

*yo sólo quiero jugar sin sentir el borde, el límite.
pero está ahí, en mi piel, en mi cuerpo,
en el camino andado y el valor dado a cada cosa.
me atrapo en mí mismx,
contando una y otra vez mi propia historia, intentando darle un sentido.
encuentro alivio.
pero también encuentro excusas.
encuentro iras.
encuentro el resultado de un CISTema.
me desdoble entre lo que soy y lo que quiero ser,
y termino habitando el espacio en el que no soy.
creo que fui y creo que seré.
pero no sé si soy.
el ahora es un mar de preguntas.
una constante lucha interna.
a veces condratictoria, a veces reveladora.
tengo la impresión de liberarme tanto,
pero sigo atadx a la naturaleza social de lxs humanxs.
quiero hacer las cosas bien.
quiero que quienes amo vean que hago las cosas bien.
pero me rompo la cabeza redefiniendo el "bien"
...que para el resto ya no me queda energía.*

Validation junkies navigating a CISTem

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I believe I grew up to be a validation junkie.

Always seeking for others to give value to what I did, to give value to what I was.

My mom and dad always celebrated us when things went “right”.

Me, as a first born in the family, was supposed to set the bar, to set the example.

My parents, with their journalist careers and different studies and job opportunities, went up the *academic escalator* and made it very clear for my sister and I that books. can. change. your. life. By doing so, intentionally or not, they also transmitted a clear distinction between a *superior* and an *inferior* knowledge, very similar to the one Rancière mentions when he talks about the *Stultifying Teacher*. Academia has a very specific spot on the common imaginary.

Back to my parents: they never made me doubt my intellectual capacities. For example, when going for an exchange year at 15, money, paperwork, and my age were things to pay attention to, maybe even worry about, but my ignorance in German wasn't one at all. It was taken for granted that I would learn it. And I did. On the other hand, they did sometimes make me feel almost absolutely unprepared to face the outside world, the streets, and the diverse realities that cohabit in Quito, Ecuador. Partly because being perceived as a woman in Latin America is simply dangerous. And partly because they had already done all they could to give us what they didn't have, so they didn't want us to be exposed to harsher facades of life, if it wasn't completely necessary.

I remember telling my dad that I refused to stay in, cause if I didn't go out I would never learn to *be* outside. How do you learn something without experiencing it? It's a question that pops up quite often in my head. For example, as important as I think it is that CIS men get involved

in

feminism and the abolition of the CISTem, a part of me keeps whispering in my head “they will never understand what being a woman is like”. Although if they really want to emancipate themselves from the sex difference, I think they could come really close. But also, and maybe even more importantly, whatever “being a woman is like”¹ and the gender roles assigned to people depending on their genitals are a symptom of Therefore we could, and should, question and deconstruct them.

I see the CISTem as the biggest *Stultifying Master* and people, with our correspondent contexts, as students with a potential of emancipation. But unless we’re active about it, I fear we’ll stay unemancipated students, validation junkies. Since the Industrial Revolution made it a race for the American Dream, the colonial dream, most humans are constantly reaching for the goals sold to us as idealistic. Seeking to get the good grade, the well-paid job, the wife, the house, the (traditional) family; seeking to have an audience that witnesses their way to the top. And if not, those who decide to step out of the *Pre-set Life* seem to be simultaneously looking for the approval of other outsiders. The race for the *Alternative Dream*, the hippie-punk-queer-artistic vibe that is becoming more and more trendy.

I wonder how to share and spread the possibility of emancipation without it becoming another tool of the CISTem. But I also wonder if that could actually be the solution: if we started competing to see who’s more emancipated, through empirically questioning ourselves, our context, the differences with other’s realities, without a *Master Explicator*, and without constantly being thirsty for their validation, wouldn’t we all reach the *Emancipated’s Dream*?

And I say Emancipated’s and not Emancipated because dreams cannot emancipate themselves, but people can.

This text was written in November 2021 after the collective reflection on Jacques Rancière’s texts at La Manufacture with the promo G.

¹ *What being a woman is like*, after a History of oppression, has been changing and I wouldn’t want to forget the fights already fought.

Rancière J. (1987) Le maître ignorant : cinq leçons sur l'émancipation intellectuelle.