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DEUS POR QUE EU SOU ASSIM? POR QUE MEU CABELO É ASSIM?: A
transitivity analysis of Black Brazilian and African American women's narratives in blogs
regarding hair

Florianópolis
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O presente trabalho em nível de mestrado foi avaliado e aprovado por banca
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Certificamos que esta é a **versão original e final** do trabalho de conclusão que foi
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To my dear grandmother Marleni, for the unending love, patience, and the amount of time she spent combing and styling my hair (sometimes with lots of avocado hair cream).

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Os cientistas dizem que somos feitos de átomos, mas um passarinho me contou que somos feitos de histórias. (GALEANO, 2012)

RESUMO

O presente estudo investiga como narrativas produzidas por mulheres blogueiras brasileiras negras e mulheres Afro-americanas abordam e discutem suas experiências com seus cabelos. A análise linguística é guiada pela Linguística Sistêmica-Funcional (HALLIDAY; MATTHIESSEN, 2004; EGGINS, 2004; FUZER; CABRAL, 2014) e seu sistema de Transitividade, e pela Análise Crítica do Discurso (FAIRCLOUGH, 2003, 2010; RESENDE; REGIS, 2017). A discussão dos dados analisados é guiada por debates e estudos relacionados a importância sociopolítica da estética do cabelo Afro (hooks, 1989; BYRD; THARPS, 2001; KILOMBA, 2008; GOMES, 2017; XAVIER, 2021), assim como discussões referentes a Redes Sociais como espaços que permitem mudança social (KHOSRAVINIK, 2018; TRINDADE, 2020). Os resultados demonstram que blogueiras narram processos de *superção* de noções prévias sobre seus cabelos e fornecem espaços para a discussão das correlações entre cabelo, raça e sociedade.

Palavras-chave: Análise Crítica do Discurso. Narrativas. Raça. Cabelo Afro.

ABSTRACT

This study investigates how narratives produced by Black Brazilian and African American bloggers approach and discuss their experiences with hair. The linguistic analysis is guided by Systemic-Functional Linguistics (HALLIDAY; MATTHIESSEN, 2004; EGGINS, 2004; FUZER; CABRAL, 2014) and its Transitivity system, and Critical Discourse Analysis (FAIRCLOUGH, 2003, 2010; RESENDE; REGIS, 2017). The discussion of the analyzed data is guided by debates and studies related to the socio-political importance of Black hair aesthetics (hooks, 1989; BYRD; THARPS, 2001; KILOMBA, 2008; GOMES, 2017; XAVIER, 2021), as well as discussions about Social Networks as environments that enable social change (KHOSRAVINIK, 2018; TRINDADE, 2020). The results have demonstrated that bloggers narrate processes of *overcoming* previous notions about their hair and provide room to discuss the correlations between hair, race, and society.

Keywords: Critical Discourse Analysis. Narratives. Race. Afro-Hair.

LISTA DE ABREVIATURAS E SIGLAS

AA African American

BB Black Brazilian

BR Brazil

CDA Critical Discourse Analysis

SFL Systemic Functional Linguistics

SNS Social Networks

US United States of America

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CHAPTER I

1. INTRODUCTION

I was 12 years old and a student of the 7th grade in a public school in the south of Brazil when I heard from a male colleague that, to be accepted, I should “straighten my hair, lose some weight, not stay for a long time in the sun, and simply do what every cool girl does”. It was not the first time, though, that people had suggested in a ‘friendly’ (or not so friendly) tone that I should manipulate my Black, thick, curly hair. It was only nine years after this specific moment in my life that I sat in front of a mirror and decided to cut the straight part of my hair, leaving only the natural part. Before taking that decision, extensive research on terms like *Big Chop*, *Capillary transition* and *Hair acceptance* was made. The more I searched, the more I found - I discovered countless online communities of Black women who were proud of their hair and who ‘simply’ turned an aesthetical choice into a political movement, which later I discovered was called “the natural movement”. What called my attention, back at that time, was how not only could I find meaningful material on Brazilian blogs, but also on blogs from the US. I realized that hair plays an important role in the life of Black people, Brazilian or American. I also realized that *our* hair stories had similar patterns, most of them marked by being exposed to a racist environment. In our online hair stories, hair represented the construction of race, self-esteem, aesthetics, and identity and what I thought was an exception was, most of the time, a pattern: the process of accepting one’s natural hair is a common and particularly meaningful moment for Black women since many Black girls grow up with the belief that their hair is not adequate, is dirty, or even “bad”. Bad, too big, ugly, too curly - the social construction of Black¹ hair as not appropriate and as something one should fight against was also constructed through language and evaluations. This research investigates the role of language in narratives produced by Black Brazilian and African American female bloggers with a focus on the discursive evaluation of natural hair.

To better investigate and explain the discourses produced by Black bloggers about hair, this study relies on the functional view of language proposed by M.A.K Halliday (HALLIDAY; MATTHIESSEN, 2004). This work also relies on Fairclough’s assumption that language is strictly part of our social life (FAIRCLOUGH, 2003, p.2). As a result, language is crossed and marked by social practices and other elements of social life - such as ideology, power relations,

¹ I present a brief discussion on terms regarding hair in the subchapters 1.1 and 2.5, ‘On Terminology’ and ‘The Politics of Hair’, respectively.

and identities. Considering that, this study is located in the area of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), with CDA serving both as theory and as method to examine, analyze, and understand the ideological and political aspects of discourses on Black hair. A critical approach to language can offer ways of understanding the relations between language and society, and, in this case, the correlation between society, language, and the experiences lived by Black women.

According to the contemporary Afro German thinker Grada Kilomba (2010), afro-textured hair (henceforth ‘natural hair’ or ‘Black hair’, which encompasses textures defined as ‘kinky’ and ‘curly’) and afro hairstyles such as dreadlocks, box-braids, cornrows, etc., portray a political message of empowerment against racial oppression. Historically, natural hair has been an “integral part of a complex language system” (BYRD; THARPS, 2001, p.2). Within African societies in the early fifteenth century, hair could indicate age, religion, wealth, ethnic identity, and even marital status (BYRD; THARPS, 2001, p.2). More than social, the significance of hair for African people was also aesthetical (BOONE apud BYRD; THARPS, 2001) - big hair (in length and volume) was a synonym of beauty and desire, used to attract people from the opposite sex. Black hair represented a complexity not only of meanings and symbols but also of textures, styles, and adornments. Six centuries later, the same complexity regarding Black hair is still present in the lives of Black people. Classified as ‘bad hair’ by white slave-owners, Black hair became a stigma and a symbol of primitivity, uncivilization, and dirtiness, with straight hair being the “opposite”, a representation of civilization, beauty, and cleanliness.

The constant quest for straight hair by enslaved people was not merely aesthetical, as Byrd and Tharps (2001, p.18) point out - wearing straight hair could mean social advantage in comparison to other slaves. However, for Black women, wearing straight hair and having light skin also increased the chances of becoming sex slaves. Hair started to be a racial marker – the straighter the hair, the closest the person is to whiteness, while Black hair is a marker of being black. This marker is still present in contemporary society, when Black women are confronted by white ideals and standards of beauty and are pressured to straighten their hair thermally or chemically, physically damaging its structure.

Oppressed by primitivity, hyper sexualization, and pain, Black people – and hence Black women - started to question white/western standards of beauty. Examples from the 1950s and 1960s in the US (as in the work of Kwame Brathwaite, which is famous for portraying through photography the ‘Black is Beautiful’ slogan) and from the 1990s in Brazil (as in the famous ‘100% Negro’ T-shirts that celebrated blackness as a cultural and political identity) demonstrate.

The recent Oscar-awarded animated short film ‘Hair Love’ (Sony Pictures Releasing, 2019), directed by Matthew A. Cherry and Bruce W. Smith, which presents a narrative centered on an African American father who is learning – and, at first, struggling – how to style his daughter’s natural hair, demonstrates how hair and representation remain very contemporary issues, directly addressed by Blacks in different kinds of media. Another example of how discussions about the relation of hair and Black people are being revisited by the media is the production of the drama limited series “Self-Made: Inspired by the Life of Madam C. J. Walker”, by Netflix (Netflix, 2020). The series portrays the story of Madam C. J. Walker, known as the first Black American self-made female billionaire – her fortune came from developing cosmetics and hair care products for Black women in early 20th century.

The same issue is also being approached through the Internet - many Black women started to write on social networking websites about their personal experiences with everyday racism in relation to their hair. Several of these women have shared their narratives through blogs and some have even become “hair gurus”, helping other Black women with similar experiences of self-denying to accept their natural hair. Online blogs currently constitute a network to share information regarding natural hair, and bloggers within the natural afro-hair movement have faithful readers and are part of the lives of many Black women who seek tips about and even support to accept their own natural hair, finding this encouragement in virtual blogs. African American women represent a considerable number of online users consuming hair-related content - literature shows that computer-mediated debates play, since the early 2000s, a central role in the discussion of hair for African American women (ELLINGTON, 2014).

Furthermore, the natural movement activism has also become quite strong in Brazilian society, a society that, as The Guardian² reminds us, was once known by its unique techniques of hair straightening. The narratives produced by Black Brazilian women and by African American women in online environments indicate three movements in terms of the ‘hair issue’: (1) Black women are openly speaking about previous experiences regarding their hair, and hence acknowledging its importance to the construction of their identities; (2) Black Brazilian and African American women share this with other Black women, creating safe online environments and communities to discuss hair – a movement which Davis (apud BYRD; THARPS, 2001) considers an opportunity for Black women to educate, empower and give agency to one another; and, last but not least, (3) by talking about their experiences, Black

² Available at <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/aug/04/brazilian-women-natural-hair-techniques>. Retrieved on October 18th, 2018

women are sharing their empowerment with other women who are not yet involved with these specific discussions.

Freeman (2015) claims that there is no better way to study human lives than through narratives, as humans are essential story-telling animals. Narratives, then, are used to explain human experience, being part of the identity construction of one's own life and even of the lives of social groups. Page (2015) claims that the stories told in social network sites "exemplify the increasing range and diversity of storytelling practices" (p. 329). The formation of online natural hair communities (understood by some as the Second Wave of the Natural Hair Movement) has opened ground for the sharing of hair-related narratives that challenge the mainstream idea of Black hair as bad. It is through these counter-narratives that many Black women get inspired to join a natural hair movement and to go through a process of hair-transition, moving from chemically straightened hair or hair damaged by heating processes to accepting their Black/afro-hair - either for aesthetic reasons and/or as a symbolic gesture, thus challenging racist structures and systemic discrimination. The rise of academic studies approaching Black women, hair, and online environments in Brazil (SANTOS, 2015; SOUZA, 2018; OLIVEIRA; MATTOS, 2019) also point to the contemporary influence of computer and digital mediated spaces on racial discussions in our country.

Based on the discussion provided above, the objective of this thesis is to investigate the narratives about Black hair produced by Brazilian and African American women, as a way of understanding if the linguistic choices made by these women engage with racist structures of everyday racism in the Brazilian and American society (by exposing, criticizing or challenging them, for example) and, at what point, if so, the narratives produced by women from two African diasporic communities share similar discursive patterns. Similarities could strengthen antiracist struggles in the Americas, both in terms of activisms and collective action, and academic production. The differences between the global North and the global South are known and not ignored in this study, however, in terms of the interconnections between racial and hair activism, the understanding of differences and similarities could point to common oppressive patterns from a white, colonial society.

Having stated what the base of this study is, this first chapter also presents a small note on terminology, the significance of the study, the organization of this thesis, the objectives of the study, and the research questions that guide it.

1.1. ON TERMINOLOGY

As language plays a central role in this study, it is pertinent to explain why I have chosen to use the terms “Black” for Brazilian women of African ancestry and “African American” for North Americans. This subsection also offers a brief explanation of hair-related terms that might appear in this study.

Understanding race as a socially constructed and contestable category, this study uses the term “Black”, capitalized, to refer to people of African ancestry that are socially read as Black or to the specific kind of hair most people of African ancestry have. The capitalization of the word comes from the very notion of Black as a cultural, political, and racial identity, as well as to the differentiation of the racial connotation from simply the black color. Since not all Blacks in America are African Americans (e.g. immigrants, people who do not identify culturally with the cultural identity of African American, Black Latinos, etc.) and my study is centered on the narratives of the latter group, the term “African American” is used. The same is applied to the usage of “Black women” in Brazil, being “mulheres negras” broader used. Detailed information on this terminology and their usage on racial discussions in Brazil and in the US is found in the second chapter, in the “African diaspora” subsection.

In what concerns hair, this study comprehends “Black hair” as afro-textured hair, which encompasses terms from “curly” (in Brazilian Portuguese “cacheado”) to “kinky” (in Brazilian Portuguese “crespo”). Although I am aware of the reclaiming of words like “nappy” as positive terms, I will not be adopting this terminology to avoid being offensive. Different terminologies are used in both American and Brazilian narratives, which are translated to English. Whenever plausible, the term ‘natural hair’ is used as historically it has been used to mark and define Black hair.

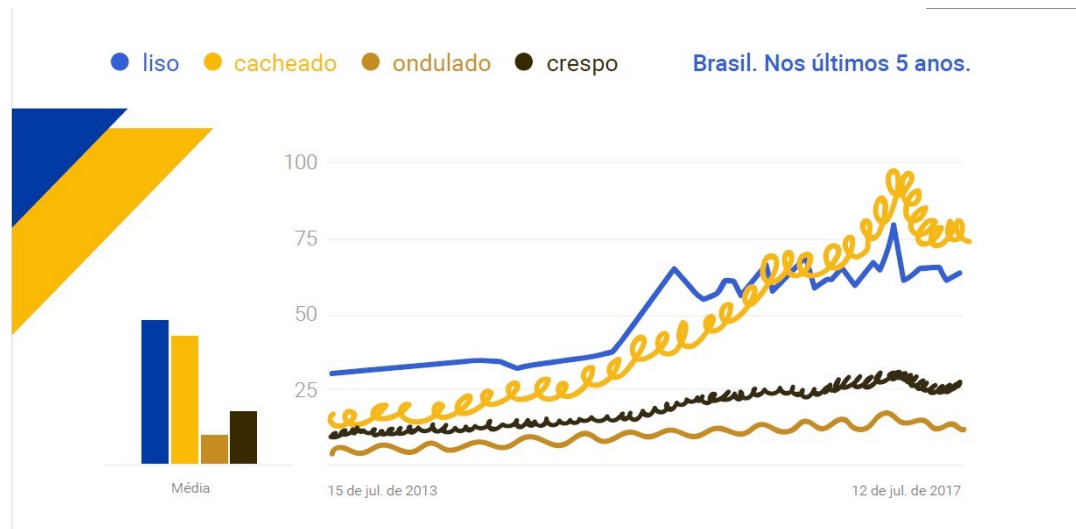
1.2. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

A study conducted by Google BrandLab in São Paulo, Brazil, in 2017 showed that, for the first time in Google’s trends advanced research tool analysis archives, the search for “curly hair” had grown 232% in one year and outnumbered research on straight hair, as figure 1 shows. The study also demonstrates that, in the same year, the search for the term “transição capilar³” grew in 55%. The report correlates the research on these terms and hair-acceptance with YouTube (a SNS from Google itself) channels and other forms of social media. Despite the

³ Capillary transition, the moment when a person stops using chemicals or physical straighteners in their hair.

biased purpose of the report, it demonstrates how the relation of Brazilian people with Black hair is changing.

Figure 1 – BrandLab’s research on the search of hair-related terms on Google

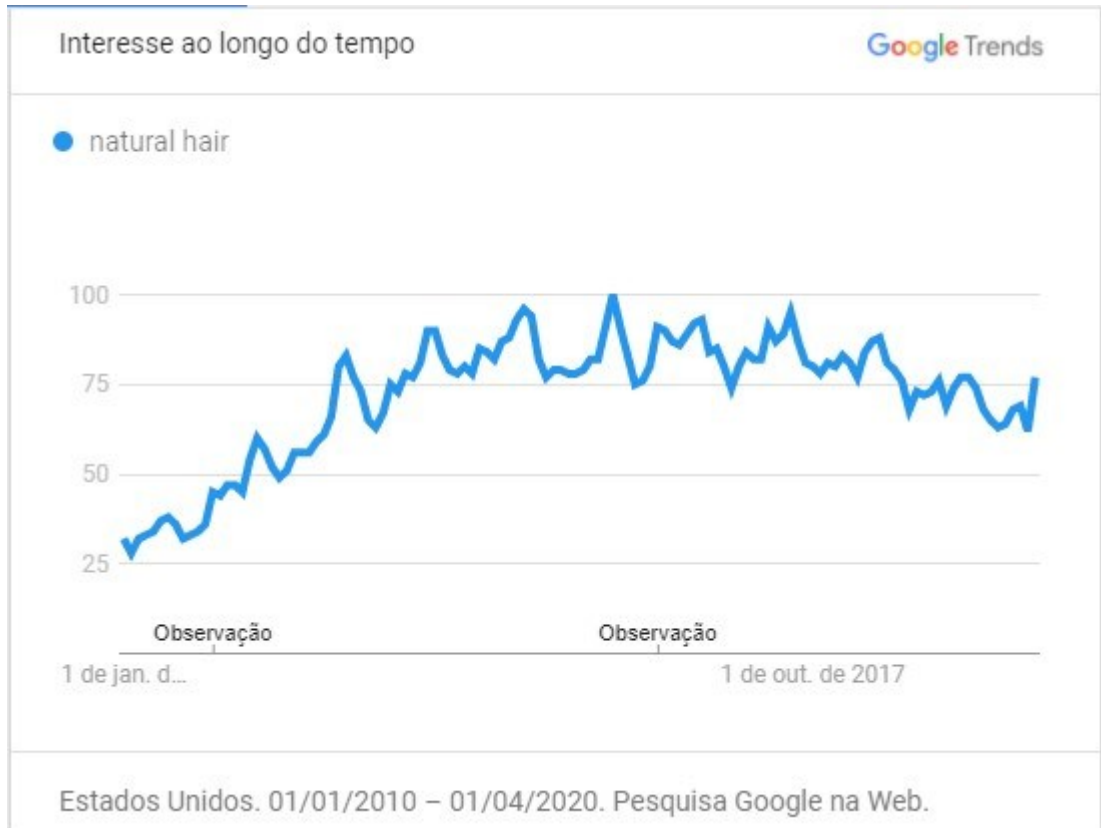


Source: Google BrandLab (2017)⁴

Similarly, in quick research through Google Trends, from 2010 to 2020 the search for ‘natural hair’ in the US also grew (see figure 2). Related terms in rise are 4c hair, 4c natural hair, and protective styles – terms that are related to Black natural hair. This demonstrates that in both contexts (US and Brazil), non-straight hair has become a popular topic of interest, and how Social Network Sites are spaces with great discursive concentration on such topics.

Figure 2 – Search trend on ‘natural hair’ in the US

⁴ Available at <<https://www.thinkwithgoogle.com/intl/pt-br/estrategias-de-marketing/video/revolucao-dos-cachos/>>. Accessed in January 4th, 2021.



Source: Google trends⁵

Even though studies from different areas have been published on the subject “hair” – from psychology to medical studies – most of the main works approaching the correlations between Black women, hair, and identities focus on African American women (BANKS 2000; BYRD; THARPS, 2001; JACOBS-HUEY, 2006; HOOKS, 2015). However, academic research on Black hair is increasing in Brazil, and this growth can be connected to the popularity of the topic in digital environments. One of the pioneer studies in the area is Gomes’ (2002) dissertation, an ethnographic study conducted in Belo Horizonte that took place in four ethnic beauty salons and focused on the social significance of the Black body and the Black hair for the participants. More recently, studies focusing on the role language plays in relation to Black hair and social media have emerged (SILVA, 2017; SOUZA, 2018; TRINDADE, 2020). The present study belongs to this growing body of research and is an attempt to provide both linguistic description and critical analysis of the experiences of African American women and Black Brazilian women, keeping in mind that their narratives may be different – even though both groups are placed within the Black diaspora, the historical, cultural, and social experiences lived by African American and Black Brazilian women are not necessarily the same.

⁵Available at < <https://trends.google.com.br/trends/explore?hl=pt-BR&tz=180&date=2010-01-01+2020-04-01&geo=US&q=natural+hair&sni=3>>. Accessed on Jan. 5th, 2021

In addition, as an educator I believe that paying attention to and understanding the narratives of Black girls and women regarding their hair is particularly important to create more democratic and antiracist teaching practices. Racism in the school environment is a recurrent topic in the narratives, as one can observe in the analysis section of this study. The construction of healthy and safe environments is extremely important to maintain the physical and mental health and well-being of Black kids, many of whom suffer their first experiences with racism at school (CRUZ, 2014), like me.

1.3. ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

This thesis is organized in 5 main sections, as well as a section for the references. In the first section I present the introduction, which is composed of an overview of the topic, its significance, the organization of the text, objectives, and the research questions. The second section focuses on the review of the literature, providing theoretical background for the study, which is grounded on concepts from Critical Discourse Analysis, Systemic Functional Grammar, and theoretical discussions on race, gender, and the political status of hair (Black hair). The third section has its focus on the methodological procedures for data collection, description, and analysis of the selected material. The fourth section is composed by an analytical chapter, and, lastly, the fifth section encompasses the discussion of the analyzed data, containing the textual analysis, interwoven with the social theories that grounded this study.

1.4. OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The objective of this study is to propose, from a critical discursive-oriented perspective, a qualitative analysis of the narratives of Black women in Brazil and in the US regarding hair in blog posts. The study aims at assessing if and how these two groups of women negotiate their identities. In addition, this study has the purpose of investigating if the intersection between aesthetics and politics takes place in the discourse of African American (AA) and Black Brazilian (BB) women. The study also takes into consideration the contexts and experiences these women are exposed to, having in its theoretical apparatus studies which cover both Black Brazilian and African American experiences. To achieve the objective of this thesis, the following research questions were made:

(RQ1). What themes emerge from the narratives produced by Black Brazilian women and African American women? To what extent do the writers explicitly mention race/racism in the narratives?

(RQ2). Are the narratives of these two groups of Black women similar in terms of linguistic choices? If so, how/which? If not, in what terms do they differ?

Further and more detailed information on participants, data collection, methodological, and analytical procedures are available on the third chapter of the thesis.

CHAPTER II

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This section provides the theoretical foundations and concepts that guide this research. Considering the main topics of this study (language, discourse, hair, race, gender), it is necessary to provide the views adopted on them. In this study, language is viewed through the lens of Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) and Critical Discourse Analysis – from now on, CDA – based “upon the assumption that language is an irreducible part of social life” (FAIRCLOUGH, 2003, p. 2). As a result, critical studies of language and its functions are comprehended in this study (FAIRCLOUGH, 2003; FAIRCLOUGH, 2010; WODAK; MAYER, 2001; VAN DIJK, 2001; EGGINS, 2004; MATTHIESEN; HALLIDAY, 2004; FUZER, CABRAL, 2014). Moreover, the critical and functional views of language adopted in this study enables a dialogue with other disciplines from the social sciences. This dialogue is used to understand and apply key concepts, terms, and discussions from the social sciences regarding the topics approached in this study - Hair, Gender and Race, discussing the racial situation in Brazil and in the US, and how the other two topics relate and engage (BYRD; THARPS, 2001; GOMES, 2002; HOOKS 2015;). Narrative studies which focus on the intersection of storytelling and identities (understood as the result of processes of identification), ideologies, time, space, and social relations (DE FINA; GEORGAKOPOLOU, 2008; FREEMAN, 2015;) will also ground the analysis of the data.

In order to organize the review of literature, this chapter is divided into three main sections. The first section covers the linguistic and discursive bases for this study: section 2.1 covers Critical Discourse Analysis; Section 2.2 covers Systemic Functional Grammar, its views on language, and the Transitivity system. After that, the focus goes to the social studies that ground this research, from the areas of Narratives, Racial and Gender studies in Brazil and in the US, and Hair: 2.3 *Narratives, Identities and social media*; 2.4 *African Diaspora*; and, lastly, 2.5 *The politics of (black) hair*, covering the specificities of Black hair and how it could be understood as a racial political statement.

2.1. CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

In this section I discuss the theoretical and analytical approach that guides this study in terms of language orientation. Critical Discourse Analysis (henceforth, CDA) is a critical perspective to language that is often described “as much as theory as a method – or a theoretical

perspective on language” (FAIRCLOUGH, 2001, p. 121). Despite the discussions surrounding the nature of CDA, the principles that underlie this approach⁶ are concerned with the understanding of the correlations between language and power. CDA proposes conceptual and analytical tools to investigate and explain the power relations embedded in language.

Fairclough underlies the theoretical position of CDA, in which semiosis (visual images, body language, and verbal language as well) is understood as “an irreducible part of material social processes” (FAIRCLOUGH, 2001, p. 122). Thus, CDA aims to analyze language (and other forms of semiosis) and its dialectical relationship with other elements of social practices (ways to interact socially), what Chouliarki and Fairclough (1999, p.38) claim to be a way of mediating between abstract structures and concrete events. The authors also discuss the term ‘discourse’, which is used to refer to the semiotic elements in social practice:

Discourse, therefore, includes language (written and spoken and in combination with other semiotics, for example, with music in singing), nonverbal communication (facial expressions, body movements, gestures, etc.) and visual images (for instance photographs, film). (CHOULIARKI; FAIRCLOUGH, 1999, p. 38)

In other words, discourse is perceived as the dynamic relation of language (semiosis), the elements of a text, and the social structures to which they are connected. Considering the complexity that surrounds a critical analysis of language, a single linguistic theory would not be able to cover all the dimensions proposed by CDA. Its multidisciplinary nature should, then, be taken into consideration.

In what concerns this study, I also follow Fairclough’s 2018 approach to CDA as a dialectical reasoning, which means that I not only intent to understand how the linguistic aspects of the texts produced by bloggers interact with socio-cultural practices, but also present a consistent critique that connects and problematizes how and why the texts these women produced interplay with everyday social practices. Additionally, I intend to construct possible paths to socially change how Black hair is perceived and appraised in different sectors of society.

Another important notion within CDA is *ideology*. the texts produced by social actors may change or sustain specific ideologies. Ideologies are forms of understanding and

⁶ The nature and possible paths of analysis within CDA have been highly discussed, as elaborated by Meyer (2001, p. 14) in the chapter “Between theory, method, and politics: positioning approaches to CDA”. The Dijk propounds the view that “CDA is not a method (...) but a critical attitude while doing DA, also using many methods, for instance by focusing on discursive forms of power abuse (...)” (2018, p. 28).

representing the world, and often contribute to maintaining “power, domination and exploitation” (FAIRCLOUGH, 2003, p. 9), which explains why some social groups are the keepers of structural power, but also why there are challenge these structures. To discuss such abstract structures (e.g.: politics, media, capitalism, race, gender, language) CDA relies on other disciplines that investigate and explain different aspects of social reality; in such manner, CDA provides transdisciplinary social analysis while exploring the linguistic aspects of texts (e.g.: grammar, semantics, pragmatics, genre). For the purpose of this study, section 2.4 approaches studies in feminism, ideology, and racial discussions in the US and the Brazilian context, as previously mentioned.

Relying on the transdisciplinary tradition of CDA, many studies are concerned with how unequal social arrangements are sustained through language use (or challenged through it), and a range of scholars (WODAK, 1997; FIGUEIREDO, 2009; LAZAR, 2008; MACEDO; FIGUEIREDO, 2020) have added feminism to studies that adopt CDA as their main theoretical approach, and have conducted analyses that focused on how gender, power, and ideology are interconnected in discourse. However, feminist linguist Deborah Cameron (1998) calls attention to the fact that CDA was founded and dominated initially by white straight men and, further, Lazar (2008, p. 3) highlights that the problem does not lie on the identity of the founders, but on how feminist research in CDA is undertaken. In this sense, Lazar (2008) explores the idea of naming and defining CDA as *feminist* (Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis) and elaborates this matter as political praxis. Generally, the concern of Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis is to critique “discourses which sustain a patriarchal social order” (LAZAR, 2008, p. 5) and to show that social practices are gendered. Further, Figueiredo (2009, p. 749) argues that both CDA and SFL (which will be discussed in the next section) are appropriated theoretical and methodological approaches to discuss language and gender.

Although this study is not directly placed within feminist critical discourse analysis *per se*, it focuses on discourses produced by Black women, and the guidance of not only CDA studies but feminist CDA studies as the rationale that connects language, race, and gender is essential, considering that the study of women’s narratives about hair are ways of understanding broader cultural issues of race and gender. In the same manner, considering that most of the theoretical framework in what concerns Discourse Studies have been produced in England, France, and the US, scholars from the global south have been discussing the colonial nature of the field. Resende (2017) draws attention to the danger of seeing discourse studies as universal in terms of applicability in ‘the south’, more specifically in Latin America. More than that, Resende addresses issues such as the epistemic privilege of scholars that speak and produce in

English or French; she also addresses what she claims to be an ‘epistemic inferiority’ imposed by coloniality on the knowledge produced in the South – an example of this is that every so often, in universities, students are encouraged to only read from “non-local” sources, or the “original” sources, placing local knowledge as inferior.

I address the decolonial issue, and not only in CDA studies, due to some aspects of this thesis. This research is being conducted and written in Brazil, where I am a graduate student in a program of English. I focus on narratives produced in the US and in Brazil, a great part of this work is theoretically supported by authors from the Global North, and it is written in English. In spite of that, I acknowledge the need to detach my study from Eurocentrism, and where feasible I rely on Brazilian and Latin-American authors.

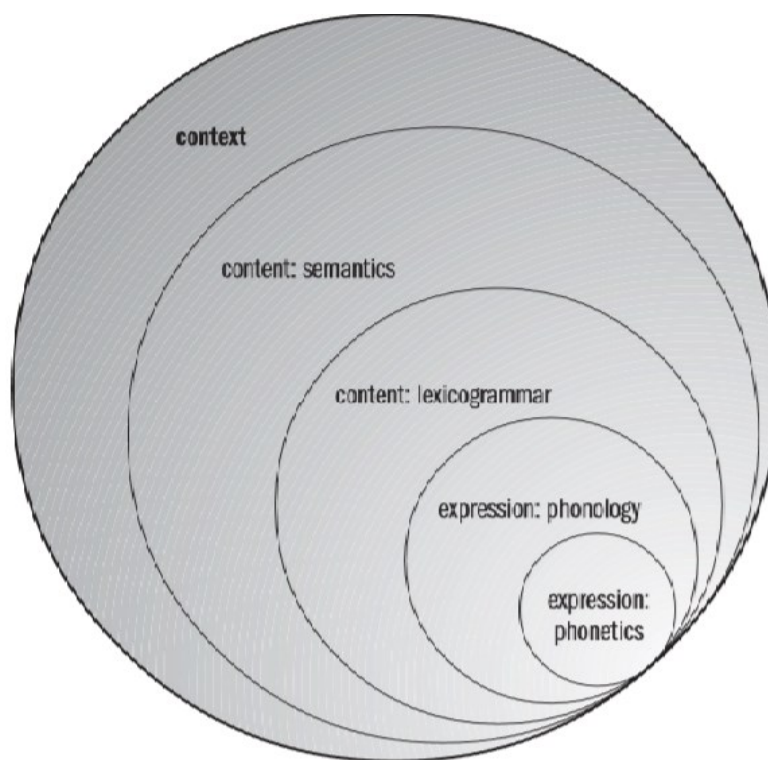
Having discussed the approach to discourse adopted in this study, the next section presents the approach to language and the frameworks that are used to describe and analyze the participants’ perspectives at the lexicon-grammatical level.

