintbrushes, paints, and crayons. The application of the body map storytelling was conducted by the research team, although all of them

were involved in different stages (fieldwork, data analysis, guidance, and supervision). All care was taken to preserve the participant's confidentiality and privacy. Initially, the methodology and aims of the research were presented to the participant. Afterward, she signed the Free and Informed Consent Form. The form guarantees confidentiality, authorizes the use of the produced material (audio and map), and guarantees that the participant could leave the research at any time if she wanted to. It also informs the contact information of the researchers and offers the possibility of later psychological assistance.

Inductive thematic analysis (Clarke & Braun, 2017) was used to perform the empirical analysis of the narrated body map, with the researchers transcribing and coding the empirical data after reading for similarities and contradictions in the interview material. The thematic analysis was conducted following the six steps recommended by the authors, which consisted of: (1) familiarization with the data, (2) generating initial codes, (3) searching for themes, (4) reviewing themes, (5) defining and naming themes, and (6) producing the report. All researchers read the transcripts several times to familiarize themselves with the key issues and identify emerging themes. Then, we went through the other steps, checking each decision according to a coding frame, which were used to compare, organize and study the relation among the themes. Themes were mapped, reviewed, and reworked jointly by the authors, as was the final analysis involved defining and naming themes and choosing excerpts of speech that best represented each theme for further analysis. Furthermore, the guiding principles of Yardley (2000) were used with a view to obtaining a direction for the quality of the qualitative study, considering the context, scientific rigor and relevance.

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Results: The Sky as a Limit

Luna is a 37-year-old woman who arrived in Brasília (Brazil) as a child, having been rescued after witnessing the murder of her father. As her relationship with her mother was distant, and they lived in different states, she moved to live with an aunt in the Federal District. Luna sees the loss of her father as a “watershed” in her life. Since then, she says she no longer trusts anyone because she had the only figure of love and trust in her father. With a certain reserve, Luna tells about the new life that then presented itself to her at 10. She mentions that, at the time, she had no one to talk to about what she was living and ended up making her feel isolated and angry at school, a reason that culminated in her compulsory removal from the classrooms and, consequently, going to the streets. She contests: “But I didn't even have the opportunity to open up, to talk to anyone, you know? At the time, it was a rich man's thing and I couldn't afford it”, referring to the lack of access to psychological care.

The abrupt interruption of her father's relationship left Luna very shaken. She started going to the streets as a child. She says she sniffed glue and stole or taught herself to steal. However, she says that she soon realized that "it wasn't hers", because she didn't like anything that belonged to others. Luna says that she is ashamed of this phase of her life and shows her fear of embarrassing others she cares about, like her brother, who also passed away, and her friend, who always helped her and "opened her mind". Luna states that her mission is to protect her family, putting on the role of caregiver. She had a strong relationship with her younger brother, who was murdered in 2019 due to settling scores between rival groups. Luna is emotional as she recalls the recent loss of her brother and the partnership they had. "He was the only one who could hold me... And he, in the moments when I was always sick, he was the only one who took care of me. Do you understand?". Luna refers to her brother as a source of protection, both in giving and receiving. With his loss, she is again faced with the absence of protection. She did not cry at any point but showed great emotion when talking about her brother's death.

In Luna's story, the dimension of care is linked to the act of protecting and feeling protected. She says that she did not have the opportunity to experience mourning for her brother since she had to assist the child and the elderly woman who she cared for, in exchange for friendship, shelter, and food. The death of her brother also makes her replay the troubled relationship with her mother. In Luna's narratives, her mother blames her for overprotecting her brother and indirectly blames her for his death. She also mentions a close friend, whom she says is the only person she trusts, besides God. They met when Luna was working in the vicinity of the shelter for homeless people. She recalls that her friend liked her very much and called her to take care of a niece with a disability. From there, a strong friendship was born that lasts still today. Luna recognizes the importance of the friend in her life because the friend advises her to stop using drugs and warns her about her relationship with her current partner. This friend was also indispensable when her brother died because she helped her to "give him a proper burial", as her mother wished.

When talking about herself, Luna presents an introspective and suffering attitude. Luna shows the difficulty in expressing sadness and emotional struggles arising from hard moments. This is due to her current love relationship, which is not at all welcoming of her suffering, and to the need to appear strong and unshakable to others. She says, "I try not to show others how much I suffer because those who know me know 'where' it knocks me down." Over time, the bond between Luna and the researchers deepened. Slowly, she begins to loosen up more, and again the question of trust comes up, a cornerstone for her: "I look at you... the only person like that, from the outside (...) that I talk to and there is no way to hide. But I'll tell you, the rest I look at, I talk to, I don't trust anyone." This openness was essential for Luna to be able to share her life trajectory, elaborate her own body map and allow an internal availability to share her stories.

