

## REVOLUTION THROUGH WORDS: REFLECTIONS ON THE USE OF LITERATURE AND ORALITY AS SOCIAL EXPRESSION AND POLITICAL ACTION IN THE “SLAM DAS MINAS” IN RJ

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### ABSTRACT

This article is a result of a research in progress that intends to understand the meanings and political effects of female participation in Brazilian *slam poetry* and the way that this artistic expression interacts with the city territory. Using an ethnographic approach in the “Slam das Minas” events in the city of Rio de Janeiro, this article aims to show how women and trans people are acting politically through spoken poetry and what are the effects of the union of their bodies in the public space.

**KEYWORDS**  
Slam poetry; Art;  
Policy; Resistance;  
Activism.

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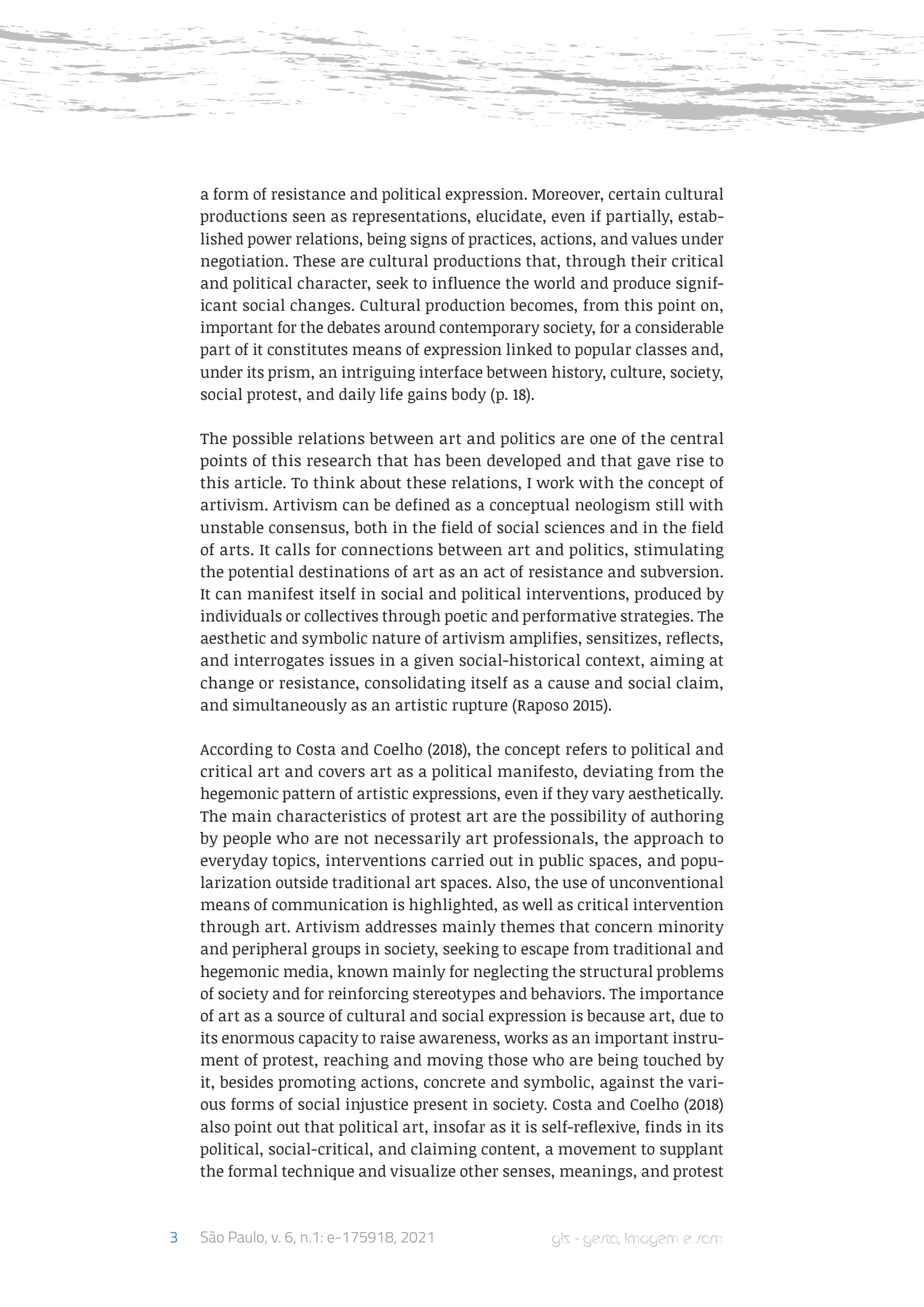
## **SLAM DAS MINAS: CULTURAL AND POLITICAL INTERVENTIONS IN CITY SPACE**

The right to the city is a concept that covers a variety of meanings within urban studies. First proposed by Henri Lefebvre (2011), the concept refers to the full right to a transformed and renewed urban life. This full right, according to the author, constitutes access to basic human rights such as the right to instruction and education, the right to work, culture, rest, health, and housing. The right to the city also advocates the need to create a city geared to social needs through an urban revolution that encompasses the working classes, victims of segregation, and deprived of urban life in its entirety. Also mobilized by David Harvey (2014) in the sense of a collective rather than an individual right, the right to the city is built on the idea of reinventing the city through the exercise of collective power over the urbanization process. It is “more than a right to individual or group access to the resources that the city embodies: it is a right to change and reinvent the city more following our deepest desires.” (p. 28). Harvey defines the right to the city in the sense of claiming some kind of shaping power over the processes of urbanization and how cities are made and remade.