2.2. SYSTEMIC FUNCTIONAL GRAMMAR

The view on language adopted in this study comes from Systemic Functional Grammar (or SFG), a theory developed largely by M.A.K Halliday (HALLIDAY; MATTHIESSEN, 2004). As suggested by its name, this theory proposes a functional approach to language, in which its function is to make meanings, influenced by the contexts where these meanings are generated, negotiated and exchanged (EGGINS, 2004, p.3). More than that, SFG understands language as a social semiotic – language is used by people in order to achieve social goals in their everyday lives. In this sense, to understand how language is functional we have to think in terms of two axes: understanding how or why people use language in their lives and how the language in use is structured. As language is always used in social contexts, language and context are deeply connected – as social animals, human beings have the ability to deduce context from the text⁷, thus making context a central concern in SFG in the process of making meaning. The various levels, or *strata*, of meaning making are part of the complex semiotic systems of language. The following figure depicts the organization of the *strata* of the meaning-making process:

Figure 3 – Stratification of language

⁷The term ‘text’ in SFG refers to “any instance of language that makes sense to someone who knows the language” (HALLIDAY; MATTHIESSEN, 2004, p. 3)



(HALLIDAY; MATTHIESSEN, 2004, p. 25)

Considering that people use language to make meanings related to their experiences and interpersonal relations, the stratification of language demonstrates the whole interface involved in language use. As shown in Fig. 1, the highest level is context, a non-linguistic level. Grammar engages and interfaces with context, which is “the happenings and conditions of the world” (HALLIDAY, MATTHIESSEN, 2004, p. 24), as well as with the social processes involved in human interactions. Everyday texts can be seen as ambiguous, or, as suggested by Egins (2004, p. 8), “the sentence is ideationally ambiguous: we cannot be sure which dimensions of reality are being referred to”. However, if contextualized, the information is then able to be understood.

2.2.1. Transitivity

SFL proposes that clauses realize ideational meanings, which are meanings used to represent existence in the world, how people represent reality through language. The system of Transitivity expresses experiential meaning, one of the components of ideational meaning⁸, through processes that are realized by verbal groups. The contextual dimension dealt by

⁸ Ideational meaning is composed by two components: experiential meaning – discussed in this subchapter – and the logical meaning, which focuses on complex clauses (see HALLIDAY; MATTHIESSEN, 2004; EGGINS, 2004)

Transitivity is Field, as explained by Eggins, “(...) with the choice of process types and participant roles seen as realizing interactants’ encoding of their experiential reality: the world of actions, relations, participants, and circumstances that give content to their talk” (EGGINS, 2004, p. 206). Halliday and Matthiessen explain that:

All figures [of happening, doing, sensing, saying, being, or having – figures that modelled by the flow of events in grammar] consist of a process unfolding through time and of participants being directly involved in this process in some way; and in addition, there may be circumstances of time, space, cause, manner or one of a few other types. These circumstances are not directly involved in the process; rather they are attendant on it. All such figures are sorted out in the grammar of the clause. (HALLIDAY; MATTHIESSEN, 2004, p. 170)

There are six types of processes: *material, verbal, mental, behavioral, existential, and relational*. Each process type has its own model. It is important to mention that, in my analysis, the term ‘participant’ is shortened to “Pt.” and ‘process’ is shortened to “Pr.”. The same shortening is made with “Relational – Identifying” and “Relational – Attributive” processes, which become “Rel-Ident” and “Rel-Attr”. In addition, we can find in the clauses *Circumstances*, which are often realized by adverbial groups or prepositional phrases. Eggins (2004, p. 223) claims that the best way to identify Circumstances (which are present in all process types) is through a probe, as the following table, an adapted version from Eggins (2004), illustrates:

Circumstance:	Probe
1 Extent	How long? How far?
2 Location	When? Where?
3 Manner	How? With what? How... -ly (quality); What... like? (comparison)
4 Cause	Why? What for? Who? Who for?
5 Accompaniment	With whom?
6 Matter	What about?
7 Role	What as?

Table 1 – Adapted from Eggins (2014, p. 223)

The subsections below further explain and illustrate each process type with, where feasible – given that not all processes were observed in the analyzed narratives – examples from the analyzed data.

2.2.1.1. Material processes

Material processes are related to *doing*, to physical actions. The participants in material processes are the actor (the one who is doing something), the goal (the affected participant), the

beneficiary (the client and recipient), and the range. Material processes characterized by the absence of a goal are defined as “happening material process”, whereas the ones characterized by the presence of a goal are “doing material process”. Material processes construct an “outer experience” of the world (HALLIDAY; MATTHIESSEN, 2004, p. 170) and are often used to narrate events (EGGIS, 2004).

Na minha infância meu cabelo <u>foi</u> trançado pela minha mãe ⁹			
Na minha infância	meu cabelo	foi trançado	pela minha mãe
Circ.: Time	Pt.: Goal	Pr.: material	Pt.: Actor

Example 01 – Material process in a Mel’s narrative

I have been managing my hair since I was about 6...			
I	have been managing	my hair	since I was about 6...
Pt.: Actor	Pr.: Material	Pt.: Goal	Circ.: Extent

Example 02 – Material process in an Jane’s narrative

2.2.1.2. Verbal processes

As suggested by its name, a verbal process is a process of verbal action and often involves three participants: Sayer, Receiver, and Verbiage. Verbal processes often contribute to the construction of narratives as they allow the existence of dialogue, source, and citation (FUZER; CABARAL, 2014, p. 72). The Verbiage is commonly represented through another clause with different components, in the case of example 04, through a material (**to straight**) process.

[Nós]	Estamos defendendo	as características do meu cabelo crespo ¹⁰
Pt.: Sayer	Pr.: Verbal	Pt.: Verbiage

Example 03 – Verbal process in Rayza’s narrative

I	begged	my mother	relentlessly	to straighten my hair
Pt.: Sayer	Pr.: Verbal	Pt.: Receiver	Circ.: Manner	Pt.: Verbiage

⁹ “In my childhood, my hair was braided by my mother.

¹⁰ “[We are] defending Black hair’s characteristics”.

Example 04 – Verbal process in Emma’s narrative

2.2.1.3. Mental processes

Processes classified as mental reflect the experiences “going on inside ourselves, in the world of consciousness” (HALLIDAY; MATTHIESSEN, 2004, p.170). They may indicate affection, cognition, perception, and desire and help the speaker/writer built their conscience flow (p.197). All mental processes need to have two participants –Senser and Phenomenon. A great range of elements can be Phenomena in mental processes – acts and facts (EGGINS, 2004, p.227).

Na escola,	ninguém	acreditava	que aquele cabelo podia ser meu ¹¹
Circ.:Location	Pt.: Senser	Pr.: Mental	Pt.: Phenomenon

Example 05 – Mental process (fact) in a Luisa’s narrative

I	remember	going to sleep crying and praying for manageable “white” people hair like my Mom.
Pt.: Senser	Pr.: Mental	Pt.: Phenomenon

Example 06 – Mental process (act) in Jane’s narrative

2.2.1.4. Behavioral processes

These processes are, in Hallidayan terms, a “half-way house” between mental and material processes, as Eggins (2004, p.233) explains. They are located between mental and material and typically are “processes of physiological and psychological behavior” (p. 233). The participants are the Behaver (typically a conscious being) and, in some cases, the Behavior – which is a restatement of the process.

[eu]	me ver	como negra com meu crespo natural ¹²
Pt.: Behaver	Pr.: Behavioral	Circ.:Role

Example 07 – Behavioral process in Mel’s narrative

¹¹ “At school, no one believed that hair could be mine.”

¹² “To see myself as Black with my natural hair”.

I	spent months	watching	natural gurus	hair	on YouTube
Pt.: Behaver	Cir.: Extent	Pr.: Behavioral			Circ.: Location

Example 08 – Behavioral process in an Anne’s narrative

2.2.1.5. Existential processes

One of the easiest processes in terms of clause-identification, existential processes represent experiences through the “there+be” structure. In Brazilian Portuguese, the typical verb in the existential clause is “haver” and, differently from English, the clause will not present a Subject. This process is particularly relevant for narratives as, usually, it used to introduce the central participants in the introductory stage of a story (FUZER; CABRAL, 2014, p. 79). Due to the lack existential processes in the analyzed data, I illustrate here with a clause from one of the narratives which was not analyzed and incorporated to the data:

There are so many products and tips that I’ve learned over the years to make the process easier.

Example 09 – Existential process in Claire’s narrative

2.2.1.6. Relational processes

Relational processes are processes which establish a relation between two different entities. In this type of process, there will always be two kinds of different participants. They represent characteristics and identities and “the many different ways in which *being* can be expressed” (EGGINS, 2004, p. 239) in clauses. Relational processes can be Attributive or Identifying. Eggins explains that in Attributive Relational processes, an Attribute (a quality, classification, description) is assigned to a participant, the Carrier (which is realized by a noun or nominal group) whereas in Relational Identifying processes, one of the participants has a determined identity. In terms of semantic differences between Relational Attributives and Relational Identifying processes, the Identifying clause defines something. The participants in a Relational Identifying process are Token and Value.

Meu cabelo <u>ficou</u> super armado, enorme. ¹³		
Meu cabelo	ficou	super armado, enorme
Pt.: Carrier	Pt.: Rel-Attr	Pt.: Attribute

Example 10 – Relational-Attributive Process in Fernanda’s Narrative (BR)

I	‘ve	always	been	pretty picky about who touches my hair
Pt.: Token	Auxiliar	Circ.: Time	Pr.: Rel-Ident	Pt.: Value

Example 11 – Relational-Identifying Process in Jane’s narrative (US)

2.3.NARRATIVES, IDENTITIES AND SOCIAL MEDIA

This section approaches theoretical studies on narratives and social media. The study of narratives has been carried out in a wide range of fields, and as the term is approached in different areas and in different ways – such as the studies of literary narrative in the field of Literature -, here I approach narratives from two different views: as defined and explored by the area of narrative studies, and as defined by CDA. I rely on both areas to present a panorama on the relevance of narratives to the understanding of identity. I also discuss the paradigm of social media, as well as how the advent and popularity of interactive digital media plays an important role in the construction of bottom-up discursive practices and identity positions.

Narratives are part of the daily life of humans and play different functions in human interaction. Toolan states that a basic characteristic is that, typically, a narrative is the “recounting of things, spatiotemporally distant” (2001, p. 2). Another typical characteristic is that the narrator is trusted by their audience – the addressee(s). This gives the narrator a position of power and may affect the lives of the ones who listens to them – narratives told by politicians or famous journalists, for example, influence people’s perceptions on specific social practices and events. This authority given to the narrator is seen by Toolan (2001, p. 3) as a controversial

¹³ “My hair became really bulky, huge”.

area, in conjunction with the interpretability of narratives. Having this in mind, I call attention to another typical characteristic of narratives, as discussed by Toolan:

Narratives have a teller, and that teller, no matter how backgrounded or remote or 'invisible', is always important. In this respect, despite its special characteristics, narrative is language communication like any other, requiring a speaker and some sort of addressee (TOOLAN, 2001, p. 5).

Even though the author mentions that in some narratives context is not taken into consideration, usually extra-linguistic information can help the addressee to make sense of specific pieces of information. In this sense, contexts shape and are shaped by the told or heard story (TOOLAN, 2001, p. 227) and, since narratives have effects and consequences for the addressee and for the real world, Toolan states that “narratives are, among other things, a kind of political action. Narratives, in short, carry political and ideological freight” (p. 227). In relation to this statement, more recent publications on the field have pointed to the latest discussions in narrative studies, such as the use of narratives for “the construction of subjectivities and experientiality through stories” (DE FINA; GEORGAKOPOLOU, 2015, p. 2), which these authors see as a link between narratives and modes of “self- and other-understanding” (p.2). In this sense, narrative analysis can be an epistemological tool for qualitative research on identities, as the narratives produced by people should not only be analyzed on their own in terms of level of interaction, as proposed by conversation analysts, but also through the contexts they are placed in. More than that, not only are narratives shaped by contexts, but “they also create new contexts by mobilizing and articulating fresh understandings of the world, by altering power relations between peoples, by constituting new practices” (DE FINA; GEORGAKOPOLOU, 2015, p. 3).

De Fina (2015) points to the recent emergence of research on the interconnections between narrative and identity. According to the author, the 1990s is pointed as the period when the most important contributions to the field were published, in what is referred to as the “narrative turn”. In that line, the author states that “narratives are seen as the prime vehicle for expressing identity and narrative analysts have gone so far as to argue that the stories we tell mold us into what we are” (DE FINA, 2015, p. 35). In addition to that, Figueiredo (2009) argues that “the concepts of identity and identity formation have become inseparable from language and discourse” (p. 42), and, in the context of late modernity, blogs and other digital environments constitute spaces to express both individual and collective identities through the telling of personal stories. Within that debate, scholars have been discussing how, in one point

or another, social media have created more hegemonic spaces for the construction of “non-mainstream identities” (KHOSRAVINIK; ZIA, 2014, p. 757).

Given the data that composes this thesis, it is important to consider how narratives are shaped by social media and the discussions around the stories told on social media. For example, Page (2015) points out that the stories published in social media (blogs, social network sites - and I would include more contemporary formats of blogging such as *vlogs* and *podcasts*) are “important resources that exemplify the increasing range and diversity of storytelling practices employed at the turn of the twenty-first century” (p. 329). The author argues that the specificities of storytelling in social media contexts have been approached by different areas of narrative analysis, such as transmedial narratology, which focuses mostly on digitally enabled forms of fictional narratives (gaming, fan fiction), and discourse-analytic and sociolinguistic narrative research studies, which lately have focused on personal storytelling told online (discussion forums, reviewing sites, private interactions, etc.), (Page, p. 329). However, the umbrella term ‘social media’ started to form an area of interest combining two fields of studies: computer-mediated communication, which approaches social media in a more general form, and studies of storytelling, with Page (2012, 2015) as one of the central authors who discusses the issue, alongside with Georgakopoulou (2015).

The different genres present in social media – blogs, vlogs, etc. – share similar patterns with other computer-mediated genres. They are intertextual and multimodal (present colors, different font sizes, images, sounds, etc.) and allow interaction, directly or not. However, Page calls attention to some other patterns present on social media:

[...] social media genres are characterized by their distinctive collaborative potential (the opportunity for narrators to interact with a networked audience), their episodic formats (the distribution of textual fragments as posts or updates within an archive), and their tendency to prioritize recency over retrospection (through the use of timelines and reverse-chronological ordering). (PAGE, 2015, p. 330)

Even though there are several definitions to what constitutes social media, to define and describe a social media-based genre is complicated since these genres are in a semi-permanent state of evolution. As an example, when I first designed this study most of the content on “hair” was found on blogs. Nowadays, different social network sites (SNS) such as *Instagram*, *YouTube*, *Twitter*, and *TikTok* are becoming the main sources of content sharing for the (previously) bloggers.

Due to the many forms and shapes that social media can take, Page (2015, p. 330) relies on Herrings’ (2011) descriptions to comprehend how changes in genres happen. The genres in social media can be: ‘familiar genres’, the ones that “are reproduced from an earlier format with

minimal change marked by transferring the story to its new social media context” (PAGE, 2015, p. 330); ‘reconfigured genres’ that “might include the relationship between diaries and the new format of personal blogs, which enables the public creation of a previously private form of life writing” (p. 330); or ‘emergent genres’, “those that are entirely innovative, and qualitatively distinct from their predecessors” (p. 330). Following this classification, Blogs are a reconfigured genre which recreates both inter-personal and mass communication, a space both public and private.

The non-static and fluid nature of social media also affects how discourse (and discursive power) is constructed in these platforms. As traditional mass media (which has been an important site for CDA investigation) started to be slowly replaced by SNS, the belief in SNS as interactive and participatory spaces increased. Even though the belief that SNS would decentralize discourse and be used as spaces for direct political action is seen by scholars as utopic, these spaces do play an important role in changing the dynamics of discursive power (KHOSRAVINIK, 2014; 2018). Khosravini (2018, p. 583) calls attention to the critique towards social media and its postulation as a democratic space. In this sense, although blogs concentrate bottom-up discursive practices and, considering the data of this study, can be spaces for identity construction, especially for the so-called ‘Others’ (in this case, Black women whom the mass media has failed in terms of the representation and depiction of their identities, as, for example, with a massive depiction of Black hair as negative), they are not, by any means, detached from modes of production and consumption. While not all bloggers are, in fact, influencers (or at least may not define themselves as such), some of their posts contain hyperlinks that will lead the reader to, for example, a website which sells a specific hair product, and the more clicks and sells one link makes, the more money that blogger will get.

The apparent democratization of discourse presented in SNS is also a digital version of ‘synthetic personalisation’, a phenomenon discussed by Fairclough (1989; 1992) in which social actors simulate features of private discourse in public mass-audience discourses. In this case, (many) bloggers rely on the simulation of interaction and intimacy with their readers, which are both their audience and consumers. Considering the SNS as a subtler form of *prosumption*¹⁴, a construction of a Marxist self-critique would be, at least, difficult since prosumers in SNS are engaged in a form of ‘playbour’ – prosumers are not exactly sensing the experience of exploitation as something bad or physically demanding, on the contrary, their

¹⁴ Prosumption involves the combination of production and consumption rather than focusing in either one or other practice. Common examples of prosumption involve auto-pumping gasoline and using electronic kiosks to check into hotels or airports. See RITZER; JURGESON (2010).

online immersion is often crossed by positive feelings as joy, happiness, and love (FUCH, 2014, apud KRHOSVANIK, 2018, p. 583). This is especially true when considering that SNS have become one of the most disputed spaces in terms of digital marketing – social media creators and ‘influencers’ are hired by companies to target their audience and transform them into potential consumers of the goods/services mentioned.

From the perspective of CDA, to understand the discourses produced in SNS, the approach would both have to link the online discursive practices to socio-political contexts (both in the online and the offline world) and produce a horizontal contextualization that traces discourses across online platforms (KHOSRAVINIK; ZIA, 2014). Considering the socio-political context that surrounds the discourses of SNS, racism and sexism, for example, are not excluded from the digital world – Boyd (2008) claims that “technologies are shaped by society and reflect society’s values back at us, albeit a bit refracted” (p. 112). Data covering reported cases of hate speech on the internet in Brazil demonstrates that one-third of the cases were related to racist discourse (BOEHM apud TRINDADE, 2019). Trindade (2018) also revealed that 81 per cent of the Brazilian victims of racist discourse on Facebook are Black women. The author points out that, more recently, data has shown that the online environment in Brazil has become a “breeding ground for the dissemination of hate speech, racism and bigotry” (TRINDADE, 2018, p. 2). In this sense, the social media paradigm is given: the same platforms seen as useful tools to social inclusion and identity recognition also provide space for racist, sexist, and other hate discourses, as well as old practices of *prosumption* and synthetic personalization. I highlight all these factors before moving to anti-racist narratives to make it explicit how SNS are spaces shaped by society which can offer both positive and negative discourses. It is important to keep in mind that power relations, although not overly explicit like in some mass media outlets, are still present in digital discursive practices.

Anti-racist movements, both in Brazil and in the US, represent a long history of political reaction from oppressed Black and racialized peoples. While I expand this subject in section 2.4, it is important to call attention to how anti-racist movements have created an online presence and openly discuss racial issues in online environments. One of the biggest examples is the Black Lives Matter movement, created in 2013 and world-spread through the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter (or #BLM) on social media. Cyber/digital activism has played a central role in the dissemination of content in non-mainstream media, and the digital space has been explored as a space of mobilization and social change. However, digital discussions both

include and exclude different people in our society. According to a report by ITU¹⁵ (International Telecommunication Union/UN), globally in 2019, 72 per cent of households in urban areas had access to internet, whereas in rural areas the number is nearly 38 per cent. The gap between urban and rural internet access in developing countries, which is the case of Brazil, is higher than the gap in developed countries. Although the report demonstrates that gender parity in the Americas, in terms of access to the internet, is of 77 per cent for females and 76 per cent for males, it does not make a distinction between Brazil and the US (as it uses the term ‘The Americas’), which could compromise the real number in terms of access. Research “TIC Domicílios”, made by CETIC¹⁶ in Brazil, also from 2019, showed that there is a significant gap between households with internet access in the South of Brazil (73 per cent) and in the Northeast (65 per cent).

I also call attention to those numbers to demonstrate that even with differences in terms of access, Black women are occupying cyberspaces to discursively (re)create a new common imaginary about Black hair and Black identities. Khosravini (2015) highlights that despite the obstacles found in social media discourses, there is still “a real sense of potentials and unpredictability about the way these new spaces of power could be taken up and used” (p. 593). A good example of the transformative potential found in blogs and other digital pages is the *Marcha do Orgulho Crespo*¹⁷, first held in São Paulo (Brazil) in 2015. The march had as its main tool for organization a Facebook event and, later, boosted the creation of *Dia do Orgulho Crespo em São Paulo*¹⁸, implemented by the legislative assembly of the city. In the United States, a law which prohibits race-based hair discrimination has been implemented in several states. The policies that prohibit natural hair share roots in systemic racism, and the main argument of supporters of The Crown Act law is that without national legal protections “Black people are often left to risk facing consequences at school or work for their natural hair or invest time and money to conform to Eurocentric professionalism and beauty standards”¹⁹.

Having discussed the main concepts concerning narratives and social media, and establishing the main challenges found to perform critical discourse analysis within digital

¹⁵ Source: <<https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Pages/ff2020interactive.aspx>>. Access in Dec. 09th, 2020.

¹⁶ Source: <https://cetic.br/media/docs/publicacoes/2/20201123121817/tic_dom_2019_livro_eletronico.pdf>. Access on Dec. 09th, 2020

¹⁷ “Black hair pride march”

¹⁸ “Black hair day in São Paulo”

¹⁹ Source: <<https://www.naacpldf.org/natural-hair-discrimination/>>. Access on Dec. 09th, 2020

platforms, the next section presents central discussions on identity, genre, and race in the context of Brazil and the United States.

2.4.AFRICAN DIASPORA: BRAZIL AND THE US – RACE, GENDER, AND IDENTITIES

This section discusses the theoretical studies and debates on ‘race’ in Brazil and in the United States, focusing on studies that approach the complex subject of the African Diaspora in both countries. I rely on the notion of African Diaspora in this research as a means to point to the transnational fight of Afro-diasporic persons while, at the same time, placing a question mark on whether the Afro-diasporic experience could be seen as universal for Blacks living in the Americas. To do so, I shall first approach social studies that focus on general notions of the African Diaspora, and then on studies that discuss the very concept of race in both the US and Brazil. The contextualization of the different aspects comes from the need to de-center the USA in Brazilian discussions about Blackness.

The study of the African Diaspora involves a myriad of authors, disciplines, approaches, and attempts to conceptualize what constitutes it. First, it is important to remember, as Davies (2008, p. xxxi) points out, that not all migrations constitute a diaspora – the creation of a Diaspora is defined by, of course, migration, and “historical, emotive, political, economic, and cultural connections to that homeland and a consciousness of that interaction” (DAVIES, 2008, p. xxxi). In terms of definitions, Davies states that:

The term African Diaspora refers to the dispersal of African peoples all over the world. The word diaspora comes from the Greek diaspora (dia, meaning “through,” and spora, which refers to the process of sowing). [...] In this reading, then, the Diaspora can be seen as a kind of harvest of peoples, cultures, and knowledge that comes initially out of Africa—a demographic globalization, and internationalization, of African peoples created through centuries of migration. (DAVIES, 2008, p. xxxiii)

Davies also points to the political aspect of the usage of the term “African Diaspora”, linked to post and decolonial theorization. The discussion of the African diaspora is necessary given the fact that the very idea of “race” and racial categories/racial classification is a product of the forced removal of Africans to the Western Hemisphere (QUIJANO, 2000; WRIGHT, 2004).

One of the key references in discussions about the African diaspora is the researcher Paul Gilroy and his book *The Black Atlantic* (1993), which places the topic – African Diaspora – at the center the analysis. The Black Atlantic is, as discussed by the author, a metaphor to modern transnational structures that somehow connect Black individuals from the African diaspora. However, one of the main critiques involving *The Black Atlantic* is the fact that it does not approach the African diaspora in Brazil, focusing mainly on the USA and the UK.

2.4.1. Black, African American, Brown, Preto, *negro*, *pardo*, afro-bege, and *moreno* – on naming and race in Brazilian and American contexts

The Brazilian myth of racial democracy has made racial relations very complex, to say the least. Da Matta (1987 apud SANSONE, 2004, p. 11) places Brazilian racial democracy as the myth that grounds Brazilian racial relations. Sansone (2004, p. 11) discusses the notion of racial democracy, remembering that more than simply understanding it as – or reducing it to – an imposed ‘farse’, deep anthropological analysis is necessary to comprehend it. I rely on the perceptions on socio-racial relations produced by Sansone, who, after 15 years of research on racial constructions in Brazil and Latin America, wrote the book “Blackness without Ethnicity” (2002; 2004), a key-reference in the area. To the author, “the case of ethnicity in Brazil demonstrates very strongly that ethnic identity is a social construction that differs from context to context” (SANSONE, 2002, p. 3). This subsection approaches how the process of racialization is produced in the US and in Brazil, and the role language plays in defining one’s racial background - considering that this matter has complex dimensions in both countries and is often a huge debate. The understanding of such discussions is relevant to better comprehend, in the narratives that compose the data for this study, the current debate on different types of hair, the notion of wearing natural hair as a way for someone to see oneself as Black, the preference for curly (as opposed to kinky) hair, and notions of colorism.

The myth of Brazilian racial democracy has its roots on the whitening ideology and colonial politics from the early 1900s. The young republic had, in 1889, 56.03 percent of non-whites inhabitants, according to *Diretoria Geral de Estatísticas* (D.G.E)²⁰. Seeing this as a problem, the politics of sponsoring white European immigration was adopted, which was seen as a positive feature by Gilberto Freyre (1933) in his famous book *Casa Grande e Senzala*.

The strong belief that Brazil has or had a racial policy that could bring together all races without any kind of prejudice, since “we are all mixed” or “Brazil is a mixed country”, not only disrupts the discussion about race and racism in Brazil, but re-shapes how Brazilians self-identify racially.

The Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (*IBGE*) - the official provider of data and information about the country – uses five terms in official tables regarding race: 1) *amarelo* (Yellow or Asian descent), 2) *branco* (White), 3) *indígena* (Indigenous), 4) *pardo* (Brown or miscegenated) and 5) *preto* (Black). It is important to remember that IBGE has only adopted these terms after a survey conducted by the institute in 1976 revealed 135 denominations based

²⁰ D.G.E, 1989, apud TRINDADE, 2020, p.3.

on self-declared skin tones (TRINDADE, 2020, p. 3). Furthermore, the Black (*negro*) Brazilian population is comprised by the combination of *pretos* and *pardos* – this combination is adopted and vindicated by social movements, scholars, and IBGE. The Brazilian *Movimento Negro Unificado/MNU* –, (Black Unified Movement - my translation) – is key on raising social awareness about Blackness and the *pardo* category. the organization was founded at the end of the 1970s, and it has reestablished the ways in which Blacks in Brazil fight for their rights²¹. The frontiers of being Black, however, were not clear even to MNU, as a testimony given by Arani Santana, member of the NEGO group (a theatre group which was the first core-group of MNU in Bahia, according to Rodrigues, 2020), to the MNU's book (1989), indicate:

[...] the second group's divergency factor, pointed by Arani Santana, was the question of the skin tone. The light-skinned Blacks [*pardos*] were discriminated against. [They] were called "counterfeit-Blacks", "Black liars". Arani Santana says that dark skinned-Blacks could not explain, but they terribly rejected light-skin Blacks because they thought those people were read as White. It was a matter of assuming the pattern. And people, generally, had their hair straightened, [she] concludes." (1989, p. 14, apud RODRIGUES, 2020, p. 5)²²

Although the term *negro* is widely accepted in Brazil, this does not apply into the US context. The term African American has been used since mid-1920s, "it has been the preferred term in the USA since the 1970s" (AGYEMANG, BHOPAL, BRUIJINZEELS, 2005, p. 1016). The term *Black*, however, may be applied in political and power contexts.

The usage of *Pardo* as an umbrella term that encompasses everyone who is not inserted in other racial terms is highly contentious, though. Given the complex sociohistorical origins of the "Brazilian" mixed race, other terms to refer to light skinned Blacks are currently being used. The preference for "negro de pele clara" (Brazilian Portuguese for "*lightskin*") is demonstrated by several people who understand the term *pardo* as potentially apolitical or as a term that denies Blackness. In the well acknowledge essay "Negros de pele clara"²³ (2016), Sueli Carneiro – one of the most influential Black intellectuals in Brazil – discusses the ways in which Blackness is often attacked in Brazil, and how light skinned Blacks are constantly under a political racial dispute created by Whites in order to "whiten" Brazil. She illustrates this by recounting the process of defining her daughter's race on her birth certificate:

Insisto em contar a forma pela qual foi assegurada, no registro de nascimento de minha filha Luanda, a sua identidade negra. O pai, branco, vai ao cartório, o escrivão preenche o registro e, no campo destinado à cor, escreve: branca. O pai diz

²¹ Source: <>. Accessed on February 1st, 2021.

²² Original: "[...] o segundo fator de divergência do grupo, apontado por Arani Santana, foi a questão da cor da pele. Os negros pardos eram discriminados. Chamava-se de "negros de contrabando", "negros mentirosos". Arani Santana diz que os negros bem escuros não sabiam explicar, mas rejeitavam terrivelmente os negros de pele clara porque achavam que aquelas pessoas passavam por brancas. Era só assumir o padrão. E as pessoas, geralmente, tinham o cabelo alisado, conclui."

²³ "Light-skinned Blacks".

ao escrivão que a cor está errada, porque a mãe da criança é negra. O escrivão, resistente, corrige o erro e planta a nova cor: parda. O pai novamente reage e diz que sua filha não é parda. O escrivão irritado pergunta, “Então qual a cor de sua filha”. O pai responde, “Negra”. O escrivão retruca, “Mas ela não puxou nem um pouquinho ao senhor? É assim que se vão clareando as pessoas no Brasil e o Brasil. Esse pai, brasileiro naturalizado e de fenótipo ariano, não tem, como branco que de fato é, as dúvidas metafísicas que assombram a racialidade no Brasil, um país percebido por ele e pela maioria de estrangeiros brancos como de maioria negra. Não fosse a providência e insistência paterna, minha filha pagaria eternamente o mico de, com sua vasta carapinha, ter o registro de branca, como ocorre com filhos de um famoso jogador de futebol negro. (CARNEIRO, 2016)²⁴

As this research investigates language in social media contexts, it is worth mentioning that the usage of new terms to refer to light skin Blacks, such as “afrobege”, are also increasing. The jokes toward these terms seem to have appeared after the concept of colorism was introduced to Brazilian context. According to Rodrigues (2020), it was only after Nascimento’s (2015) article on mulatto culture, class, and eugenic beauty in the post-American emancipation that the discussions on colorism arisen and became part of Brazilian digital culture. Colorism is defined by Rodrigues as “a color spectrum of Black people, that allows the benefit of certain racial hegemonic (white) prerogatives, naming this benefit as privilege.” (2020, p.1, my translation). The discussion on colorism has also been incorporated by bloggers and vloggers, who have extended it to discussion on the differences between type 3 and type 4 hair (discussed below, in section 2.4.2 Feminism and Black Hair).

2.4.2. Feminism, gender, and identities: what hair has to do with it?

In the autobiographic essay that opens the book “Quem tem medo do feminismo negro?” (RIBEIRO, 2018), the Brazilian philosopher Djamila Ribeiro discusses her own childhood, adolescence, and adulthood using Kilomba’s (2010, p. 17) notion of the mask of speechlessness (a parallel draw with the mask Anastacia, a Brazilian enslaved woman, was forced to wear. Anastacia’s famous drawing, created by Jacques Arango, epitomizes the horrors of slavery in Brazil), pointing to a life which is crossed by silencing and racism. This introduction presents the interconnections of social and private life, letting the reader get acquainted with Ribeiro’s

²⁴ “I insist on telling the way in which it was ensured, in the birth certificate of my daughter Luanda, her Black identity. The father, white, goes to the registry, the clerk fills out the registration and, on the field assigned to the color, writes: white. The father tells the clerk that the color is wrong because the child’s mother is Black. The clerk, resistant, corrects the mistake and plants the new color: *parda*. The father reacts again and says that his daughter is not *parda*. The clerk, bothered, asks, “so what is your daughter’s color?”. The father answers: “Black”. The clerk retorts “but doesn’t she look even a little bit like you, sir?”. And this is how they are whitening people in Brazil and Brazil itself. This father, a naturalized Brazilian e with Caucasian phenotype, does not have, as a white person which he in fact is, the metaphysical doubts that haunt raciality in Brazil, a country perceived by him and by most white foreigners as having a Black majority. If not for the paternal providence and insistence, my daughter would be eternally mocked for wearing her large coily hair, and having ‘white’ in her documents, which is what happens to the children of a famous Black soccer player.

personal history. The subject “hair” is referenced in several parts of the text – either to talk about the differences between the way her mother and her grandmother took care of Djamila’s hair, or describing her experiences with chemical straighteners and hot combs. The second half of the book is composed of a set of articles published online by the author, who devotes her writing to reflections on Black feminism and racial discussions in Brazil. Considered an “important contribution to feminist and racial debates in Brazil” (MALCHER; RIAL, 2019, p.3), the book and the author became “big hits” in the country.