In her narratives, Luna reveals a long trajectory of involvement with drugs. She says that she started smoking marijuana, out of curiosity, because she saw her father constantly smoking during her childhood. In the beginning, Luna did not like it, but later she started to "get a taste for it". Nowadays, she says she is a crack, marijuana, and tobacco user and also uses sleeping pills. Sometimes she says that using drugs

is very pleasurable, but she says that she feels “oppressed by drugs” nowadays. She says that this oppression comes from the difficulty in stopping the use: what once seemed functional now imprisons her.

There is some ambiguity about the place that drugs, especially trafficking, occupy in Luna’s life. Although she feels oppressed, she shows another side that makes her feel empowered by the respect, autonomy, and achievements that she conquered in this context. Furthermore, she affirms: “Until today I command there... it is because my word makes the ground shake!” Furthermore, she emphasizes that she can take over the “drug den”, imposing fear on the dealers and feeling like she is a guardian of the people in this context. On the other hand, the relationship with the drug dealing makes her see certain behaviors of her current partner, whom she says “is a slacker” because he does not do his daily activities and leaves “the runs” for her to do alone. Because of trafficking, besides losing her younger brother, another of her brothers became paraplegic after being shot.

In the narratives about love relationships, Luna mentions that when she met her current partner, he “touched my dream, my dream was to have a child, so I got pregnant with him.” However, she was taken aback when he said that he was married and that his current wife was pregnant. Luna vents and says that her life “took a break again” and became “groundless”. She expressed ambivalent feelings toward her partner, which translated into a desire to be and at the same time not to be with him. She criticizes him harshly when narrating abusive behaviors that he practiced against her. One of the consequences of this relationship is the insecurity that it provokes in Luna. When asked how she feels, she replies: “Oh, for me, I am inferior to everyone. Nowadays, I think like this... he is the one who makes me like this!”. She describes her companion:

(He) puts me down, I can’t stand it anymore, I don’t even know why I stay with him still (...) I don’t know if it is love anymore because I created my love for him more than ten years ago, and his love is a monster, he is an ogre, (...) manipulator, he is the real gigolo of poor whores, of ‘doper’.

Luna justifies staying in the bond with her partner because of the financial help she receives from him. However, she also talks a lot about the need to protect him, besides the sex she says she enjoys. When asked about this need to exercise protection, Luna gets in touch again with this doubt and verbalizes: “Oh, I don’t know... I think this is the point where I am lost, I am lost! Because there are many emotions in my head, emotions, tribulation, perturbation because tribulation is one thing, perturbed is another”.

It is observed how the body map storytelling helps look at oneself and perceive oneself through the stories. It facilitates access to conscious and unconscious issues through memories and the production of very particular and genuinely built knowledge about oneself. Furthermore, it was possible to verify how Luna made this access possible by looking at herself and the dimensions of care through her corporeality. An example of this was what she verbalized when she chose the position to be represented in the role: “Do you know why this pose here? [...] is because of my surgery. It was the part where I was without pain”. This moment, still early, was a trigger to understanding later that Luna had a tubal pregnancy, which left painful

marks on her body. She says that she always dreamed of being a mother, but had three pregnancies that did not progress, all of them twins. She attributes the fact that she could not have the babies to drugs and says that her biggest fear is not being able to have children.

With the map, one notices that the simple choice of body position produces a series of memories and associations that surfaced to understand Luna's life process, including issues related to the dimension of care and the production of knowledge produced in what was lived. At another moment, faced with a range of clippings of pictures and words, she chooses the words "Light" and "Survival" and explains that:

The light is that God allows me to be alive today to be able to tell you this, and the survival through the bumps and bruises that I managed to go through on the street, they have already tried to kill me five times! I was sleeping, and I was only a man with a stab in the head. To be able to take the drug den, understand? That I opened. That they were not capable of doing.

In these episodes of violence, very present in her narrative, she tells a specific one that marked her memories. She was chased by a man, a potential rapist, and responded criminally after killing him to defend herself. Again she talks about this difficult moment, of not being able to trust anyone, and she chooses the word "refuge" to put on her map: "Look what I looked for: the refuge" and puts it at the height of her heart, justifying: "The only refuge I had was only my heart really, it was me, God and my heart."