The discussion on the right to the city and the dispute over urban space focuses largely on the exclusionary urbanization process that resulted in cities marked by territorial division where social and political inequality predominate, with segregated and exclusive urban centers that do not reflect the totality of social life. The free access to urban space and resources is under the power of the state and of those who belong to the most privileged classes of society. In the face of this, less privileged social groups struggle to reclaim these spaces, which in definition belong to everyone, but in practice segregates, differentiates, and excludes.

Different strategies are mobilized to claim the right to these spaces and to build a more just and inclusive city. One of these strategies is the political use of the voice and the body. Historically silenced, the less privileged layers of society seek to break the silence imposed by the structures of domination by claim, through their voices and the physical presence of their bodies, and furthermore, the physical and symbolic spaces. The political mobilization of this voice and these bodies takes place largely through artistic and cultural productions. Resulting from experiences, practices, and relationships, these productions function as a means of expression, through which subjects communicate and transmit their worldview, enabling the perception of the social, cultural, and economic framework of societies in their different historical and social moments (Oliveira 2015).

According to Oliveira (2015), art works as a means of communication through which it is possible to reproduce cultural aspects of a given society and also allows a possibility of overcoming conflicts when used as



a form of resistance and political expression. Moreover, certain cultural productions seen as representations, elucidate, even if partially, established power relations, being signs of practices, actions, and values under negotiation. These are cultural productions that, through their critical and political character, seek to influence the world and produce significant social changes. Cultural production becomes, from this point on, important for the debates around contemporary society, for a considerable part of it constitutes means of expression linked to popular classes and, under its prism, an intriguing interface between history, culture, society, social protest, and daily life gains body (p. 18).

The possible relations between art and politics are one of the central points of this research that has been developed and that gave rise to this article. To think about these relations, I work with the concept of activism. Activism can be defined as a conceptual neologism still with unstable consensus, both in the field of social sciences and in the field of arts. It calls for connections between art and politics, stimulating the potential destinations of art as an act of resistance and subversion. It can manifest itself in social and political interventions, produced by individuals or collectives through poetic and performative strategies. The aesthetic and symbolic nature of activism amplifies, sensitizes, reflects, and interrogates issues in a given social-historical context, aiming at change or resistance, consolidating itself as a cause and social claim, and simultaneously as an artistic rupture (Raposo 2015).

According to Costa and Coelho (2018), the concept refers to political and critical art and covers art as a political manifesto, deviating from the hegemonic pattern of artistic expressions, even if they vary aesthetically. The main characteristics of protest art are the possibility of authoring by people who are not necessarily art professionals, the approach to everyday topics, interventions carried out in public spaces, and popularization outside traditional art spaces. Also, the use of unconventional means of communication is highlighted, as well as critical intervention through art. Activism addresses mainly themes that concern minority and peripheral groups in society, seeking to escape from traditional and hegemonic media, known mainly for neglecting the structural problems of society and for reinforcing stereotypes and behaviors. The importance of art as a source of cultural and social expression is because art, due to its enormous capacity to raise awareness, works as an important instrument of protest, reaching and moving those who are being touched by it, besides promoting actions, concrete and symbolic, against the various forms of social injustice present in society. Costa and Coelho (2018) also point out that political art, insofar as it is self-reflexive, finds in its political, social-critical, and claiming content, a movement to supplant the formal technique and visualize other senses, meanings, and protest

subjectivities, registering and exposing the yearnings of a given society and its way of seeing the world, as well as problematizing social and political issues that seem invisible.

Following the prompt in this research, I investigate the political meanings of art in an artistic movement of urban and peripheral character, the slam poetry. Known as *slam*, slam poetry emerged in a Chicago bar in the United States in 1986 a creation of the poet and construction worker Mark Kelly Smith. Mainly a movement linked to the periphery, the slam, according to researcher and slammer<sup>2</sup> Roberta Estrela D'Alva (2011), can be defined as a spoken poetry competition, a space for free poetic expression, an agora where current issues are debated, or even another form of entertainment. It is also, as put by Vilar (2019), a hybrid poetic and artistic material, an art form that allows the recognition of different ways of knowing and being in the world, a tool for self-determination for marginalized communities that can find in these spaces, listeners who share similar experiences. In slams, unease is transformed into lyricism. Aesthetics and experience are the sources of poetic making, and themes cross borders, almost always reflecting structural problems common to diverse societies.