The U.S activist, academic, feminist, and writer bell hooks, in her article “Straightening Our Hair” (1988), discusses the correlations between the act of hair straightening and white supremacy in the US. Similarly to Ribeiro, hooks shares with the reader interconnections between social and private life, approaching US racial politics and personal narrative through (Black) hair. The author says:

I ask students to write autobiographical statements that reflect their thoughts about the connection between race and physical beauty. A vast majority of black women wrote about their hair. When I asked individual women outside class why they continued to straighten their hair, many asserted that naturals don’t look good on them or that they required too much work. (...) We talked about the way it hurts to realize the connection between racist oppression and the arguments we use to convince ourselves and others that we are not beautiful or acceptable as we are. (hooks, 1989, p. 3)

The discussion provided by hooks also approaches other themes, such as heteronormativity, colonialism, and sexism. This specific article is often reprinted, and the author is globally recognized as a feminist activist, cultural critic, and political theorist.

Lastly, I shall mention Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, a Nigerian fiction writer who also wrote non-academic books on feminism (2014, 2017). In her novel *Americanah* (2013), Adichie discusses race in the United States, or “becoming Black”. One of the topics often approached in the novel is the relation between the protagonist’s (Ifemelu) hair²⁵ with being Black in the United States - as the following passages demonstrate:

She touched Ifemelu’s hair. “Why don’t you have relaxer?” “I like my hair the way God made it.” “But how do you comb it? Hard to comb?” (ADICHIE, 2013, p. 15);

My full and cool hair would work if I were interviewing to be a backup singer in a jazz band, but I need to look professional for this interview, and professional means straight its best but if it’s going to be curly then it has to be the white kind of curly, loose curls or, at worst, spiral curls but never kinky. (ADICHIE, 2013, p. 252)

²⁵ See Francisco (2020).

These three examples demonstrate that Black women from different backgrounds (Brazil, US, and Nigeria) who self-identify as “feminists” are - and were, as hook’s example from 1989 shows - incorporating narratives about hair in their works, be them academic or not. This points to a correlation between the women’s movement and discussions on body and hair politics.

2.4.3. Race and Gender

In this section, feminism, gender, and identities (as indicated by the title) are approached to discuss Black female experiences in the US and in Brazil and the importance, if any, of hair in this matter. In what refers to gender and identities, I shall rely on the intersectional feminist approach to race, gender, and class. This approach is theoretically based on the intersectional theory developed by Crenshaw (CRENSHAW, 1991), as well as on the contributions of other Black female scholars and women of color who have theorized on the intersections of race and gender (DAVIS, 1981; ANZALDÚA, 1987; GONZALEZ 1988; 2018; COLLINS, 1990; hooks, 2015; RIBEIRO, 2018). Nevertheless, in this section I will also provide a brief discussion on other perspectives on gender and race that are not connected to the feminist movement – I make this move not only to demonstrate the diversity of thinking and theorization in the African diaspora, but also to keep this study updated in terms of new discussions around Black feminism and the criticisms towards it. Furthermore, the previously discussed contextual differences between Brazil and the US are also approached in the more specific area of gender and identity, focusing on the discussions on gender and race developed by Brazilian researches or Brazilian thinkers.

The literature (mostly in English) points to the first use of the term intersectionality in a text by the African American jurist Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989), where the author discusses the correlations of power, class, race, and gender. However, while mapping the origins of intersectionality, Hirata (2014, p. 62) affirms that, as a concept *per se*, intersectionality has its roots in the end of the 1970s, with the Black feminist movement and its criticism of upper-middle class white feminism. Dorlin (*apud* Hirata, 2014, p. 62) claims, though, that the term only became a “hit concept” in the second half of the 2000s. Brazilian thinker Akotirene (2019) claims that “intersectionality demands geopolitical orientation” (p. 21, my translation). Her work on intersectionality also sheds light into the intersectional nature of Black Brazilian feminism, that, although not deriving directly from intersectionality *per se*, suggests antiracist, antisexist practices.

In this sense, even though some scholars (HIRATA, 2014; RIBEIRO, 2018) point to the origin of the term in the Black feminist movements of the 1970s and 1980s, we should also consider that back in the 19th century African American women already discussed their intersectional identity of being both women and Black. These Black women participated both in the movement for racial equality and the women's rights movement. As hooks (2015, p. 16) points out, the fact that some White men supported the vote for Black men while rejecting the vote for women was an invitation for Black women to emphasize their status as "females", whereas the racism of advocates for white women's rights emphasized their status as "Blacks". Hooks explains that:

Black women were placed in a double bind; to support women's suffrage would imply that they were allying themselves with white women activists who had publicly revealed their racism, but to support only black male suffrage was to endorse a patriarchal social order that would grant them no political voice. (hooks, 2015, p. 17)

Important names such as Mary Church Terrell, Anna Cooper, Amanda Berry Smith, and Sojourner Truth – whose speech "*Ain't I a woman?*" in 1851 is contemporaneously used as a critique of single axis analysis, as well as an intersectional critique – who were engaged in defining a place for racialized women, portray how the need for intersectional analysis is not something new. Nevertheless, such discussions are still contemporary, and Black women often feel like they have to choose between being "Black" or "women" or being what hooks classifies as a "limbo, not wanting to ally themselves with sexist Black men or racist white women" (hooks 2015, p. 24).

Other Black women reacted to such dichotomy by creating Black feminist groups, and centering feminism on the experiences of the Black woman, through the assumption that race and sex were not separable. I find it important to mention that there are Black women in the West (especially in the US) who follow movements such as womanism, denying the label 'feminist' for political reasons; other Black women deny the label "feminist" and decide to follow discussions of gender de-centering them from Eurocentric concepts - such as 'feminism' – and focusing on the Pan-African movement. In "*What's in a Name? Womanism, Black Feminism, and Beyond*" (1996), Patricia Hill Collins discusses whether Black women's movements should be labelled "womanism" or "Black feminism". One of the most acclaimed authors on the issue is Alice Walker who, in her volume of essays on womanist "*In Search of Our Mother's Gardens*" (1983), discusses four meanings of womanism. In the first definition, the author states that a womanist is "A black feminist or feminist of color (...)." (WALKER, 1983, p. xi). In the second definition, Walker adds: "Also: A woman who loves other women,

sexually and/or non-sexually. Appreciates and prefers women's culture (...)." (WALKER, 1983, p. xi), whereas in the third definition she states that a womanist "Loves music. Loves dance. Loves the moon. (...) Loves herself. Regardless." (WALKER, 1983, p. xii). Lastly, the fourth definition states that "Womanism is to feminism as purple to lavender." (WALKER, 1983, p. xii). Considering the first definition, it could be argued that the terms are interchangeable, and Collins claims that "like Walker, many African American women see little difference between the two [terms] since both support a common agenda of black women's self-definition and self-determination" (COLLINS, 1996, p. 10). The multiple definitions provided by Walker are analyzed by Collins, who points that Walker's usage of the term is controversial.

Not to be confused with Walker's definition of womanism, another concept that is centered on Black women is Africana Womanism, proposed by Clenora Hudson-Weems (1987). Even though the term was "coined" by Hudson-Weems, Africana women activists claim that it is based on ancestral practices. It is an alternative for those who reject Black feminism, and an attempt to call attention to the importance of self-naming - the author points that the terminology and concept of 'feminism' are White, and that Blacks have been "persuaded" by White feminists to adopt it. The usage of the term "feminist" would only be beneficial for White feminists who could "increase their power base by expanding their scope with the convenient consensus that sexism is their only commonality and primary concern" (HUDSON-WEEMS, 2006, p. 39). The Black women who the author calls 'Africana women activists', like Sojourner Truth and other freedom fighters, and who were labeled by authors such as bell hooks as 'Black feminists', are seen as 'mislabeled by procrustians', since to Hudson-Weems they were not feminists and their primary concerns were not of a "feminist nature" (p. 39), but rather it:

was the life-threatening plight of all Africana people, both men and women, at the hands of a racist system. To cast them in a feminist mode, which de-emphasizes their major interest, is an abomination and an outright insult to their level of struggle. (HUDSON-WEEM, 2006, p. 39)

In this sense, Africana Womanism claims agency for Black women to select and to have their own criteria for the assessment of the Black reality, not through White women's previously established agenda – what the author calls a "futile attempt to fit into the constructs of an established White female paradigm" (p. 40). As proposed by Hudson-Weems, Africana Womanism (both a theoretical framework and a methodology) considers gender oppression but does not see it as the main and only struggle for parity, as Black feminism does. However, differently from Black feminism, it "views feminism, the suggested alternative to these problems, as a sort of inverted White patriarchy, with the White feminist now in command and

on top” (HUDSON-WEEMS, 2006, p. 40). African Womanism focuses on the “Africana” culture that is defined by the author as a culture where there is an “organic” equality with the Africana man, in Hudson’s terms the “companion” of the Africana woman. The Africana men and the Africana women are, essentially, allies that have struggled together since both were first enslaved until today.

In what refers to the discussion of the women’s movement in Brazil, Carneiro defines it as one of the most respectable movements in the world but, similarly to the comments made by African American theorists, Carneiro also calls attention to the fact that feminism (just as other Brazilian social-movements) has been guided by a Eurocentric view that universalizes the women-experience (2003, p. 117, p. 118). Carneiro uses the term “feminism” as an equivalent to “women’s movement”. She points out that the many accusations of Eurocentrism concerning feminism in Brazil led to new discursive and political practices, with the Black women’s movement as the determiner of these changes (p. 118).

Even though I consider myself a Black feminist and use the term as my main reference and theoretical background, I must acknowledge that discussions on womanism, Africana womanism, and on other African-centered perspectives on gender have shed light on many important issues for me – such as the criticism that considers feminism Eurocentric, and as such incapable of providing the necessary analytical tools to understand the multiple realities of racialized women, the argument that the universalization of ‘men’ excludes Black men and serves as a tool for their oppression, or even the discussions about ‘academic feminism’, a feminism that does not reach working class women. It is a fact, though, that there is a theoretical dispute in the usage of different terms and the adoption of one or the other. However, I do believe that these differences and disputes demonstrate the diversity of Black scholarship.

Hall (1996, p.1) claims that feminism and cultural criticism, influenced by a psychoanalytic perspective, have developed the question of subjectivity. This is also supported by Lopes (2001, p. 56), who discusses how social movements have advanced the discussion and theorization about the place of the self in social life.

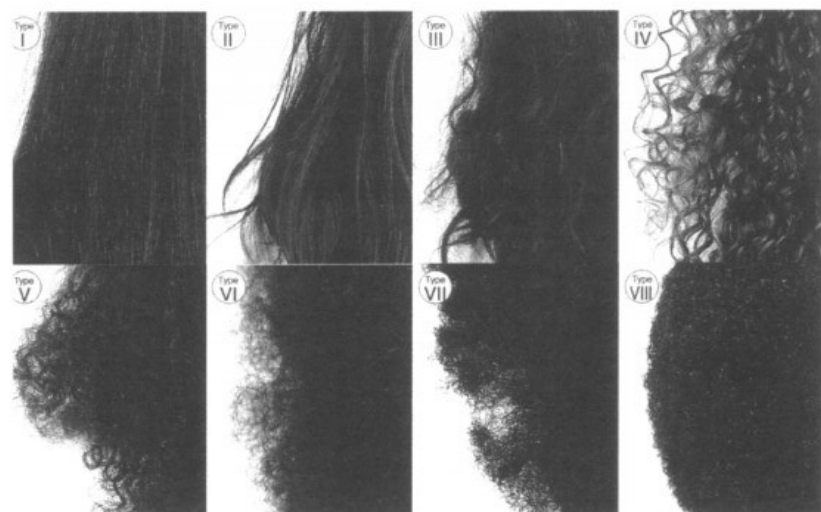
2.5. THE POLITICS OF (BLACK) HAIR

The keratinous filament that grows out of one’s epidermis, named “hair”, has been part of several academic discussions and investigations over the past century (BANKS, 2000, p. 4).

From medicine and the analysis of hair as purely dead keratinized cells to psychoanalysis, sociology, anthropology, and the analysis of the symbolic meanings of hair, the subject is approached by different disciplines and from different perspectives. In this section, I approach hair as a cross-cultural and social phenomenon that is correlated to constructions of identity and politics that intersect race and gender.

First, it is necessary to conceptualize and define what is considered “Black” hair in this work. A study conducted in the biology area (DE LA METTRIE et al., 2007) has attempted to create a worldwide classification of human hair. The study demonstrates that early anthropological classifications of hair based on ethnic groups (African, Asian, and European hair) or on texture (such as curly, straight, etc.) could not account for the historical and biological diversity of human hair (p. 265). Through a qualitative analysis of 1.442 hair samples, and taking into consideration the curve diameter, the number of waves, and number of twists, the study presents eight hair categories (as an example, samples of hair collected in African countries were mainly classified from “V” to “VIII”, whereas hair collected in Brazil – Rio de Janeiro – included types “I” to “VI”). Even though the authors emphasize the importance of a new-universal classification for hair, they often use “regular” vocabulary to best explain their classification: “As mentioned, so-called straight hair, as embodied in types I and II (...).” (DE LA METTRIE, Roland, et al., 2007). The authors offer a figure to better illustrate their classification:

Figure 4 – De La Mettrie, Roland, et al., worldwide approach to human hair classification

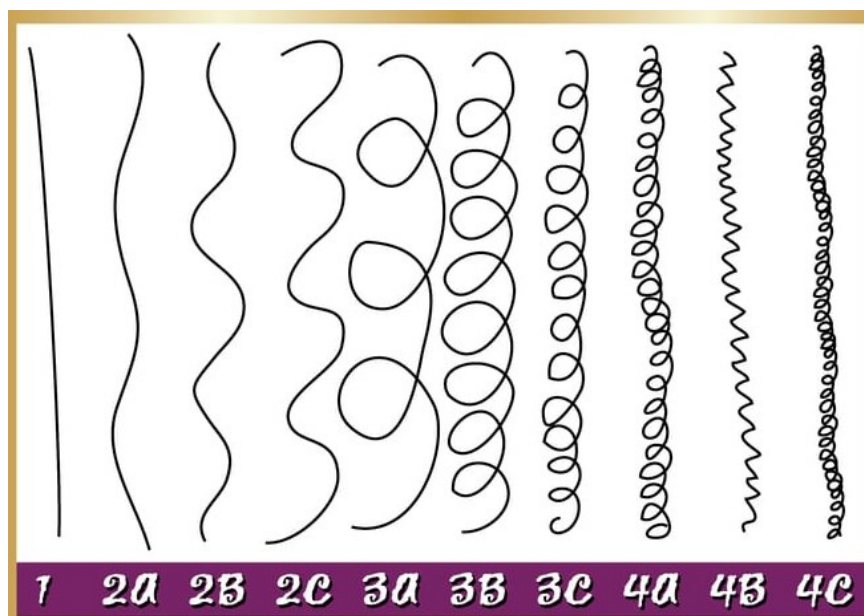


DE LA METTRIE, Roland, et al., 2007

Even though the arguments for a new hair classification that could consider the “high complexity of human biological diversity” (DE LA METTRIE, Roland, et al., 2007, p. 265) are

strictly relevant, it could be argued that in everyday live people still classify hair in regular terms (straight, wavy, curly, kinky). More than that, it is common to observe in hair-related websites the adoption of Andre Walker’s hair typing system. Even though no scientific papers have academically referred to his system, data from different *blogs* that have hair as the main subject (e.g., Naturally Curly; Curls; Hairstyle Camp; Curlcentric) demonstrate Walker’s numerical grading system being applied. The “Andre Walker Hair Typing System” classifies types of hair from 1 to 4, with the A, B, C letters used as indicators of the coil degree of each hair type. For example, 1A hair type is described as straight fine hair, whereas 3A is described as curly hair with loose curls, and 4C would be kinky-coily hair, with almost no visible defined curls. The 4C hair of Walker’s system could be compared to hair De La Mettrie et al.’s type VIII. It should be noticed that Walker is a famous hairstylist, known to work with the US media celebrity Oprah Winfrey.

Figure 5 – Visual representation of Walker’s hair typing system



Retrieved from <<https://www.curlcentric.com/hair-typing-system/>>. Accessed on June 10th, 2020.

This system is often used as a guide for people to understand which type of hair they have (could be more than one) and which strategies they should use in their haircare routine. The system has also been adopted by brands to classify their hair products. The use of the term “Black hair” to refer to the hair Black people commonly have (which could range from hair types 3 to 4 in Walker’s system) is common, alongside with “Natural hair” and “African-textured hair”. Further, it should be mentioned that terms like “nappy” or “kinky” are often used

in derogatory ways but seem to be reframed to portray pride, as books like “Happy to nappy” (hooks, 1999; 2018) suggest.

As previously mentioned, I adopt the terms “Black hair” and “Natural hair” in this study due to the frequency of their current usage, but it is important to mention that I am aware that White people may have curly or even kinky-coily hair, as well as that Black people may have straight-textured hair (naturally or not), and this is not one’s racial determinant, especially in diverse societies like Brazil. In Brazilian Portuguese, there is not an exact correspondent to the term – Black hair can be called “cabelo crespo” (kinky hair), “cabelo cacheado” (curly hair), and in some rare cases “cabelo Afro” (afro hair). I also consider protective hairstyles for Black hair, such as cornrows (boxbraids), twists, and locs.

That being said, in order to understand how hair, or, to be more specific, Black hair, has gained attention in recent years, it is necessary to understand the social and historical processes that guided these discussions. Morrow (1973) maps the history of Black hairstyling practices and places the African continent at the beginning of his discussions.

In the essay “straightening our hair”, hooks (1989) draws a parallel between a racially segregated society and the Black female “obsession” with hair:

Since the world we lived in was racially segregated, it was easy to overlook the relationship between white supremacy and our obsession with hair. Even though black women with straight hair were perceived to be more beautiful than those with thick, frizzy hair, it was not overtly related to a notion that white women were a more appealing female group or that their straight hair set a beauty standard black woman were struggling to live out. (hooks, 1989, p.1)

This citation demonstrates that notions of beauty were incorporated into the racist system. The attempt to reproduce or imitate the dominant group’s appearance emerges as a way to emotionally and physically survive in the given context. Even though hooks suggests that hair straightening is often connected with self-hate – “[it] represents an imitation of the dominant white group’s appearance and often indicates internalized racism, self-hatred, and/or low self-esteem” (1989, p. 2) – Carneiro (2011), in “Enegrecer o Feminismo”, from a Brazilian perspective, calls attention to the social status of Black women:

Black women are part of the group of women who are the ‘queens of nothing’, who are portrayed as the anti-muses of Brazilian society, because the aesthetic model of woman is the white woman. When we talk about ensuring the same opportunities for men and women in the job market, are we ensuring jobs for what kind of woman? We are part of a group of women to whom job advertisements highlight the clause: “Good appearance is essential”. (CARNEIRO, 2011)²⁶

²⁶ My translation. Original: “As mulheres negras fazem parte de um contingente de mulheres que não são rainhas de nada, que são retratadas como antimusas da sociedade brasileira, porque o modelo estético de mulher é a mulher branca. Quando falamos em garantir as mesmas oportunidades para homens e mulheres no mercado de trabalho, estamos garantindo emprego para que tipo de mulher? Fazemos parte de um contingente de mulheres para as quais os anúncios de emprego destacam a frase: “Exige-se boa aparência”.” (CARNEIRO, 2011)

In the bestselling classic ‘The Beauty Myth’, written by Naomi Wolf and published for the first time almost three decades ago, in 1991, the beauty as a contemporary form of social control over women was discussed in depth. The author argues that since the 1970s and 1980s Western women achieved several legal and reproductive rights, but more strict and cruel images of female beauty have emerged. Even though the author emphasizes that the women she is referring to are Western women, her discussion addresses only White women and, more specifically, White American and/or European heterosexual women. A good example of this issue are two protests that took place in the 48th Miss America beauty pageant contest, in 1968. The first protest was carried out by a group of women denouncing beauty concepts. The second was organized by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, when the first Miss Black America was staged, and it was defined as “positive protests against the exclusion of black women from the Miss America title” (CRAIG, 2002, p. 3). From a transnational perspective, it can be argued that, both in the US and in Brazil, the notion of beauty is white-related, as the link between beauty pageants and racism is not exclusive to the American context. The first Black pageant titleholder won the contest in 1986, whereas the second Black titleholder won it in 2016 and the third in 2017. Pontes (2017) discusses the ways in which beauty pageants in Brazil, when not directly promoted by the Black community, have left Black women out. Pontes highlights the “Black beauty night” promoted by Ilê Aiyê, one of Brazil’s oldest Carnival Blocks, for almost forty years. Brazilian feminist Lélia Gonzalez mentioned how much she was impressed with the participants from the Ilê Aiyê block

1978’s carnival, (...) young Black women, beautiful, really beautiful, dancing *Ijexá*, without wigs or “stretched” hair, without showing their buttocks or paint masks, [they] looked like the very incarnation of Oxum, the Black beauty goddess. (GONZALEZ, 1982 apud PONTES, 2017, p. 47).²⁷

In this sense, Gonzalez’s concerns with the deconstruction of white beauty patterns, additionally highlighting the issue of the hyper-sexualization of Black women in carnival parades, indicate the inclusion, within Black Feminism, of discussions that were primarily based on aesthetic notions.

More contemporarily, Leite and Souza (2017) contextualize the rise of the *Afrotombamento* generation in the state of Bahia, characterized by Blacks who engage through the internet to “transgress white beauty patterns and assume their racial identity²⁸” (LEITE;

²⁷ My translation. Original: “Nunca esquecerei o carnaval de 78, (...) Jovens negras lindas, lindíssimas, dançando *Ijexá*, sem perucas ou cabelos “esticados”, sem bunda de fora ou máscaras de pintura, pareciam a própria encarnação de Oxum, a deusa da beleza negra” (GOZALEZ, 1982, apud PONTES, 2017, p. 47).

²⁸ My translation. Original: “Os representantes dessa geração transgridem os padrões estéticos brancos e assumem sua identidade racial” (LEITE; SOUZA, 2017, p. 6)

SOUZA, 2017, p. 6). In terms of hair, the Afrotombamento generation, “when not wearing the traditional box braid hairstyle and *dreads*, is exhibiting their naturally kinky hair”²⁹ (p.7).

Even though there is a movement among Black women, some of whom claim their free will over their hair and their right to wear it straight styled³⁰, Resende (2017, p. 17) calls attention to how discourse is socially structured and how our notions of “freedom” and, in this case, free will, are relative due to the fact that people move within structures that precede their actions:

Considering that social structures precede actions, including discursive actions, then the structures with which we deal in the moment of our action in the world are “conformed by actions of other actors that preceded us” (RESENDE, 2017, p. 17).³¹

In this sense, the notion of “free will”, often associated with a discourse that claims that “we live in a democracy”, is not true when it comes to the social aspects of Black hair and Black beauty. As mentioned before, beauty has been an instrument of oppression that excludes or objectifies Black women, and many Black women still wear straight hair not by free will or any notion of freedom, but because their curly, *coily*, Black hair is often seen as dirty, unprofessional, not good-looking.

It is considering the socio-historical ways in which the Black female hair and body have been put in a place of non-desire, and how Black people have been fighting to socially reshape this, especially Black women who are discussing the hyper-sexualization of the Black female body which results in controlling images such as of the historical Jezebel or the contemporary “hoochie” (COLLINS, 2000), that I highlight the importance of discussing “beauty” and “hair”. Even though it may at first seem a superficial topic, the imaginary order has material implications, such as of the creation of controlling images, negative, stereotypical images that are “designed to make racism, sexism, poverty, and other forms of social injustice appear to be natural, normal, and inevitable parts of everyday life” (COLLINS, 2000, p.69).

²⁹ My translation. Original: “Quando não estão usando os tradicionais trançados e dreads, exibem os cabelos naturalmente crespos” (LEITE; SOUZA, 2017, p.7)

³⁰CUNEGUNDES, Larissa. **10 belas negras brasileiras empoderadas com cabelos lisos**. 2016. Available: <https://www.geledes.org.br/10-belas-negras-brasileiras-empoderadas-com-cabelos-lisos/>. Accessed 31st sep. 2020.;

³¹My translation. Original: “Considerando que estruturas sociais sempre antecedem ações, inclusive ações discursivas, então as estruturas com as quais lidamos no momento de nossa ação no mundo são “conformadas por ações de outros atores que [nos] antecederam”. (RESENDE, 2017, p. 17)

CHAPTER III

3. METHODOLOGY

This section presents the methodological procedures used in this study, divided into two main subsections: 3.1 and 3.2. In 3.1, the procedures for data collection are described, and 3.2 covers the process and procedures for data analysis. Finally, the last subsection, 3.3, summarizes this chapter.

3.1. RESEARCH DATA AND PROCEDURES FOR DATA COLLECTION

The data for this study consist of ten publicly available narratives of life stories produced by Black Brazilian and African American women bloggers regarding Black hair. The online data collection was conducted in Brazil in the time frame of 2019-2020. The collection process was driven by the search of a set of keywords related to hair stories - “*cabelo natural relato*”; “*cabelo natural história*”; “*cabelo cacheado história*”; “*cabelo crespo história*”; “*natural hair story*”; “*curly hair story*”; “*kinky hair story*”; “*afro hair story*” - on Google’s online search engine, maybe the most popular one in the world. The choice of terms was influenced by the usage of these terms in other academic works related to Black hair (BYRD; THARPS, 2001; GOMES, 2017; TRINDADE, 2020).

To follow ethical guidelines for online research, this study safeguards the bloggers’ privacy, and no markers of personal identification, such as real names, hyperlinks, or geographical localization, are disclosed. The criteria for the selection of the narratives was the following: the narrative must be published in a personal blog (there are many narratives produced specifically to compose a brand’s website, specially brands that sell haircare products) or within the blog space of a brand (such as *reader’s space* or *editor’s blog*); the narrative must be written by a woman who self-identifies as Black (understanding the complex conditions of assuring one’s Blackness in Brazil and in the US, it would not be appropriate for me to be the one who decides if one is Black or not, as discussed in subsection 2.4.1). To access this information, I considered the writer’s own narrative as some of them refer to themselves (self-identification) as Blacks. In case this is not mentioned in the narrative itself, I searched for racial-related terms (*preto, black, negro, pardo*) in the blogs. The table below summarizes the process of data collection:

Table 2 – Data collection

Stage	Procedures
Data collection	<p>I. Online search on main search platforms using key terms to find hair related narratives (in Brazilian Portuguese and in English).</p> <p>II. Collect narratives.</p> <p>III. Check and organize narratives in terms of location (is the narrative produced by an American/Brazilian person?), race (is the narrative produced by a woman who self-identifies as Black?), and published timeframe (2010-2020).</p>

Source: author (2021).

After the collection and organization of the data, the texts were exported into .txt documents, to allow them to be opened in AntConc, a software for corpus analysis further explained in section 3.2. To organize the narratives and preserve the bloggers' identity, each narrative received a number (first 5 Brazilian, last 5 from the US), and the blogger's name was replaced by a fictional one. The following table presents the number of words, the year, and the kind of webspace where each narrative was published:

Table 3 – Information from the selected narratives

Narrative	Number of words	Year	Webspace
01 Gabriela	588 words	2017	Personal blog
02 Fernanda	1005 words	2016	Personal blog
03 Luisa	629 words	2019	Blog space within brand website
04 Mel	796 words	2014	Interview within personal blog
05 Rayza	1042	2021	Personal blog
06 Jane	1476	2019	Personal blog
07 Anne	966	2017	Personal blog
08 Claire	960	2018	Blog space within brand website
09 Emma	1143	2021	Blog space within brand website
10 Lorraine	672	2020	Personal blog

Source: author (2021)

The procedures for the analysis of each narrative are further explained in the subsection below.

3.2 PROCEDURES FOR DATA ANALYSIS

As previously mentioned, the lexical choices in the narratives produced by the participants were analyzed through the Transitivity system. This framework, springing from Systemic Functional Linguistics (HALLIDAY, 2004), provides the necessary tools to understand, from a functional perspective, how bloggers describe their experiences with ‘hair’. Thus, keeping in mind that the data for this study is analyzed both under the perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis - considering notions of identity, power, and emancipation presented by Fairclough (FAIRCLOUGH, 1992, 2003, 2010), and of Narrative Studies (FREEMAN, 2015; TOOLAN, 2001) - to better understand how the narratives are constructed -, this study relies on the research framework proposed by Fairclough (2003, p. 210) as its main methodology, with slight adaptations made for the purposes of this study (see table 3):

Table 4 – Schematic picture for critical discourse analysis

Step	Procedure	Location within my study
I	Focus on a social problem which has a semiotic aspect;	Chapters I and II
II	Identify obstacles to it being tackled, through the analysis of a) the network of practices within which it is located; b) the relationship of semiosis elements within the practice(s) concerned; c) the discourse (the semiosis itself): i. Structural analysis (the order of discourse) ii. Textual/interactional analysis – both interdiscursive analysis and linguistic, (and semiotic)	Chapter IV
III	Consider whether the social order (network of practices) in a sense ‘needs’ the problem. The point here is to ask whether those who benefit most from the way social life is now organized have an interest in the problem not being resolved;	Chapter IV
IV	Identify possible ways past the obstacles.	Chapters IV and V
V	Reflect critically on the analysis (I-IV)	Chapter V

Source: Fairclough, 2003.³²

³² Note: [...] with slight changes made by the author of this study, as previously mentioned.

For organizational purposes, the narratives analyzed in this study were uploaded in the software AntConc, a corpus analysis toolkit for concordance and text analysis, as figure 4 shows. The software offered tools to qualitatively trace the recurrence of transitivity and evaluative meanings in terms of patterns. As this study focuses on the evaluation and experiences strictly related to hair, the software's concordance hints list helped me to better visualize and trace evaluative words (such as adjectives) related to the keywords *cabelo*, *hair*, *kinky*, *curly*, *cachos*.

Figure 6 - Example of AntConc's concordance hints list

Line	Text
1	não conseguia mais viver sem isso. Meu cabelo crescia 1 cent&atilde;metro e eu jã necessitava passar
2	os meninos da classe, me vissem com o cabelo daquele jeito . Não satisfeita, a professora pent
3	o que eu estava fazendo com o meu cabelo e cornigo . Eu me perguntava o porque de
4	, a professora tirou o laão do meu cabelo , e eu fiquei morrendo de vergonha. Eu nã
5	resumidamente a minha relaão com meu cabelo , em forma de retrospectiva, para que vocãs enten
6	to seguido de escova progressiva, percebi que meu cabelo estava sem vida , murcho, quebrado. Eu me olhei
7	e nem sofrer preconceito por causa do meu cabelo . Eu olhava ao meu redor, brincava com bonecas
8	muito bullying na escola por causa do meu cabelo . Eu sempre estudei em escolas particulares e dura
9	. Então, vocãs imaginam o que aconteceu? Meu cabelo ficou super armado , enorme. E eu que jã
10	defeitoã, por não ter nascido com o cabelo liso . E dessa forma fui explicitamente apresentad
11	porque de estar colocando tanta quãmica no cabelo , mudando a minha identidade. Eu jã não
12	que jã vinha sofrendo preconceito por causa do cabelo , nessa hora fui v&atilde;tima de uma chacota
13	odutos para cabelos onde todas as mulheres tinham cabelo ou liso ou alisado , então intrinsecamente fui
14	secos ganham volume. ã uma caracterãstica do cabelo , que hoje &atilde; super valorizada, pois dã vida
15	. Lembro que meus coleguinhas diziam que eu tinha cabelo ruim, duro, zombavam e perguntavam o que eu
16	. Não satisfeita, a professora penteou o meu cabelo , seco! Como assim?! ã isso mesmo, seco! Todos
17	por que eu sou assim? Por que meu cabelo &atilde; assim? O que eu fiz para merecer

Source: author (2021)

In addition, social studies and theoretical works regarding hair, Black hair, Black politics, Black feminism, and race/racial discourse (BANKS, 2000; KILOMBA, 2008; FANON, 2008; HOOKS, 2015) guide the discussion and are taken into consideration in the macro-textual analysis of the findings, since these elements influence the social and discursive practices recontextualized by these Black women's narratives. Considering both micro and macro levels of textual organization, I divided the analysis in two sections of the following chapter (section 4 and 5). In the table below, this division is explained:

Table 5 – Analysis division

SECTION 4	SECTION 5
Micro-textual	Macro-textual
Process choice analysis and evaluative language analysis	Interdiscursive analysis (interaction between texts and social life)

Source: author (2021).

