

Transcript (ENG):
***“Travesti” não se traduz!* by Maria Clara Araújo,**

“Travesti” não se traduz! (2017), Maria Clara Araújo, 3'21"
Listen here: bit.ly/3eF76Ym

“Linn [da Quebrada], my love, let me tell you, let me quickly explain to you what I was thinking about when I sent you this message.

Friend, travesti is a Latin American identity and to say this means that the particularities and specificities of being a Brazilian travesti turn this identity into something unique worldwide. So, even if for example, “transvestite” is a commonly used translation of the term, and it is used in other countries, being a transvestite, I don’t know, in France, is not and will never be the same thing as being a Brazilian travesti, you know? And so it doesn’t make much sense to translate the term “travesti” when we are writing a text or making any kind of work out there because it makes sense that we add a historicity to the text, you know? A geopolitical position. Then, when we translate it, we might lose this context.

The travesti is a Brazilian identity, so, for example, this is something that I decide to embrace in my work, but I’m not saying that you should do this, you know? But one thing to think about is that not translating the term is precisely to position ourselves as belonging to a South American identity, to a Latin American identity, and to a Brazilian identity. With this, I think that no translation is going to be precise in this case, because the term is not the same... Like, the language is not the same language, you know? When you’re translating, it won’t just be the language that’s being translated.

The term travesti is not just a term, it carries a symbology, a representation, a social role, a specific social place in Brazil. So, if we translate it, I'm afraid that all the historicity of the travesti movement in Brazil, including that of having reclaimed a term that was used in a pejorative way for years and re-signified it, translating the term would make us lose a bit of the notion of our position in the world: as part of a dissident, South American identity, in a process of translation that is aimed at someone that is, for example, in a western geography and who needs this term to be translated in order to grasp it, you know?

Like, for me it is much more worthwhile that we present ourselves to the world without translation. Because why do we often need to translate ourselves, you know? For the white man to understand us. So, for the white man to materialise that in his head because he's going to look for a close representation, a close sign, you know? We have our own particularities and maybe this process of translation will make us lose them. We would, then, be seen from a general viewpoint, which tends to be a view that reaps, excludes, silences, hides specific things that we only live precisely for being Brazilian travestis."

Maria Clara Araújo (Recife, 1996) is a transactivist and parliamentary advisor to Erica Malunguinho MP for PSOL/SP, graduated in pedagogy at the Federal University of Pernambuco and researcher in curriculum theory with emphasis on anti-racist and decolonial pedagogies. The audio that integrates the exhibition is part of a conversation she had with the singer Linn da Quebrada, about how she sees the importance of not translating the term "travesti", because it carries the specificities of a location/context that can be lost in the translation process.

Notes on Travecceleration is curated by Ode and commissioned by Cairo Clarke, LUX Curatorial Fellow 2020/21.