The slams promote integration between the participants of the event as they take the proportion of a celebration, where the word is communed among all, in a poetic circle where the demands of the now of a certain community, its most poignant issues, are presented, opposed and organized according to the experiences that this community lives by (D'Alva 2011). For a slam to happen, there must be the collective and active participation of all those who are present. The term “community” defines well the groups that practice poetry, since they have been organizing collectively around a common interest, under a minimal set of norms and rules (D'Alva 2011). These rules will be responsible for defining how the event will be conducted since they govern from the time that each performance will last to how these poems should be spoken by the slammer.

Three fundamental rules must be respected: the poems must be written by the poet who will perform them, they must be a maximum of three minutes long, and no costumes, props, or musical accompaniment may be used. Five judges are randomly chosen from among the audience present at the event, and it is up to them to evaluate the poets' performances, giving scores ranging from 0.0 to 10.0, where the highest and lowest scores are discarded so that there is no favoritism or disfavoring on the part of the judges. The whole event is conducted by the slammaster, who is the person who acts as a mix of presenter and master of ceremonies. The audience is also an important part of the slam competitions, interacting

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<sup>2</sup> Name for the poets who participate in poetry slams.

throughout the event with the poets and acting as something similar to a thermometer because it is through their reactions that we realize how the poetry was received by the audience.

The movement, which emerged in the United States, has already spread around the world and is gaining a lot of space on the Brazilian scene. According to the last survey done by SLAM BR<sup>3</sup> in November of 2019, there are now 210 slams in 20 Brazilian states, of which all of them are very connected to the peripheries and social themes, such as violence, prejudice, sexuality, and low political representation. It is important to highlight the political direction that slam has taken in Brazil as a movement mainly of black and peripheral people. According to Sabino (2020), contrary to the poetic battles in countries like the United States and France, the slam editions in Brazil are held mostly by black people, mainly women, non-academical and poor. Moreover, the poems are about marginalized lives, translating experiences crossed by constitutive agendas such as race, class, gender, and territory.

Some of the groups that have been gaining more and more notoriety are the gendered groups, such as the Slam das Minas groups, which are organized exclusively for the participation of women and transgender people. Created for the first time in Brasília in 2015 and then in São Paulo the following year, the collective currently operates in 17 Brazilian states, and emerged with the need to create a space that aimed to welcome and give prominence to the voices of women artists. Besides, it was also an objective to expand the spaces occupied by them in *saraus*, recitals, and competitions<sup>4</sup>, such as SLAM BR and the Slam World Cup, held in France.

The narratives exposed in the Slam das Minas meetings question mainly the forms of violence present in society and seek to demonstrate how this violence crosses and constitutes the existence of these women. In Rio de Janeiro, the city where I conduct my research, the Slam das Minas has been taking place in public spaces since May 2017 and was created by the poet Tom Grito, being currently organized and formed by Moto Tai, Débora Ambrósia, Gênesis, Tom Grito, Rejane Barbosa, DJ Bieta, Andrea Bak and Lian Tai.

Through the analysis of the artistic production and the path of these women, I seek to understand how art has been mobilized politically in the search for the construction of inclusive spaces free of violence. In this article, I will make a brief description of one of the poetry battles of Slam das Minas - RJ, held in 2019. I intend to demonstrate how the word has been politically mobilized, exploring the importance of the voice of these women and the power of poetic performances in public spaces.

3 SLAM BR is the Brazilian national championship of spoken word poetry.

4 Available at: [https://brasil.elpais.com/brasil/2019/02/19/cultura/1550599627\\_105700.html](https://brasil.elpais.com/brasil/2019/02/19/cultura/1550599627_105700.html). Accessed on: 01/12/2020.



