

**AUTHENTICITY AND POWER: RECONNECTING WITH MARGINALIZED
ASPECTS OF THE FEMININE**

**AUTENTICIDADE E PODER: A RECONEXÃO COM OS ASPECTOS
MARGINALIZADOS DO FEMININO**

**AUTENTICIDAD Y PODER: RECONEXIÓN CON ASPECTOS MARGINADOS DE
LO FEMENINO**

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ABSTRACT

The present study aims to provide a critical analysis of the historical marginalization of the three feminine powers — cyclicity, ancestry, and sexuality — and their impact on female subjectivity, as they directly influence the construction of women's identity, self-esteem, and autonomy. The central question of this research is: How does the historical marginalization of cyclicity, ancestry, and sexuality affect the construction of women's identity, self-esteem, and autonomy, and in what ways can the conscious integration of these three powers promote empowerment and authenticity? The hypothesis that supports this study is that, through self-knowledge, women achieve authenticity and liberation in the process of self-occupation by re-signifying individual and collective experiences. To substantiate the critical analysis, the theoretical concepts of Audre Lorde (2019), who problematizes power as erotic and self-expression as resistance, are used; Brené Brown (2019), who discusses vulnerability and courage; Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (2014), with her contributions on the danger of a single story, feminism, and the social construction of femininity; Clarissa Pinkola Estés (1992), on ancestral archetypal feminine wisdom; Michel Foucault (1983; 1986), on biopower and subjectivation; Silvia Lane (1999), from the perspective of critical social psychology; and Zygmunt Bauman (2001), in his reflections on identity in liquid modernity. This bibliographic research seeks to integrate these authors to broaden the understanding of the phenomenon, highlighting how the conscious reclaiming of these three powers can serve as a path to personal and social transformation. The analysis aims to demonstrate that self-occupation — understood as the capacity to recognize oneself and lead one's own life — is strengthened when women reconnect with their ancestry, embrace their natural cycles, and express their sexuality and creativity.

Keywords: Female Subjectivity. Self-knowledge. Cyclicity. Ancestry. Sexuality. Authenticity.

RESUMO

O presente estudo tem como objetivo trazer uma análise crítica sobre a marginalização histórica dos três poderes femininos — ciclicidade, ancestralidade e sexualidade — e seu impacto na subjetividade feminina, ao influenciar diretamente a construção da identidade, da autoestima e da autonomia nas mulheres. A questão central da pesquisa é: Como a marginalização histórica da ciclicidade, ancestralidade e sexualidade impacta a construção da identidade, autoestima e autonomia de mulheres, e de que forma a integração consciente

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desses três poderes pode promover empoderamento e autenticidade? A hipótese que sustenta este estudo é a de que, por meio do autoconhecimento, promove-se autenticidade e libertação às mulheres na ocupação de si mesmas ao ressignificar experiências individuais e coletivas. Para fundamentar a análise crítica, são utilizados os conceitos teóricos de Audre Lorde (2019), que problematiza o poder como sendo erótico e a autoexpressão como resistência; Brené Brown (2019), ao abordar vulnerabilidade e coragem; Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (2014), com suas contribuições sobre o risco da história única, feminismo e construção social do feminino; Clarissa Pinkola Estés (1992) sobre sabedoria arquetípica ancestral feminina; Michel Foucault (1983; 1986), sobre biopoder e subjetivação; Silvia Lane (1999), a partir da psicologia social crítica e Zygmunt Bauman (2001), ao refletir sobre identidade na modernidade líquida. A pesquisa aborda uma metodologia bibliográfica, buscando integrar esses autores na compreensão do fenômeno, evidenciando como o resgate consciente desses três poderes pode atuar como caminho de transformação pessoal e social. A análise busca revelar que a ocupação de si, entendida como a capacidade de se reconhecer e liderar a própria vida, é potencializada quando a mulher se reconecta com sua ancestralidade, compreende seus ciclos naturais e expressa sua sexualidade e criatividade.

Palavras-chave: Subjetividade Feminina. Autoconhecimento. Ciclicidade. Ancestralidade. Sexualidade. Criatividade. Autenticidade.

RESUMEN

Este estudio tiene como objetivo proporcionar un análisis crítico de la marginalización histórica de los tres poderes femeninos (ciclicidad, ascendencia y sexualidad) y su impacto en la subjetividad femenina, influyendo directamente en la construcción de la identidad, la autoestima y la autonomía de las mujeres. La pregunta central de investigación es: ¿Cómo impacta la marginalización histórica de la ciclicidad, la ascendencia y la sexualidad en la construcción de la identidad, la autoestima y la autonomía de las mujeres, y cómo puede la integración consciente de estos tres poderes promover el empoderamiento y la autenticidad? La hipótesis subyacente a este estudio es que, a través del autoconocimiento, se promueve la autenticidad y la liberación de las mujeres en su autoocupación al redefinir las experiencias individuales y colectivas. El análisis crítico se apoya en los conceptos teóricos de Audre Lorde (2019), quien problematiza el poder como erótico y la autoexpresión como resistencia; Brené Brown (2019), quien aborda la vulnerabilidad y el coraje; Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (2014), con sus contribuciones sobre el riesgo de una sola historia, el feminismo y la construcción social de lo femenino; Clarissa Pinkola Estés (1992) sobre la sabiduría femenina arquetípica ancestral; Michel Foucault (1983; 1986) sobre el biopoder y la subjetivación; Silvia Lane (1999), basada en la psicología social crítica; y Zygmunt Bauman (2001), quien reflexiona sobre la identidad en la modernidad líquida. La investigación utiliza una metodología bibliográfica, buscando integrar a estos autores en la comprensión del fenómeno, destacando cómo la recuperación consciente de estos tres poderes puede actuar como un camino hacia la transformación personal y social. El análisis busca revelar que la autoocupación, entendida como la capacidad de reconocer y liderar la propia vida, se potencia cuando las mujeres reconectan con su ascendencia, comprenden sus ciclos naturales y expresan su sexualidad y creatividad.