It is important to mention that, considering the nature of this study, even though I present numbers that may indicate a quantitative aspect in the analysis, this study aims at being more explanatory than statistically representative.

CHAPTER IV

4. MICRO-TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

In the last two sections I have presented both the methodological procedures for data gathering as well as the theoretical studies that guide the analysis in both micro and macro levels. The following subsections contain the micro-textual analysis. I present the information for each ‘hair story’ in terms of date and blogger, as well as the analysis itself, following the procedures previously mentioned. I reinforce that, due to time constraints, my analysis focuses on the clauses that nominalize ‘hair’ (or its derivatives, like curly or kinky); the full texts can be found in the appendix section of this study. Further, I present translations for each Brazilian Portuguese example in footnotes.

Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) claim that material, mental, and relational processes are the main types in the English transitivity system (p. 171). On this subject, Fuzer and Cabral (2014, p.42), who research/write about Systemic-Functional Linguistics in Brazilian Portuguese, state that material, mental, and relational processes are also the main ones through which humans represent their experiences.

This chapter is organized in the following sections: 4.1 Online Hair Stories from Brazil. and 4.2 Online Hair Stories from the US

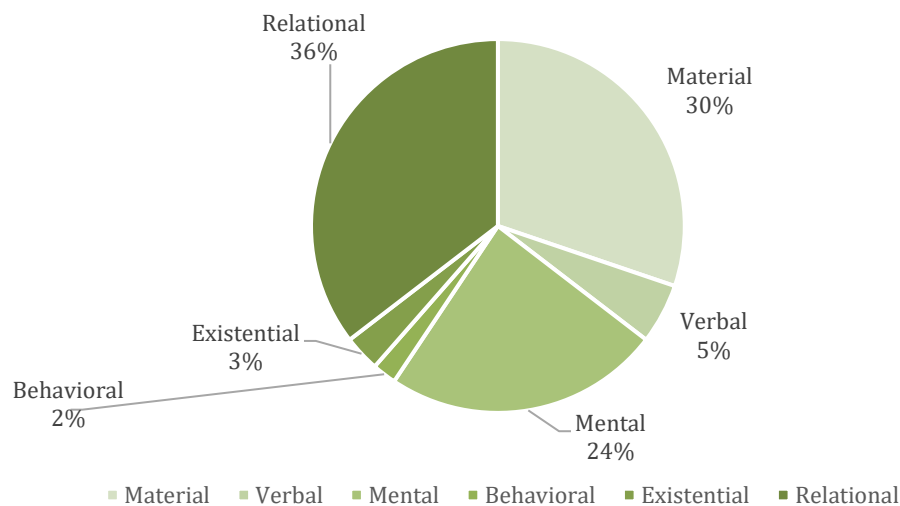
4.1.ONLINE HAIR STORIES FROM BRAZIL

This subsection presents the analysis from the online hair stories produced by Brazilian bloggers. The analysis is composed by five blogposts published from 2014 to 2021 with ‘hair story’ as their main themes.

4.1.1. TRANSITIVITY ANALYSIS

The Brazilian narratives analyzed follow Eggins’ (2004) and Halliday and Matthiessen’s (2004) pattern of most used processes – Relational, Material, and Mental are, respectively, the most frequent ones.

Figure 7 – Percentage of process types in the Brazilian narratives



4.1.1.1. Relational processes

As the pie chart above (fig. 7) shows, the relational process is the most predominant type in the Brazilian narratives analyzed. Macedo (2018, p. 106) highlights that narratives usually present relational patterns, with the use of relational and existential processes to “set the scene of the narration” (p.106). In terms of evaluation, the main function of a relational attributive process is to evaluate a participant’s experience, whereas relational identifying processes “represent the effect of these experiences and the chain of events” (MACEDO, 2018, p. 106). In most Brazilian narratives, however, relational processes are used to establish the writer’s relation with their hair or to express their hair’s characteristics, as the examples below indicate:

[eu] sempre tive <u>devoção</u> pelo meu cabelo . ³³				
Eu	sempre	tive	devoção	pelo meu cabelo
Pt.:	Circ.:	Pr.:	Pt.:	Circ.:
Carrier	Extent	Rel-Attr	Attribute	Matter

Example 12 – Relational-Attributive process in Gabriela’s narrative

³³ “I’ve always had devotion to my hair”.

Meu cabelo com progressiva <u>era</u> <u>lindo</u> ? Demais. Super brilhoso, a cara da riqueza. ³⁴		
Meu cabelo com progressiva	era	lindo?
Pt.: Carrier	Pr.: Rel-Attr	Pt.: Attribute

Example 12.1 – Relational-Attributive process in Gabriela’s narrative

O fio do cabelo com progressiva	era	muito grosso e áspero
Pt.: Carrier	Pr.: Rel-Attr	Pt.: Attribute

Example 12.2 – Relational-Attributive process in Gabriela’s narrative

o [fio] do cabelo natural <u>super macio</u> ³⁵		
O [fio] do cabelo natural	[era]	super macio
Pt.: Carrier	Pr.: Rel-Attr	Pt.: Attribute

Example 12.3 – Relational-Attributive process in Gabriela’s narrative

Meu cabelo <u>estava</u> <u>grande</u> ³⁶		
Meu cabelo	estava	grande
Pt.: Carrier	Pr.: Rel-Attr	Pt.: Attribute

Example 12.4 – Relational-Attributive process in Gabriela’s narrative

Assumir meu cabelo natural foi a decisão mais <u>acertada</u> que eu tomei na vida. ³⁷		
Assumir meu cabelo natural	foi	a decisão mais acertada que eu tomei na minha vida
Pt.: Token	Pr.: Rel-Ident	Pt.: Value

Example 12.5 – Relational-Identifying process in Gabriela’s narrative

³⁴ “Was my chemically straightened hair beautiful? A lot. Super shiny, looking like a million dollars.”

³⁵ “and the [strand of] natural hair super soft”.

³⁶ “My hair was big”.

³⁷ “To accept my natural hair was the rightest decision in my life”

[fios cacheados/crespos quando penteados secos ganham volume_] <u>É uma característica do cabelo</u> , ³⁸		
[ganhar volume]	é	uma característica do cabelo
Pt.: Token	Pr.: Rel-Ident	Pt.: Value

Example 12.6 – Relational-Identifying process in Fernanda’s narrative

Meu cabelo <u>ficou</u> super armado, enorme. ³⁹		
Meu cabelo	ficou	super armado, enorme
Pt.: Carrier	Pt.: Rel-Attr	Pt.: Attribute

Example 12.7 – Relational-Attributive process in Fernanda’s narrative

Eu me <u>tornei</u> escrava das químicas que mudam a estrutura dos fios [dos cabelos]. ⁴⁰			
Eu	me tornei	escrava	das químicas que mudam a estrutura dos fios
Pt.: Carrier	Pr.: Rel-Attr	Pt.: Attribute	Circ.: Matter

Example 12.8 – Relational-Attributive in Fernanda’s narrative

(a raiz <u>crescia</u> e) ele [o cabelo] <u>ficava</u> “cheio”. ⁴¹		
ele	ficava	“cheio”
Pt.: Carrier	Pt.:Rel-Attr	Pt.: Attribute

Example 12.9 – Relational-Attributive in Fernanda’s narrative

³⁸ “It’s a characteristic of the hair”.

³⁹ “My hair became really bulky, huge”.

⁴⁰ “I became enslaved to the chemicals that changed the hair’s structure”.

⁴¹ “The hair root would grow and it [the hair] would become “bulky”.”

Na minha cabeça essa [colocar químicas] era a única forma de estar bonita, socialmente aceita e principalmente, nunca mais passar nenhum constrangimento e nem sofrer preconceito por causa do meu cabelo.				
Na minha cabeça	essa	era	a única forma de estar bonita, socialmente aceita e principalmente, nunca mais passar nenhum constrangimento e nem sofrer preconceito	por causa do meu cabelo
Circ.: Location	Pt.: Token	Pr.: Rel-Ident	Pt.: Value	Circ.: Reason

Example 12.10 – Relational-Identifying process in Fernanda’s narrative

meu cabelo <u>estava</u> sem <u>vida</u> , <u>murcho</u> , <u>quebrado</u> . ⁴²		
Meu cabelo	estava	Sem vida, murcho, quebrado
Pt.: Carrier	Pr.: Rel-Attr	Pt.: Attribute

Example 12.11 – Relational-Attributive process in Fernanda’s narrative

E o cabelo ? Esse <u>era</u> um problema, acreditem. ⁴³		
Esse [o cabelo]	era	um problema
Pt.: Carrier	Pr.: Relational-Attr	Pt: attribute

Example 12.12 – Relational-Attributive process in Luisa’s narrative

Como um cabelo pode <u>ser</u> um problema na vida de alguém? ⁴⁴						
Como	um cabelo	pode	ser	um problema	na vida	de alguém?

⁴² “my hair was lifeless, withered, damaged”.

⁴³ “And the hair? That was a problem, believe it.”

⁴⁴ “How can hair be a problem in someone’s life?”

-	Pt.: Carrier	-	Pr.: Relational- Attr	Pt.: Attribute	Circ: Extent	Circ: Behalf
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Example 12.13 – Relational-Attributive process in Luisa’s narrative

Tínhamos que nos virar como dava			
[nós]	Tínhamos	que nos virar	como dava
Pt.: Carrier	Pr.: Relational- attributive	Pr.:Attribute	Circ: Manner

Example 12.14 – Relational-Attributive process in Luisa’s narrative

Como um cabelo <u>duro</u> podia <u>estar</u> daquele tamanho?. ⁴⁵				
Como um	cabelo duro	podia estar	daquele	tamanho?
	Pt.: carrier	Pr.: Rel-Attr	Intens.	Pt.: attribute

Example 12.15 – Relational-Attributive process in Luisa’s narrative

o cabelo <u>ficava</u> muito <u>armado</u> ⁴⁶			
o cabelo	ficava	muito	armado
Pt.: Carrier	Pr.: relational (attributive)	[intensification]	Pt.: Attribute

Example 12.16 – Relational Attributive process in Luisa’s narrative

Corte químico é nome que se dá ao corte do cabelo feito com química. ⁴⁷		
Corte químico	é	nome que se dá ao corte do cabelo feito com química

⁴⁵ “How could a thick hair be that long?”

⁴⁶ “the hair became really voluminous.”

⁴⁷ Original. My translation: “A chemical cut is the name that is given to a haircut made with chemical straightening”.

Pt: Value	Pr: Rel-Ident	Pt: Token
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Example 12.17 – Relational Attributive process in Luisa’s narrative

Fiquei oito meses com praticamente quatro centímetros de cabelo . ⁴⁸				
[eu]	fiquei	oito meses	com praticamente	quatro centímetros de cabelo
Pt: Carrier	Pr: relational (attributive)	Circ: Extent	Modalization	Pt: Attribute

Example 12.18 – Relational-Attributive process in Luisa’s narrative

tudo o que <u>conseguiam</u> era <u>alisar</u> meu cabelo . ⁴⁹		
tudo o que [eles] conseguiam	era	alisar meu cabelo
Pt: Carrier	Pr.: Rel- Att	Pt.: Attribute

Example 12.19 – Relational-Attributive process in Mel’s narrative

O crespo é muito bonito ⁵⁰		
o crespo	é	muito bonito
Pt: Carrier	Pr: Rel-Attr	Pt: Attribute
muito bonito: positive appreciation of reaction		

Example 12.20 – Relational-Attributive process in Mel’s narrative

a discriminação com o cabelo crespo está ligada ao racismo ⁵¹		
a discriminação com o cabelo crespo	está ligada	ao racismo
Pt.: Value	Pr: Rel-Ident	Pr.: Token

Example 12.21 – Relational-Attributive process in Mel’s narrative

⁴⁸ “I had practically four centimeters of hair for eight months”

⁴⁹ “All they could do was to straighten my hair”.

⁵⁰ “Natural hair is really beautiful”.

⁵¹ “Natural hair discrimination is connected to racism”.

Eu sou negra, meu cabelo é crespo , uma herança. Faz parte de quem eu sou. E me dá orgulho. ⁵²		
meu cabelo	é	crespo
Pt: Carrier	Pr: Rel-Attr	Pt: Attribute

Example 12.22 – Relational-Attributive process in Mel’s narrative

Meu cabelo é crespo sim, porque eu gosto dele assim! ⁵³		
Meu cabelo	é	crespo
Pt.: Carrier	Pr.: Rel-Attr	Pr: Attribute

Example 12.23 – Relational-Attributive process in Mel’s narrative

é uma caminhada muitas vezes difícil assumir seu crespo . ⁵⁴		
é	uma caminhada muitas vezes difícil	assumir seu crespo
Pr: Rel-Ident	Pr: Token	Pt: Value

Example 12.24 – Relational-Identifying process in Mel’s narrative

Seu cabelo crespo é símbolo de resistência. ⁵⁵		
Seu cabelo crespo	é	símbolo de resistência
Pt: Carrier	Pr.: Rel-Attr	Pt: Attribute

Example 12.25 – Relational-Attributive Process in Mel’s narrative

Seu cabelo faz parte de quem você é. ⁵⁶		
Seu cabelo	faz parte	de quem você é
Pt: Token	Pr.: Rel-Ident	Pt: Value

Example 12.26 – Relational-Identifying process in Mel’s narrative

[eu era] uma das poucas [criadoras de conteúdo] que falava sobre cabelo crespo , beleza e moda a partir das nossas vivências. ⁵⁷		
--	--	--

⁵² “I am Black, my hair is natural, a heritage. It is part of who I am, and it I am proud of it”.

⁵³ “Yes, my hair is natural, because I like it like this!”.

⁵⁴ “It is, sometimes, a very difficult path to assume your natural hair”.

⁵⁵ “Your natural hair is a resistance symbol”.

⁵⁶ “Your hair is part of who you are”.

⁵⁷ “I was one of the few content creators that talked about natural hair, beauty, and fashion from our experiences”.

eu	era	uma das poucas [criadoras de conteúdo] que falava sobre cabelo crespo, beleza e moda a partir das nossas vivências
Pt.: Carrier	Pr.: Rel-Att	Pt.: Attribute

Example 12.27 – Relational-Attributive process in Rayza’s narrative

A relação com o meu cabelo também estava pautada nas interações que eu tinha a partir dele. ⁵⁸			
A relação com meu cabelo	também	estava pautada	nas interações que eu tinha a partir dele
Pt.:Carrier	Circ: Accompaniment-additive	Pr.:Rel-Attr	Pt.:Attribute

Example 12.28 – Relational-Attributive process in Rayza’s narrative

Mais uma vez, o [blog] e automaticamente o meu cabelo crespo , se tornaram canais de comunicação com o mundo ao meu redor. ⁵⁹		
o [blog] e automaticamente o meu cabelo crespo	se tornaram	canais de comunicação com o mundo ao meu redor
Pt.: Carrier	Pr.: Rel-Attr	Pt.: Attribute

Example 12.29 – Relational Attributive process in Rayza’s narrative

a lógica aplicada pelo sistema que buscava hierarquizar as texturas era mais uma prática racista [tentando inferiorizar as características do cabelo crespo .] ⁶⁰		
a lógica aplicada pelo sistema que buscava hierarquizar as texturas	era	mais uma prática racista
Pt.: Carrier	Pr.: Rel-Att	Pt.: Attribute

Example 12.30 – Relational-Attributive process in Rayza’s narrative

Relational processes, used to express characteristics and identities, are applied in the Brazilian narratives to represent different social actors and their experiences. The main thing represented, of course, is hair. It is mostly represented through *evaluations* –via Relational attributive processes, which describe how the hair was perceived in each moment of the writers’ life (*beautiful, thick, problem, etc...*). Different actors are also evoked through the relational

⁵⁸ “The relation with my hair was also based on the interactions that I had from it .”

⁵⁹ “Once more, the [blog], and automatically my natural hair, became communication channels with the world around me.”

⁶⁰ “The logic applied by the system that tried to rank hair-textures was another racist practice [trying to downgrade the characteristics of Afro-textured hair]”.

process, such as discrimination, chemical processes, and even their own relation with their hair, with expressions of devotion to the hair and the importance of hair in their social relations.

4.1.1.2. Material processes

Material processes play an important part in the bloggers' narratives as they demonstrate the handling of different instruments to manage hair. Above all, the material processes found refer to acts of brushing, straightening and the appliance of chemicals. hooks illustrates a common routine in a Black girl's life – the day you manipulate your hair:

On Saturday mornings we would gather in the kitchen to get our hair fixed, that is straightened. Smells of burning grease and hair, mingled with the scent of our freshly washed bodies, with collard greens cooking on the stove, with fried fish. We did not go to the hairdresser. Mama fixed our hair. (hooks, 1989, p.1)

Representing 30% of the processes found in the Brazilian narratives, the use of material processes shows how the discipline of hair manipulation is strongly present in the lives of Black Brazilian women – even though not all Black women go through processes of hair straightening.

Minha mãe <u>alisou</u> meu cabelo pela primeira vez quando eu tinha uns 7 anos ⁶¹			
Minha mãe	alisou	meu cabelo	pela primeira vez quando eu tinha uns 7 anos
Pt.: Actor	Pr.: Material	Pt.: Goal	Circ.: Time

Example 13 – Material process in a Gabriela's narrative

eu nunca parei de <u>passar</u> química no cabelo ⁶²				
eu	nunca parei	de passar	química	no cabelo
Pt.: Actor	Circ.: Extent	Pr.: Material	Pt.: Scope	Pt.: Goal

Example 13.1 – Material process in Gabriela's narrative

A prancha não <u>pegava</u> no cabelo natural ⁶³
--

⁶¹ “My mother straightened my hair for the first time when I was about 7 years old”.

⁶² “Since then, I've never stopped applying chemicals in the hair”.

⁶³ “The hair straightener didn't work on the natural hair”.

A prancha	não pegava	no cabelo natural
Pt.: Actor	Pr.: Material	Pt.: Goal

Example 13.2 – Material process in a Gabriela’s narrative

<u>Passei a minha transição toda com o cabelo pranchado</u> ⁶⁴		
[eu]	passei	a minha transição toda com o cabelo pranchado
Pt.: Actor	Pr.: Material	Pt.: Scope

Example 13.3 – Material process in Gabriela’s narrative

<u>Meu cabelo começou a <u>arrebentar e a cair</u></u> . ⁶⁵		
Meu cabelo	começou	a arrebentar e a cair
Pt.: Actor	Pr.: Material	Pt.: Goal

Example 13.4 – Material process in Gabriela’s narrative

<u>Finalizei o cabelo e <u>dormi</u></u> . ⁶⁶				
[eu]	finalizei	o cabelo	e [eu]	dormi
Pt.: Actor	Pr.: Material	Pt.: Goal	Pt.: Behaver	Pr.: Behavioral

Example 13.5 – Material process in Gabriela’s narrative

<u>[eu] <u>passei a ter meu cabelo 100% <u>natural</u></u></u> ⁶⁷			
eu	passei	a ter	meu cabelo 100% natural
Pt.: Actor	Pr.: Material	-	Pt.: Goal

Example 13.6 – Material process in Gabriela’s narrative

<u>[...] a professora <u>tirou</u> o laço do meu cabelo</u> ⁶⁸
--

⁶⁴ “I’ve spent my whole transition with my hair straightened.”

⁶⁵ “My hair started to break and fall”

⁶⁶ “I got my hair done and slept”.

⁶⁷ “It was in this moment that I started to wear my hair 100% natural”

⁶⁸ “The teacher took the head tie of my hair”

A professora	tirou	o laço do meu cabelo
Pt.: Actor	Pr.: Material	Pt.: Goal

Example 13.7 – Material process in Fernanda’s narrative

a professora <u>penteou</u> o meu cabelo , seco! ⁶⁹			
A professora	penteou	o meu cabelo	seco
Pt.: Actor	Pr.: Material	Pt.: Goal	Circ.: Manner

Example 13.8 – Material process in Fernanda’s narrative

eu <u>já fazia</u> escova para 'abaixar' meus cabelos e torná-los <u>aceitáveis</u> . ⁷⁰			
eu	já fazia	escova	para 'abaixar' meus cabelos e torná-los aceitáveis
Pt.: Actor	Pr.: Material	Pt.: Scope	Pt.: Goal

Example 13.9 – Material process in Fernanda’s narrative

a única solução seria <u>alisar</u> os cabelos . ⁷¹			
A única solução	seria	alisar	os cabelos
Pt.: Actor	Modal	Pr.: Material	Pt.: Goal

Example 13.10 – Material process in Fernanda’s narrative

Meu cabelo <u>crescia</u> 1 centímetro ⁷²		
Meu cabelo	crescia	1 centímetro
Pt.: Actor	Pr.: Material	Pt.: Scope

Example 13.11 – Material process in Fernanda’s narrative

⁶⁹ “the teacher combed my hair dry”.

⁷⁰ “I already blew-dry my hair to “lower” it and turn them into a more acceptable kind of hair.”

⁷¹ “The only solution was to straight my hair”.

⁷² “My hair would grow 1 centimeter.”

[eu] <u>brincava</u> com bonecas que sempre eram loiras, de cabelos lisos e olhos azuis ⁷³ ;		
[eu]	brincava	com bonecas que sempre eram loiras, de cabelos lisos e olhos azuis
Pt.: Actor	Pr.: Material	Pt.: Goal

Example 13.12 – Material process in Fernanda’s narrative

Inicialmente, minha mãe passou a <u>trançar</u> nossos cabelos , porque <u>era</u> mais prático e não <u>dava</u> “trabalho”. ⁷⁴			
Inicialmente,	minha mãe	passou a trançar	nossos cabelos
Circ: Time	Pt: Actor	Pr.: Material	Pt.: Goal

Example 13.14 – Material process in Luisa’s narrative

Antes de <u>trançar</u> os cabelos , minha mãe <u>precisava</u> <u>penteá-los</u> . ⁷⁵			
Antes de	trançar	os cabelos	
Circ: time	Pr.: material	Pt.: goal	
minha mãe		precisava	penteá-los
Pt.: Actor		Modulation (obligation)	Pr.: Material

Example 13.15 – Material process in Luisa’s narrative

Então ela resolveu <u>alisar</u> nossos cabelos . ⁷⁶			
Ela	resolveu	alisar	nossos cabelos
Pt.: actor	Modulation	Pr.: material	Pt.: goal

Example 13.16 – Material process in Luisa’s narrative

<u>crecemos</u> ao longo de anos <u>alisando</u> os cabelos ⁷⁷			
[nós]	crecemos	ao longo de anos	alisando os cabelos

⁷³ “I played with dolls that were always blond, with straight hair and blue eyes.”

⁷⁴ “Initially, my mother started to braid our hair, because it was more practical and didn’t give much trouble.

⁷⁵ “before braiding the hair, my mother needed to comb it”.

⁷⁶ “so she decided to straight our hair”.

⁷⁷ “We grew up through the years straightening our hair.”

Pt.: Actor	Pr.: Material	Circ.: Extent	Circ: Mode
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Example 13.17 – Material process in Luisa’s narrative

resolvi fazer progressiva (uso de formol nos cabelos). ⁷⁸			
[Eu]	resolvi	fazer	progressiva
Pt: Actor	Modulation	Pr: Material	Pt:goal

Example 13.18 – Material process in Luisa’s narrative

meus cabelos estavam praticamente caindo da raiz. ⁷⁹			
Meus cabelos	estavam praticamente	caindo	da raiz
Pt: Actor	Modalization	Pr: Material	Circ: location

Example 13.19 – Material process in Luisa’s narrative

Na minha infância meu cabelo foi trançado pela minha mãe ⁸⁰			
Na minha infância	meu cabelo	foi trançado	pela minha mãe
Circ: Time	Pt: goal	Pr.: material	Pt.: Actor

Example 13.20 – Material process in Mel’s narrative

uma química desconhecida que <u>deixou</u> meu cabelo liso. ⁸¹		
Uma química desconhecida	que deixou	meu cabelo liso

⁷⁸ I decided to do a Brazilian Blowout (to make use of *formaldehyde* in the hair)

⁷⁹ “My hair was practically falling out of the root”.

⁸⁰ “In my childhood, my hair was braided by my mother.

⁸¹ “An unknown chemical that straightened my hair”.

Pt.: Actor	Pr.: Material	Pt: Goal
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Example 13.21 – Material process in Mel’s narrative

a cultura do " cabelo ruim" impede muitas meninas de deixar a química ⁸²		
a cultura do “cabelo ruim”	impede	muitas meninas de deixar a química
Pt: Actor	Pr: Material	Pt: Goal

Example 13.22 – Material process in Mel’s narrative

estamos quebrando ditaduras de beleza e deixando tudo mais bonito, mais crespo . ⁸³		
[nós]	estamos deixando	tudo mais bonito, mais crespo
Pt.: Actor	Pr: Material	Pt: Goal

Example 13.23 – Material process in Mel’s narrative

a confiança e autoconhecimento, trazidos pelo meu cabelo crespo , cada vez mais lapidados. ⁸⁴					
a confiança e autoconhecimento,	trazidos	pelo meu cabelo crespo		[são]	cada vez mais lapidados
Pt.: Goal	Pr.: Material	Pt.: Actor		Pt.: Rel-Ident	Pt.: Value

Example 13.24 – Material process in a Brazilian narrative

Em 2020 eu recebi diversos ataques virtuais relacionados à falta de definição do meu cabelo , predominantemente 4c. ⁸⁵				
Em 2020,	eu	recebi	diversos ataques virtuais	relacionados à falta de definição do meu cabelo, predominantemente 4c
Circ.: Time	Actor	Pr.: material	Goal	Circ.:Contingency

Example 13.25 – Material process in Rayza’s narrative

[eu] cresci junto com o cabelo . ⁸⁶

⁸² “The “bad hair” culture prevents many girls from stop using chemicals”.

⁸³ “We are breaking toxic beauty standards and letting everything prettier, more natural.”

⁸⁴ “The spaces in Recife were becoming more and more accessible and the truth and self-knowledge, brought by my natural hair, were more and more lapidated.”

⁸⁵ “In 2020, I received tons of virtual insults related to my hair’s lack of definition , predominantly 4c”

⁸⁶ “I grew with the hair”.

[eu]	cresci	junto com o cabelo
Pt.: Actor	Pr.: Material	Pt.: Scope

Example 13.26 – Material process in Rayza’s narrative

As examples 13.25 and 13.26 illustrate, some material processes deal with less “material” acts, such as receiving virtual attacks, the impact of culture, and how the bloggers increased their self-confidence through their natural hair. It is also interesting to mention that, in most cases, the main actor of the hair manipulating technique is a third person – with the mother as the main one. The figure of the teacher is also present in the narratives, signaling to the importance of racial-sensitive training at schools.

4.1.1.3. Mental processes

Mental processes, as previously mentioned, refer to how experiences are constructed through the conscience. As the participants may feel, think, realize, and desire, the processes in the narratives represent different types of mental processes.

eu não <u>fazia a mínima</u> ideia de como <u>era</u> o meu cabelo natural ⁸⁷		
eu	não fazia a mínima ideia	de como era meu cabelo natural
Pt.: Senser	Pr.: Mental	Pt.: Phenomenon

Example 14 – Mental process in Gabriela’s narrative

<u>Sentia</u> os cachos , a textura do cabelo natural ⁸⁸		
[eu]	Sentia	os cachos, a textura do cabelo natural.
Pt.: Senser	Pr.: Mental	Pt.: Phenomenon

Example 14.1 – Mental process in Gabriela’s narrative

⁸⁷ “I had no idea how my natural hair was”.

⁸⁸ “I’d feel the curls, the texture of the natural”.

e achava bem <u>mais macio</u> que o cabelo com química . ⁸⁹		
[eu]	achava	bem mais macio que o cabelo com química
Pt.: Senser	Pr.: Mental	Pt.: Phenomenon

Example 14.2 – Mental process in Gabriela’s narrative

Como decidi <u>passar</u> a transição <u>pranchando</u> o cabelo , tudo ficou mais difícil. ⁹⁰		
[eu]	decidi	passar a transição pranchando o cabelo
Pt.: Senser	Pr.: Mental	Pt.: Phenomenon

Example 14.3 – Mental process in Gabriela’s narrative

Mesmo sabendo que eu poderia ficar com o cabelo <u>muito curto</u> , eu estava preparada pra isso.			
mesmo	[eu]	sabendo	que eu poderia ficar com o cabelo muito curto, eu estava preparada pra isso
-	Pt.: Senser	Pr.: Mental	Pt.: Phenomenon

Example 14.4 – Mental process in Gabriela’s narrative

Eu <u>me apaixonei por completo</u> pelos cachos . ⁹¹			
Eu	me apaixonei	por completo	pelos cachos
Pt.: Senser	Pt.: Mental	Circ.: Manner	Pt.: Phenomenon

Example 14.5 – Mental process in Gabriela’s narrative

⁸⁹ “I’d find it way softer than the hair with chemicals”.

⁹⁰ “As I decided to pass through the transition straightening the hair, everything was more difficult”.

⁹¹: “I completely fell in love with the curls.”

<u>Sofri muito bullying na escola por causa do meu cabelo.</u> ⁹²				
[eu]	sofri	muito bullying	na escola	por causa do meu cabelo
Pt.: Senser	Pr.: Mental	Pt.: Phenomenon	Circ.: Location	Circ.: Reason

Example 14.6 – Mental process in Fernanda’s narrative

<u>Lembro que meus coleguinhas diziam que eu tinha cabelo ruim, duro (...).</u> ⁹³		
[eu]	Lembro	que meus coleguinhas <u>diziam</u> que eu tinha cabelo ruim, duro (...). ⁹⁴
Pt.: Senser	Pr.: Mental	Pt.: Phenomenon

Example 14.7 – Mental process in Fernanda’s narrative

Eu não queria que ninguém, principalmente os meninos da classe, me <u>vissem</u> com o cabelo daquele jeito. ⁹⁵		
Eu	não queria	que ninguém, principalmente os meninos da classe, me <u>vissem</u> com o cabelo daquele jeito.
Pt.: Senser	Pr.: Mental process	Pt.: Phenomenon

Example 14.8 – Mental process in a Fernanda’s narrative

E eu que já <u>vinha sofrendo</u> preconceito por causa do cabelo (nessa hora <u>fui</u> vítima de uma chacota sem tamanho). ⁹⁶

⁹² “I’ve suffered a lot from bullying at school because of my hair.

⁹³ “I remember my (little) colleagues would say that I had bad, stiff hair

⁹⁵ “I didn’t want anyone, especially the boys from my classroom, saw me with the hair like that”.

⁹⁶ “And I, who was already suffering prejudice because of my hair, in this time was the victim of a huge mockery”.

[e] eu	que já vinha sofrendo	preconceito	por causa do cabelo
Pt.: Senser	Pr.: Mental	Pt.: Phenomenon	Circ.: Reason

Example 14.9 – Mental process in Fernanda’s narrative

Por muito tempo <u>achei</u> que eu era o problema, que eu <u>tinha</u> “defeito”, por não ter nascido com o cabelo liso. ⁹⁷				
Por muito tempo	[eu]	achei que	eu era o problema, que eu tinha “defeito”	por não ter nascido com o cabelo liso
Circ.: Time	Pt.: Senser	Pr.: Mental	Pt.: Phenomenon	Circ.: Reason

Example 14.10 – Mental process in Fernanda’s narrative

Na escola, ninguém <u>acreditava</u> que aquele cabelo podia ser meu			
Na escola,	ninguém	acreditava	que aquele cabelo podia ser meu
Circ.:Location	Pt.: Senser	Pr.: Mental	Pt.: Phenomenon

Example 14.11 – Mental process in Fernanda’s narrative

queria assumir meu cabelo como ele é. ⁹⁸			
[eu]	queria assumir	meu cabelo	como ele é
Pt.: Senser	(Modalization) Pr.: Mental	Pt.: Phenomenon	Circ.: Contingency

Example 14.12 – Mental process in Mel’s narrative

quando se usa química não se conhece o cabelo ⁹⁹		
Quando se usa química	não se conhece	o cabelo
Circ: contingency	Pr.:mental	Pt.:Phenomenon

⁹⁷ “For a long time I thought I was the problem, that I had “a flaw” for not being born with straight hair.”