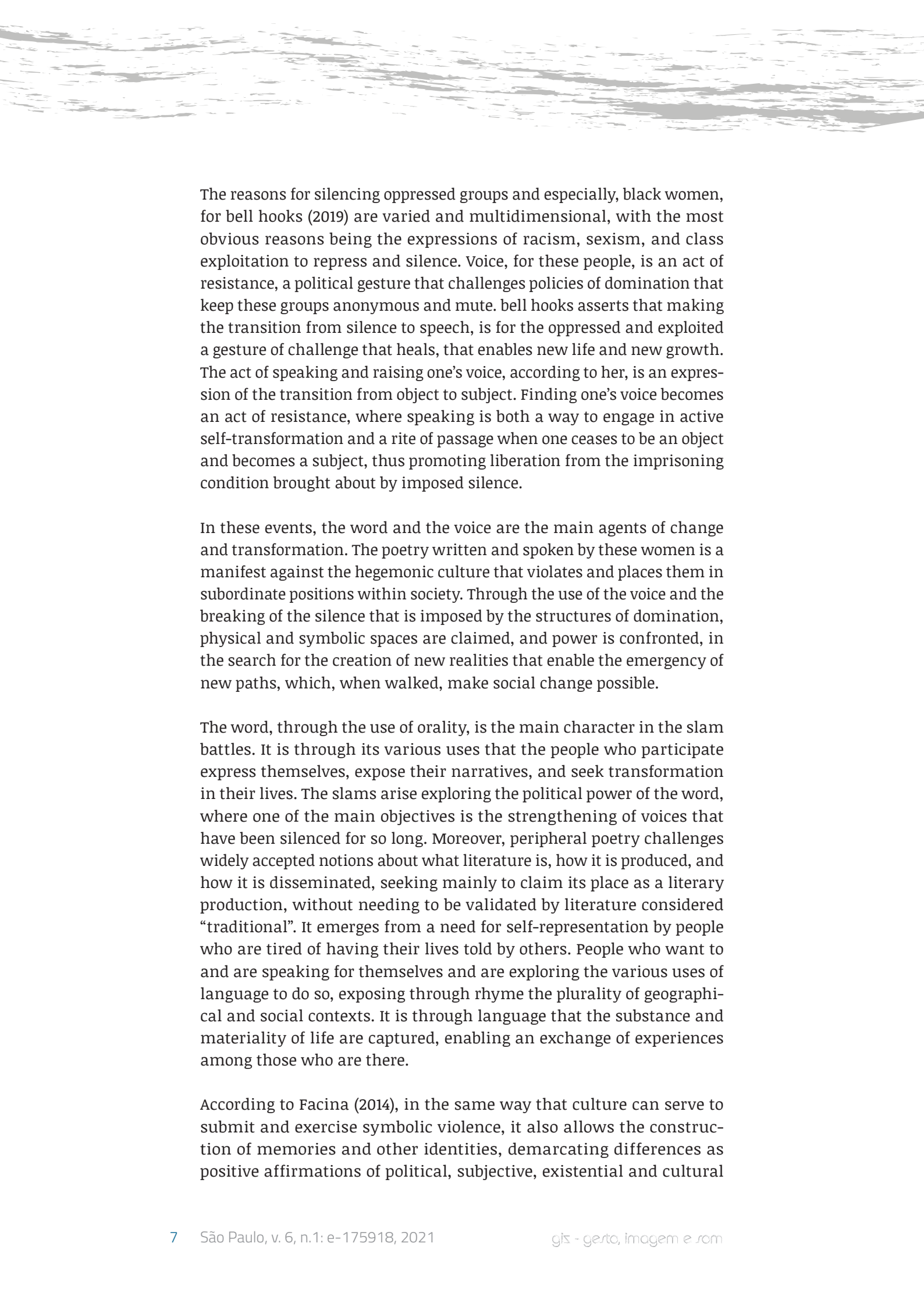
### **BREAKING THE SILENCE: THE POLITICAL POWER OF THE WORD**

Slam das Minas presents itself, in an artistic material of the collective, as an event “that brings together women from the most diverse locations in search of a safe and oppression-free space for the development of the artistic potency of women (straight, lesbian, bis, queer people, agender, non-binary and trans)”. In an interview<sup>5</sup> given to the Poeme-se blog, the poet Genesis, one of the members of the collective, says that the events and interventions of Slam das Minas - RJ aim to revolutionize through the word, promoting healing and liberation of women’s voices that have been silenced for so long.



FIGURE 1. Slam das Minas 2 Year Anniversary. Source: Personal Collection.

<sup>5</sup> Part of the answer given by the poet Genesis, a member of Slam das Minas - RJ, when asked about what the members of the movement believed in. Interview for Poeme-se blog. Available at: <https://blog.poemese.com/entrevista-com-ge%CC%82nesis-do-slam-das-minas-rj/>. Accessed on: 15/01/2020.



The reasons for silencing oppressed groups and especially, black women, for bell hooks (2019) are varied and multidimensional, with the most obvious reasons being the expressions of racism, sexism, and class exploitation to repress and silence. Voice, for these people, is an act of resistance, a political gesture that challenges policies of domination that keep these groups anonymous and mute. bell hooks asserts that making the transition from silence to speech, is for the oppressed and exploited a gesture of challenge that heals, that enables new life and new growth. The act of speaking and raising one's voice, according to her, is an expression of the transition from object to subject. Finding one's voice becomes an act of resistance, where speaking is both a way to engage in active self-transformation and a rite of passage when one ceases to be an object and becomes a subject, thus promoting liberation from the imprisoning condition brought about by imposed silence.

In these events, the word and the voice are the main agents of change and transformation. The poetry written and spoken by these women is a manifest against the hegemonic culture that violates and places them in subordinate positions within society. Through the use of the voice and the breaking of the silence that is imposed by the structures of domination, physical and symbolic spaces are claimed, and power is confronted, in the search for the creation of new realities that enable the emergency of new paths, which, when walked, make social change possible.

The word, through the use of orality, is the main character in the slam battles. It is through its various uses that the people who participate express themselves, expose their narratives, and seek transformation in their lives. The slams arise exploring the political power of the word, where one of the main objectives is the strengthening of voices that have been silenced for so long. Moreover, peripheral poetry challenges widely accepted notions about what literature is, how it is produced, and how it is disseminated, seeking mainly to claim its place as a literary production, without needing to be validated by literature considered "traditional". It emerges from a need for self-representation by people who are tired of having their lives told by others. People who want to and are speaking for themselves and are exploring the various uses of language to do so, exposing through rhyme the plurality of geographical and social contexts. It is through language that the substance and materiality of life are captured, enabling an exchange of experiences among those who are there.