Palabras clave: Subjetividad Femenina. Autoconocimiento. Ciclicidad. Ascendencia. Sexualidad. Creatividad. Autenticidad.

1 INTRODUCTION

Throughout history, the feminine has been subjected to systematic processes of silencing, control, and marginalization that have profoundly impacted the way women build their identity and relate to themselves and society. The patriarchal structure, based on power relations, established norms that defined the social roles attributed to women, as well as the limits of their subjective experiences. Michel Foucault (1983; 1986) points out that bodies are targets of disciplinary technologies that, at the same time that they produce knowledge, impose restrictions and configure specific modes of subjectivation. In the case of women, this disciplining is expressed in the control of sexuality, reproduction, emotional expression, and identity.

Among the elements most affected by this process are three fundamental dimensions of the female experience: cyclicity, ancestry, and sexuality/creativity. These dimensions, which could constitute sources of power, autonomy and authenticity, have historically been devalued and associated with fragility, irrationality or transgression. Marginalization occurred in conjunction with a historical-cultural movement aimed at maintaining patriarchal hierarchy. As Bauman (2001) observes, in a liquid modernity characterized by identity fluidity, women are encouraged to constantly reinvent themselves, but without the support of solid bonds of belonging, which intensifies subjective fragmentation and the feeling of insecurity.

In this context, the demand to conform to social standards — related to beauty, fashion, motherhood, professional performance and relationships — deepens a cycle of permanent demand. Often, the more women sacrifice themselves to meet external expectations, the more they are socially valued, perpetuating a logic of recognition conditioned to the renunciation of themselves. As Lorde (2019) points out, patriarchy is not limited to institutions, but also crosses the way women perceive themselves and relate to the world. This internalization of patterns often results in feelings of inadequacy, shame, and self-sabotage, as evidenced in the so-called Impostor Syndrome (CLANCE; IMES, 1978; BROWN, 2019).

Cyclicity, linked to biological and emotional rhythms, was disregarded in a culture that favors linearity and continuous productivity. Ancestry, which refers to the transmission of knowledge between generations, has been weakened by modern individualism and the devaluation of women's collective histories. Sexuality, also understood as vital energy and creativity, was subjected to processes of moral control, limiting the full expression of the body and desire. In this sense, Audre Lorde (2019) defends eroticism as a creative and

transformative force, often distorted by patriarchy and reduced to repression or the satisfaction of others:]

When I speak of the erotic, then, I speak of it as an affirmation of the vital force of women; of that strengthened creative energy, the knowledge and application of which we now claim in our language, our history, our dance, our loves, our work, our lives. (LORDE, 2019, p. 70)

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (2015) also emphasizes the importance of narratives in the construction of the feminine, showing how repeated stories shape beliefs and behaviors. For the author, recognizing the plurality of voices is essential, as she says, "what the discovery of African writers did for me was this: it saved me from having a unique story about what books are" (ADICHIE, 2015, p. 9). When narratives are crossed by silencing and oppression, they not only perpetuate inequalities, but also limit the possibilities for transformation. Thus, revisiting cyclicity, ancestry and sexuality means rescuing individual and collective dimensions, creating conditions for the strengthening of women in their processes of self-knowledge and emancipation.

Given this scenario, the present study aims to investigate how the historical marginalization of these three dimensions impacts female subjectivity and how their conscious rescue can promote empowerment and authenticity. It is based on the hypothesis that, through self-knowledge, it is possible to resignify experiences, deconstruct internalized patterns and expand the occupation of oneself, allowing women to constitute themselves as active agents in the construction of their own narratives.

For the development of this proposal, a bibliographic research was carried out based on authors such as Audre Lorde (2019), Brené Brown (2019), Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (2015), Clarissa Pinkola Estés (1992), Michel Foucault (1983; 1986), Silvia Lane (2000) and Zygmunt Bauman (2001), whose contributions allow an interdisciplinary analysis of power, identity, subjectivity and transformation.

Thus, this article seeks to contribute to academic and social debates about the awakening of female consciousness, offering theoretical subsidies to understand how the reconnection with these three powers can be configured as a path of liberation and authenticity in the face of contemporary challenges.

2 SILENCING OF THE FEMININE: POWER, CONTROL AND FRAGMENTATION OF SUBJECTIVITY

The marginalization of the feminine, as a historical process, is not limited to the exclusion of women from formal spaces of power. It involves, above all, the construction of control devices over their bodies, emotions and narratives. In this sense, Foucault (1983; 1986) points out that power is not only exercised in a repressive way, but also in a productive way, that is, it creates knowledge, norms and practices that shape behaviors and subjectivities.

In the case of women, this mechanism is manifested through what the author calls biopower, in which the body becomes a privileged target of social and political regulation. The medicalization of the menstrual cycle, the normalization of motherhood and the control of female sexuality exemplify how society disciplines and organizes women's bodies to meet the interests of a patriarchal order.