⁹⁸ “[I] wanted to accept my hair the way it is”.

⁹⁹ “When you make use of chemicals, you don’t know your hair.”

Example 14.13 – Mental process in Mel’s narrative

	não sabia cuidar do meu crespo . ¹⁰⁰	
[eu]	não sabia	cuidar do meu crespo
Pt.: Senser	Pr: mental	Pt.: Phenomenon

Example 14.14 – Mental process in Mel’s narrative

eu achei muito importante deixar meu cabelo se mostrar ¹⁰¹		
Eu	achei muito importante	deixar meu cabelo se mostrar
Pt.: Senser	Pr: Mental	Pt.: Phenomenon

Example 14.15 – Mental process in Mel’s narrative

Sou assim e gosto de mim, gosto de meu cabelo, da minha cor. ¹⁰²		
[eu]	gosto	de meu cabelo
Pt: Senser	Pr: Mental	Pt: Phenomenon

Example 14.16 – Mental process in Mel’s narrative

Eu me sinto maravilhosa com meu cabelo natural e com confiança e amor vocês também se sentirão! ¹⁰³			
Eu	me sinto	maravilhosa	com meu cabelo natural
Pt: Senser	Pr: Mental	Pt: Phenomenon	Circ: contingency

Example 14.17 – Mental process in Mel’s narrative

Antes de cortar o meu cabelo desse tamanho que você está vendo na foto, eu lembro exatamente qual era a sensação: impaciência! ¹⁰⁴			
Antes de cortar o meu cabelo desse tamanho que você está vendo na foto,	eu	lembro	exatamente qual era a sensação: impaciência!

¹⁰⁰ “I didn’t know how to take care of my natural hair”.

¹⁰¹ “I found it really important to let my hair be shown”.

¹⁰² “I am like this, and I like me, I like my hair, I like my colour”.

¹⁰³ “I feel marvelous with my natural hair and with confidence and love you will also feel like this!”.

¹⁰⁴ “Before cutting my hair the size you are seeing in the picture, I remember exactly what the sensation was: impatience!”

Circ: Time	Pt.: Senser	Pr.: Mental	Pt.: Phenomenom
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Example 14.18 – Mental process in Rayza’s narrative

percebendo a representatividade do cabelo crespo no ambiente digital. ¹⁰⁵	
percebendo	a representatividade do cabelo crespo no ambiente digital
Pr: Mental	Pt.: Phenomenom

Example 14.19 – Mental process in Rayza’s narrative

Até aqui eu já havia me aprofundado em discussões que estavam além do meu cabelo crespo . ¹⁰⁶				
Até aqui	eu	já	havia me aprofundado	em discussões que estavam além do meu cabelo crespo
Circ.: Extent	Pt.:Senser	Circ: Time	Pr: Mental	Pt.: Phenomenon

Example 14.20 – Mental process in Rayza’s narrative

As diferenças entre os fios crespos e cacheados , tecnicamente, eu já conhecia. ¹⁰⁷			
As diferenças entre os fios crespos e cacheados,	tecnicamente,	eu	já conhecia
Pr: Phenomenon	Circ.: Manner	Pt.: Senser	Pt.: Mental

Example 14.21 – Mental process in Rayza’s narrative

[eu quero] questionar mais a fundo sobre os mitos que cercam o nosso cabelo crespo .		
[eu]	[quero]	questionar mais a fundo sobre os mitos que cercam o nosso cabelo crespo
Pt.: Senser	Pr.: Mental	Pt.: Phenomenon

Example 14.22 – Mental process in Rayza’s narrative

As the data shows, mental processes help demonstrate how the participants feel toward their hair, how they feel with their hair and because of their hair – narratives of transformation and reaffirmation of their natural beauty. It can be perceived how the racism system is so perverse and complex that it makes us, Black women, “accept” and “adequate” ourselves to our own natural traits once we understand how the system works.

¹⁰⁵ “Realizing natural hair’s representativity in the digital environment”.

¹⁰⁶ “So far, I had already deepened myself in discussions that were beyond my natural hair.”

¹⁰⁷ “The differences between curly and Afro-textured hair, technically, I already knew”

4.1.1.4. Verbal, behavioral, and existential processes

These three types of processes are the least present ones in the analyzed data. However, even though they represent a small portion of the data, important expressions have arisen from them.

Eu	falava	Deus	por	eu	sou	Assim?
Pt.: Sayer	Pr.: Verbal	Pt.: Receiver	que	Pt.:	Pt.: Rel-Ident	Pt.: Value

Example 15 – Verbal process in Fernanda’s narrative

[estamos] defendendo as características do meu cabelo crespo. ¹⁰⁸		
[Estamos]	defendendo	as características do meu cabelo crespo
Pt.: Sayer	Pr.: Verbal	Pt.: Verbiage

Example 15.1 – Verbal process in Rayza’s narrative

[eu]	via	propagandas publicitárias e rótulos de produtos para cabelos onde todas as mulheres tinham cabelo ou <u>liso</u> ou <u>alisado</u>
Pt.: Behaver	Pr.: Behavior	Circ.: Matter

Example 15.2 – Behavior process in Fernanda’s narrative

(Eu <u>comecei a</u>) <u>me perguntar</u> o que eu estava fazendo com o meu cabelo e comigo. ¹⁰⁹		
[eu comecei a]	me perguntar	o que eu estava fazendo com meu cabelo e comigo
Pt.: Sayer	Pr.: Verbal	Pt.: Verbiage

15.3 – Verbal process in Fernanda’s narrative

¹⁰⁸ “In defense of my natural hair’s characteristics”.

¹⁰⁹ “I started to get bothered, to ask myself what I was doing with my hair and with myself”.

Eu <u>me perguntava</u> o porque [sic] de estar colocando tanta química no cabelo . ¹¹⁰		
Eu	me perguntava	o porque de estar colocando tanta química no cabelo
Pt.: Sayer	Pr: Verbal	Pt.: Verbiage

15.4 - Verbal process in Fernanda's narrative

Naquela época (início dos anos 90), <u>não existiam</u> produtos específicos para cabelo crespo , ou seja, <u>tínhamos</u> que nos virar como dava. ¹¹¹			
Naquela época (início dos anos 90)	Não existiam	produtos específicos	para cabelo crespo
Circ.: Time	Pr.: Existential	Pt.: Existent	-Circ: Matter

15.5 – Existential process in Luisa's narrative

[eu]	me ver como negra, com meu crespo natural ¹¹²	
[eu]	me ver	como negra com meu crespo natural
Pt.: Behaver	Pr.: Behavioral	Pt: Behavior

15.6 – Behavioral process in Mel's narrative

eu ainda estou falando de cabelo . ¹¹³			
eu	ainda	estou falando	de cabelo
Pt.: Sayer	Circ: Extent	Pr.: Verbal	Pr: Verbiage

Example 15.7 – Verbal process in Rayza's narrative

	[estamos] defendendo as características do meu cabelo crespo. ¹¹⁴	
[Estamos]	defendendo	as características do meu cabelo crespo
Pt.: Sayer	Pr.: Verbal	Pt.: Verbiage

¹¹⁰ "I would ask myself why I would be putting so much chemicals in the hair".

¹¹¹ "Back in that time (in the begging of the 1990s), there weren't specific products for coily hair, that means, we had to get by the way we could".

¹¹² "(...) to see me as a Black woman, with my natural Black hair."

¹¹³ "I am still talking about hair".

¹¹⁴ "In defense of my natural hair's characteristics".

15.7 – Verbal process in Rayza’s narrative

The verbal processes used in the narratives relate to the verbal actions of denouncing and questioning how Black hair is seen in Brazilian society. Behavioral processes were used to construct the idea of “seeing” (or “understanding”) oneself as Black. They were also used as a way of literally portraying what the participants were observing.

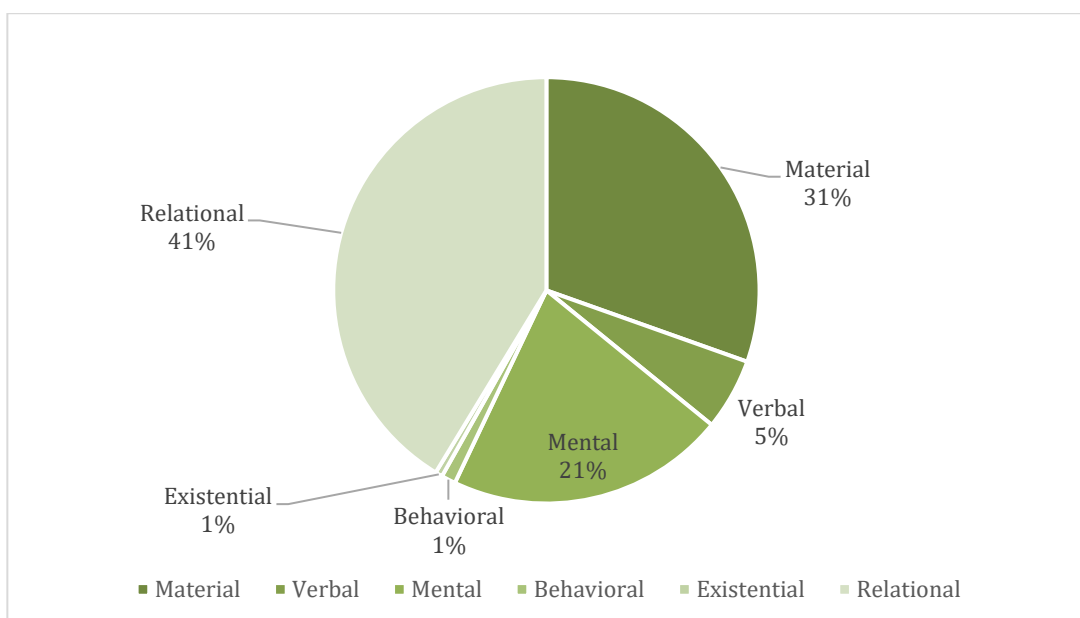
4.2.ONLINE HAIR STORIES FROM THE US

In this section, the analyzed data from the American narratives is presented. The five narratives produced by African American women were also extracted from blogposts from 2014 to 2021 and had as their main theme “hair stories”.

4.2.1. TRANSITIVITY ANALYSIS

The narratives produced in the US have also followed the usual pattern in narratives – the most frequent process types were, respectively, Relational, Material and Mental, as the pie chart below (fig. 8) shows. The following subsections will discuss and present the data regarding each process and how the transitivity patterns realize contextual choices and how the participants represent their hair-related experiences.

Figure 8 - Percentage of process types in the American narratives



4.2.1.1. Relational processes

The first USA narrative analyzed was Jane's. This narrative is the longest, with 61 direct mentions to 'hair'. relational processes open and close the blogger's narrative, as a way of setting the scene.

After a lifetime of wearing my hair naturally I definitely have a hair journey.				
After a lifetime of wearing my hair naturally	I	definitely	have	a hair journey
Circ: Extent	Pt.: Token	Adverb	Pr.: Rel-Ident	Pt.: Value

Example 16 – Relational-Identifying process in Jane's narrative

[name/I] had tons of hair		
[name/I]	had	tons of hair
Pt.: Carrier	Pr.: Rel-Attr	Pt: Attribute

Example 16.1 – Relational-Attributive process in Jane's narrative

I had many many crazy hair days.			
I	had	many many	crazy hair days
Pt.: Carrier	Pr.: Rel-Attr	Quantifier	Pt.: Attribute

Example 16.2 – Relational-Attributive process in Jane's narrative

it was on me to do my hair .		
[to do my hair]	was	on me
Pt.: Value	Pr.: Rel-Ident	Pr.: Token

Example 16.3 – Relational-Identifying process in Jane's narrative

it was my hair , I just dealt with it.		
It	was	my hair
Pt.: Token	Pr.: Rel-Ident	Pt.: Value

Example 16.4 – Relational-Identifying process in Jane's narrative

My hair was long and fluffy		
My hair	was	long and fluffy
Pt.: Carrier	Pr.: Rel-Attr	Pt.: Attribute

Example 16.5 – Relational-Attributive process in Jane's narrative

my hair looked just like hers [Diana Ross' hair]!!		
my hair	looked	just like hers!!
Pt.: Carrier	Pr.: Rel-Attr	Pt.: Attribute

Example 16.6 – Relational-Attributive process in Jane's narrative

While living here, it was the first time in my life I can remember feeling unhappy and <i>emotional</i> about my hair .			
While living here,	it	was	the first time in my life I can remember feeling unhappy and <i>emotional</i> about my hair.
Circ.: Contingency	Pt.: Carrier	Pr.: Rel-Attr	Pt.: Attribute

Example 16.7 – Relational-Attributive process in Jane's narrative

I swear my hair was a monster.					
I	swear		my hair	was	a monster
			Pt.: Token	Pr.: Rel-Ident	Pt.: Value

Example 16.8 – Relational-Identifying process in Jane's narrative

In my mind it [the hair] was awful.			
In my mind	it	was	awful
Circ.: Location	Pt.: Token	Pr.: Rel-ident	Pt.: Value

Example 16.9 – Relational-Identifying process in Jane's narrative

Moving to LA when I was 12 was perhaps the MOST emotional I felt about my hair .			
Moving to LA when I was 12	was	perhaps	the most emotional I felt about my hair.
Pt.: Carrier	Pr.: Relational-Attr	Adverb	Pt.: Attribute

Example 16.10 – Relational-Attributive process in Jane's narrative

That same hair represented "good hair " according to them			
That same hair	represented	"good hair"	according to them
Pt.: Token	Pr.: Rel-Ident	Pt.: Value	Circ.: Reason

Example 16.11 – Relational-Identifying process in Jane's narrative

I had the audacity to have long curly hair .		
I	had	the audacity to have long curly hair
Pt.: Carrier	Pr.: Rel-Attr	Pt.: Attribute

Example 16.12 – Relational-Attributive process in Jane’s narrative

My entire 8th grade year I did not have any friends, ate lunch alone, and often ran home after school because the group of kids waiting across the street to kick my ass everyday scared the shit out of me....all because of HAIR .			
I	did not have	any friends	(...)all because of hair
Pr.: Carrier	Pr.: Attr	Rel-Attr	Pt.: Attribute Circ.: Reason

Example 16.13 – Relational-Attributive process in Jane’s narrative

My hair must be pretty awesome		
My hair	must be	pretty awesome
Pt.: Token	Pr.: Rel-Ident	Pt.: Value

Example 16.14 – Relational-Identifying process in Jane’s narrative

my new school was an accepting environment filled with creative ambitious young people that could care less about my hair .		
my new schools	was	an accepting environment filled with creative ambitious young people that could care less about my hair.
Pt.: Token	Pr.: Rel-Ident	Pt.: Value

Example 16.15 – Relational-Identifying process in Jane’s narrative

My attempts at dying those stubborn white hairs was short lived.		
My attempts at dying those stubborn white hairs	was	short lived
Pt.: Token	Pr.: Rel-Attr	Pt.: Attribute

Example 16.16 – Relational-Attributive process in Jane’s narrative

they [the hair] looked dingy and dirty and yellow		
they	looked	dingy and dirty and yellow
Pt.: Token	Pr.: Rel-Attr	Pt.: Attribute

Example 16.17 – Relational-Attributive process in Jane’s narrative

I was destined to have white hair too...		
I	was	destined to have white hair too
Pt.: Token	Pr.: Rel-Attr	Pt.: Attribute

Example 16.18 – Relational-Attributive process in Jane’s narrative

[It took family and friends pointing out] how thin my hair had become.		
how thin	my hair	had become
Pt.: Attribute	Pt.: Carrier	Pr.: Rel-Attr

Example 16.19 – Relational-Attributive process in Jane’s narrative

The girl that always had the long fluffy hair was gone.		
had	The girl that always	the long fluffy hair was gone.
Pt.: Carrier	Pt.: Attribute	Pr.: Rel-Attr

Example 16.20 – Relational-Attributive process in Jane’s narrative

My hair was finer		
My hair	was	finer
Pt.: Carrier	Pr.: Rel-Attr	Pt.: Attribute

Example 16.21 – Relational-Attributive process in Jane’s narrative

His [the <i>curl doctor</i>] whole approach to curly hair was utterly refreshing.		
His whole approach to curly hair	was	utterly refreshing
Pt.: Carrier	Pr.: Rel-Attr	Pt.: Attribute

Example 16.22 – Relational-Attributive process in Jane’s narrative

Today, at 41, Yes, my hair is still very EMOTIONAL for me			
at 41,	Today,	my hair	is still very EMOTIONAL for me
Time	Circ.: Carrier	Pt.: Carrier	Pr.: Rel-Attr Pt.: Attribute

Example 16.23 – Relational-Attributive process in Jane’s narrative

Loving my hair is as important as all the other self practices [sic] I live by.		
Loving my hair	is	as important as all the other self practices I live by
Pt.: Token	Pr.: Rel-Ident	Pt.: Value

Example 16.24 – Relational-Identifying process in Jane’s narrative

What’s your hair journey?		
What	is	your hair journey?

Wh-interrogative	Pr.: Rel-ident	Pt.: Token
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Example 16.25 – Relational-Identifying process in Jane’s narrative

Relational processes not only describe how Jane’s hair was, but also enable Jane to construct what her hair means to her – an emotional subject, part of her destiny, an audacity, etc. Different subjects – which are further discussed in the macro-textual analysis – also appear in Jane’s narrative. The second narrative is from Anne, who also opens her story with a Relational process.

From hot combs to relaxers, my natural hair has been through a lot.			
From hot combs to relaxers,	my natural hair	has been through	a lot
	Pt.: Carrier	Pr.: Rel-Attr	Pt.: Attribute

Example 16.26 – Relational-Attributive process in Anne’s narrative

in the end, your hair is straight.			
in the end,	your hair	is	straight
Circ.: Time	Pt.: Carrier	Pr.: Relational-Attr	Pt.: Attribute

Example 16.27 – Relational-Attributive process in Anne’s narrative

My hair was pin straight.		
My hair	was	pin straight
Pt.: Carrier	Pr.: Relational-Attr	Pt.: Attribute

Example 16.28 – Relational-Attributive process in Anne’s narrative

And while	I	was	happy,	my hair	was	not [happy]
Extent	Pt.: Token	Pr.: Rel-Ident	Pt.: Value	Pt.: Token	Pr.: Rel-Ident	Pt.: Value

Example 16.29 – Relational-Identifying processes in Anne’s narrative

My hair felt dry and lifeless		
My hair	felt	dry and lifeless
Pt.: Carrier	Pr.: Rel-Attr	Pt.: Attribute

Example 16.30 – Relational-Attributive process in Anne’s narrative

her [hair] texture was different from mine.		
her texture	was	different from mine

Pt.: Carrier	Pr.: Rel-Attr	Pt.: Attribute
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Example 16.31 – Relational-Attributive process in Anne’s narrative

Her hair is low density and more of a wavy/curly texture.		
Her hair	Is	low density and more of a wavy/curly texture
Pt.: Carrier	Pr.: Rel-Attr	Pt.: Attribute

Example 16.32 – Relational-Attributive process in Anne’s narrative

having to learn how to manage my own hair was an intimidating, and complicated process.		
Having to learn how to manage my own hair	was	an intimidating, and complicated process
Pt.: Carrier	Pr.: Rel-Attr	Pt.: Attribute

Example 16.33 – Relational-Attributive process in Anne’s narrative

[clip-in extensions] which only made my hair worse		
[clip-in extensions]	only made my hair	worse
Pt.: Token	Pr.: Rel-Ident	Pt.: Value

Example 16.34 – Relational-Identifying process in Anne’s narrative

their hair [the vloggers] texture wasn’t the same as mine.		
their hair texture	wasn’t	the same as mine
Pt.: Carrier	Pr.: Rel-Attr	Pt.: Attribute

Example 16.35 – Relational-Attributive process in Anne’s narrative

I had no idea how to manage my transitioning hair in another country.		
I	had	no idea how to manage my transitioning hair in another country
Pt.: Carrier	Pr.: Rel-Attr	Pt.: Attribute

Example 16.36 – Relational-Attributive process in Anne’s narrative

The line of demarcation is the part of the hair where the transition is occurring.		
The line of demarcation	is	the part of the hair where the transition is occurring.
Pt.: Token	Pr.: Rel-Ident	Pt.: Value

Example 16.37 – Relational-Identifying process in Anne’s narrative

and [my hair] is thick

[my hair]	is	thick
Pt.: Token	Pr.: Rel-Ident	Pt.: Value

Example 16.38 – Relational-Identifying process in Anne’s narrative

Curly hair is just beautifully complex.			
Curly hair	is	just beautifully	complex
Pt.: Token	Pr.: Rel-Ident	Circ.: Manner	Pt.: Value

Example 16.39 – Relational-Identifying process in Anne’s narrative

Interestingly, Anne sticks to descriptions of her hair through most of the Relational processes used. Through hair attributes, Anne approaches the image of her mother’s hair, illustrating how different hair textures – even though not straight – may present different challenges in terms of hair-caring practices. She also invokes the image of vloggers – YouTubers.

The third narrative, Claire’s, follows the pattern of introducing her topic with a Relational process. In this case, she projected the Relational clause through a Mental one.

I wanted to be just like all the other girls—Jordache jeans, bright orange varsity jacket, and relaxed hair done up in a roller set.				
I	wanted		to be	like all the other girls —Jordache jeans, bright orange varsity jacket, and relaxed hair done up in a roller set.
Pt.: Sensor	Pr.: Mental		Pr.: Rel-Ident	Circ.: Manner

Example 16.40 – Relational-Identifying process in Claire’s narrative

the goal was always longer hair			
The goal	was	always	longer hair
Pt.: Token	Pr.: Rel-ident	Circ.: Extent	Pt.: Value

Example 16.41 – Relational-Identifying process in Claire’s narrative

My hair was innately connected to my idea of femininity and prettiness.		
My hair	was	innately connected to my idea of femininity and prettiness.
Pt.: Token	Pr.: Rel-Ident	Pt.: Value

Example 16.42 – Relational-Identifying process in Claire’s narrative

[One family member even told me that my new style made me look like a boy, and] I was so much cuter with straight hair .			
I	was	so much cuter	with straight hair
Pt.: Carrier	Pr.: Rel-Attr	Pt.: Attribute	Circ.: Manner

Example 16.43 – Relational-Attributive process in Claire’s narrative

Just like with my natural hair , my attitude became: Don’t like it? Too bad.			
Just like with my natural hair	my attitude	became	Don’t like it? Too bad
Circ.: Manner	Pt.: Carrier	Pr.: Rel-Attr	Pt.: Attribute

Example 16.44 – Relational-Attributive process in Claire’s narrative

With my natural hair , I became more noticeable			
With my natural hair	I	became	more noticeable
Circ.: Accompaniment	Pt.: Carrier	Pr.: Rel-Attr	Pt.: Attribute

Example 16.45 – Relational-Attributive process in Claire’s narrative

I became the girl with the big hair , bold glasses, and bright smile.			
I	became	the girl with the big hair, bold glasses, and bright smile	
Pt.: Carrier	Pr.: Rel-Attr	Pt.: Attribute	

Example 16.46 – Relational-Attributive process in Claire’s narrative

Now, my natural hair is such a part of my personality			
Now,	my natural hair	is	such a part of my personality
Circ.: Time	Pt.: Token	Pr.: Rel-Ident	Pt.: Value

Example 16.47 – Relational-Identifying process in Claire’s narrative

Finally, the things things I learned about caring for natural hair during my transition eventually led me to become a beauty editor.				
Finally,	the things I learned about caring for natural hair during my transition	eventually	led me to become	a beauty editor
Circ.: Time	Pt.: Carrier	Circ: Time	Pr.: Rel-Attr	Pt.: Attribute

Example 16.48 – Relational-Attributive process in Claire’s narrative

When I went natural in 2007, I had two friends who also had Afro hair.				
--	--	--	--	--

When I went natural in 2007,	I	had	two friends who also had Afro hair
Circ.: Time	Pt.: Carrier	Pr.: Rel-Attr	Pt.: Attribute

Example 16.49 – Relational-Attributive process in Claire’s narrative

[I always knew I wanted to be a journalist, but] it was the lack of representation of natural hair that really inspired me.		
it	was	the lack of representation of natural hair that really inspired me.
Pt.: Token	Pr.: Rel-Ident	Pt.: Value

Example 16.50 – Relational-Identifying process in Claire’s narrative

The use of Relational processes in the fourth American narrative (Emma) is like the previous ones.

my hair has different textures in certain sections			
My hair	has	different textures	in certain sections
Pt.: Carrier	Pr.: Rel-Attr	Pt.: Attribute	Circ.: Location

Example 16.51 – Relational-Attributive process in Emma’s narrative

[making it hard to] [i] identify myself with one hair type.		
making it hard	to identify myself	with one hair type
Pt.: Token	Pr.: Rel-Ident	Pt.: Value

Example 16.52 – Relational-Identifying process in Emma’s narrative

it was the “I hate my hair ” and “I don’t know what to do with my hair ” phase.		
It	was	the “I hate my hair” and “I don’t know what to do with my hair” Phase.
Pt.: Carrier	Pr.: Rel-Attr	Pt.: Attribute

Example 16.53 – Relational-Attributive process in Emma’s narrative

[the actor] Mia went from having curly “bushy” hair (at least that’s what they called it) to straight silky hair.			
Mia	went	from having	curly “bushy” hair (at least that’s what they called it) to straight silky hair
Pt.: Carrier	-	Pr.: Rel-Attr	Pt.: Attribute

Example 16.54 – Relational-Attributive process in Emma’s narrative

everyone had bone straight hair		
everyone	had	bone straight hair
Pt.: Carrier	Pr.: Rel-Attr	Pt.: Attribute

Example 16.55 – Relational-Attributive process in Emma’s narrative

Could this be the reason my hair isn’t growing?			
Could	this	be	the reason my hair isn’t growing?
Modal	Pt.: Token	Pr.: Rel-Attr	Pt.: Value

Example 16.56 – Relational-Attributive process in Emma’s narrative

I was also becoming more aware of the overall health of my hair .				
I	was	also	becoming	more aware of the overall health of my hair
Pt.: Carrier	Aux		Pr.: Rel-Attr	Pt.: Attribute

Example 16.57 – Relational-Attributive process in Emma’s narrative

Initially, the plan was to grow out the relaxer until my hair was long enough.			
Initially	the plan	was	to grow out of relaxer until my hair was long enough
Circ.: Time	Pt.: Token	Pr.: Rel-Ident	Pt.: Value

Example 16.58 – Relational-Identifying process in Emma’s narrative

I still had this vision of having really long straight hair .			
I	still	had	this vision of having really long straight hair
Pt.: Carrier	Circ.: Time	Pr.: Rel-Attr	Pt.: Attribute
really long straight hair = positive appreciation of composition (balance), intensified by ‘really’			

Example 16.59 – Relational-Attributive process in Emma’s narrative

I was so nervous about what my hair was going to look like.			
I	was	so nervous	about what my hair was going to look like
Pt.: Token	Pr.: Ident	Rel-	Pt.: Value Circ.: Matter

Example 16.60 – Relational-Identifying process in Emma’s narrative

[the store] would later become one of my favorite and most used hair care brands.				
[the store]	would	later	become	one of my favorite and most used hair care brands
Pt.: Carrier	Modal	Circ.: Time	Pr.: Rel-Attr	Pt.: Attribute

Example 16.61 – Relational-Attributive process in Emma’s narrative

The shortest narrative from the data from the US, Lorraine made use of Relational processes through almost all her narrative:

I’ve always been pretty picky about who touches my hair .				
I	‘ve	always	been	pretty picky about who touches my hair
Pt.: Token	Auxiliar	Circ.: Time	Pr.: Rel-Ident	Pt.: Value

Example 16.62 – Relational-Identifying process in Lorraine’s narrative

Like most girls, I had one hair stylist for most of my life (after my mom, of course).					
Like most girls,	I	had	one hair stylist	for most of my life	(after my mom, of course).
Circ.: Role	Pt.: Carrier	Pr.: Rel-Attr	Pt.: Attribute	Circ.: Time	-

Example 16.63 – Relational-Attributive process in Lorraine’s narrative

I was in tears every night trying to do my hair because my roots were so thick.									
I	as	was	in tears	every night	trying to do my hair	because	my roots	were	so thick
t.: Carrier	r.: Rel-Attr	t.: Carrier	r.: Rel-Attr	t.: Carrier	r.: Rel-Attr	t.: Carrier	r.: Rel-Attr	t.: Carrier	r.: Rel-Attr

Example 16.64 – Relational-Attributive processes in Lorraine's narrative

my hair was growing		
My hair	was	growing
Pt.: Carrier	Pr.: Rel-Attr	Pt.: Attribute

Example 16.65 – Relational-Attributive process in Lorraine's narrative

By summer 2015 my "natural" hair was heat damaged, stringy, and not healthy under any circumstances.			
By summer 2015	my "natural" hair	was	heat damaged, stringy, and not healthy under any circumstances.
Circ.: Time	Pt.: Carrier	Pr.: Rel-Attr	Pt.: Attribute

Example 16.66 – Relational-Attributive process in Lorraine's narrative

While standing in [store] in the natural hair aisle on Friday, June 12, 2015 with my mom, I had a meltdown because it hit me there was no saving my hair .						
Wh ile standing in [store] in the natural hair aisle	on Friday, June 12, 2015	with my mom	I	h ad	a meltdow n	becau se it hit me there was no saving my hair
Cir c.: Location	Cir c.: Time	Circ.: Accompanim ent	P t.: Carrier	P r.: Rel- Attr	P t.: Attribute	Circ.: Reason

Example 16.67 – Relational-Attributive process in Lorraine’s narrative

My hair was my safety net (hence why I cried in [local]).		
My hair	was	my safety net
Pt.: Token	Pr.: Rel-Ident	Pt.: Value

Example 16.68 – Relational-Identifying process in Lorraine’s narrative

It [the hair] was ALWAYS laid			
it	was	always	laid
Pt.: Token	Pt.: Rel- Ident	Circ.: Time	Pt.: Value

Example 16.69 – Relational-Identifying process in Lorraine’s narrative

By June 2016 my hair was at a great length

By June 2016	my hair	was	at a great length.
Circ.: Time	Pt.: Token	Pr.: Rel- ident	Pt.: Value

Example 16.70 – Relational-Identifying process in Lorraine’s narrative

My hair was all protected		
My hair	was	all protected
Pt.: Carrier	Pr.: Rel-Attr	Pt.: Attribute

Example 16.71 – Relational-Attributive process in Lorraine’s narrative

By summer 2017, I was in love with my hair (and still am).					
By summer 2017,	I	was	in love	with my hair	(and still am)
Circ.: Time	Pt.: Carrier	Pr.: Rel-Attr	Pt.: Attribute	Circ.: Accompaniment	Residue

Example 16.72 – Relational-Attributive process in Lorraine’s narrative

my hair was healthy enough for highlights		
My hair	was	healthy enough for highlights
Pt.: Carrier	Pt.: Rel-Attr	Pt.: Attribute

Example 16.73 – Relational-Attributive process in Lorraine’s narrative

My #1 tip is take time to love on your hair !		
My #1 tip	is	take time to love on your hair
Pt.: Token	Pr.: Rel-ident	Pt.: Value

Example 16.74 – Relational-Identifying process in Lorraine’s narrative

4.2.1.2. Material processes

Although most of the US narratives, similarly to the Brazilian ones, use material processes to refer to hair-straightening or hair manipulation techniques, material processes are also used to describe physical experiences (getting beaten, being persecuted), as Jane’s narrative shows:

I’ll start my hair soap opera at the beginning.			
I	will start	my hair soap opera	at the beginning
Pt.: Actor	Pr.: Material	Pt.: Goal	Circ.: Extent

Example 17 – Material process in Jane’s narrative

I have been managing my hair since I was about 6...			
I	have been managing	my hair	since I was about 6...
Pt.: Actor	Pr.: Material	Pt.: Goal	Circ.: Extent

Example 17.1 – Material process in Jane’s narrative

I ALWAYS styled my hair , typically in a ponytail.				
I	Always	styled	my hair	typically in a ponytail
Pt.: Actor	Circ.: Extent	Pt.: Material	Pt.: Goal	Circ.: Manner

Example 17.2 – Material process in Jane’s narrative

Hair	in my black community	would	literally	get	you	beat up
Pt.: Actor	Circ.: Location	Adverb	Circ.: Manner	Pr.: Material	Pt.: Scope	Pt.: Goal

Example 17.3 – Material process in Jane’s narrative

The girls in my predominantly black middle school persecuted me because of my hair .				
The girls	in my predominantly	persecuted	me	because of my hair

	black middle school			
Pt.: Actor	Circ.: Location	Pr.: Material	Pr.: Goal	Circ.: Reason

Example 17.4 – Material process in Jane’s narrative

[I]	often	ran	home	after school	because the groups of kids waiting across the street to kick my ass everyday scared the shit [sic] out of me...
Pt.: Actor	Circ.: Extent	Pr.: Material	Pt.: Scope	Circ.: Time	Circ.: Contingency
...all because of HAIR					
Circ.: Reason					

Example 17.5 – Material process in Jane’s narrative

Most of my twenties I kept my hair in my “signature styles”			
Most of my twenties	I	kept	my hair in my “signature styles”
Circ.: Extent	Pt.: Actor	Pr.: Material	Pt.: Scope

Example 17.6 – Material process in Jane’s narrative

Imagine being 23 and white hair starts sprouting			
Imagine being 23 and	white hair	starts	sprouting
Circ.: Time	Pt.: Actor	Pr.: Material	Pt.: Scope

Example 17.7 – Material process in Jane’s narrative

I’m about to have white curly hair		
I	am about to have	white curly hair
Pt.: Actor	Pr.: Material	Pt.: Scope

Example 17.8 – Material process in Jane’s narrative

At age 30, I finally started wearing my **hair** down on a regular basis.