According to Facina (2014), in the same way that culture can serve to submit and exercise symbolic violence, it also allows the construction of memories and other identities, demarcating differences as positive affirmations of political, subjective, existential and cultural

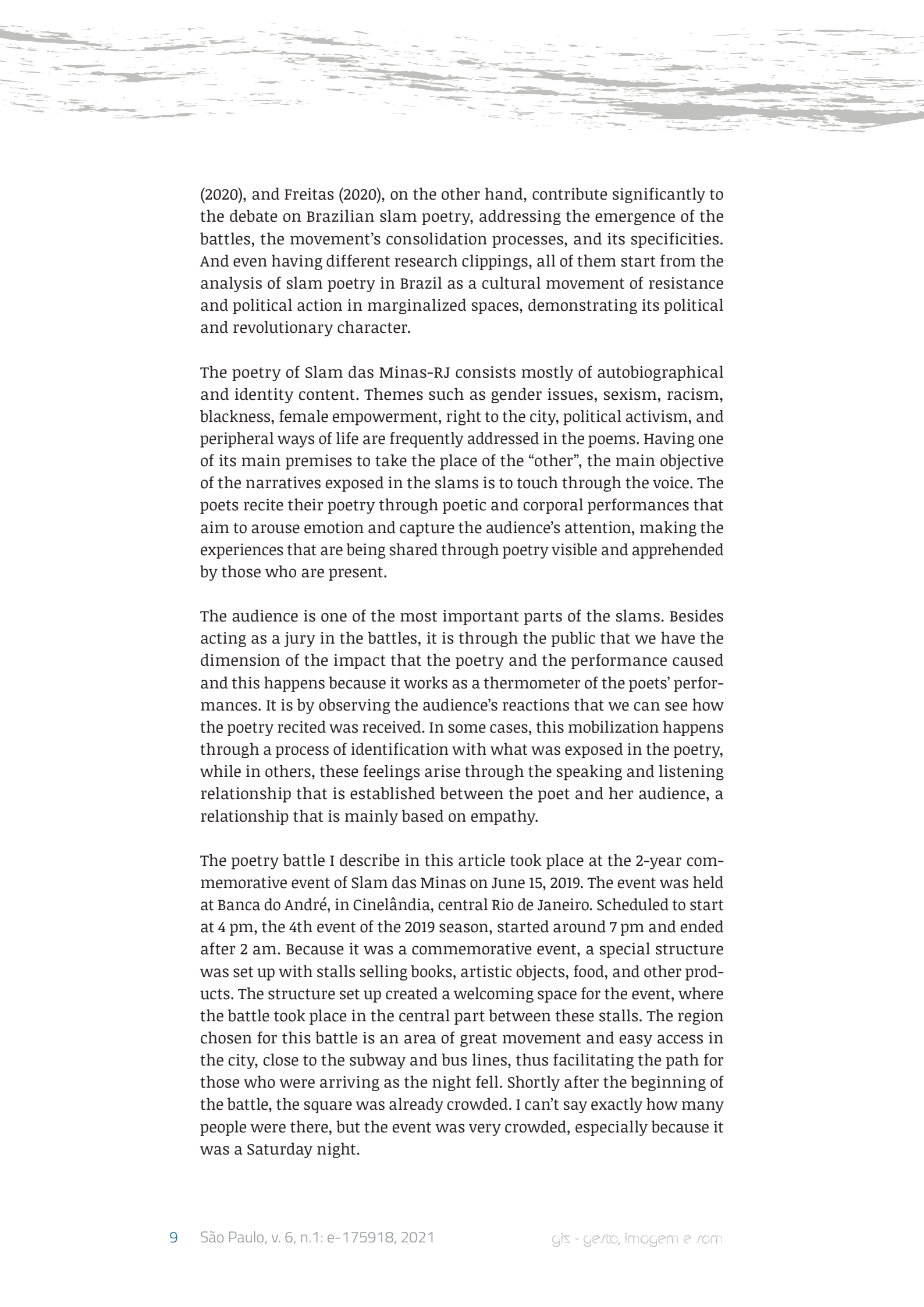
dissidence. According to the author, culture can emerge as a resource that can be triggered “for the production of emancipatory counter-hegemonies, allowing to put into perspective, relativize and counterpose the hegemonic discourse” (Facina 2014, 6). When reflecting on culture and pacification in Complexo do Alemão, the author demonstrates how the residents of the Complexo used culture as a form of resistance and reconstruction after the intervention and pacification processes of the UPPs (Pacifying Police Units) and the housing removal programs of the PAC (Growth Acceleration Program). In addition to being forms of resistance, the cultural manifestations in these contexts also configure ways to build a memory and to imagine new ways of living:

Diasporic, the cultures of the favelas are narratives that carry the memory of struggles, of shared experiences that perpetuate themselves in history through poetry, music, forms of social interaction, architecture, and in so many other places where creativity faces the world as it is and rehearses the world as to-be. (Facina 2014, 11).