This discipline, however, is not only established by explicit laws or prohibitions, but also by seemingly banal daily practices, which guide how women should think, feel and relate to themselves and others. From childhood, discourses are transmitted that teach which behaviors are considered "appropriate" or "acceptable". The result is the construction of a process of internal surveillance, which leads to self-policing. As Foucault (1983; 1986) observes, women themselves begin to reproduce and reinforce these norms unconsciously, perpetuating structures of oppression.

Female subjectivity, in this context, is built on a terrain of restrictions, marked by the repression of desires, the denial of female ancestral knowledge and the absence of self-recognition. It is no coincidence that, although all human beings are born of a woman, we still live in a society marked by machismo, misogyny, and systematic criticism of female behaviors, desires, and ambitions.

With the arrival of liquid modernity, as analyzed by Bauman (2001), these control mechanisms take on new forms. If before society was structured in rigid and predictable norms, today the scenario is characterized by fluidity and instability.

For women, this new context represents both opportunities and challenges: on the one hand, it creates space to question old patterns; on the other hand, there is a constant pressure for reinvention, performance and adaptation to unattainable ideals. As the author points out, identity is continuously reconstructed, never finalized or stable, which generates a permanent state of anxiety.

Consider, for example, the contradiction of self-constituted identities that must be sufficiently solid to be recognized as such and at the same time flexible enough not to impede the freedom of future movement in constantly changing and volatile circumstances. Or the precariousness of human partnerships, now burdened with higher expectations than ever, but poorly institutionalized (if institutionalized), and therefore less resistant to the additional burden. (BAUMAN, 2001, p. 52)

In this scenario, the three powers of the feminine — cyclicity, ancestry, and sexuality — are further stifled. Cyclicity, which invites the recognition of natural and internal rhythms, clashes with the capitalist productive logic, sustained by linearity, constancy and continuous growth. The female body, in this process, is reduced to a machine, disregarding its physiological and emotional variations.

The menstrual cycle, for example, is often medicalized or made invisible, producing a rupture between the woman and her biological processes. This separation weakens the ability to self-perceive and respect one's own limits, resulting in physical and emotional exhaustion.

Contemporary culture imposes unrealistic standards of productivity and perfection on women, symbolized by the figure of the "Bionic Woman": impeccable body, domesticated emotions and constant availability. This expectation generates physical and emotional overload, resulting in exhaustion, frustration, or paralysis in the face of the fear of not meeting social demands. The pressure for performance and belonging intensifies in liquid modernity (Bauman, 2001), in which identities become unstable and continuously reconfigured.

The recognition of cyclicity allows women to align their activities with their own internal rhythms — creation, planning, execution, review and rest — promoting autonomy, energy preservation and a fuller experience. However, historically, this cyclical power has been invisible, medicalized, or pathologized (Illich, 1976; Emily Martin, 1987), creating a disconnect between the woman and her body. Cyclicity, which reflects natural rhythms of bodily and emotional wisdom, is often perceived as instability, fragility, or an obstacle to the linear productivity required by capitalism.

Ancestry, a central element for the sense of belonging and identity, also suffers marginalization. In the liquid society, community bonds are weakened, and knowledge transmitted orally by elderly women — such as practices of care, spirituality and resistance — is devalued (Bauman, 2001; Gonzalez, 1984; Anzaldúa, 1987). This historical erasure limits the recognition of a lineage of feminine strength and creativity, while the hegemony of androcentric scientific knowledge delegitimizes non-formalized knowledge. Women lose solid

references and are often compelled to adapt to external narratives about what a woman "should be", reinforcing insecurity and disconnection with herself.

Control over the body intensifies with medicalization and techno-scientific science, which impose norms on food, health, and aesthetics (Ortega, 2003; Haraway, 1991). Perfect health becomes an ideal to be displayed continuously, configuring itself as a new social utopia, while the circulation of digital information, paradoxically, contributes to misinformation and anxiety (Bauman, 2021).

Sexuality, understood by Audre Lorde (2019) as vital and creative energy, constitutes a deeply controlled field. Female eroticism, a source of personal and collective power, is historically silenced, repressed, and devalued in patriarchal societies. When associated with guilt or danger, it restricts not only pleasure but also creativity and authentic expression.

As Lorde (2019) observes, naming experiences and breaking silence is an essential political act "In the name of silence, each of us evokes the expression of our own fear [...] But most of all, I think we fear visibility that we can't really live without." (LORDE, 2019, p. 53)

The fragmentation of these three powers—cyclicity, ancestry, and sexuality—produces a subjectivity marked by disconnection, low self-esteem, anxiety, and difficulty in self-confidence (Lane, 1999; Brown, 2019). Female identity, shaped by limiting roles and hegemonic discourses, becomes restricted, reinforcing the internalization of patriarchal norms (Beauvoir, 1949; Butler, 1990).

The rescue of these powers involves self-knowledge and practices of collective resistance. Reconnecting to cyclicity can involve body awareness, taking care of one's own rhythms, and valuing emotional experience; ancestry is rescued through women's circles, oral histories, community rituals, and intergenerational dialogues (Julieta Paredes; Gonzalez, 1984; Anzaldúa, 1987); sexuality can be celebrated as a creative and transformative energy, breaking taboos and resignifying female pleasure and creativity (Lorde, 2019).

In addition, the deepening of the analysis requires an intersectional perspective: black, indigenous, and peripheral women face specific forms of marginalization that articulate gender, race, and class (hooks, 2000; Ribeiro, 2017; Lugones, 2008). Recognizing these multiple layers of oppression is essential to understanding the diversity of experiences and strategies of resistance of the feminine.