At age 30,	I finally	started	wearing my hair down on a regular basis
Circ.: Time	Pt.: Actor	Pr.: Material	Pt.: Scope

Example 17.9 – Material process in Jane’s narrative

At some point during this time I began using a curling iron to curl the ends a bit to make my hair look more consistent.				
At some point during this time	I	began using	a curling iron	to curl the ends a bit to make my hair look more consistent.
Circ.: Time	Pt.: Actor	Pr.: Material	Pt.: Goal	Circ.: Reason

Example 17.10 – Material process in Jane’s narrative

To make my hair matters worse I began to rapidly lose my hair.			
To make my hair matters worse	I	began to rapidly lose	my hair
Circ.: Contingency	Pt.: Actor	Pr.: Material	Pt.: Goal

Example 17.11 – Material process in Jane’s narrative

Bit by bit, day by day, my hair began to grow back.			
Bit by bit, day by day,	my hair	began	to grow back.
Circ.: Extent	Pt.: Actor	Pr.: Material	Pt.: Scope

Example 17.12 – Material process in Jane’s narrative

Sigh, the epic hair saga continues.		
Sigh,	the epic hair saga	continues
-	Pt.: Actor	Pr.: Material

Example 17.13 – Material process in Jane’s narrative

He [the <i>curl doctor</i>] celebrated my choice not to dye my hair .		
he	celebrated	my choice not to dye my hair
Pt.: Actor	Pr.: Material	Pt.: Scope

Example 17.14 – Material process in Jane’s narrative

He [the <i>curl doctor</i>] built up my hair confidence		
He	built up	my hair confidence
Pt.: Actor	Pr.: Material	Pt.: Goal

Example 17.15 – Material process in Jane’s narrative

I am also able to have a curl crush on my own hair !!		
I am also	able to have	a curl crush on my own hair!!
Pt.: Actor	Pr.: Material	Pt.: Goal

Example 17.16 – Material process in Jane’s narrative

In the second narrative, from Anne, the use of material processes to describe hair-styling practices is more present. In conformity to Brazilian narratives, the verbs “to wear”, “to straight”, “to cut” and “to manage” are highly used. This is also observed in the following US narratives, written by Claire, Emma, and Lorraine:

Through elementary (and early middle) school I wore beads, barrettes and ball hair ties in my hair .				
Through elementary (and early middle) school	I	wore	beads, barrettes and ball hair ties	in my hair
Circ.: Extent	Pt.: Actor	Pr.: Material	Pt.: Scope	Pt.: Goal

Example 17.17 – Material process in Anne’s narrative

My friends flaunted straight hair .		
My friends	flaunted	straight hair
Pt.: Actor	Pr.: Material	Pt.: Scope

Example 17.18 – Material process in Anne’s narrative

My mom detangled and styled my natural hair every Sunday.			
My mom	detangled and styled	my natural hair	every Sunday
Pt.: Actor	Pr.: Material	Pt.: Goal	Circ.: Time

Example 17.19 – Material process in Anne’s narrative

on special occasions, my mom straightened my hair with the infamous hot comb.				
on special occasions,	my mom	straightened	my hair	with the infamous hot comb
Circ.: Time	Pt.: Actor	Pr.: Material	Pt.: Goal	Circ.: Manner

Example 17.20 – Material process in Anne’s narrative

And while my mom did her best to manage my thick and curly/coily hair					
while	And	my mom	best did her	to manage	my thick and curly/coily hair
Circ.:	Pt.:	Pr.:	Pt.:	Pt.:	
	Actor	Material	Scope	Goal	

Example 17.21 – Material process in Anne’s narrative

My hair suffered from the relaxer and constant heat I put it through.		
My hair	suffered	from the relaxer and constant heat I put it through
Pt.: Goal	Pr.: Material	Pt.: Actor

Example 17.22 – Material process in Anne’s narrative

I made sure to properly, and delicately, manage my transitioning hair .			
I	made sure to	properly, and delicately	manage my transitioning hair
Pt.: Actor	Pr.: Material	Circ.: Manner	Pt.: Goal

Example 17.23 – Material process in Anne’s narrative

my natural hair started to grow!		
My natural hair	started	to grow
Pt.: Actor	Pr.: Material	Pt.: Goal

Example 17.24 – Material process in Anne’s narrative

[I went back to researching and watching videos to see how] I could manage my transitioning hair while abroad.				
I	Could	manage	my transitioning hair	while abroad
Pt.: Actor		Pr.: Material	Pt.: Goal	Circ.: Location

Example 17.25 – Material process in Anne’s narrative

[I decided to get Senegalese twists in hopes that] would protect my hair from breakage at the demarcation line.					
[It]	would	protect	my hair	from breakage	at the demarcation line

Pt.: Actor	Modal	Pr.: Material	Pt.: Goal	Pt.: Scope	Circ.: Location
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17.26 – Material process in Anne’s narrative

I was able to finally shed the rest of the relaxed hair !					
I	was able to	finally	shed	the rest of the relaxed hair	
Pt.: Actor		Circ.: time	Pr.: Material	Pt.: Goal	

17.27 – Material process in Anne’s narrative

My hair is now approaching bra strap length!					
My hair	is	now	approaching	bra strap length!	
Pt.: Actor	-	Circ.: Time	Pr.: Material	Pt.: Scope	

17.28 – Material process in Anne’s narrative

my hair gets tangled easily.					
My hair	gets	tangled	easily		
Pt.: Actor	Pr.: Material	Pt.: Goal	Circ.: Manner		

17.29 – Material process in Anne’s narrative

Not many women can rock curly hair one week, and straight hair the next.					
Not many women	can rock	curly hair one week, and straight hair the next			
Pt.: Actor	Pr.: Material	Pt.: Scope			

Example 17.30 – Material process in Anne’s narrative

[My transition was inspired by the few girls I saw on my college campus who were] wearing Afros or their natural hair straightened with a hot comb					
[the girls]	were wearing	Afros or their natural hair			straightened with a hot comb
Pt.: Actor	Pr.: Material	Pt.: Scope			Circ.: Manner

Example 17.31 – Material process in Claire’s narrative

I cut my armpit-length hair up to my chin.					
I	Cut	my hair	armpit-length	up to my chin	

Pt.: Actor	Pr.: Material	Pt.: Scope	Pt.: Goal
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Example 17.32 – Material process in Claire’s narrative

standing up for the way my hair looked made me more confident in my choices.			
[I] standing up for the way my hair looked	made	me	more confident in my choices
Pt.: Actor	Pr.: Material		Pt.: Goal

Example 17.33 – Material process in Claire’s narrative

The bigger my hair got, the bigger my personality got.					
The bigger	my hair	Got	The bigger	my personality	got
Pt.: Goal	Pt.: Actor	Pr.: Material	Pt.: Goal	Pt.: Actor	Pr.: Material

Example 17.34 – Material processes in Claire’s narrative

Now I spend my entire day sharing beauty products I love for both hair , skin, and makeup as a beauty editor.			
Now	I	spend	my entire day sharing beauty products I love for both hair, skin, and makeup as a beauty editor.
Circ.: Time	Pt.: Actor	Pr.: Material	Pt.: Scope

Example 17.35 – Material process in Claire’s narrative

When I bring up my natural hair journey I can’t start at the moment I decided to start slowly and steadily cut off my relaxer in October of 2017							
hen I bring up my natural hair journey		an’t start	at the moment	decided to	start [slowly and steadily] cut off my relaxer	in October 2017	
Circ.: Time	Pt.: Actor	Pr.: Material	Circ.: Time	Pt.: Sense	Pr.: Mental process (with material projection)	Pt.: Phenom	Circ.: Time

						Slowly and steadily – Circ: Manner	
--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Example 17.36 – Material process in Emma’s narrative

My mom and aunt made a great effort to try to do my hair in ways that I would like			
My mom and aunt	made	a great effort	to try to do my hair in ways in ways that I would like
Pt.: Actor	Pr.: Material	Pt.: Scope	Pt.: Goal

Example 17.38 – Material process in Emma’s narrative

I started trying some natural hair techniques			
I	started	trying some natural hair techniques	
Pt.: Actor	Pr.: Material	Pt.: Goal	

Example 17.39 – Material process in Emma’s narrative

I was spending a lot of time trying to simply learn how to take care of my hair			
I	was spending	a lot of time	trying to simply learn how to take care of my hair
Pt.: Actor	Pr.: Material	Range	-

Example 17.40 – Material process in Emma’s narrative

I was watching lots of how to retain length hair videos and curly girl routine videos.			
I	was watching	lots of	how to retain length hair videos and curly girl routine videos
Pt.: Actor	Pr.: Material	range	Pt.: Goal

Example 17.41 – Material process in Emma’s narrative

By December of 2017 I really started to research how to take care of my hair .					
By December of 2017	I	really	started	to research	how to take care of my hair
Circ.: Time	Pt.: Actor	-	-	Pr.: Material	Pt.: Goal

Example 17.42 – Material process in Emma’s narrative

Soon enough, my roommate was braiding my hair up every few days for me to wear braid-out.						
Soon enough,	my roommate	was braiding	my hair	up	every few days	for me to wear braid-out
Circ.: Time	Pt.: Actor	Pr.: Material	Pt.: Goal	Circ.: Manner	Circ.: Extent	Circ.: Reason

Example 17.43 – Material process in Lorraine’s narrative

when I went home, I would get my hair straightened and trimmed by the Dominicans.				
when I went home,	I	would get [my hair] straightened and trimmed	my hair	by the Dominicans
Circ.: Time	Pt.: Recipient	Pr.: Material	Pt.: Goal	Pt.: Actor

Example 17.44 – Material process in Lorraine’s narrative

I was still wearing my hair straightened				
I	Was	still	wearing	my hair straightened

Pt.: Actor	Auxiliar	Circ.: Extent	Pr.: Material	Pt.: Goal
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Example 17.45 – Material process in Lorraine’s narrative

I was coloring my hair every few months with box color.					
I	was	Colorin g	m y hair	ever y few months	with box color
Pt.: : Actor	Auxilia r	Pr.: Material	Pt.: : Goal	Circ.: : Extent	Circ.: Accompanimen t

Example 17.46 – Material process in Lorraine’s narrative

I got all my hair cut off.			
I	got	all my hair	cut off
Pt.: Actor	-	Pt.: Goal	Pr.: Material

Example 17.47 – Material process in Lorraine’s narrative

Once I cut it [the hair] all off			
Once	I	cut	it all off
Circ.: Time	Pt.: Actor	Pr.: Material	Pt.: Goal

Example 21.47 – Material process in Lorraine’s narrative

My hair grew out from the cut great			
My hair	grew	out from the cut	great
Pt.: Actor	Pr.: Material	Pt.: Scope	Circ.: Manner

Example 17.48 – Material process in Lorraine’s narrative

it [the hair] was growing great.			
it	was	growing	great
Pt.: Actor	Pr.: Auxiliar	Pr.: Material	Circ.: Manner

Example 17.49 – Material process in Lorraine’s narrative

I started falling in love with my natural hair .			
I	started	falling in love	with my natural hair
Pt.: Actor	Pr.: Material	Pt.: Scope	Circ.: Accompaniment

Example 17.50 – Material process in Lorraine’s narrative

if you continuously take care of your hair				
If	You	continuously	take care	of your hair
-	Pt.: Actor	Circ.: Manner	Pr.: Material	Pt.: Goal

Example 17.51 – Material process in Lorraine’s narrative

It [the hair] can get healthier			
It	Can	get	healthier
Pt.: Actor	Modal	Pr.: Material	Pt.: Scope

Example 17.52 – Material process in Lorraine’s narrative

[I] [have] been working to keep my hair as healthy as possible.			
[I]	been working	to keep [my hair] as healthy as possible	my hair
Pt.: Actor	Pr.: Material	Pt.: Scope	Goal

Example 17.53 – Material process in Lorraine’s narrative

I’m still working on keeping my hair moisturized, and helping it [the hair] grow.					
I	’m	still	working	on	my
				keeping	hair moisturized and helping it grow
Pt.: Actor	Aux	Circ.: Extent	Pr.: Material	Pt.: Scope	Pt.: Goal

Example 17.54 – Material process in Lorraine’s narrative

Do	the same	with your hair
Pr.: Material	Pt.: Scope	Pt.: Goal

Example 17.55 – Material process in Lorraine’s narrative

4.2.1.3. Mental processes

Mental processes were the third type of process most present in the narratives. Given the nature of these processes, they express, mostly, what participants felt in relation to their hair or the experiences they lived due to their hair. In some clauses, the bloggers are not the participants, and the mental process also illustrates the perceptions/reactions of others about hair/hair experiences.

no one paid attention to race or even cared about how your hair looked.		
No one	paid attention	to race
Pt.: Senser	Pt.: Mental	Pt.: Phenomenon
no one [...]	even cared	about how your hair looked
Pt.: Senser	Pr.: Mental	Pt.: Phenomenon

Example 18 – Mental processes in Jane’s narrative

At the time I didn’t find my hair a challenge,			
At the time	I	didn’t find	
Circ.: Time	Pt.: Senser	Pr.: Mental	
To not find the hair a challenge: Negative appreciation of affect (insecurity)			

Example 18.1 – Mental process in Jane’s narrative

I began to feel very insecure about my hair .		
I	began to feel	very insecure about my hair
Pt.: Senser	Pr.: Mental	Pt.: Phenomenon

Example 18.2 – Mental process in Jane’s narrative

I remember going to sleep crying and praying for manageable “white” people hair like my Mom.		
I	remember	going to sleep crying and praying for manageable “white” people hair like my Mom.
Pt.: Senser	Pr.: Mental	Pt.: Phenomenon

Example 18.3 – Mental process in Jane’s narrative

I had no idea that hair in my black community would literally get you beat up!!		
I	had no idea	that hair in my black community would literally get you beat up!!
Pt.: Senser	Pr.: Mental	Pt.: Phenomenon

Example 18.4 – Mental process in Jane’s narrative (projecting a Material clause)

Hair that I didn't even really like.		
Hair that	I didn't even	really like
Pt.: Phenomenon	Pt: Senser	Pr.: Mental

Example 18.5 – Mental process in Jane's narrative

Hair that drove me crazy everyday to wrangle into a ponytail.				
Hair	that drove	me	crazy	everyday to wrangle into a ponytail
Circ.: Reason	Pr.: Mental	Pt.: Senser	Pt.: Phenomenon	Circ.: Time

Example 18.6 – Mental process in Jane's narrative

My hair deserves my love not my angst.		
My hair	deserves	my love not my angst
Pt.: Senser	Pr.: Mental	Pt.: Phenomenon

Example 18.7 – Mental process in Jane's narrative

Yep, I had a few years in the beginning that I felt massively embarrassed and self conscious <i>[sic]</i> of my white hair .			
Yep, I had a few years in the beginning that	I	felt	massively embarrassed and self conscious of my white hair.
Circ.: Time	Pt.: Senser	Pr.: Mental	Pt.: Phenomenon

Example 18.8 – Mental process in Jane's narrative

I would see those gleaming white hairs and think WHHHYYYYEEEEEE <i>[sic]</i> !!			
I	Would	see	those gleaming white hair
Pt.: Senser	Modal	Pr.: Mental	Pt.: Phenomenon
[I]	think	WHHHYYYYEEEEEE	
Pt.: Senser	Pr.: Mental	Pt.: Phenomenon	

Example 18.9 – Mental processes in Jane's narrative

I began to see yellowing of my white hair .			
I	Began	to see	yellowing of my white hair
Pt.: Senser	-	Pr.: Mental	Pt.: Phenomenon

Example 18.10 – Mental process in Jane’s narrative

He [the curl doctor] built up my hair confidence		
He	built up	my hair confidence
Pt.: Actor	Pr.: Material	Pt.: Goal

Example 18.11 - Mental process in Jane’s narrative

I honestly hated it [the hair].			
I	honestly	hated	it
Pt.: Senser		Pr.: Mental	Pt.: Phenomenon

Example 18.12 – Mental process in Anne’s narrative

[I] hated that I couldn’t be active with my straight hair .		
I	hated	that I couldn’t be active with my straight hair
Pt.: Senser	Pr.: Mental	Pt.: Phenomenon

Example 18.13 – Mental process in Anne’s narrative

[I] loved being able to swing my hair .		
I	loved	being able to swing my hair
Pt.: Senser	Pr.: Mental	Pt.: Phenomenon

Example 18.14 – Mental process in Anne’s narrative

After a few months of getting touch-ups, I decided to stop getting relaxers in my hair for good.				
After a few months of getting touch-ups	I	decided to stop	getting relaxers in my hair	for good
Circ.: Extent	Pt.: Senser	Pr.: Mental	Pt.: Phenomenon	Circ.: Manner

Example 18.15 – Mental process in Anne’s narrative

I didn’t understand how to take care of my hair .		
I	didn’t understand	how to take care of my hair
Pt.: Senser	Pr.: Mental	Pt.: Phenomenon

Example 18.16 – Mental process in Anne’s narrative

I was used to my mom always doing my hair .
--

I	was used to	my mom always doing my hair
Pt.: Senser	Pr.: Mental	Pt.: Phenomenon

Example 18.17 – Mental process in Anne’s narrative

I thought straight hair was prettier.		
I	thought	straight hair was prettier
Pt.: Senser	Pr.: Mental	Pt.: Phenomenon

Example 18.18 – Mental process in Anne’s narrative

I struggled for months going from product-to-product trying to find the ones that my hair responded positively to.			
I	struggled	for months	trying to find the ones that my hair responded positively to.
Pt.: Senser	Pr.: Mental	Circ.: Extent	Pr.: Phenomenon

Example 18.19 – Mental process in Anne’s narrative

I’ve learned to appreciate my hair .			
I	‘ve	learned	to appreciate my hair
Pt.: Senser	-	Pr.: Mental	Pt.: Phenomenon

Example 18.20 – Mental process in Anne’s narrative

I wanted to be just like all the other girls—Jordache jeans, bright orange varsity jacket, and relaxed hair done up in a roller set.				
I	wanted		to be	like all the other girls — Jordache jeans, bright orange varsity jacket, and relaxed hair done up in a roller set.
Pt.: Senser	Pr.: Mental		Pr.: Rel-Ident	Circ.: Manner

Example 18.21 – Mental process in Claire’s narrative (projecting a Relational-Identifying clause)

[I remember being so nervous that] no one would find me attractive without long, straight hair

No one	would	find me	attractive	without long, straight hair
Pt.: Senser	Modal	Pr.: Mental	Pt.: Phenomenon	Circ.: Manner

Example 18.22 – Mental process in Claire’s narrative

I wanted to bring more women of color and Afro- hair ladies to national magazines, changing the beauty standard.		
I	wanted	to bring more women of color and Afro-hair ladies to national magazines changing the beauty standard.
Pt.: Senser	Pt.: Mental	Pt.: Phenomenon

Example 18.23 – Mental process in Claire’s narrative (projecting a material clause)

I decided to start slowly and steadily cut off my relaxer in October of 2017			
I	decided to	start [slowly and steadily] cut off my relaxer	in October 2017
Pt.: Senser	Pr.: Mental process (with material projection)	Pt.: Phenomenon	Circ.: Time
		Slowly and steadily – Circ: Manner	

Example 18.24 – Mental process in Claire’s narrative

I realized I had developed this hate for the color of my skin, eyes and hair early on.						
I	realized	I	had	developed	this hate for the color of my skin, eyes and hair	arly on
Pt.: Senser	Pr.: Mental	Pt.: Senser	aux	Pt.: Mental	Pt.: Phenomenon	Circ.: Time

Example 18.25 – Mental processes in Claire’s narrative

After much consideration, I decided that the most reasonable thing I could change was my hair .			
After much consideration	I	decided	that the most reasonable thing I could change was my hair

Circ.: Extent	Pt.: Senser	Pr.: Mental	Pt.: Phenomenon
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Example 18.26 – Mental process in Claire’s narrative

That’s when I realized that it was actually possible to go from curly hair to straight hair			
That’s when	I	realized	that it was actually possible to go from curly hair to straight hair
Circ.: Time	Pt.: Senser	Pr.: Mental	Pt.: Phenomenon

Example 18.27 – Mental process in Claire’s narrative

I thought it [what other people said about her straight hair] couldn’t possibly be worse than what they said about my curly hair .			
I	thought	it couldn’t possibly be worse than what they said about my curly hair	
Pt.: Senser	Pr.: Mental	Pt.: Phenomenon	

Example 18.28 – Mental process in Claire’s narrative

I will never forget the smell of burning hair .				
I	will	never	forget	the smell of burning hair
Pt.: Senser	Modal	Circ.: Time	Pr.: Mental	Pt.: Phenomenon

Example 18.29 – Mental process in Claire’s narrative

I truly didn’t know how to take care of my hair or style it for that matter.			
I	truly	didn’t know	how to take care of my hair or style it for that matter
Pt.: Senser	Circ.: Manner	Pr.: Mental	Pt.: Phenomenon

Example 18.30 – Mental process in Claire’s narrative

In October of 2017, I finally decided that my hair was long enough to cut the relaxed ends off.				
In October of 2017	I	finally	decided	that my hair was long enough to cut the relaxed ends off.

Time	Circ.: Senser	Pt.: -	Pr.: Mental	Pr.: Phenomenon
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Example 18.31 – Mental process in Claire’s narrative

I love my hair .			
I	love	my hair	
Pt.: Senser	Pr.: Mental	Pt.: Phenomenon	

Example 18.32 – Mental process in Claire’s narrative

When I got [to] college, I refused to let anyone do my hair .			
When I got college,	I	refused	to let anyone do my hair
Circ.: Time	Pt.: Senser	Pr.: Mental	Pt.: Phenomenon

Example 18.33 – Mental process in Lorraine’s narrative

[I]felt soooo ugly without hair .			
I	felt	soooo ugly	without hair
Pt.: Senser	Pr.: Mental	Pt.: Phenomenon	Circ.: Contingency

Example 18.34 – Mental process in Lorraine’s narrative

By then, I thought my hair was at it's [sic] healthiest.			
By then	I	thought	my hair was at it's healthiest
Circ.: Time	Pt.: Senser	Pr.: Mental	Pt.: Phenomenon

Example 18.35 – Mental process in Lorraine’s narrative

4.2.1.4. Verbal, Behavioral and Existential processes

The three least used processes in the US narratives are Verbal, Behavioral, and Existential. As expected, most of the verbal processes project another clause with a different process. The different types of verbal processes that composed the verbal processes' group are diverse. Behavioral processes are only present in two of the narratives, whereas Existential processes are only found in one narrative.

I swear my hair was a monster.					
I	swear		my hair	was	a monster
Pt.: Sayer	Pr.: Verbal		Pt.: Token	Pr.: Rel-Ident	Pt.: Value

Example 19 – Verbal process in Jane's narrative (projecting a Relational Identifying clause)

I never told anyone how upset my hair was making me.				
I	never	told	anyone	how upset my hair was making me
Pt.: Sayer	Circ.: Time	Pr.: Verbal	Receiver	Pt.: Verbiage

Example 19.1 – Verbal process in Jane's narrative

He taught me how to wash my hair			
He	taught	me	how to wash my hair
Pt.: Sayer	Pr.: Verbal	Pt.: Receiver	Pt.: Verbiage

Example 19.2 – Verbal process in Jane's narrative (projecting a material clause)

[he] reminded [me] to be happy with the hair that grew out of my head.			
He	reminded	me	to be happy with the hair that grew out of my head
Pt.: Sayer	Pr.: Verbal	Pt.: Receiver	Pt.: Verbiage

Example 19.3 – Verbal process in Jane’s narrative

I’m sharing my natural hair story		
I’m	sharing	my natural hair story
Pt.: Sayer	Pr.: Verbal	Pt.: Verbiage

Example 19.4 – Verbal process in Anne’s narrative

In 8 th grade, I begged my mom to relax my hair .				
In 8 th grade	I	begged	my mom	to relax my hair
Circ.: Time	Pt.: Sayer	Pr.: Verbal	Pt.: Receiver	Pt.: Verbiage

Example 19.5 – Verbal process in Anne’s narrative

These days I often give advice to women transitioning from relaxed to natural hair .				
These days	I	often	give advice	to women transitioning from relaxed to natural hair
Circ.: Time	Pt.: Sayer	Adverb	Pr.: Verbal	Pt.: Receiver

Example 19.6 – Verbal process in Claire’s narrative

I would describe my hair as coily voluminous.				
I	would	describe	my hair as coily voluminous	
Pt.: Sayer	Modal	Pr.: Verbal	Pt.: Verbiage	

Example 19.7 – Verbal process in Emma’s narrative

I begged my mother relentlessly to straighten my hair				
I	begged	my mother	relentlessly	to straighten my hair
Pt.: Sayer	Pr.: Verbal	Pt.: Receiver	Circ.: Manner	Pt.: Verbiage

Example 19.8 – Verbal process in Emma’s narrative

I always got compliments on how great it [the hair] looked				
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I	always	got compliments	on how great it looked
Pt.: Receiver	Circ.: Time	Pr.: Verbal	Pt.: Verbiage

Example 19.9 – Verbal process in Lorraine’s narrative

I spent months watching natural hair gurus on YouTube.				
I	spent months	watching	natural hair gurus	on YouTube
Pt.: Behaver	Cir.: Extent	Pr.: Behavioral	Pt.: Behaviour	Circ.: Location

Example 19.10 – Behavioral process in Anne’s narrative

When I saw my hair straight for the first time I cried tears of joy.			
When I saw my hair straight for the first time	I	cried	tears of joy
Circ.: Time	Pt.: Behaver	Pr.: Behavioral	Pt.: Behavior

Example 19.11 – Behavioral process in Emma’s narrative

In her place was a depressed 31 year old woman with 50% less hair .			
In her place	[there] was	a depressed 31 year old woman	with 50% less hair
Circ.: Location	Pr.: Existential	Pt.: Existent	Circ.: Accompaniment

Example 19.12 – Existential process in Jane’s narrative

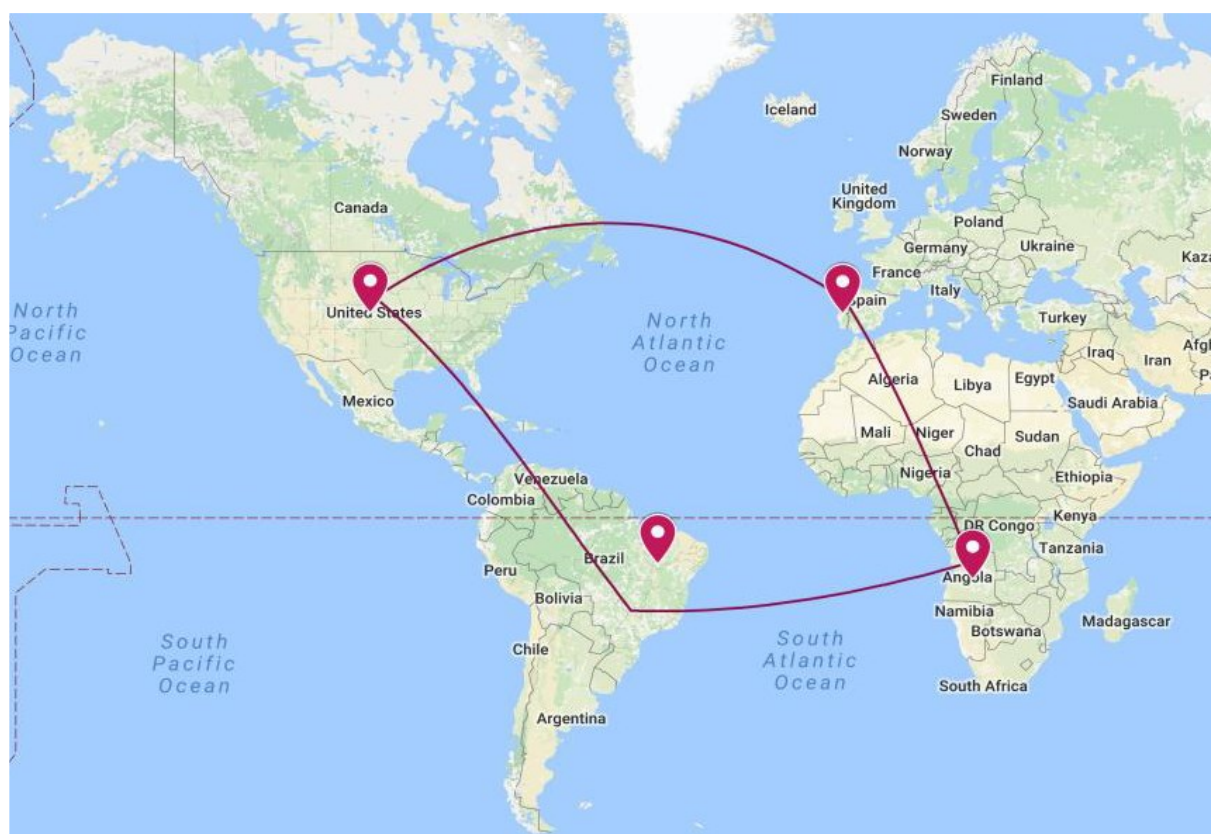
4.3.CONNECTING THE DOTS

The narratives from both Brazil and the US share similar patterns in terms of process choices. They both follow the usual pattern for narratives, with Relational, Material, and Mental processes as the main ones in each narrative.

In terms of hair-related experiences, the African American context and the Brazilian context show similarities, even though both contexts have differences in terms of racial construction. Inspired by the style and practices of African American bloggers (which are known in Brazil as ‘gringas’), Brazilian bloggers started to share tips and adapt their content to

the Brazilian context, without being stuck to American hair products. The digital natural revolution also enhanced discussions that crossed the *Black Atlantic*, and were not limited to Brazil and the US, as Gomes (2017, p. 134) demonstrates in the figure below:

Figure 10 – Map with online hair transitioning communities (Brazil, US, Spain, and Angola)



Source: GOMES (2017, p. 134)

The creation of global discussions on Black hair, hair transitioning, and Black hair acceptance was mainly stimulated through online practices and SNS, signaling the importance of these digital discussions.

The next section, “macro-textual analysis”, as its title suggests, presents the textual analysis at a broader level, bringing together micro and macro contexts and analyzing the data in the light of social studies.

5. MACRO-TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

Sara, sara, sara cura
Dessa doença de branco
De querer cabelo liso

Já tendo cabelo louro
Cabelo duro é preciso
Que é para ser você, crioulo.
(Sará Miolo – Gilberto Gil)

In this section I discuss the analyzed data from a macro-textual perspective. The interpretation and discussion of the findings done made by connecting the main themes raised by the bloggers and the social studies that guided this research.