The work of Lopes et al (2018) also demonstrates the importance of artistic creation processes in the construction of new spaces and new sociabilities. From ethnographic listening to the literacy history of two young university students, producers of cultural interventions and residents of subaltern areas in the city of Rio de Janeiro, the authors seek to show how those who have been subordinated by modernity do not surrender peacefully to writing, but rather appropriate and transform its meanings, “constituting themselves as authors of their own stories and reinventing ways to act, to narrate and to survive linguistically and culturally” (p. 23). In the exposed narratives, writing and reading go hand in hand with political engagement showing stories that counterpoint the hegemonic narratives that represent peripheral youth as subjects who lack skills and competencies and need to be colonized, civilized, and educated (idem).

Research on rap and hip hop (Alves 2016, Cura 2017) also shows the importance of understanding art as a social and political intervention in marginalized spaces. The work of Oliveira (2015), already cited in this article, analyzes from the emergence of Rap to its transformation into a consolidated movement that became known primarily as a cultural and political expression of the peripheries. The author argues that focusing on rap-society relations makes it possible to study how certain social tensions are expressed in the field of culture, as well as how these productions demonstrate an engaged attitude, a critical position, and a protest stance, showing an alternative of social action and a point of convergence between the individual and the collective. The works by D’Alva (2011), Stella (2015), Araújo (2019), Vilar (2019), Sabino (2020), Neves





(2020), and Freitas (2020), on the other hand, contribute significantly to the debate on Brazilian slam poetry, addressing the emergence of the battles, the movement's consolidation processes, and its specificities. And even having different research clippings, all of them start from the analysis of slam poetry in Brazil as a cultural movement of resistance and political action in marginalized spaces, demonstrating its political and revolutionary character.

The poetry of Slam das Minas-RJ consists mostly of autobiographical and identity content. Themes such as gender issues, sexism, racism, blackness, female empowerment, right to the city, political activism, and peripheral ways of life are frequently addressed in the poems. Having one of its main premises to take the place of the “other”, the main objective of the narratives exposed in the slams is to touch through the voice. The poets recite their poetry through poetic and corporal performances that aim to arouse emotion and capture the audience's attention, making the experiences that are being shared through poetry visible and apprehended by those who are present.

The audience is one of the most important parts of the slams. Besides acting as a jury in the battles, it is through the public that we have the dimension of the impact that the poetry and the performance caused and this happens because it works as a thermometer of the poets' performances. It is by observing the audience's reactions that we can see how the poetry recited was received. In some cases, this mobilization happens through a process of identification with what was exposed in the poetry, while in others, these feelings arise through the speaking and listening relationship that is established between the poet and her audience, a relationship that is mainly based on empathy.

The poetry battle I describe in this article took place at the 2-year commemorative event of Slam das Minas on June 15, 2019. The event was held at Banca do André, in Cinelândia, central Rio de Janeiro. Scheduled to start at 4 pm, the 4th event of the 2019 season, started around 7 pm and ended after 2 am. Because it was a commemorative event, a special structure was set up with stalls selling books, artistic objects, food, and other products. The structure set up created a welcoming space for the event, where the battle took place in the central part between these stalls. The region chosen for this battle is an area of great movement and easy access in the city, close to the subway and bus lines, thus facilitating the path for those who were arriving as the night fell. Shortly after the beginning of the battle, the square was already crowded. I can't say exactly how many people were there, but the event was very crowded, especially because it was a Saturday night.



FIGURE 2. Slam das Minas 2 Year Anniversary. Source: Personal Collection.

Before the poetry battle began, some artistic and musical performances took place. While these presentations were happening, the poets were getting ready for the beginning of the battle, which took place right after slammaster Tom Grito presented the rules to the audience. As is customary at Slam das Minas, at the beginning the microphone is open, which means that anyone present can sign up to enunciate poetry or make an announcement. But first, as in every slam battle that has its own slogan, Tom called out “Slam das...”, to which the audience responded with the slogan “minas!

The event was crowded with people who saw in that built space a welcoming environment to expose through poetry stories of their trajectory. During the battle, all the performances were well received by the public and received many applause and shouts of support, which is a behavior encouraged by the presenters, who say that despite being a poetry battle the goal is not only the battle itself but to encourage and support the poets who are performing there. The battle was quite crowded that day and the space was somewhat small, which made it so that people stayed close and could hear and look at each other closely. Some of the audience sat on

the floor in the center of the space, and some of the audience sat around those people who were sitting down. This configuration was encouraged by the slammaster, because according to him it facilitated the interaction between the poets and the audience. When a poem was well received the ecstasy was shared and people stood up to applaud and cheer, and looked at each other as if they were trying to share the feeling caused by that performance. One of the performances that moved the audience the most and was responsible for putting the audience in a real ecstasy was that of the poet Valentine:

Sou como uma boneca, não tenho sentimentos  
As minhas falas devem ser programadas  
Quando não sirvo mais, sou jogada fora  
Sem cerimônias ou lamentos  
Boa de brincar, fácil de largar, não sou levada para passear  
Entre quatro paredes ou em um baú é onde devo ficar  
Guardo segredos  
Sou amável, mas o amor eu não posso tê-lo  
Afinal bonecas não sentem amor e nem medo  
Não respondo ao padrão, não mereço amor não  
É o que dizem os donos da razão  
Meu sofrimento pra eles é diversão  
Mas não importa, pois boneca não tem depressão  
Sou como uma boneca  
Mas não sou uma boneca  
Sinto medo, mágoa e solidão  
Me machuco, sinto dor e sangro  
Dentro do meu peito bate um coração  
Mas vocês comigo vão continuar brincando  
E essa poesia não vai terminar com uma rima  
Verão que mais difícil do que prever o clima  
É ser o objeto que tem vida  
E tentar manter a graça, a ternura e o que restou da alegria  
E eu não sei se vai adiantar avisar  
Mas agora mais uma vez eu vou falar  
Eu não sou boneca pra você brincar  
Não sou objeto para você usar  
Não sou fetiche para você experimentar  
E não sou a porra de um produto pra você aproveitar  
Eu sou uma mulher pra você respeitar  
E acima de tudo, eu sou um ser humano  
Meu nome é Valentine, jamais Valentina  
Se quiserem me encontrar vão me achar num *slam*  
Nunca numa esquina  
(Valentine 2019)<sup>6</sup>

6 2 Year Commemorative Battle of *Slam das Minas* – RJ, 2019. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H5KWmNBigs0>. Accessed on: 15/08/2020.

Valentine's performance was a presentation that aggregated the main characteristics of what is considered a good slam performance: she allied the use of her voice and body in the construction of a powerful performance that moved and held the attention of the audience, being applauded at the end of her presentation. Through poetry recited and the use of her body in a lively and intense way, Valentine addressed issues that cut across and constitute her experience as a black and transgender woman. In the transcribed poem, she questions the treatment of her deviant body, addressing mainly the objectification of a body that escapes the heteronormative logic that takes place in society.

Through her verses she talks about important social issues, such as the exclusion of the transgender population from the labor market. In the last verses "Se quiserem me encontrar vão me achar num slam/ Nunca numa esquina" we can see a clear allusion to the process that results in 90% of transvestites and transsexuals living solely from prostitution<sup>7</sup> and scarce informal jobs. The difficulty of access to formal jobs by the trans population occurs because in Brazil, cultural standards constitute transgender identities as deviant and inferior, resulting in the difficulty of access to the formal market (Almeida e Vasconcelos 2018). By saying that if they want to find her, they will find her in a slam, Valentine uses her voice to refuse and protest against this framework, refusing prostitution as a way of survival and claiming her place as a poet and artist.

Another performance that caused a great impact on the public present was that of poet Aline Anaya. Through her poetry, the slammer addressed a recurring theme in the poetry written by the women who participate in the slam: sexual harassment.

Desde o início  
Fadada ao assédio  
A mercê da sujeira  
Objeto do tédio  
Eu nego  
As memórias de sua malícia  
Às portas de minha alma uma criança ainda grita  
E é mó fita  
Parecia brincadeira  
Impunidade  
Mente branca  
Abusando da vila inteira  
E eram alguns anos de distanciamento  
O meu jeito frágil, pequeno, era alvo do seu tormento?

7 Available at: <https://economia.estadao.com.br/blogs/ecoando/transgenero-transexual-travesti-os-desafios-para-a-inclusao-do-grupo-no-mercado-de-trabalho/> Accessed on: 07/08/2019.

E tudo cheirava a manipulação  
O teu sorriso no rosto  
E no meu corpo a sua mão  
Ah não!  
Vamos às vias de fato  
Da história do lobo mau eu era estudo de caso  
Eu anulei alguns sonhos  
Fui pele, saliva e fracasso  
E como as antepassadas eu fui pega no laço  
E eu jurei, assim lentamente  
O seu suor foi gasolina pro meu ódio permanente  
Eu peço aos orixás que protejam meu consciente  
Pra que a fuga do meu olhar afaste macho indecente  
E mesmo em frente  
Eu só ando olhando pros lados  
Se vier pro meu canto vai ser raiva ao quadrado  
E eu botei no meu texto: manos, fiquem ligados  
Hoje eu sou preta d'água  
Se me tocar, morre afogado  
(Aline Anaya 2019)<sup>8</sup>

Aline Anaya's poetry, besides relating how she assimilated and reacted to the violence described in the poem, discusses a practice characteristic of a society structured by male domination and that constantly reduces women to the condition of objects. Moreover, it is possible to see how this event altered her perception of the world and the way she chose to act upon it. Just like Valentine's poetry, Aline Anaya's poetry was also energetically received by the people who were present. The experiences shared in the poems infected the audience, touching on sensitive and important points and issues.

Being in the field as a slam spectator was an experience that directly affected me. Besides acting as a researcher, I was also present as a woman who listened at certain times to stories that affected me because they reminded me of things I had experienced or because they touched on sensitive places. Thus, besides the exercise of the ethnographic look, affective listening was also present, moved by the awakening of feelings through poetry. These looks crossed by affection (Favret-Saada 2005) were decisive not only for my field experience but also in the choice of poems incorporated in this article.