Luna talks about her desire to finish her studies, putting it as a priority in her activities. She studies in a specific school for the homeless population that has specialized support. She highlights education as a transformer in her life: "If it weren't for this school, I wouldn't have changed, no". She says she is living a moment of change in her life; she has recently received an apartment from a social housing program for homeless people in the Federal District. Both the house and the school are meant as driving sources of change. Besides the school and the apartment, Luna is also inserted in another public policy for homeless people called Centro POP (Specialized Reference Center for Population in Street Situation), where users can have free baths and meals and have access to social care professionals.

Finally, when Luna chooses the expression cut out from the magazine "living on the street", she pastes it on her map (see Figure 1) and verbalizes: "Living on the street I felt vulnerable, everything and everyone around me, I put my trust in the Father only because I always had the sky as a limit". Next, she is invited to illustrate what she had mentioned and draws on her map a big starry sky that is very eye-catching and powerful. When provoked about the drawing, Luna says she really likes the night because it is the only moment she can feel free.

There are several gaps in Luna's story, which are part of the participant's own narrative process. Although there was a guiding script, the intention of the body map is to allow the person herself to access and tell her story using her own language and without necessarily counting on temporal linearity. Some information was not included because it was not really deepened in detail by the participant. Luna answered all the questions, some answers were evasive showing little interest from the participant in further exploring the topic. As the body map was built, the participant accessed remarkable memories of her life and registered them. The



Fig. 1 Body-map made by Luna. *Note.* At the far right is a picture of Luna's body-map from above. The four close-ups at the left highlights Luna's writings: "never give up on your dreams"; "faith above all"; "my mission is to protect my family"; "unconditional family"; "living in the streets I felt vulnerable to everything and everyone around me"; "trust God only because I've always had the sky as the limit". There's also a few elements of collage such as a feminist symbol, the words "refugey" and "rich", as well as the phrases "we women, we black women" and "paintings are brushes made with the colors and energy of the soul"

results present the most important points of the story reported by Luna in the process of building her body map (Figure 1).

Discussion: World of Luna

The life story narrated by Luna shows us a range of elements that are configured as knowledge built throughout her experiences on the streets. The weaving of her trajectory outlined by the body map allowed her to get in touch with feelings that had not surfaced for a long time, which summoned her to rethink her memories under a perspective of protagonism of her own history and valorization of what was once lived.

When getting in touch with her experiences, Luna reveals how the helplessness due to the loss of her father made her look for a place of care, recognition and belonging on the streets. In this universe, she found companions, challenging experiences, and achieved power and status. Luna reports with great pride the influence she exercised among her colleagues on the streets, marking her trajectory through approval and authority before the social imperatives of being a woman, black, and a crack user. About her colleagues, she says about the perplexity of one of them before her attitudes: "(He) never admitted that I commanded everyone, and he had war with everyone and I didn't. Do you understand?"

In her trajectory on the streets, one realizes that Luna receives and can also offer care on the streets. Groton and Radey (2018) demonstrate how homeless women

are intensely dedicated to providing care, making it a priority to provide support to those in need. Nevertheless, for many, the incessant desire to help (financially and materially included) still prevails, always prioritizing others over themselves. In this perspective, Luna, like other women, built her life on the streets. Her work, her relationships, everything comes from a redefinition of this space. The street, where all the vulnerabilities and violence it brings, can still stand out as a place of care and protection in detriment of one's own home, and the movement of going to the streets can represent care that they end up having for themselves. It becomes the scenery for recognition of the self, its desires and capabilities, as well as of the responsibilities you have toward the community, since the care of the self is intimately related to being conscious of your role in the collective sphere (fornet-betancourt et al., 1987). Therefore, the street is presented as an exercise of freedom and autonomy, but obviously, also as a continuum of the experience of violence and helplessness, once they are faced with new object relations that remain within a logic of domination. It is important to highlight that freedom is approached here as a variable expression, since not everyone shares the same possibilities to change and build the world around them. In her trajectory, Luna has expanded what was at reach for a woman in the streets to represent. Still, in some aspects, especially when it comes to her romantic relationship, Luna is stuck with what Simone de Beauvoir calls abstract freedom: those are the expressions that don't challenge the structures in any substantial way, an impotent revolt that won't take up on the destructive format it needed to make real change (Mussett, 2003). The glimpse of freedom is there, but communicated through empty and ineffective behavior.