Table 6 – Main themes arisen in narratives from Brazil and from the US

THEMES	NARRATIVES	TOTAL
BEAUTY PARLOR	BR01, BR02, BR03, BR05	4
HAIR STRAIGHTENING BLOGGERS	BR01, BR02, BR03, BR04, EUA03, EUA04, EUA05	7
FAMILY	BR01, BR05, EUA02	3
BIG CHOP/HAIR TRANSITIONING	BR01, BR02, BR03, EUA01, EUA02, EUA03, EUA04	7
SOCIETY/RACISM	BR01, BR04, BR05, EUA02, EUA03, EUA04	6
SCHOOL BULLYING	BR02, BR04, BR05	3
IDENTITY/BEING BLACK	BR02, EUA01, EUA02, EUA03, EUA04	5
	BR02, BR04	2
	BR02, BR03, BR04, BR05, EUA01, EUA03, EUA04	7

Source: author (2021)

Three out of nine themes stand out: hair straightening, family, and identity/being black. The analyzed narratives also presented the theme of ‘big chop’ or ‘hair transition’. The theme “school” follows with five mentions out of ten narratives. The act of going to a hair salon or beauty parlor is mentioned by four bloggers and, surprisingly, only three narratives directly mention themes like racism and society, and three mention bloggers, followed by two narratives that mention bullying. In the following subsection, I provide a social analysis of the mentioned themes.

5.1.HAIR STRAIGHTENING

Although not all bloggers mention the process of hair straightening, this practice is well known in the natural hair movement. Hooks (1989) explains that although “hair pressing was a

ritual of black women’s culture of intimacy” (p.1), in the context of white supremacists and capitalist societies, straightening our hair represents “an imitation of the dominant white group’s appearance and often indicates internalized racism, self-hatred, and/or low self-esteem” (p. 2). Even though this may not be the case for all Black women who choose to straight their hair, the process of hair straightening in the analyzed narratives is seem as a painful, imposed one. As previously mentioned, hair straightening and hair manipulation practices are mostly realized via material processes in both groups of narratives.

Minha mãe alisou meu cabelo pela primeira vez quando eu tinha uns 7 anos, e desde então nunca parei de passar química no cabelo. Ou seja, eu não fazia a mínima ideia de como era o meu cabelo natural. Há uns 2 anos, eu comecei a ficar incomodada com a falta de liberdade.¹¹⁵

Example 26: Hair straightening process in a Brazilian narrative

E cresci com a idéia [sic] fixa de alisá-los, porque o **bullying** não parava, eu continuava a me sentir feia e para mim a única solução seria alisar os cabelos.¹¹⁶

Example 27: Hair straightening as a method to deal with being bullied

In narratives produced in the US, the process of hair-straightening is also portrayed as something negative:

Ah I will never forget the smell of burning hair. I was 12 when I got my first relaxer. From that point forward, I would get a relaxer every 6-8 weeks for the next 10 years. The main reason was because I wanted to fit in with the other kids in school- I mean it was the 2000s everyone had bone straight hair that was thing

Example 28:

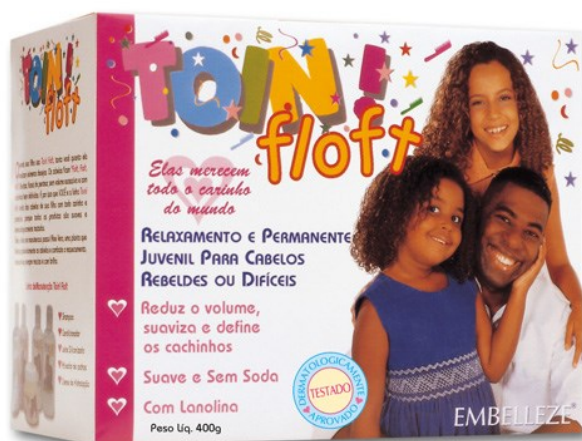
As the examples demonstrate, the hair straightening theme is linked with other themes, such as “big chop”, “school”, “family” and “hair parlor”, the last two themes being commonly part of the straightening process. It is possible to notice that, in most cases, the urge to straighten the hair has different inputs.

In Brazil, hair-products that promised bone-straight hair for curly girls were common in the beginning of the 2000s – some of them even had young children as their main clients (figure X). The culture of hair-straightening has led Brazilian brands to be famous out of the country – worldwide famous Brazilian straightening (or Brazilian blowout) is extremely harmful and known for its cancer-causing chemical, formaldehyde.

Figure 11 – Brazilian hair straightening product

¹¹⁵ “My mother straightened my hair for the first time when I was 7 years old, and since then I never stopped applying chemicals on it. That is, I had no idea about how my natural hair was. Two years ago, I started to get bothered with the lack of liberty”.

¹¹⁶ “And I grew up with the fixed idea of straightening them because the *bullying* wouldn’t stop, I continued to feel ugly and for me the only solution would be to straighten my hair”.



The social imposition of straight hair is also the reason why topics such as Big Chop and Hair transitioning (further discussed below) were frequent in most narratives – even though this was not a requirement for the selection of this study’s data, many women who are now natural have used in the past hair-straightening processes. The rise of bloggers and vloggers in the internet has helped to reshape the discourses surrounding Black hair – as the concept of Hair transitioning became more familiar, more people started to accept their natural hair. The discussion of colorism and its relation to hair-texture has also arisen in Brazilian narratives – as the acceptance for 3ABC hair textures increased, some bloggers also denounced the invisibility of 4ABC hair texture, as illustrated by Rayza (example 29).

Em 2020 eu recebi diversos ataques virtuais relacionados à falta de definição do meu cabelo, predominantemente 4c e essa se tornou mais uma pauta urgente para o [blog].¹¹⁷

Example 29 – Rayza’s narrative

Considering Fairclough’s analytical procedures and the reflection on how to overcome the social problem under discussion, I consider the work and influence of bloggers and, more than that, the construction of digital communities as safe spaces for the discussion of why and what led so many Black women straighten their hair and share common hair stories, as crucial steps to the overcoming of compulsory hair straightening.

¹¹⁷ “In 2020 I received several virtual attacks related to the lack of definition of my hair, predominantly 4c, and this has become another urgent issue for the [blog]”.

5.2.FAMILY

The social importance of families in western societies is reflected in the narratives, particularly through the presence of the mother. First, the maternal figure is introduced in narratives as a companionship figure, present in the most relevant moments in the blogger's hair stories.

Saturday, June 13, 2015, my mom and I went to the [hair saloon], and I got all my hair cut off.

Example 30 – Lorraine's narrative

Minha mãe me levou a um salão de cabeleireiro.¹¹⁸

Example 31 – Fernanda's narrative

In a different way, the figure of the mother is also portrayed as the agent of hair changes and of hair manipulation techniques. The mother as the agent of such a strong body modification can be connected to several reasons: hooks, for example, suggests that when she had her hair hot-combed by her mother, it was a rite of "initiation to womanhood" (hooks, 1989, p.1), not directly connected to white ideals of beauty. The analysed narratives, however, demonstrate that the bloggers have first straightened their hair at a very young age, and that the decisions were mediated by the pain of braiding or brushing the hair or by peer pressure – the subject 'school' is another common theme further explored below.

Minha mãe alisou meu cabelo pela primeira vez quando eu tinha uns 7 anos¹¹⁹

Example 32 – Gabriela's narrative

In 8th grade, I begged my mom to relax my hair.

Example 33 – Anne's narrative

so I begged my mother relentlessly to straighten my hair until one day she finally said yes.

Example 34 – Emma's narrative

The analyzed narratives portray the mother as a figure which needs to be convinced and persuaded. The verbal process "to beg" appears in two out of ten narratives and exemplifies the

¹¹⁸ "My mother took me to the hair parlor".

¹¹⁹ "My mother straightened my hair for the first time when I was about 7 years old."

process of persuading the mother to straighten the hair. In short, the frequency of references to the mother makes it explicit how most western families operate – with the mother as the one responsible for hairstyling and hair-related issues in the household, and for the initiation of the daughter into ‘womanhood’. Hairstyling and, in this case, hair straightening, grounds personal relationships between mother and daughter, and promotes socialization and Black gendered identities, as Black mothers who fail to care for and “control” their daughter’s hair are seen as “bad mothers”¹²⁰.

5.3.IDENTITY/BEING BLACK

Narratives discussing hair reveal that hair is part of the construction and negotiation of complex racial identities. “Being black” is used by bloggers to illustrate why certain situations have happened, as well as to reaffirm themselves racially. The discussions provided in 2.4 (African Diaspora: Brazil and the US – Race, Gender and Identities) should be kept in mind when observing expressions of Blackness, as both Brazil and the US hold complex notions of what does it mean to be Black.

Eu sempre estudei em escolas particulares e durante a minha infância eu era uma das únicas negras nas salas de aula. Lembro que meus coleguinhas diziam que eu tinha cabelo ruim, duro, zombavam e perguntavam o que eu estava fazendo naquela escola, pois não era lugar para mim.¹²¹

Example 35 – Fernanda’s narrative

Neste espaço quero compartilhar com vocês a minha história, a minha vivência e falar sobre como é ser mulher e negra na sociedade.¹²²

Example 36 – Luisa’s narrative

E também queria assumir meu cabelo como ele é, me ver como negra, com meu crespo natural.¹²³

Example 37 – Mel’s narrative

Eu sou negra, meu cabelo é crespo, uma herança.Faz parte de quem eu sou.¹²⁴

Example 38 – Mel’s narrative

¹²⁰ As an example, the recent debate on Beyonce’s daughter hair.

¹²¹ “I have always studied in private schools and during my childhood I was one of the only Blacks in the classrooms. I remember my friends telling me that I had bad hair, tough hair, making fun of me and asking what I was doing in that school, because that place wasn’t for me”.

¹²² “In this space I want to share with you my history, my experiences, and talk about how it is to be a woman and Black in the society.”

¹²³ “I also wanted to assume my hair as it is, to see me as Black, with my natural hair”.

¹²⁴ “I am Black, my hair is natural, a heritage. It is part of who I am.”

I was still the nerdy black girl with glasses—but I did decide to branch out and go natural

Example 39 – Claire’s narrative

It is perceived that in Brazilian narratives, being black is mentioned in a political and reassuring way – to define oneself as Black and celebrate Blackness. In American narratives, being Black is mentioned as a physical description and in a less political way. The creation of a positive and combative Black identity in both analyzed groups is associated with hair and demonstrates how the relationship hair-race is built.

5.4.BIG CHOP/ HAIR TRANSITIONING

Hair transitioning refers to the moment where one decides to stop using chemicals in their hair and adopt their natural hair. Sometimes, the big chop (cutting all the straightened part of your hair) is a part of the hair transitioning process. Three narratives produced by Brazilian bloggers and three narratives produced by American bloggers approached the theme of hair transitioning.

Entrei em transição pela primeira vez¹²⁵.

Example 40 – Gabriela’s narrative

Este é o meu segundo BC e a segunda tentativa de deixar o cabelo natural.¹²⁶

Example 41 – Mel’s narrative

A nossa comunidade me fortaleceu muito após a transição capilar e o big chop, então nada mais justo que rever tudo isso com você.¹²⁷

Example 42 – Rayza’s narrative

When I first started my journey, I was transitioning. To avoid the big chop and retain length, I made sure to properly, and delicately, manage my transitioning hair

Example 43 – Anne’s narrative

My transition was inspired by the few girls I saw on my college campus who were wearing Afros or their natural hair straightened with a hot comb (most of them were not native southerners).

Example 44 – Claire’s narrative

In October of 2017, I finally decided that my hair was long enough to cut the relaxed ends off.

¹²⁵ “I entered in hair transitioning for the first time”.

¹²⁶ “This is my second BC and the second attempt to keep the hair natural”

¹²⁷ “Our community has straightened me a lot after the capillary transition and the big chop, so nothing fairer than review all of this with you”

Example 45 – Emma’s narrative

Gomes (2017, p. 143) sees hair transitioning as a rite of passage in which a new self-image is built. Indeed, the decision to hair transition is portrayed as an active (opposed to impulsive) decision, in which the participants were inspired, determined, and thoughtful about this choice. The bloggers mention research on how to take care of their natural hair, the opinion of other hair-gurus, and inspiration from other Black girls as resources to go through the difficult moment of hair transitioning – here, it is perceived how this movement represents more than an individual process, but a process made in the community.

5.5.SCHOOL AND BULLYING

The school is seen by many scholars as a space of construction of social identities, a space of both content-learning but also beliefs, habits, values, and different kinds of prejudice (GOMES, 2002, p. 40). The theme “bullying” is incorporated in this section because the two themes overlap.

Narratives involving the school environment were mostly found in the American narratives, but this theme is not excluded from the Brazilian blogs. Although only one Brazilian narrative directly mentions school, Gomes (2002) also relates that, while gathering data for her PhD research on Hair and Body as symbols of black identity, all participants mentioned their school trajectory as an important part in their identity construction process. Unfortunately, the analyzed narratives portray the school environment as a negative space in which racist practices took place.

Sofri muito **bullying** na escola por causa do meu cabelo¹²⁸

Example 46 – Fernanda’s narrative

As someone who got picked on for wearing glasses in the third grade, I knew being different was the kiss of death in the social stratasphere of the public school system.

Example 47 – Claire’s narrative

In middle school the last thing you want is to be different in any way, that makes you a target for ridicule.

Examples 48 – Emma’s narrative

¹²⁸ “I suffered a lot of bullying at school because of my hair”.

Interestingly, one of the narratives approaches the theme of colorism – according to the blogger, her not so kinky hair was associated with white hair and would get her beaten up. This emphasizes the need to incorporate racial-related themes into the school curriculum. In 2003, Brazil implemented law 10.639, which made compulsory the teaching of Afro-Brazilian history in all schools. In a more contemporary perspective, in March 2021, California has approved an ethnic studies curriculum for all K-12 schools, although huge debates on the decision have appeared across the US¹²⁹.

Going to school was an even greater slap in the face!! I had no idea that hair in my black community would literally get you beat up!!

Example 49 – Jane’s narrative

Although the school presents racial challenges, it is important to keep in mind that “at school, we not only learn how to reproduce negative representations about Black hair and Black body; we can also learn how to overcome them”¹³⁰ (GOMES, 2002, p. 50).

5.6.BEAUTY PARLOR

One of the pioneer studies about hair and race in Brazil was conducted by Gomes (2002) in self-denominated ethnic beauty parlors in the city of Belo Horizonte, Brazil. The results of that study show beauty parlors as spaces for different understandings of hair, body, and beauty. The analyzed narratives in both groups present beauty parlors as spaces where hair transformations take place – from natural to straight and from straight to natural. Beauty parlors are spaces in which individual and social projects converge and conflict, and, although they are not necessarily engaged in a political agenda, as a social institution they play an important part in constructing Black women’s self-esteem.

¹²⁹ See SAWO, Marokey; BANERJEE, Asha. The racist campaign against ‘critical race theory’ threatens democracy and economic transformation. 2021. Available: <https://www.epi.org/blog/the-racist-campaign-against-critical-race-theory-threatens-democracy-and-economic-transformation/>. Access in 17 sep.. 2021.

¹³⁰ Original: “Na escola, não só aprendemos a reproduzir as representações negativas sobre o cabelo crespo e o corpo negro; podemos também aprender a superá-las”

Foi então que depois de tanto insistir e vendo o quão triste eu estava com tudo isso, para me ver feliz, minha mãe me levou a um salão de cabeleireiro.¹³¹

Example 50 – Fernanda’s narrative

She made me an appointment at the local [place] with 1 of the 2 black hair stylists there. When I saw my hair straight for the first time I cried tears of joy.

Example 51 – Emma’s narrative

Além dos processos químicos que eu fazia no salão (fiz quase todos que existem. Hahaha), eu sempre cuidei muito dele em casa também.¹³²

Example 52 – Gabriela’s narrative

In the case of the analyzed narratives, beauty parlors appear as the place where the participants go to straighten their hair. The process of hair straightening is seen as a synonym of hair care – as Gabriela’s narrative demonstrate. Three out of five Brazilian narratives mention this space, which demonstrate how Brazilian beauty parlors have perpetuated hegemonic notions of beauty and hair. It was not uncommon in Brazil to see billboards and other forms of advertisements that emphasized the “perfect straight hair”. In fact, as previously mentioned, Brazil has long been known for its hair straightening chemical products. As the narratives talk about the bloggers’ childhood or adolescence, not about the present, it could be argued that a small part of this tradition has changed. With the natural hair revolution, beauty parlors which have Black hair as their main focus have appeared and new hair products as well, with a new services demand being created by capitalism – we can even observe how the description found in recent hair products have changed, portraying positive narratives about Black hair.

5.7.BLOGGERS

For some of the bloggers, other bloggers and/or vloggers have active participation in their decision of going natural, or in their processes of learning about their natural hair. As the examples below demonstrate, SNS celebrities “offered support and education regarding hair care products, overall health, and styling/maintenance of natural AA hair” (ELLINGTON, 2014, p. 562), both in the Brazilian and the American contexts.

Acompanho várias blogueiras há um tempo, e sempre testando os produtos que as via usar.

¹³¹ “That was when, after insisting and seeing how sad I was with all of that, to see me happy, my mother took me to a beauty parlor”

¹³² “Besides the chemical processes I made at the beauty parlor (I did almost every process that exists), I have always taken care of my hair at home too”

Example 53 – Gabriela’s narrative

Foi quando comecei a acompanhar blogueiras que passaram pela transição, e comecei a trabalhar a mente para parar com a química de uma vez por todas.¹³³

Example 54 – Gabriela’s narrative

I spent months watching natural hair gurus on Youtube. I learned how to manage my hair.

Example 55 – Anne’s narrative

I was spending a lot of time trying to simply learn how to take care of my hair, I was watching lots of how to retain length hair videos and curly girl routine videos.

Example 56 – Emma’s narrative

As previously mentioned, the rise of bloggers, vloggers and other communication professionals on the internet addressing the issue of Black hair has helped to articulate and debate not only the aesthetics of Black hair, but also its political content. Although not many bloggers mention the political aspects of Black hair and going natural, it is perceived that many women raise their racial consciousness through the debates and discussions found in blogs and virtual communities.

5.8.SOCIETY/RACISM

Explicit mentions to society and racism as problems only appear in Brazilian narratives. As racism is a multidimensional, adaptive system, it is -very important to emphasize that the notions of ‘good’ or ‘bad’ hair do not happen in a vacuum. To name the structures which have created unjust and damaging effects on the lives of these Black women shifts the individual practice to a collective one and exposes how racial hierarchies are created.

Sei que muitas meninas e mulheres irão se identificar e tantas outras poderão, através das minhas exposições, perceber toda a opressão e desvalorização que era e ainda é atribuída aos **cabelos crespos/cacheados** na sociedade.¹³⁴

Example 57 – Fernanda’s narrative

Muitas vezes a discriminação com o cabelo crespo está ligada ao racismo¹³⁵

Example 58 – Mel’s narrative

¹³³ “That was when I started to follow bloggers that have been through hair transition, and I have started to set my mind in stopping with chemicals once and for all”.

¹³⁴ “I know that many girls and women are going to identify with me and other will, through my expositions, realized all the oppression and devaluation that was and still is attributed to Black hair in the society”

¹³⁵ “Many times, hair discrimination is connected to racism”

ficou mais fácil de entender a lógica aplicada pelo sistema que buscava hierarquizar as texturas: era mais uma prática racista tentando inferiorizar as características do cabelo crespo.¹³⁶

Example 59 – Rayza’s narrative

One of the participants mentions how the school (as discussed above) was the place where she was formally introduced to racist practices, as it is usually the first place where a child interacts with other children. The political aspects of narratives which mention and reaffirm the existence of a given structure enhances the possibility of political awareness about such structure – more than creams, techniques, and beauty hacks, bloggers are responsible for opening the debate on hair and race.

After discussing the analyzed narratives both in terms of linguistic choices and social themes, the next chapter presents the conclusion of this study, through a revision of the research questions.

¹³⁶ “It was easier to understand the rationale applied by the system that wanted to rank hair textures: it was another racial practice trying to downgrade Black hair’s characteristics”

CHAPTER V

6. CONCLUSION

The narratives that discuss hair in blogs written by African American and Black Brazilian women are diverse, approach individual and collective themes, and demonstrate the complexity of Black hair in both Brazilian and American societies. Digital communities such as blogs have provided room to discuss such experiences and to the understanding of how individual feelings are permeated by racism and prejudice. In this sense, bloggers can be seen as active social actors in the process of hair transitioning and hair-acceptance.

In this final chapter I outline the final remarks and conclusions of this study. Revisiting the research questions and following Fairclough's schema (2003), I extend my critical reflection on the analysis and try to identify possible ways past the obstacles. I also discuss the limitations of the study and provide suggestions for further research. Lastly, I briefly reflect on current events and how they are linked to the theme of this thesis.

6.1. FINAL REMARKS

6.1.1. REVISITING THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The first specific research question which guided this study was “What themes emerge from the narratives produced by Black Brazilian women and African American women? To what extent do the writers explicitly mention race/racism in the narratives?” was developed in section 5. The three most frequent themes in Brazilian narratives were, respectively, hair straightening, family, and identify/being black. Surprisingly, explicit mentions of racism as a systematic way of discrimination grounded on *race* is only found in three out of five Brazilian narratives, and in none of the narratives produced in the US. This number, however, does not necessarily mean that the writers lack political awareness: notions of “discrimination” and “society” are also approached when discussing their identities and how their hair is perceived (examples 62, 63, and 64):

a discriminação com o **cabelo crespo** está ligada ao racismo¹³⁷

Example 62 – Racism in Brazilian narratives

Sei que muitas meninas e mulheres irão se identificar e tantas outras poderão, através das minhas exposições, perceber toda a opressão e desvalorização que era e ainda é atribuída aos **cabelos crespos/cacheados** na sociedade.¹³⁸

Example 63 – Society and oppression

É dessa forma fui explicitamente apresentada ao Racismo¹³⁹

Example 64 – Racism in Brazilian narratives

In the American narratives, the most mentioned themes were hair straightening, family, and school. The last two themes represent how social institutions play an important part on a person’s relation with their hair.

The second research question approached the linguistic similarities and differences in both groups of narratives: “Are the narratives of these two groups of Black women similar in terms of linguistic choices? If so, how/which? If not, in what terms do they differ?”. The answer is yes, they are similar. In terms of transitivity, both groups of narratives make use of Relational, Material, and Mental processes (in this order) as their main linguistic choice. These processes introduce the theme and set the scene for how participants related with their hair (Relational), described material actions of hair manipulation (Material), and the participants’ feelings towards the situations involving their hair.

¹³⁷ “Natural hair discrimination is connected to racism”.

¹³⁸ “I know that many girls and women will relate and many others will be able to, through my exposure, realize all the oppression and devalue that is still attributed to kinky/curly hair in the society”

¹³⁹ “And in this way I was explicitly introduced to racism”.

6.2. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study of digital narratives was suitable during the pandemic, in a context of social distancing and limitations on face-to-face contact. These online narratives, however, exclude a percentage of Black women (more in Brazil and less in the US) who do not have direct access to the internet or enough knowledge of blogging platforms – or who simply discuss the theme in different spaces, digital or not.

6.3. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Considering the limitations of this study and the characteristics of the digital environment, my first suggestion for further research is to conduct studies in other and more contemporary digital spaces: SNS as Facebook, Tiktok, YouTube, Twitter and Instagram are also used to discuss the topic Black hair. As these SNS rely heavily on images and/or videos, another suggestion would be to conduct a study that investigates the hair narratives produced by Black women in multimodal genres, considering both text and images - as mentioned, this was a limitation of this study.

My second suggestion is related to the selected data and is far more ambitious: it would be interesting to conduct a study that could contrast and compare other diasporic experiences and African experiences. Understanding that this could be a challenge, another suggestion would be a study focusing on Brazil and considering its different regions: narratives from the North to the South. As racial and social identities in Brazil are complex and mutable, one of my hypotheses is that the relation of Black women with their hair, as well as their experiences (and consequently the role language plays in the construction of these experiences) may differ from region to region.

The next suggestion is related to straightened-hair discourses: in which ways brands construct discourses regarding the need to straighten Black hair? A comparative study with more contemporary approaches to natural hair could provide interesting linguistic analysis in terms of discursive techniques applied.

Finally, considering the intersectional aspect of this study, my last suggestion would be to consider the differences between how Black women and Black men discuss and evaluate hair and hair experiences.

6.4. REFLECTIONS

The task of writing this thesis during the COVID-19 pandemic was a difficult one. In some moments, I wondered if discussing hair was suitable in a moment of socio-environmental collapse. In the beginning of the two year-period I had to write this thesis, a popular TV show was airing on Brazilian TV – *Big Brother Brasil*. In this show, a Black participant had his hair compared to a monster¹⁴⁰. In a sports program, a soccer player had his hair compared to beans, as well as being called “dirty hair”¹⁴¹. A model had a job offer denied because her hair “called too much attention”¹⁴². Even the president of Brazil, Jair Bolsonaro, for the second time has suggested that the hair of one of his supporters was a “maker” of cockroaches¹⁴³. These unfortunate examples demonstrate how prejudice and racism are still linked to hair in today’s society. They made me realized that this discussion is still necessary. The narratives analyzed in this study indicate that for a “natural hair revolution” to happen, communities had to be created. Although most of these hair discussions have taken place in the digital environment, they expanded to real-life events¹⁴⁴, such as the *Marcha do Orgulho Crespo*¹⁴⁵, events that demand social justice and that denounce the existence of racial prejudice in all social spheres – from beauty to the judicial system. It is through these collective actions and collective consciousness that more and more young Black women discover the potential of their Black hair, women like me whom, in 2015, sat in front of the mirror and relentlessly cut all my straightened hair – I am because we are.

¹⁴⁰ DELGADO, Andreza. Racismo no BBB 21 envolvendo cabelos de João não é espetáculo. 2021. Available at: <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/ilustrada/2021/04/racismo-sofrido-por-joao-luiz-no-bbb-21-nao-e-entretenimento.shtml>. Access in: 29 ago. 2021.

¹⁴¹ BRANDÃO, Renato. Por cause do cabelo, jogador é vítima de racismo em transmissão da Série B. 2021. Available at: <https://www.uol.com.br/esporte/futebol/ultimas-noticias/2021/07/18/jogador-e-vitima-de-racismo-durante-transmissao.htm>. Access in: 29 ago. 2021.

¹⁴² NUNES, Júlia. Modelo denuncia racismo após funcionário de agência sugerir diminuir volume de cabelo: 'Não dá para colocar chapéu nem boné'. 2021. Available at: <https://g1.globo.com/sp/itapetininga-regiao/noticia/2021/06/11/modelo-denuncia-racismo-em-agencia-apos-funcionario-sugerir-diminuir-volume-de-cabelo-nao-da-para-colocar-chapeu-nem-bone.ghhtml>. Access in: 29 ago. 2021.

¹⁴³ GLOBO, O. Bolsonaro volta a fazer comentário racista sobre cabelo de apoiador: 'Olha o criador de barata aqui'. 2021. Available at: <https://oglobo.globo.com/politica/bolsonaro-volta-fazer-comentario-racista-sobre-cabelo-de-apoiador-olha-criador-de-barata-aqui-1-25098273>. Access in: 29 ago. 2021.

¹⁴⁴ See GOMES, 2017.

¹⁴⁵ Black hair pride parade

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ANNEX A – NARRATIVES FROM BRAZIL¹⁴⁶

1.

1.1.NARRATIVE 01:

Olá, maravilhosos e maravilhosas!

No post de hoje eu vou contar pra vocês como foi o meu processo de transição capilar e meu big chop.

Bom, quem me conhece sabe que sempre tive devoção pelo meu cabelo. Além dos processos químicos que eu fazia no salão(fiz quase todos que existem. Hahaha), eu sempre cuidei muito dele em casa também. Acompanho várias blogueiras há um tempo, e sempre testando os produtos que as via usar.

Minha mãe alisou meu cabelo pela primeira vez quando eu tinha uns 7 anos, e desde então nunca parei de passar química no cabelo. Ou seja, eu não fazia a mínima ideia de como era o meu cabelo natural.

Há uns 2 anos, eu comecei a ficar incomodada com a falta de liberdade. Como sou professora, faço faculdade e procuro manter uma vida social, meus dias sempre foram muito corridos. E a dependência da prancha, da progressiva começou a me incomodar demais.

Foi quando comecei a acompanhar blogueiras que passaram pela transição, e comecei a trabalhar a mente para parar com a química de uma vez por todas.

Entrei em transição pela primeira vez.

Sentia os cachos, a textura do cabelo natural e achava bem mais macio que o cabelo com química, e isso me animava. Mas foi por pouco tempo. Como decidi passar a transição

¹⁴⁶ Pictures and hyperlinks excluded. Bolds, italics and other stylistic choices maintained. No grammatical changes made.

pranchando o cabelo, tudo ficou mais difícil. A prancha não pegava no cabelo natural e as duas texturas ficavam visíveis. Não aguentei e passei progressiva nele.

Meu cabelo com progressiva era lindo? Demais. Super brilhoso, a cara da riqueza. Mas eu percebi uma coisa: mesmo com todo esse brilho, o fio do cabelo com progressiva era muito grosso e áspero, e o do cabelo natural super macio. Foi quando me arrependi e decidi não mais fazer progressiva.

Passei a minha transição toda com o cabelo pranchado, preso e cheio de creme na frente pra segurar os “parentes”(rs).

Meu cabelo começou a arreentar e cair(é normal, tá?), e com 6 meses sem química eu decidi fazer meu big chop(corte da química).

Como você soube que era o momento certo pro BC?

Eu apenas sentia que estava pronta. Meu cabelo estava grande e, embora eu já tivesse cortado chanel outras vezes, nunca tinha cortado joãozinho. Mas, mesmo sabendo que eu poderia ficar com o cabelo muito curto, eu estava preparada pra isso.

Já tinha várias fotos de cortes no celular e escolhi um corte bem curto, com a nuca batida e assimétrico. Saí do salão, corri pra casa, fiz uma nutrição, finalizei o cabelo e dormi. E foi assim que ele ficou:

Gente, foi amor à primeira vista. Eu me apaixonei por completo pelos cachos e nunca mais passei prancha no cabelo.

Como nesse primeiro corte ainda restaram umas partes lisas, eu dei meu segundo corte em dezembro. Foi a partir daí que passei a ter meu cabelo 100% natural(sem nenhuma parte alisada).

Não tem um dia que eu me arrependa. Eu digo sempre que assumir meu cabelo natural foi a decisão mais acertada que eu tomei na minha vida. Não é apenas uma mudança estética, eu mudei como pessoa. Eu passei a me aceitar mais. E sabe aqueles comentários: “Nossa, e esse cabelo duro? Vai alisar não? “

Quando a luz dos outros não brilha, eles vão fazer o quê?? Tentar apagar a de quem brilha. E nós brilhamos muito, meus amores!!

Pelo direito de sermos o que quisermos ser! E que toda essa negatividade e comentários maldosos se transformem em brilho para os nossos cabelos!

Até a próxima!

1.2.NARRATIVE 02:

Olá **encaracoladas** e **encaracolados**! Nesse post de abertura vou contar resumidamente a minha relação com meu cabelo, em forma de retrospectiva, para que vocês entendam como tudo aconteceu comigo e a importância de hoje eu estar compartilhando minhas experiências, conhecimentos e ideias. Sei que muitas meninas e mulheres irão se identificar e tantas outras poderão, através das minhas exposições, perceber toda a opressão e desvalorização que era e ainda é atribuída aos **cabelos crespos/cacheados** na sociedade.

Bom...vamos começar! A primeira lembrança que me vem à cabeça é dos tempos de escola. Infelizmente essa lembrança é ruim. Inúmeras vezes cheguei em casa, depois de um dia de aula, aos prantos. Sofri muito **bullying** na escola por causa do meu cabelo. Eu sempre estudei em escolas particulares e durante a minha infância eu era uma das únicas negras nas salas de aula. Lembro que meus coleguinhas diziam que eu tinha cabelo ruim, duro, zombavam e perguntavam o que eu estava fazendo naquela escola, pois não era lugar para mim.