In this context, self-knowledge is not just an individual exercise, but a political and transformative act. It allows the identification and questioning of internalized norms, reconstructing one's own narratives, and integrating individual and collective history,

promoting authenticity, freedom, and creativity (Lane, 2000; Brown, 2019). When women know each other deeply, they are strengthened not only personally, but collectively, inspiring others and opening paths to a more just and egalitarian society, in which female subjectivity can flourish in its entirety.

2.1 THE DOMESTICATED FEMININE AND THE FRAGMENTATION OF SUBJECTIVITY

Female subjectivity was historically constructed from unequal power relations, which shaped behaviors, desires, and ways of being over time. Silvia Lane (2000) argues that psychological phenomena cannot be understood in isolation, as they emerge from social, cultural and historical contexts. The feelings of inadequacy, anxiety or low self-esteem that many women experience are not only individual, but reflections of internalized collective processes, which cross their histories, bodies and social relationships.

To be or not to be? It is the great moral question. What will be its ethical equivalence? 'Why are we what we are?' And the answer lies in the conception of the human being that we have adopted: we can be mere creatures at the mercy of superior forces, or we can become subjects of the History of our society, that is, capable of deciding on which ethical values will guide our actions and interactions. (LANE, 2000, p.68)

Oppression over the feminine also acts through silencing. Audre Lorde (2019) emphasizes that when women do not have space to express emotions, desires, or narratives, they internalize symbolic violence and distance themselves from their creative force. The imposed silence is not neutral; It serves as a mechanism for maintaining patriarchal power, reinforcing external norms and expectations that domesticate the feminine. For Lorde, transforming silence into language and action constitutes a revolutionary act, essential for the reconstruction of women's identity and personal power.

The fragmentation of subjectivity is, therefore, a structural phenomenon. It is not just about individual experiences of self-criticism or insecurity, but about an ongoing process of domestication of the feminine, in which women are shaped to correspond to external standards and demands, often internalized as obligatory or natural. This internal disconnection makes the woman perceive herself mainly through the eyes of the other, constantly seeking external validation and moving away from her own authenticity and autonomy (Brown, 2019; Butler, 1990).

In addition, fragmentation is intensified by historical and cultural factors that devalue cyclicity, ancestry, and sexuality. Women are taught, from an early age, to suppress

emotions, regulate behaviors and meet linear expectations of productivity, beauty and sociability, while ancestral knowledge, care practices and creativity are relegated to silence (Anzaldúa, 1987; hooks, 2000). This configuration contributes to the construction of a subjectivity that does not fully recognize its creative, ethical, and relational potential, making it difficult to integrate experiences and form a solid and autonomous identity.

Understanding female subjectivity as the result of social and historical processes of domination is fundamental to think about strategies to rescue authenticity, autonomy and internal power. Breaking the cycle of silencing and domestication requires, in addition to self-knowledge, collective and cultural practices that value the expression, creativity, and ancestry of the feminine, enabling each woman to recognize herself as a full subject and agent of her own history (Lorde, 2019; Ribeiro, 2017; Lugones, 2008).

2.2 THE LIQUID SOCIETY AND THE (PRE)OCCUPATIONS OF CONTEMPORARY LIFE

Nowadays, there is a social model characterized by the fluidity and instability of relationships, in which individuals are constantly pressured by external and internal expectations. According to Bauman (2001, p. 25), "The individual submits to society and this submission is the condition of his liberation."

The author describes this context as liquid modernity, in which bonds, values, and identities are fragile, transitory, and constantly reconfigured. In this scenario, women face specific challenges: they are called upon to play multiple roles — professional, maternal, marital, social — that are often contradictory, which causes inadequacy, anxiety and emotional exhaustion. This overload is intensified by historical patriarchal structures, which have shaped gender roles and limited the full expression of female subjectivity (Lorde, 2019; Lane, 2000; hooks, 2000).

The construction of female identity, therefore, is deeply rooted in historical, economic, and political conditions. Understanding gender oppression only as an individual experience is insufficient; it is necessary to recognize its collective dimension. Feelings of inadequacy, perfectionism, and self-criticism are largely products of systems that legitimize inequalities, not women's personal failings.

In this context, many women live in a constant state of (pre)occupation — occupied in advance — either with past pain, which feeds resentment or depressive states, or with anxieties projected into the future. The absence of full presence in the "here and now" makes

it difficult to connect with one's own authenticity and strengthens patterns of self-sabotage and extreme demand. Lane (2000, p. 66) points out:

In everyday life, emotions should be repressed, as they disturb rationality and psychological health. Conscience was saved. Talking, demonstrating, convincing, should be the invincible weapons of the human being.

This dynamic is closely linked to historical and cultural structures that define gender roles and shape female identities to serve the other rather than herself. As Bauman (2001) observes, class and gender significantly influenced the options available to each person; breaking through these barriers was not much simpler than challenging the assigned position in the 'divine hierarchy of being' prior to modernity. Thus, for all intents and purposes, class and gender were considered 'natural aspects', and the mission of many individuals was to 'adjust' to the assigned space, acting in accordance with others who were there.

The risk of the "single story", as Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (2014, p.13) warns, reinforces this precariousness of identity:

I realized that I had been so immersed in the media coverage of Mexicans that they had become one thing in my mind: the abject immigrant. I had believed in the unique story of the Mexicans and I was ashamed of it. This is how a unique story is created: show a people as one thing, one thing, without stopping, and that is what this people becomes.