Another point that draws attention is how the drug appears in a care perspective in Luna's life. According to the concept used by Mbembe (2017), one can understand that for Luna, the drug is presented as *pharmakon*, that is, the antidote and the poison in the same element. In other words, the drug, in common sense, is stigmatized by those who use it. However, on the streets, it often becomes the only strategy to face dangers. Drugs can be conceived as care in the form of escape from reality through their narcotic and psychoactive effects. Furthermore, drug use allows a possible link to work and subsistence, even if illegal.

Luna's relationship with drugs has become an ongoing one since her early departure to the streets. Studies show a close relationship between drug abuse, victimization history, traumatic childhood experiences, and or the presence of successive adverse circumstances and strong influence on substance use and dependence (Logan et al., 2002). The case at hand is quite representative, considering that the onset of Luna's drug abuse occurred shortly after the traumatic experience of witnessing her father's murder and her abrupt move to Brasilia.

The authors affirm that drug use is a protective mechanism demonstrated in testimonies of women living on the streets who said they use drugs to ease the suffering in the face of physical and sexual violence suffered (Sanhonete et al., 2019). The main forms of physical violence experienced on the streets are those perpetrated by intolerance; violence between people living on the street; violence committed by police officers, traders, residents; and sexual violence. In addition to psychological violence, due to the constant fear and insecurity when they are on the street (Rosa & Brétas, 2015), studies have found that women living on the

street usually present significantly more mental health problems than the others, considering the frequent disorders such as anxiety, depression, psychosis and the intense use of drugs itself (Austin et al., 2008).

Facing adversity on homelessness, drug use becomes a means of adaptation and support for the reality experienced by these people (Fazel et al., 2008). Its users attribute the feeling of bravery and courage to the drug, either to forget momentarily or to face the situation. In the same direction, Luna says she uses crack mainly when she feels “weak”, a term she uses to express her emotional distress. Thus, in this situation, one can understand that the drug is placed as a protective factor against situations that trigger these feelings, becoming a coping strategy. She blurts it out:

I used drugs on the day of the funeral (of the brother) because I was very shaken [...] while she (mother) did not arrive, I had to solve all that, everything in a way that made me crazy! [...] I was taking drugs to see if I could control my madness.

In this perspective, perhaps it is possible to consider drug use as a protective factor against insanity for people in this scenario of extreme vulnerability. Wouldn't looking for strategies that help them resist and sustain all the violence they experience to be a form of care?

On the other hand, the theme of religiosity is always present and deserves further discussion in future studies, as it is not the focus of this study. Without falling into superficial reductionism, we can say that, for many people who live on the streets, God may represent the first or even the only protection option that remains in the face of the absence of State protection policies. However, Luna presents religiosity as a human dimension linked to the search to give meaning to life and existence and chooses this factor, as well as the street itself, as an element of protection in her daily life. It can be deduced that religiosity in Rose brings an existential mark whose ontology is aligned with what Heidegger (Guimarães & Moreira, 2011) calls the “state of care of the being”, that is, the state of valorization of the existence of life by itself, beyond the world of stuff. In extreme situations of social vulnerability, material deprivation, and constant struggles to ensure survival, as is the case of homeless populations, existence is appreciated as a gift, hence the meaning of life.

A third element that stands out in Luna's narratives is the male figure as a place of protection, sometimes exercised by men, sometimes exercised by herself. In her story, her father, her brothers, and her partner presented themselves as protectors, and in some cases, as protected and cared for by her. Her first reference of protection was her father, for whom she had great admiration, affection, and trust: “He wouldn't leave me alone for anything, (he) bathed me, did everything.”. She sees her father's support as a differential in her life and his loss generated a change in her life project: “If they hadn't killed my father, I have faith that I would be a police officer, an investigator, do you have faith?” The absence of a source of emotional support to replace the one she received from her father was overwhelming: “At the age of nine, I didn't trust anyone. The only person I trusted was my father”.

Luna is the oldest of the siblings and took special care of two of them. One of them, a wheelchair user, required accompaniment and dressings. The other, the youngest, was her partner in managing the “drug den” and companion on the streets of Federal District until he was murdered. She cared for and felt cared for

by her brother; nowadays, she feels his absence a lot. When Luna did the body map, this event was still recent and represented a significant rupture in her life.

He (brother) could talk to me in any way he wanted, and I let him. But when I said: ‘Hey, motherfucker, shut your mouth! You do what I say, you bastard!’ Then he... do you understand? So it was like, the protection that I had from him and I don’t have today [...] That’s when they killed my brother, it was over for me. Because he was the one I protected the most. My mission is to protect my family.