8 2 Year Commemorative Battle of *Slam das Minas* – RJ, 2019. Available at: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L\\_QqT2SUGf8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L_QqT2SUGf8). Accessed on: 15/08/2020.



## **BODIES IN ALLIANCE: STRATEGIES AGAINST GENDER AND STATE VIOLENCE**

The slam events then become, beyond the battle of spoken poetry, a space where these women feel safe to gather and express their trajectories, addressing issues related to the place of women and the entire population that is placed on the margins of society. As previously stated, slams take place mostly in public spaces and these events have great representation in these spaces, because, as said by Butler (2015), the power that people have to gather is itself an important political prerogative. According to the author in the book “Notes toward a performative theory of assembly” gathering signifies beyond what is said, and this mode of signification is a concerted bodily representation, a plural form of performativity. Within these assemblies, the body that is on display exhibits its value and its freedom in the manifestation itself, representing, through the corporeal form of the assembly, an appeal to the political. For Butler, acting in concord may be an embodied way of calling into question the incipient and powerful dimensions of the reigning notions of politics. The bodies present are the object of the manifestations that take precariousness as their stimulating condition: these are the bodies that experience the condition of a threatened livelihood, of ruined infrastructure and precarious condition. These are the bodies that through a plural form of performativity, demand better conditions of life and existence in society:

(...) when bodies come together in the street, in the square, or in other forms of public space, they are exercising a plural and performative right to appear, a right that affirms and instantiates the body in the middle of the political field and that, in its expressive and meaningful function, conveys a corporeal existence for a more bearable set of economic, social, and political conditions, no longer affected by the induced forms of precarious condition. (p. 17).

The assembled bodies stimulate a form of social solidarity, a gathering represented by bodies under duress or in the name of duress, which signifies a form of persistence and resistance (Butler 2015). At a time when there is the rise of conservative and fundamentalist governments and the resurgence of moralistic agendas, the gatherings are also a claim for the right to unite, to meet in assembly, and to express oneself freely. These plural representations demonstrate that the situations experienced by these people are shared situations and that they are not alone: they create a sense of belonging. In the case of the female slam, by using their voices and breaking the silence imposed by the structures of domination present in society, these women claim symbolic and physical spaces through the embodied manifestations represented by the slam battles.



FIGURE 3. Slam das Minas 2 Year Anniversary. Source: Personal Collection.

The artistic performance of these people is a political and performative presentation of bodies that are launched in public spaces calling attention to themselves and to the issues that come across them. This process intensifies and becomes even more symbolic when performed by bodies that deviate from the norm, bodies that are victims of prejudice and submission processes. The inscription of these bodies in public spaces represents the struggle to break the determinism that defines the place these bodies should be. They seek a place, they say through their voice and poetic performance: I am, I am here, and I want to stay.

The poems presented at slams constantly address themes that question the actions of the State and the use of coercive power in peripheral spaces.

Themes such as urban violence and the abusive use of police power are recurrent in the poems and make explicit how the State acts in these spaces and how these practices influence the lives of these people. The poems also speak to how peripheral lives are seen as disposable lives<sup>9</sup> (Butler 2015). These technologies mobilized by the state and its institutions regulate the everyday lives of people inhabiting marginalized spaces, resulting in a relationship primarily centered on the exercise of State power. The exercise of coercive and domineering power in conjunction with the absence of public policies that enable a life that can be lived<sup>10</sup> results in an existence that takes place between the presence and absence of the state. The State is present in these spaces in an attempt to control them, and is absent when it does not seek to implement public policies that reduce inequality, enable a dignified life, and promote social justice.

The spaces created through slams, especially in the case of the Slam das Minas with its specific gender clippings, are spaces that facilitate that these experiences are shared. They are spaces intentionally created to be safe and welcoming spaces, spaces that encourage speaking and listening, wherewith the exchange of knowledge through the sharing of the sensitive (Ranciére 2005), new realities can be imagined and built-in community.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The spaces built through the events organized by Slam das Minas - RJ are not only spaces of resistance, but also of reexistence, seen as the participants are always agents of their own trajectory, seeking, besides social change, change in their own lives. The exploration of the political dimensions of art and poetry through the collective mobilization of women constitute new possibilities of resistance to daily violence, resulting in the construction of new patterns of thought and action. Through artistic performances and the exhibition of personal narratives, the poets who participate in the Slam das Minas - RJ provoke listening and stimulate the public, collaborating with the construction of a space where the right to freedom of speech, free thinking, and dialogue among differences can be exercised. And as Roberta Estrela D'Alva (2011) points out, an autonomous space where the word is celebrated, expressed, and, even more, fundamental in a world like the one we live in – listening.

### TRANSLATION

Tayná Corrêa  
de Sá and Júlia  
de Azevedo  
Bittencourt.

9 To address this issue, Butler (2015) draws on Foucault's (2000) discussion of biopower and Mbembe's (2003) discussion of necropolitics, demonstrating how bodies are controlled and life and death managed through the exercise of state technologies of power.

10 Butler 2015, 33.

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