When only one narrative about what it means to be a woman prevails, other ways of existing are made invisible, reinforcing the fragmentation of identity and the internalization of normative standards.

Self-knowledge, in this context, becomes a political act. Lane (2000) emphasizes that overcoming states of (pre)occupation does not occur only through individual strategies, but through a critical understanding of the social forces that produce them. Recognizing the historical and collective origin of fears, anxieties, and frustrations allows women to articulate political awareness and self-perception, promoting integration between personal experiences and social structures.

Audre Lorde (2019) reinforces that breaking with oppressive narratives and recognizing erotic power are essential strategies for resistance and identity reconstruction.

The silence imposed on women is a tool for maintaining patriarchy; transforming it into conscious action makes it possible to affirm autonomy, creativity and authenticity.

Thus, living in liquid modernity implies unique challenges for women: dealing with social fluidity, the multiplicity of roles, the demand for performance and the pressure for constant belonging. At the same time, it represents an opportunity to resignify identities, question internalized norms, and reconstruct personal and collective narratives based on self-knowledge and critical awareness (Bauman, 2001; Lorde, 2019; Lane, 2000; Adichie, 2014).

3 OBJECTIVES

3.1 GENERAL OBJECTIVE

To investigate how self-knowledge, articulated with the rescue of ancestry, cyclicity and sexuality/creativity, contributes to authenticity and liberation of female subjectivity.

3.2 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1. To analyze how the historical marginalization of these three powers impacts women's self-esteem, identity, and personal power.
2. Investigate how self-knowledge practices can promote the integration of these powers, strengthening autonomy, self-confidence and authenticity.
3. Discuss symbolic and practical strategies for self-occupation, including reconnection with ancestry, cyclical rhythms, and creative/sexual expression.
4. Reflect on the relevance of collective spaces, such as women's circles, to enhance experiences of self-knowledge and autonomy.

4 METHODOLOGY

The present study was developed from a qualitative bibliographic research, with a critical and interpretative focus, aiming to understand the historical construction of female subjectivity and the impacts of the marginalization of essential aspects of the feminine, such as cyclicity, ancestry and sexuality/creativity.

4.1 JUSTIFICATION OF THE QUALITATIVE APPROACH

The qualitative approach was chosen because it enables the in-depth analysis of complex phenomena, allowing the understanding of experiences, meanings and historical processes that cannot be reduced to quantitative data. This approach is appropriate to

investigate how social, cultural, and political discourses shape women's perceptions of themselves, their bodies, and their relationships with the world, as well as allowing the identification of paths of resistance and empowerment.

4.2 CRITERIA FOR SELECTING WORKS

The selection of works considered authors who address:

- History and social construction of female subjectivity (Silvia Lane, Foucault, Bauman);
- Creative expression and sexuality as dimensions of female power (Audre Lorde, Brené Brown);
- Narratives and ancestry as elements of resistance and rescue of identity (Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, bell hooks, Maria Lugones, Gloria Anzaldúa);
- Contemporary context and liquid modernity (Bauman, Ortega).

Priority was given to works that enable an integrated analysis between past and present, considering how historical processes influence women's individual and collective experiences in contemporary times.

The methodological procedure adopted involved:

1. Critical and systematic reading of the selected works, identifying key concepts about power, identity, subjectivity, silencing and female self-knowledge;
2. Registration and thematic organization of contents, separating information related to cyclicity, ancestry and sexuality/creativity;
3. Interpretative analysis, relating theoretical concepts to the contemporary context, with attention to the influence of cultural, social and political discourses on women's lives;
4. Critical synthesis, integrating different theoretical perspectives to build a comprehensive understanding of the impacts of the marginalization of the three powers of the feminine and the paths of rescue through self-knowledge;
5. Articulation between theory and practice, with emphasis on proposals that allow the reconstruction of female identity and the strengthening of autonomy, authenticity and self-occupation.

This approach allowed us to develop an in-depth, sensitive and contextualized analysis, respecting the complexity of women's experiences and the diversity of experiences and identities.

The study, therefore, is not limited to reflecting on the historical and social impacts on the construction of female subjectivity, but seeks to propose concrete paths for the reintegration of cyclicity, ancestry and sexuality/creativity. Self-knowledge is understood as a continuous process of liberation, expression and reconstruction of oneself, integrating individual, collective and political dimensions of the female experience.

4.2.1 Authenticity and female liberation

Social narratives that devalue central dimensions of the female experience span centuries and consolidate themselves as normative discourses that define who women "can" or "should" be. This symbolic structure, transmitted through culture, education, and institutions, acts in a way that internalizes messages of inadequacy, submission, and limitation, leading to feelings of shame, insecurity, and fragmentation. Brené Brown (2019) adds that shame is a paralyzing emotion, as it prevents the authentic expression of the self and reinforces conforming behaviors, making it difficult for women to fully live their identity.

The historical marginalization of the three feminine powers—ancestry, cyclicity, and sexuality/creativity—is not only symbolic, but also emotional, physical, and spiritual. It creates a cycle of silencing and dependence, which distances women from their creative power and the sense of belonging. This distancing reveals how power relations are inscribed in the body and in subjectivity, operating not only through explicit oppression, but also through the invisible regulation of emotions and choices.

However, the constant fluidity of social expectations can be understood as both a threat and an opportunity. On the one hand, women are pressured to conform to unattainable and changeable standards; on the other hand, this same fluidity opens gaps for transformation, as long as there is an internal support supported by self-knowledge and self-awareness. In this sense, Foucault (1983; 1986) states that knowing oneself is an act of resistance, as it means unveiling the subtle forms of power that seek to govern subjectivity. Self-knowledge thus becomes a resource for contestation and reinvention.