Concerning her current partner, despite the long relationship and providing material support, he has always been abusive to Luna. When asked about her perceptions of the relationship and the reasons for staying in it, she reports not knowing, not being able to find reasons to “put up with” someone like him, justifying it in the fact that she is used to the relationship and because of the sex. There is an undeniable emotional involvement, although complex, that makes her wish her partner would change his behavior, especially the episodes of betrayal and physical violence of which she has already been a victim. She reveals that she has already stabbed him once, and that she has also denounced him after he broke her teeth.

Nowadays, I don’t even know what I feel for him. If it is pity, pity, or if I feel sorry for myself. Or (...) if I can’t handle living alone or if I am afraid of dying alone. Something like that...

Women on the streets are exposed to a much higher level of vulnerability than men in the same situation (Guillén et al., 2019), and this may lead them to seek in the male figure compensation for this lack of protection, even if the man is not in itself a direct protective factor. That is, even if these women experience an abusive relationship with their partners, suffer aggression, deprivation, threats, betrayal, the male presence is still able to protect them on the streets and minimize the chances of them suffering other violence.

Groton and Radey (2018) present how much the dimension of care and support is tied to the female figure, even for their own sense of existence. The authors demonstrate how the interviewed homeless women reported having priority to help and care for others. Whatever resources they have (financial, material, emotional, etc.), and regardless of the situation of vulnerability that they experience, they see this almost as an inherent responsibility. So isn’t there a possible trade-off or interdependence between the care provided by women and the protection provided by men in relationships?

Luna also explicitly shows how this is present in her life and reveals that she takes care of her partner daily. When they went out to work on the streets, she would risk working at night in his place “because he can’t take it.” On the other hand, one of her biggest complaints is the feeling of devaluation for the work and the care that she exerts as a woman, pointing out that the actions occur unilaterally, starting only from her: “There is no way to have love where, a business where the guy only charges and gives nothing”, “for me, I am inferior to everyone

[...] who makes me like this is him!” When asked about “the marks and scars of her soul” on the body map, Luna immediately brought up betrayal, which has been part of her life since she was a child, when she witnessed her father’s death and started to distrust everyone around her, and represents the total devaluation of her figure as a woman and a caregiver again. In one of the accounts, she says that she was betrayed by her brother and her partner together, “It was that the two arranged it so that they could take me out of their mouths so that they could stay with the women there. Do you understand? Betrayal. Betrayed, they acted behind my back”.

The marks of betrayals are directly reflected in the image that Luna passes in the street and in the posture she assumes as a way of self-care and resistance among men. She says that she occupies places of power wherever she goes, positions usually attributed to men, and that her word was once taken as law when her fame was of being brave and quarrelsome. Despite having gained the respect and consideration of many, the surrounding men do not seem to explicitly admit her power because she is a woman, showing that gender roles still strongly endure in this context. “It doesn’t assume that I’m more of a man than him there. That’s the reality. That I am a woman, but I am a survivor, right? I am more of a man than many people out there. I’m tired of hearing this from the mouths of the rascals”.

The woman’s role is so discredited that, to boast about her achievements, she needs to consider herself “more of a man than many” for society to see her. One realizes, then, how the male figure brings a series of reflections and possibilities when combined with the life of a woman on the street. Luna’s life story corroborates with the literature when it exposes the aggressions she experienced in the presence of a partner, the search for protection and care, and the need to always be available for the other. On the other hand, Luna’s body map reveals unique scars from living with men, the mistrust from a young age, the pain from the loss of a father and a brother, and the fear of loneliness, which are camouflaged under the cloak of a tough woman who hides her own weaknesses as much as possible.

Final Considerations: If this street were mine

Numerous crossings permeate the lives of black women living on the streets, and invisibility is one of the most insidious cruelties that society commits. However, the place devoid of knowledge and value attributed to women in this condition is reversed by the life story of Luna (and many others), which reveals, through the narrated body map, the possibility of accessing elements that show her as capable of surviving the (sub)world of men and of producing care and knowledge, from herself and her interaction with the universe of the street. Recognizing Luna’s strategies as knowledge dismantles the specific pathways to power, productivity and relevance created by a universalist canon, valorizing the local and particular alternatives that emerge in the context of intentional precariousness (Santos et al., 2016). As Moreno points out in his conception of spontaneity, novelty is possible in each repetition and it allows the subject to notice its aptitude in adapting and responding to the moment, as well as expanding and sharing her protagonism. Creativity as a non-conservable

form of energy is also essential for new responses to old situations or new responses to unknown situations (Guimarães, 2011; Moreno, 1997). In this sense, in order to survive, Luna resorts to both spontaneity and creativity when adopting a role that she has never played before, taking the lead in the drug trade, which is an exclusive male activity and a socially unexpected new enterprise. She was deeply invested in telling her story, pointing out what was expected of her and how she managed to surprise even the ones who didn't want to see her thrive. She presented herself as this character infused with hardness, wisdom, reliability and faith.