Brown (2019) reinforces this perspective by arguing that authenticity is not limited to seeking social acceptance, but to having the courage to show oneself vulnerable and truthful, even in the face of the risk of rejection. When women take care of themselves, they break with the imprisonment of external expectations and free themselves from narratives that do not belong to them. This liberation does not mean the absence of conflict or pain, but the ability to sustain choices aligned with one's own essence, even in adverse contexts.

In a liquid and fragmented society, as Bauman (2001) points out, authenticity becomes a revolutionary act. Finding an inner core of stability is essential to resist external pressures and maintain the integrity of one's existence. For women, this core can be strengthened by the integration of the three feminine powers, which offer a symbolic and practical basis for building a meaningful, authentic, and creative life.

At this point, Audre Lorde's reflection (2019, p. 69) broadens the debate by denouncing the logic of systems that value profit to the detriment of human needs:

The greatest horror of any system that defines what is good in relation to profit rather than human needs, or that defines human needs from the exclusion of the psychic and emotional components of those needs—the greatest horror of such a system is that it robs our labor of its erotic value. its erotic power and the charm for life and fulfillment.

Lorde introduces erotic power as a vital dimension that rescues the value of subjective experience and the joy of existing, connecting authenticity with vitality and enchantment.

Identity, in this process, must be understood as a living organism, in constant movement, which is transformed into cycles of life, death and rebirth. Silvia Lane (2000) emphasizes that identity is constituted in the social roles we play and is reinvented in the relationship with the other, because there is no "me" without "us". Thus, women can only recognize themselves in their entirety in the encounter with others — especially in collectives that legitimize their voice.

The plurality of narratives, as Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (2015) reminds us, is fundamental to break stereotypes and expand the possibilities of existence:

Start the story with the arrows of the Native Americans, rather than the arrival of the British, and the story will be completely different. Start history with the failure of the African state, and not with the colonial creation of the African state, and history will be completely different. (ADICHIE, 2015, p.14)

This alert invites us to retell women's stories from their own references, recovering silenced voices and recognizing the multiple ways of being and existing.

Self-knowledge, therefore, emerges as the guiding thread of the occupation of oneself, understood as the ability to fully inhabit one's own existence with authenticity and autonomy. Such a process is not lonely; It is rooted in collective practices, such as women's circles,

which function as spaces for welcoming, sharing, and mutual recognition. In an exponential way, this ancestral and accessible practice allows a woman to recognize herself in the speech of the other, breaking subjective isolations and resignifying individual pains as collective experiences.

In this way, promoting self-knowledge is not only a strategy for personal development, but a political act that confronts historical structures of marginalization. By integrating ancestry, cyclicity and sexuality/creativity, women reconnect with their power, reframe their trajectory and expand the collective field of female emancipation. This reconnection not only strengthens subjectivities, but also fuels the struggle for equity and social justice, transforming the private into the political and the individual into the collective.

4.3 TAKING CARE OF ONESELF: SELF-KNOWLEDGE AS AN ACT OF LIBERATION

The concept of taking care of oneself proposes that the woman turns inwards, recognizing and inhabiting her own internal dimensions. It is not about isolation, but about reintegration, in which she becomes an active subject of her own history. This movement implies breaking with the external concerns that fragment it, recovering its presence in the here and now and rescuing the sense of authenticity.

Contemporary women, often burdened by multiple demands, find themselves torn between caring for others and maintaining tasks that are often not theirs. The romanticization of this accumulation — as if constant overcoming were proof of value — ends up displacing it from its own essence, generating feelings of loss of identity. The incessant search for recognition and love through productivity and perfection reinforces the alienation from the self.

Taking care of oneself, therefore, means ceasing to live according to external expectations and acting in line with one's internal values and desires. For Brené Brown (2019, p. 75):

We cultivate love when we allow our most vulnerable and powerful selves to be fully seen and known, and when we honor the spiritual connection that arises from that action with trust, respect, kindness, and affection.

This process is also political. Audre Lorde (2019) reminds us that self-care is not a luxury, but an act of resistance in a world that has historically devalued the feminine.

Prioritizing one's own emotional, physical, and spiritual integrity breaks with patriarchal logic, transforming the search for authenticity into a collective practice of social transformation:

For women, the need and desire to care for one another is not pathological, but redemptive, and it is in this knowing that our true power is rediscovered. (...) Only in a patriarchal structure is motherhood the only social power available to women. (LORDE, 2019, p. 136)

Lorde, a scathing critic of hegemonic white feminism, highlighted how black women have historically been excluded from the movement's central agendas. While white women struggled for political recognition and access to the market, black women never had the possibility of not working: they took care of other women's children while seeing their own being neglected. This structural inequality is still repeated today, perpetuating an invisible cycle of exploitation. In this sense, to take care of oneself is also to rescue collective memories of oppression, to claim marginalized voices, and to reconstruct historical trajectories.

From the perspective of archetypal female psychology, Clarissa Pinkola Estés (1999) describes this process as individuation: the integration of the conscious and unconscious aspects of the psyche. It is about recognizing and welcoming rejected or hidden parts, integrating them into a fuller identity.

For Estés (2007, p. 21),

a woman's soul is older than time and her spirit is eternally young." Thus, intuition, creativity and sexuality — historically repressed — need to be rescued as vital dimensions of being.

In the same direction, Foucault (1983; 1986) understands self-care as an ethical and political practice that transforms the subject into an active agent in the production of one's own life. It is not an individualistic movement, but a way of recognizing the interdependence between the self and the collective.

To take care of oneself also means to free oneself from temporal traps: resentments that imprison in the past and anxieties that project fears into the future. Mindfulness practices, for example, allow you to reduce these emotional states and strengthen well-being. Silvia Lane (2000) adds that individual transformation has collective implications: when a woman

frees herself from limiting narratives, she opens paths for others, making the personal inseparable from the political.

Therefore, taking care of oneself is a process of liberation that breaks with toxic productivity and patriarchal imperatives of perfection. Promoting self-knowledge based on the three feminine powers — ancestry, cyclicity and sexuality/creativity — reveals itself as a way to rescue authenticity and reorganize priorities for a healthy life in its biopsychosocial dimensions.

4.4 THE OCCUPATION OF ANCESTRY

Many women grew up with the feeling that their story starts from scratch, with no affective heritage, no guide and no bonds. However, female ancestry holds wisdom and strength that await to be claimed. Reconnecting to this lineage means resuming references, belonging, and continuity.

For Silvia Lane (2000), the loss of connection with ancestry contributes to feelings of alienation, low self-esteem and existential emptiness. Audre Lorde (2019) reinforces that recognizing one's own heritage strengthens identity and sustains resistance in the face of oppressive social norms.

Ancestry works, therefore, as a vital resource of wisdom, identity and resistance. It offers women a symbolic ballast that strengthens their subjectivity and guides conscious and authentic choices. In dialogue with Bauman (2001), it can be stated that, in liquid and unstable societies, ancestry acts as an anchor, helping to maintain stability and meaning in the midst of contemporary fragmentation.

Valuing ancestry is, therefore, recovering historical and cultural ties that nurture courage, creativity and authenticity. It is not a nostalgic return to the past, but a critical and vital reintegration, which strengthens autonomy and resignifies the place of women in history.

4.5 THE OCCUPATION OF CYCLICITY

Contemporary social logic associates value with linearity and constancy. Producing without pause is seen as a sign of success, but this expectation collides with the cyclical nature of the feminine. Denying this dimension leads many women to illness — physical, psychic and emotional.

Cyclicity refers to the awareness of the internal and natural rhythms of the body and mind, allowing self-regulation and emotional balance (ESTÉS, 1992). The marginalization of

female cycles — menstrual, emotional, or energetic — generates anxiety, exhaustion, and disconnection from oneself. When recognized and integrated, cyclicity allows women to harmonize their energies, make more conscious decisions, and recognize their power of choice.

This recognition goes beyond the biological dimension. It is also a question of resistance to biopower (FOUCAULT, 1983; 1986), which regulates bodies and behaviors according to standards of productivity and health. By embracing their cycles — of creation, introspection, planning, execution and rest — women resume the management of their own vital energy, defying social impositions.

The medicalization of the menstrual cycle, often celebrated as freedom, also served as a way of adapting to male constancy and the labor market. Pharmacological control, in addition to suppressing symptoms, erased the moments of introspection and recollection characteristic of the female body. This suppression reveals not only a disregard for biology, but a denial of cyclical wisdom.

Recognizing and exploring each phase of the cycle, on the contrary, can enhance health and creativity. By rescuing her cyclicity, the woman reconnects with her vital energy, strengthening processes of healing, transformation and fulfillment.

4.6 THE OCCUPATION OF SEXUALITY AND CREATIVITY

Sexuality and creativity are expressions of life force, personal power, and the ability to manifest. This energy, which symbolically pulsates in the womb, is the source of both human life and dreams and projects. When repressed, it produces emptiness, inertia, and purposelessness.

Social norms and institutions—such as family, church, and community—have historically repressed this potency, reducing sexuality to moral control and detaching it from its creative dimension. As Foucault (1986) reminds us, sexuality is crossed by strategies of power and disciplining, especially over female bodies.

Audre Lorde (2019) claims erotic power as a vital force that is often hidden or vulgarized. For her, rescuing this power means not only experiencing pleasure, but also expanding creative capacity, directing energy to the realization of projects and the transformation of reality.

The repression of female sexuality, however, is deeply associated with the maintenance of the patriarchal order: on the one hand, morality and good customs are

preached; on the other hand, freedom is associated with the vulgarization and objectification of women. This split prevents sexuality from being understood as a source of authenticity, pleasure and creation.

Reestablishing a positive and responsible awareness of sexuality is therefore fundamental for the reconstruction of female identity. Rites of passage, such as those practiced in ancestral cultures at the time of menarche, reveal how the body already contains within itself the wisdom of self-knowledge. Recovering this knowledge and re-signifying sexuality as a creative energy allows women to inhabit their own lives in a full, authentic and transformative way.

To summarize the reflections presented in chapters 6.1 to 6.4, we have prepared a comparative table that brings together the main challenges, rescue strategies and potentialities associated with the three feminine powers — ancestry, cyclicity and sexuality/creativity. The schematic organization facilitates the understanding of how each dimension, when historically silenced, impacts female subjectivity, and how, when rescued, it opens the way for the construction of authenticity and liberation.