It is pretty noticeable in Luna's reports how homelessness, *a priori*, is thought of as a place devoid of ensuring any care, at the same time transpires as the existence of different forms of care that can be experienced. It is observed, in her speeches, the re-signification of the street from being solely a place of danger and hostility to being conceived as a search and exercise of care and emotional survival. These dimensions are evidenced in the support networks on the streets, essential for maintaining personal relationships and strategies of survival and affection for black women. Public institutions such as CAPS (Psychosocial Care Centers), Centro POP (Specialized Reference Centers for Population in Street Situation) and public schools play a central role in this system, allowing Luna to expand her relationships and reach out to the emotional and material support she needs. Her best friend and a few of her professors are the ones in which Luna deposits real trust. We reiterate that the existence of these networks is not a rule and does not minimize the violations that being on the streets brings. However, it makes explicit the dimension of care that is also present in these spaces.

Thus, it is possible to understand how the dimension of caring and being cared for the homeless woman is characterized as a central *modus operandi* of knowledge production. About the case study presented here, with the protagonism expressed in Luna's narratives, we can see how she creates strategies to face the colonial logic of what, in the Western tradition, is understood as knowledge and legitimated power. Luna surprises us by revealing that the space of the streets, drugs, and relationships with men can mean places of care and subject constitution. From this tripod, Luna seeks to break with the stereotyped standards to which marginality is conceived and constantly reinvents as a black woman who daily experiences the oppressions of racism and sexism in veiled and explicit ways.

Psychology, as an area growing within the public devices of care for homeless people, must be willing to reflect on the complexity of the different roles that social, racial and gender conditions may play in the lives of individuals (Regional Council of Psychology of Minas Gerais, 2015). Luna shows us the importance of the posture of not-knowing in which the professional seeks to meet without interference from their preconceptions and stereotypes. Using the body map in conjunction with thematic analysis allowed the observation of aspects that go against the *a priori* conceptions of marginalized subjects on which many professionals rely. These research tools allowed us to get to know facets of the participant that would not be easily explored from the knowledge of psychology formation. Luna puts these assumptions in check, once again making it evident that sciences that propose to study subjectivities and mental health cannot rely on colonizing and excluding epistemological bases (Anderson, 2016; Costa & Lordello, 2019).

On the streets, she asserts herself, grows, and reverses adversities and hierarchies. The antidote of drugs enters her deep wounds, suspending for precious moments the ghosts that haunt her. In her relationship with the male figure, the dimension of care transits between ambiguities, lack and excess, coexistence and mistrust, affection and pain. Luna, as well as many women living on the streets, shows resilience and creative capacity as mechanisms for survival and knowledge construction. The devaluation of this type of knowledge produced and the exercise of power between homeless men and women are connected to the colonial ideology that permeates our sexist and macho society. Based on Luna's narratives revealed through the body map, she shows her commitment to breaking paradigms by not succumbing to adverse situations in which she is constantly exposed on the streets. In light of the decolonial perspective (Mignolo, 2007), it can be said that Luna interrogates the pre-existing patterns of power (white, male and rich) in order to reposition herself in the face of the relentless structures of a society still full of colonialist and excluding pillars.

Finally, it is valid to say that in the opposite of what is expected by the racist and patriarchal power structures, Luna comes to show us the hidden face of the streets, unveiling its powers in the face of daily challenges. She is able to expose another side that opposes the logic of what can be conceived as a status of knowledge, not only for inhabiting a black female body vulnerable by society but mainly by making herself exist, resisting and re-existing in plural contexts in which the street presents itself "sky as a limit".

Author contribution All authors whose names appear on the submission made substantial contributions to the conception of the work: acquisition, analysis and interpretation of data.

Furthermore, the authors drafted the work and revised it critically for important intellectual content and approved the version to be published. All of them agree to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.

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Declarations

Ethics approval and consent to participate All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional and/or national research committee. The study was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the Federal District, Brazil (CAAE: 01610818.3.0000.5540). The participant consented to use data by signing an Informed Consent Form.

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