Table 1

The three feminine powers and self-knowledge as an act of liberation

Girl Power	Historical Challenges	Rescue Strategies	Potentialities for Authenticity
Ancestry	-Rupture with the female lineage and erasure of women's history. -Invisibilization of the experiences of black, indigenous and peripheral women. -Alienation and loss of symbolic references.	-Rescue family and collective stories. -Value plural and intercultural narratives. -Reconnect with traditions, rites and knowledge transmitted by previous generations.	-Sense of belonging and continuity. -Strengthening of collective identity and resistance. -Courage and confidence to face contexts of social fragmentation.
Cyclicity	-Imposition of a linear logic of productivity. -Medicalization and suppression of natural cycles.	- Recognize body and emotional rhythms. - Practice self-knowledge through the observation of	- Harmonization of internal energies. - Improved physical, emotional, and mental health. - Ability to live

	-Stigmatization of menstruation and phases of recollection.	the cycle. -Value moments of introspection and rest as part of healthy productivity.	according to one's own rhythm, enhancing creativity and well-being.
Sexuality / Creativity	- Moral and religious repression of female sexuality. - Reduction of the female body to an object of desire and control. -Exclusion of the erotic dimension as a source of creative power.	-Resignify sexuality as vital and creative energy. - Recognize erotic power as a source of pleasure and fulfillment. - Promote emancipatory sex education and rites of passage for valuing the body.	- Reconnection with the body as a territory of pleasure, wisdom and expression. -Release of creativity and vital power. - Construction of an authentic identity based on desire, freedom and self-love.

Source: Authors.

Reading the picture allows us to observe that, although each power has specificities, they all converge to the same dynamic: patriarchal oppression has produced fragmentation and weakening of female identity, while the rescue of these dimensions strengthens autonomy, creativity and belonging.

It is also noted that the three powers mutually support each other. Ancestry provides roots and collective memory; cyclicity promotes balance between action and recollection; Sexuality/creativity drives pleasure, art, and transformative power. Integrated, they constitute a solid basis for women to occupy themselves with freedom, authenticity and resilience.

Thus, the table not only summarizes the main points, but also highlights the interdependence between the three powers, reinforcing the idea that female emancipation requires both the individual work of self-knowledge and the construction of collective practices of support and recognition.

5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study sought to understand how the historical marginalization of cyclicity, ancestry and sexuality/creativity impacts female subjectivity, limiting the construction of an authentic identity and weakening women's autonomy. The analysis of the theoretical references showed that these three powers were systematically silenced over time through social, cultural and religious structures that normalized bodies and behaviors, as discussed

by Foucault (1983; 1986). This silencing is not restricted to the collective level, but crosses emotional and psychological dimensions, producing narratives of shame, inadequacy, and disconnection, as Brown (2019) and Lane (2000) point out.

Patriarchal society has imposed a domesticated feminine standard, in which women are taught to be useful, docile and available to others, but not to themselves. We learn to care for, nurture, and sustain the dreams of others, without being allowed to recognize our own desires, limits, and needs. In this model, feminine attributes such as intuition, sensitivity, cyclicity, sensuality, and creativity have historically been associated with weakness, sin, or irrationality. In search of some social prestige, many women felt compelled to distance themselves from the feminine, trying to reproduce masculine patterns of existence.

This distancing, however, represented an internal split. As Estés (1992) states, the disconnection of one's own blood, womb and instinctive nature led to the repression of pleasure, art, intuition and creative power. The feminine has been reduced to the reproductive function or to the role of caregiver, when, in its essence, it constitutes a power of life, a portal of existence and a source of nutrition. Women were simultaneously idealized as saints or demonized as witches and wantons, but rarely recognized as whole, divine, and potent beings in their entirety.

Given this scenario, the rescue of the three powers represents a movement of reconnection and liberation. Cyclicity, when recognized, allows a more harmonious life with the rhythms of the body and emotions. Ancestry, when rescued, strengthens bonds of belonging and resignifies fragmented histories. Sexuality/creativity, when rescued, gives back to women the ability to express pleasure, desire and transformative power. The rescue of these aspects strengthens self-esteem, freedom of expression and the ability to lead one's own life. As Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (2014) reminds us, "power is the ability not only to tell another person's story, but to make it their definitive story".

Self-knowledge emerges, in this process, as a central tool for self-occupation. To know oneself is to resist. It is to refuse the mechanisms of control and oppression that have shaped female subjectivity throughout history. Foucault (1983; 1986) argues that this movement is, in itself, a political act, as it challenges power structures. Brown (2019) adds that authenticity does not consist of pleasing or being accepted, but of assuming the vulnerability of showing oneself true, even in the face of the risk of rejection. Thus, self-knowledge is not only individual: it expands the boundaries of subjectivity and becomes social transformation.

In this sense, the collective dimension is equally fundamental. Group practices, especially women's circles, are configured as low-cost and high-power therapeutic and political spaces, in which empathetic listening, sharing and solidarity create a network of support and resignification. In this environment, each story narrated reverberates in the collective, freeing not only the woman who speaks, but also the one who listens. It is an ancestral movement of resistance, which reaffirms identity and strengthens the sense of community.

It is concluded, therefore, that the rescue of cyclicity, ancestry and sexuality/creativity is not only an individual process of self-discovery, but an act of resistance in the face of the patriarchal system that has historically marginalized these aspects of the feminine. Promoting their integration means promoting emotional health, belonging, creative power, and social emancipation.

When a woman takes care of herself, she not only transforms her own life, but becomes an agent of collective transformation, inspiring and opening paths for other women to also recognize and flourish. Thus, the reintegration of the sacred and profane, creative and instinctive, rational and sensitive feminine constitutes one of the most potent strategies of individual and collective emancipation, reaffirming that true freedom begins in consciousness and expands in the community.

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