Teve uma situação, que jamais me esqueci. Acho que foi quando eu tinha 6 anos de idade. Todos os alunos deveriam ser fotografados, pois as fotos seriam entregues aos pais, como presente de fim de ano. Quando chegou a minha vez, a professora tirou o laço do meu cabelo, e eu fiquei morrendo de vergonha. Eu não queria que ninguém, principalmente os meninos da classe, me vissem com o cabelo daquele jeito. Não satisfeita, a professora penteou o meu cabelo, seco! Como assim?! É isso mesmo, seco! Todos sabemos que fios **cacheados/crespos** quando penteados secos ganham volume. É uma característica do cabelo, que hoje é super valorizada, pois dá vida e personalidade às madeixas. Mas, naquela época era motivo de piada. Então, vocês imaginam o que aconteceu? Meu cabelo ficou super armado, enorme. E eu que já vinha sofrendo **preconceito** por causa do cabelo, nessa hora fui vítima de uma chacota sem tamanho. Os meninos pegavam nele, riam, diziam que parecia Bombril. Todos os alunos, meninos e meninas, começaram a me humilhar. Nem a professora, nem ninguém entrevistou [sic]. Essa situação serviu para mexer ainda mais com a minha **autoestima**. Cheguei em casa me debulhando em lágrimas, questionando meus pais, questionando Deus. Eu falava: Deus por que eu sou assim? Por que meu cabelo é assim? O que eu fiz para merecer tanta humilhação? Por muito tempo achei que eu era o problema, que eu tinha “defeito”, por não ter nascido com o cabelo liso. E dessa forma fui explicitamente apresentada ao Racismo. É na escola que ele geralmente nos é apresentado, pois é o local onde começamos a conviver em sociedade. Mas me lembro claramente dos meus pais em um trabalho árduo de conversa e muita paciência, para me fazer entender que eu não tinha “defeito”, que aquelas eram as minhas

características e que eu era sim linda do meu jeitinho. Eu me recordo que eu chorava, e eles choravam comigo.

Hoje penso o quão difícil deve ter sido para eles também tudo isso. Ver a filha sofrer, passar por tanto constrangimento e **preconceito** tão novinha, tão criança, e ao mesmo tempo, ao tentar buscar referências que ajudassem a tirar aqueles pensamentos da minha cabeça, não encontrarem. Afinal, se ainda hoje é difícil encontrar referências de negros seja na TV, revista, propagandas e tantos outros lugares, imagina no início da década de 90, época em que tudo isso aconteceu. Era quase impossível, mas eles não desistiram. Me educaram com muito amor. E as minhas referências eram eles. Mesmo assim, eu já fazia escova para 'abaixar' meus cabelos e torná-los aceitáveis. E cresci com a idéia fixa de alisá-los, porque o **bullying** não parava, eu continuava a me sentir feia e para mim a única solução seria alisar os cabelos.

Foi então que depois de tanto insistir e vendo o quão triste eu estava com tudo isso, para me ver feliz, minha mãe me levou a um salão de cabeleireiro. Eu tinha 11 anos. Me vem à cabeça a minha imagem quando saí daquele salão. Eu estava tão feliz, aquilo parecia a solução dos meus problemas. Só que não! Mal sabia eu que aquele era o início de uma escravidão. Eu me tornei escrava das químicas que mudam a estrutura dos fios. De lá para cá foram 20 anos danificando meus cabelos, cheguei até a usar megahair. Coloquei químicas, desde relaxamentos, passando por escovas definitivas e progressivas. Eu não conseguia mais viver sem isso. Meu cabelo crescia 1 centímetro e eu já necessitava passar mais químicas, pois a raiz crescia e ele ficava “cheio”. Na minha cabeça essa era a única forma de estar bonita, socialmente aceita e principalmente, nunca mais passar nenhum constrangimento e nem sofrer **preconceito** por causa do meu cabelo. Eu olhava ao meu redor, brincava com bonecas que sempre eram loiras, de cabelos lisos e olhos azuis, assistia a TV, lia revistas, via propagandas publicitárias e rótulos de produtos para cabelos onde todas as mulheres tinham cabelo ou liso ou alisado, então intrinsecamente fui condicionada a achar que o “certo” era esse, que essa era a minha única opção.

Foi quando em abril de 2015, após ir no salão que habitualmente eu frequentava, para que fosse feito relaxamento seguido de escova progressiva, percebi que meu cabelo estava sem vida, murcho, quebrado. Eu me olhei no espelho e comecei a perceber que aquela imagem refletida não era a minha verdadeira imagem. Eu comecei a me incomodar, a me perguntar o que eu estava fazendo com o meu cabelo e comigo. Eu me perguntava o porque de estar colocando tanta química no cabelo, mudando a minha identidade. Eu já não me reconhecia mais. Me lembrei da infância, do porque tudo isso começou em minha vida, pensei e decidi que não iria mais mudar a minha **identidade**. Eu optei por enfrentar tudo e todos para ser quem eu

realmente sou. Assumir minhas raízes e deixar aflorar minha verdadeira beleza, a minha negritude. Foi então que entrei em **transição capilar**, sem nem saber direito o que era.

1.3.NARRATIVE 03:

Olá, seja bem-vindx! Neste espaço quero compartilhar com vocês a minha história, a minha vivência e falar sobre como é ser mulher e negra na sociedade. Sente-se e fique à vontade, porque quero que se sintam bem ao ler este artigo e que possa refletir sobre ele.

Meu nome é [nome], **sou mulher e negra, filha de uma mineira** que foi “entregue” a uma família de brancos, na expectativa de uma vida melhor, mas isso não aconteceu; foi um trabalho escravo mascarado de adoção. Já meu pai, filho de empregados domésticos, nasceu e cresceu em São Paulo; ele também não teve uma vida fácil e ainda constrói seu legado. Eu nasci em tempos difíceis, em 1987. Meus pais moravam de aluguel e meu pai ganhava bem pouco. Nesta época minha [mãe](#) não podia trabalhar porque não tinha com quem deixar minha irmã mais velha e eu.

Mesmo com tantas dificuldades, foi possível construirmos nossa casa no terreno da minha avó paterna. Meu pai sempre trabalhou muito e ainda trabalha. Ele gosta, mesmo com todos os percalços.

Ele sempre nos ensinou a sermos dignas de nosso trabalho e a nunca deixar de trabalhar, por pior que fosse o emprego. Ele sempre dizia: **“Não temos escolha, temos que trabalhar para pagar as contas”**. Basicamente era esse o objetivo. Minha mãe, por sua vez, sempre nos ensinou as questões éticas de mulher e nos ensinou a nos defendermos tanto como mulher quanto como negras. **Ela sempre dizia para não confiarmos em homem**, por mais que fosse da família; se fosse conhecido, então, nunca ficarmos sozinhas com eles. Com relação à nossa cor, não podíamos passar vergonha. Por isso precisávamos estar sempre bem-vestidas (aliás, até hoje), mas o “estar bem-vestida” significa estar com as roupas limpas e passadas, até mesmo porque, naquela época, não tínhamos condições de comprar roupas de marca.

E o cabelo? Esse era um problema, acreditem. **Como um cabelo pode ser um problema na vida de alguém? Na nossa vida era...** Naquela época (início dos anos 90), não existiam produtos específicos para cabelo crespo, ou seja, tínhamos que nos virar como dava.

Inicialmente, minha mãe passou a trançar nossos cabelos, porque era mais prático e não dava “trabalho”.

Na escola, ninguém acreditava que aquele cabelo podia ser meu e me questionavam: “*Como um cabelo” duro” podia estar daquele tamanho?*”. Mas antes de trançar os cabelos, minha mãe precisava penteá-los. Nós reclamávamos muito, muito mesmo, porque puxava, então ficávamos com o couro cabelo dolorido por dias. Então **ela resolveu alisar nossos cabelos**. Tínhamos uns cinco ou seis anos na época.

Ainda assim, não era a melhor alternativa, porque o cabelo ficava muito armado, mas pelo menos não reclamávamos mais na hora de pentear.

Com isso, crescemos ao longo de anos alisando os cabelos, sofrendo com queimaduras no couro cabeludo, com queda de cabelo e, por fim, com **corte químico**, que, em meu ponto de vista, foi o pior.

Corte químico é nome que se dá ao corte do cabelo feito com química. Já na fase adulta, com o progresso de produtos para cabelo (se é que pode se dizer assim), na sede de ter um cabelo liso, além da química do alisamento, resolvi fazer progressiva (uso de formol nos cabelos).

Segundo a minha cabeleireira da época, o resultado seria melhor. A cada três meses, eu alisava e fazia progressiva. Até que, na terceira vez, ao enxaguar os meus cabelos, notei o desespero da cabeleireira, porque meus cabelos estavam praticamente caindo da raiz.

De acordo com a experiência dela, **isso nunca havia acontecido, mas aconteceu**.

Fiquei oito meses com praticamente quatro centímetros de cabelo. Onde eu conseguia prender, eu prendia. **As pessoas me questionavam por que eu estava daquele jeito, feia, parecendo uma velha com coque e óculos (palavras de minha avó)**.

1.4. NARRATIVE 04

Olá meus leitores queridos. Hoje aproveitando o feriado da consciência negra temos uma entrevista com a minha amiga *Mel*. Uma jovem trabalhadora, estudiosa, com uma atitude

sempre guerreira e atualizada nas questões afro sociais. Ela tem uma história capilar muito interessante e depois de tantas químicas resolveu assumir os cabelos naturais.

Juliana: *Mel* nos conte um pouco sobre a sua trajetória capilar:

Mel: Na minha infância meu cabelo foi trançado pela minha mãe, que sofria pra pentear tanto cabelo, hehe. Eu sofria porque passava um tempão sentada esperando ela terminar. Tive minha primeira experiência cedo por volta dos 10 anos quando usei o [produto] da [marca], fiz só uma vez e não fez muito efeito. Depois fui usar química lá pros meus 14 anos uma química desconhecida que deixou meu cabelo liso. Depois disso passei por muitas químicas como Guanidina, Progressiva, etc.

Juliana: Por que desistiu da química?

Mel: A princípio foi pela estética. Queria cachos mas tudo o que conseguiam era alisar meu cabelo. Eu pesquisei bastante antes de decidir, estava farta de me submeter a tudo que a química traz. E também queria assumir meu cabelo como ele é, me ver como negra, com meu crespo natural. E pelo da saúde, muitas meninas não sabem mas muitas químicas tem propriedades que chegam a ser cancerígenas.

Juliana: No início teve alguma dificuldade? Pq esta é decisão que costuma ser difícil?

Mel: Sim tive muita dificuldade por falta de informação. Este é o meu segundo BC e a segunda tentativa de deixar o cabelo natural. É muito difícil pois geralmente quando se usa química não se conhece o cabelo, dá um medo do desconhecido. Outro problema é a falta de informação. Alguns meses depois do meu primeiro BC eu recorri a química porque não sabia cuidar do meu crespo e tinha pouco acesso as informações. Também é importante se aceitar, eu achei muito importante deixar meu cabelo se mostrar e me reafirmar como negra e perceber que o crespo é muito bonito se você deixar seu preconceito de lado. Muitas vezes a cultura do "cabelo ruim" impede muitas meninas de deixar

a química. A confiança e a autoestima são importantes, precisam ser cultivadas. São muitas coisas que podem desestimular, é importante que a pessoa esteja certa de sua decisão. Para aprender a cuidar é só pesquisar e hoje está mais fácil.

Juliana: Sofreu algum tipo de bullying?

Mel: Diretamente não. Mas já percebi alguma coisa. Penso assim: se a pessoa não tem coragem de dizer pra você o que pensa não merece minha atenção. Geralmente dou uma alfinetada na pessoa, porque se importam demais com os outros. Sou assim e gosto de mim, gosto de meu cabelo, da minha cor. Muitas vezes a discriminação com o cabelo crespo está ligada ao racismo. Eu sou negra, meu cabelo é crespo, uma herança. Faz parte de quem eu sou. E me dá orgulho. As pessoas ficam olhando na rua sim, mas eles que se acostumem. Temos que ter essa consciência: Meu cabelo é crespo sim, porque eu gosto dele assim! Se tiver convicção e confiança, bullying é contornado tranquilamente. Isso já me incomodou e as vezes me deixa triste, mas aí eu vejo como essas pessoas são pequenas, chego a sentir pena. Mas é isso aí estamos quebrando ditaduras de beleza e deixando tudo mais bonito, mais crespo. E isso incomoda.

Juliana: Quais os produtos que vc usa atualmente (leave in, hidratações, gel, etc) para manter os cabelos bonitos, saudáveis e com definição?

Mel: Bom são muitos pois meu cabelo enjoa rápido e eu sempre procuro produtos mais compatíveis. Gosto muito de fazer umectação com azeite extra virgem e com o óleo de macadâmia, e misturar na hidratação. Sigo o Cronograma Capilar, do meu jeito mesmo, e sem neura. Para hidratação gosto muito do [produtos], a máscara [produto], entre outros. Ainda estou pra experimentar o gel de linhaça. Sobre leave in eu gosto do finalizador [produtos], e gosto muito do [produto] dá muita definição, mas não uso com muita frequência pois reduz muito o volume.

Juliana: Qual a sua mensagem para as meninas que pretendem mais ainda não tiveram

coragem de assumir o de crespito natural?

Mel: Primeiro tenham certeza do que querem. Pesquisem bastante, pois é uma caminhada muitas vezes difícil assumir seu crespito. Vocês vão precisar ter força de vontade para prosseguir, muitas pessoas irão criticar vocês, tentar lhes por para baixo. Seu cabelo crespito é símbolo de resistência. Existem muitas meninas que podem servir como inspiração, tenham força, e AMEM O SEU CABELO NATURAL COMO ELE É! O MAIS IMPORTANTE É VOCÊ SE AMAR E SE ACEITAR ANTES DA ACEITAÇÃO DOS OUTROS. Resistir a um sistema sempre é difícil, por isso amem a si mesmas como são. Seu cabelo faz parte de quem você é. Mesmo que tenham que tentar de novo como eu, o importante é se sentir bem. Eu me sinto maravilhosa com meu cabelo natural e com confiança e amor vocês também se sentirão! Força e Foco!

Amiga realmente você está poderosa com seu black. Te conheço pessoalmente e vi os cachinhos lindos que seus cabelos formam, é um tipo de 3c com 4a misturado. Eu uso química mais apoio a sua decisão e acredito que você seja mais uma inspiração para muitas meninas que estão na dúvida, ou tem medo de deixar os cabelos naturais.

É isso meus amores, quem quiser contar um pouco de sua trajetória capilar pode mandar fotos e relatos pelo formulário na aba de contato acima.

Beijos.

1.5. NARRATIVE 05

Abril é um mês muito especial para mim, porque foi nesse mês que eu fiz o meu *Big Chop* (o grande corte para retirar a química dos fios alisados e voltar à textura natural). Até aqui se passaram seis anos e o meu cabelo crespito me ensinou muito sobre mim. Por isso, hoje eu resolvi inspirar você compartilhando uma linha do tempo fotográfica desse período.

Seis anos atrás, eu nem imaginava que o meu cabelo tornaria um dos maiores pilares para a minha comunicação na internet. Tudo que eu descobri através desse autoconhecimento se tornou partilha desde o momento em que eu reservei um cantinho na nuvem chamado [blog]. Esse cantinho foi crescendo e junto com ele eu fui evoluindo gradativamente. A nossa comunidade me fortaleceu muito após a transição capilar e o big chop, então nada mais justo que rever tudo isso com você. Vamos?

Estamos em 2015: o ano da decisão

Antes de cortar o meu cabelo desse tamanho que você está vendo na foto, eu lembro exatamente qual era a sensação: impaciência! Sabe quando alguém te conta que “todo mundo tem medo do escuro” ou que “é impossível não gostar de chocolate”? São coisas que parecem verdades universais, mas ninguém sabe ao certo quem inventou. E assim eu me sentia: seguindo o medo de fazer o BC porque alguém tinha dito que 8 meses era pouco tempo em transição capilar.

8 meses, para mim, foi tempo suficiente para me sentir exausta dos processos de texturização. Tempo suficiente para morrer de curiosidade em relação à minha textura natural. E, sem dúvidas, foi tempo suficiente para entender que eu não tinha nada a perder, afinal nem todo mundo tem medo do escuro. Então eu cortei!

Estamos em 2016: conhecendo a mim e ao meu cabelo crespo

Foi nesse ano que eu aprendi o que significava fator encolhimento, textura, curvatura, day after e todos esses termos que em breve se tornariam comuns. Mas foi também em 2016 que o [blog] começou a crescer regionalmente.

Eu era uma das poucas criadoras de conteúdo negras na cidade de [local], consequentemente uma das poucas que falava sobre cabelo crespo, beleza e moda a partir das nossas vivências. Era chegada a hora de estudar, aprender e tomar domínio para trazer um conteúdo cada vez mais apurado e profissional. Por isso, eu gosto de dizer que o [blog] cresceu junto comigo. Nos tornamos potentes juntos e nos ajudamos ao longo do processo: eu e meu projeto, como se fossemos um só, ao lado dessa comunidade crescente.

Estamos em 2017: percebendo a representatividade do cabelo crespo no ambiente digital

Beleza e moda sempre foram temas inspiradores para mim, mas me ver neles, já era uma outra história. Eu fui a criança apaixonada por revistas que sonhava em ser jornalista e viver nesse mundo utópico de uma estagiária em filme de NY. Então a minha realidade tratou de me trazer à tona, me mostrou que não havia espaço para mim e silenciou aquela trilha sonora empolgante. Desde então, as minhas batalhas sempre estiveram marcadas no campo do que era possível, não do que era inspirador.

Mas em 2017, apenas dois anos após o corte que me motivou a escrever esse relato, eu me vi novamente nesse lugar. Seria então a minha chance de experimentar um café com gosto de correria na redação? Eu também já havia iniciado a faculdade de Jornalismo e imagina que loucura, parece que o impossível não era tão impossível assim. Nessa época eu me lembro do quanto me senti sozinha, muitas vezes invisibilizada e até questionada.

Aos poucos eu movimentei o cenário e este foi o ano que eu OCUPEI. Eu me fiz presente em todos os ambientes que não foram feitos para uma mulher como eu, dentro da minha realidade. Fiz com que lembrassem do meu nome. Eu sonhei de novo e então cresci.

Estamos em 2018: saindo da zona de conforto

Faltavam somente alguns meses para enfim me dizer jornalista, a vida de de criadora de conteúdo cada vez mais consolidada e aparentemente estava tudo sobre controle, exatamente como uma boa capricorniana fazia questão de assegurar que estivesse. Mas ainda não era tudo! Eu me senti sufocada pela vida que levava, pelos planos que tinha e as perspectivas de futuro. Então em 2018 eu fiz uma das mudanças mais loucas e incertas da minha vida: chegou a hora de viver na capital.

Mudei para Recife com os olhinhos brilhando, mas era impossível trazer na mala toda a credibilidade e relevância que eu tinha conquistado em Caruaru. Portanto, me vi obrigada a começar praticamente do zero! Agora a conversa pode parecer ter tomado um tom mais distante do nosso foco, mas não se engane, eu ainda estou falando de cabelo (também).

A relação com o meu cabelo também estava pautada nas interações que eu tinha a partir dele. Muitos dos elogios, as trocas em grupos ninchados, os encontrinhos, eventos íntimos com pessoas que eu já conhecia: tudo isso ficou. Me reconstruir em uma nova cidade, bem maior e que exigia de mim um novo estilo de vida, sendo mulher preta, LGBT e crespa, foi desafiador.

E então eu me vi novamente apegada ao ambiente virtual, como lá em 2015, de um jeito curioso, enfrontivo e potente. Mais uma vez, o [blog] e automaticamente o meu cabelo crespo, se tornaram canais de comunicação com o mundo ao meu redor. E veio o título de embaixadora.

Estamos em 2019: ganhando o mundo

O ano de 2019 já começou especial! O meu trabalho sendo reconhecido nacionalmente através do título de Embaixadora [marca], uma marca que já se relacionava com o [blog] desde 2015. Além disso, os espaços em Recife se tornavam cada vez mais acessíveis e a confiança e autoconhecimento, trazidos pelo meu cabelo crespo, cada vez mais lapidados. Foi neste ano que o meu trabalho me levou para fora do país.

Estamos em 2020: defendendo as características do meu cabelo crespo

Até aqui eu já havia me aprofundado em discussões que estavam além do meu cabelo crespo. O que significa ser mulher negra, nordestina, LGBT... e como a minha textura agrega leituras raciais a essas discussões? Eu já tinha começado a construir essas respostas, mas foi no ano de 2020, em um cenário pandêmico inimaginável, que outras questões surgiram.

As diferenças entre os fios crespos e cacheados, tecnicamente, eu já conhecia e a forma como cada uma das curvaturas era recebida em uma sociedade racista, também já estava no

meu campo de visão, eu sentia na pele. Por isso, ficou mais fácil de entender a lógica aplicada pelo sistema que buscava hierarquizar as texturas: era mais uma prática racista tentando inferiorizar as características do cabelo crespo.

Em 2020 eu recebi diversos ataques virtuais relacionados à falta de definição do meu cabelo, predominantemente 4c e essa se tornou mais uma pauta urgente para o [blog].

Estamos em 2021: ampliando as discussões

E chegamos a 2021. Me sinto amadurecida pelo processo! Cresci junto com o cabelo e hoje espero conseguir ampliar as discussões. Quero sair do razoável e questionar mais a fundo sobre os mitos que cercam o nosso cabelo crespo. Seguimos juntas?

ANNEX B – NARRATIVES FROM THE USA

1. NARRATIVE 01

My Natural Hair Journey

After a lifetime of wearing my hair naturally I definitely have a hair journey. I'll start my hair soap opera at the beginning. Little T had tons of hair, bigger than my body!! LOL!! I grew up in a very diverse suburb in the Napa Valley. My friends were like the UN, one for every spectrum of the world. Which I have to say was WONDERFUL because no one paid attention to race or even cared about how your hair looked. It was idyllic. I mention this because I had many many crazy hair days. I have been managing my hair since I was about 6... Washing, drying, and styling.

[image]

My parents worked and went to work very early, so yeah it was on me to do my hair. Can I also point out the 80's did not yield a plethora of curl friendly products. We had afro products, jerry curl products, setting lotions and coconut oil. I used the latter. At the time I didn't find my hair a challenge, it was my hair, I just dealt with it.

[image]

Looking back on it, I think to myself...HOW DID LITTLE T DO THAT!?! My hair was long and fluffy, I remember thinking I had to be related to Diana Ross because my hair looked just like hers!! I ALWAYS styled my hair, typically in a ponytail. My Dad even nicknamed me Pony Girl. I had major flyways, you know the fluff at the hairline that would NOT lay down. But you know what, it did not bother me one bit!!

At 10 years old my we moved to Ventura, a predominantly white beach community. While living here, it was the first time in my life I can remember feeling unhappy and *emotional* about my hair. My brother and I were 2 of 5 blacks kids in the entire school and I began to feel very insecure about my hair. I remember going to sleep crying and praying for manageable “white” people hair like my Mom. I was approaching puberty and I swear my hair was a monster. It was bigger than ever and getting curlier by the day. In my mind it was awful. I never told anyone how upset my hair was making me. It wasn’t the other kids teasing or anything like that, on the contrary I had loads of friends. I just wanted to fit in is all. The only good thing was I had discovered [product]!! I had finally found a way to keep my hairline & my ponytails and braids sleek and smooth.

Moving to LA when I was 12 was perhaps the MOST emotional I felt about my hair. We lived initially in Venice which in many ways reminded me of my elementary years in Northern California. Back to *the no one cares how you look*. But at that time my parents split up and my Dad living in a 1 bedroom couldn’t afford a big enough place for us in Venice. That brings us to my next move to the Crenshaw district, circa 1991. Think back – Rodney King, OJ trial, LA Riots, Boys in the Hood...that was where I lived. Lordy the 90’s in the Crenshaw District was a major shocker for my UN-like upbringing. Going to school was an even greater slap in the face!! I had no idea that hair in my black community would literally get you beat up!! The girls in my predominantly black middle school persecuted me because of my hair. Hair that I didn’t even really like. Hair that drove me crazy everyday to wrangle into a ponytail. That same hair represented “good hair” according to them and I somehow thought “I was white and all that.” The bullying was terrifying. I pretty much went to school everyday knowing that someone was going to threaten me because I had the audacity to have long curly hair. My entire 8th grade year I did not have any friends, ate lunch alone, and often ran home after school because the group of kids waiting across the street to kick my ass everyday scared the shit out of me....all because of HAIR.

Needless to say I left that school the following year. That one year of middle school taught me a lot about myself:

I have a lot of grit

My hair must be pretty awesome if it was gonna cause so much uproar.

I would never ever change one thing about myself to please anyone or to fit in.

My hair deserves my love not my angst.

Fortunately, my new school was an accepting environment filled with creative ambitious young people that could care less about my hair. I still wore my ponytails and long single braids, which by this time became kinda my signature style. Curl Friendly products were still non-existent, but I did find an Aveda gel that was very effective on my curls.

Most of my twenties I kept my hair in my “signature styles.” Braids, ponytails, and buns. Tidy and predictable that was me...I was not trying to free the monster!!

[image]Curls at Age 19

Enter: WHITE HAIR!! Imagine being 23 and white hair starts sprouting, popping up like crazy wires that would not lay down and were *impossible* to hide. Can we say EMOTIONAL!?! Yep, I had a few years in the beginning that I felt massively embarrassed and self conscious of my white hair. I would see those gleaming white hairs and think WHHHYYYYEEEE!! My attempts at dying those stubborn white hairs was short lived. I tried once or twice but the dye would not take, like they looked dingy and dirty and yellow which actually made me feel even more embarrassed!! Seriously, not only did I have big curly hair but **NOW** it appeared I was destined to have white hair too...like how could I be so unlucky!!?? I remember feeling like everyone could see them and would feel mortified if ever someone mentioned them to me, UGH. The worst!!!! Somewhere around 28 I began to feel like Efff it, I’m about to have white curly hair, nothing I can do. Time to free the monster that I kept locked up for these many years.

At age 30, I finally started wearing my hair down on a regular basis. After more than a decade I was still using the same [brand] flaxseed gel and started using their Blue Malva shampoo. At some point during this time I began using a curling iron to curl the ends a bit to make my hair look more consistent. Little did I know that I was damaging my curls with every curl of the wand. As a prolonged result, I began to see yellowing of my white hair.

[image]

Heat Damaged Hair

To make my hair matters worse I began to rapidly lose my hair. In the aftermath of a leaving the girls father I found myself single, no home, no job and 2 kids to take care of. Basically I wasn’t eating well or paying attention to my body. It took family and friends pointing out how thin my hair had become. The girl that always had the long fluffy hair was gone. In her place was a depressed 31 year old woman with 50% less hair. Can we say it again EMOTIONAL!! My eyes tear up thinking about how sad I felt, the despair, the hopelessness. And now no hair. If you have seen IGTV TeaTime Episode 1 then you know I had to fight everyday to get my life on track. Bit by bit, day by day, my hair began to grow back. Yes, it

was growing, but it was not the same. My hair was finer and the curl pattern changed, more squiggles than curls. Sigh, the epic hair saga continues.

In my mid 30's I found the Curl Doctor, [name]. Under his guidance I learned how to care for my curls properly. His curl by curl dry cut was brilliant!! His whole approach to curly hair was utterly refreshing. He taught me how to wash my hair, yes, there is a proper way. [name] also introduced me to [brand]products. But most importantly he celebrated my choice not to dye my hair. He built up my hair confidence and reminded to be happy with the hair that grew out of my head. It's safe to say his "curl intervention" changed my journey.

[image]

Today, at 41, Yes, my hair is still very EMOTIONAL for me, but I am also able to have a curl crush on my own hair!! See I learned that all curls are beautiful...even my frizzy white hair. Loving my hair is as important as all the other self practices I live by.

What's your hair journey? I'd love for you to share in the comments below!

1.2. NARRATIVE 02

Through elementary (and early middle) school I wore beads, barrettes and ball hair ties in my hair. And I honestly hated it. I couldn't understand why I still had to wear "little girl" hairstyles and accessories, while my friends flaunted straight hair. I dreaded sitting still on the floor, while my mom detangled and styled my natural hair every Sunday.

But on special occasions, my mom straightened my hair with the infamous hot comb. Anyone who's experienced the hot comb will probably tell you grease and scalp burn are part of this process. But in the end, your hair is straight. I had a love/hate relationship with the hot comb process. Hated the burn, but loved the end result. Also, hated that I couldn't be active with my straight hair, but loved being able to swing my hair.

[image]

9th grade: relaxed hair

In 8th grade, I begged my mom to relax my hair. After a few months, she caved and bought one of those kid perm box kits. The scalp burn from the relaxer was far worse than the burns I endured from the hot comb. But afterwards, my hair was pin straight. And while I was happy, my hair was not. My hair felt dry and lifeless, but I really thought I was the s***. After a few months of getting touch-ups, I decided to stop getting relaxers in my hair for good. Or, so I thought...

In high school, I was basically being on and off of relaxers. This was mainly because I didn't understand how to take care of my hair. I was used to my mom always doing my hair.

And while my mom did her best to manage my thick and curly/coily hair – her texture was different from mine. Her hair is low density and more of a wavy/curly texture. So having to learn how to manage my own hair was an intimidating, and complicated, process. I'd straighten my hair once, or twice, a week to avoid dealing with it. *But also because I thought straight hair was prettier.* My hair suffered from the relaxer and constant heat I put it through. Not to mention, I began experimenting with clip-in extensions, which only made my hair worse.

[image]

Entering college, I decided to make some changes to my lifestyle. I'd no longer waste my money on touch-ups, or my time sitting under the dryer. *Only to end up with a headache.* As a college student, I didn't have the bandwidth to get those 3-month touch-up's. From joining an organization on-campus, classes and enjoying my college experience. It just wasn't feasible to keep my relaxer. I also didn't have the income to keep paying for touch-up's.

With books, supplies, bills – and alcohol costs #priorities .

I spent months watching natural hair gurus on Youtube. I learned how to manage my hair. When I first started my journey, I was transitioning. To avoid the big chop and retain length, I made sure to properly, and delicately, manage my transitioning hair.

I ended up buying the most expensive products when I first started out. I thought, *“the more expensive the product, the more beneficial it'd be.”* Or, I'd use products that Youtube gurus suggested, even though their hair texture wasn't the same as mine. I struggled for months going from product-to-product trying to find the ones that my hair responded positively to.

TRANSITIONING TO NATURAL HAIR

Eventually I figured out what products worked well for my hair. I began deep conditioning every Friday when I didn't have classes. Went to the salon for trims every 6-8 weeks. I also started doing low manipulation protective styles. In turn, my natural hair started to grow!

The next setback came when I **studied abroad**. I had no idea how to manage my transitioning hair in another country. I went back to researching and watching videos to see how I could manage my transitioning hair while abroad. But to little (or no) avail. I decided to get senegalese twists in hopes that would protect my hair from breakage at the demarcation line. *The line of demarcation is the part of the hair where the transition is occurring.* Little did I know, when returning from studying abroad, my transitioning ends would break off. This was due to lack of care when taking down the twists. This was a big disappointment, but I didn't let

that stop me from continuing on my journey. If anything, I was able to finally shed the rest of the relaxed hair!

[image]

While I'm still going through trials and errors, I'm making great progress and feel very confident as a naturalista. One of the biggest things I've learned throughout this journey is to have **patience**.

Had I learned the importance of patience early on, I would've successfully taken out the senegalese twists. Clearly I'm still a bit bitter about this, but, you live and you learn! Anyone who knows me knows I have **ZERO** patience. However, this process has made me realize that being patient has its own rewards. My hair is now approaching bra strap length! And even though my hair gets tangled easily and is thick – I've learned to appreciate my hair. Not many women can rock curly hair one week, and straight hair the next. Curly hair is just beautifully complex.

1.1. NARRATIVE 03

As a teenager my main goal in life was to blend in. As someone who got picked on for wearing glasses in the third grade, I knew being different was the kiss of death in the social stratasphere of the public school system. I wanted to be just like all the other girls—Jordache jeans, bright orange varsity jacket, and relaxed hair done up in a roller set.

It wasn't until I moved away from my small hometown of Albany, Georgia, to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill that I started to realize the cool girls were the ones who stood out in a crowd. Part of the excitement of college is that you can be someone different, someone more exciting than your high school self. I didn't take it that far—I was still the nerdy black girl with glasses—but I did decide to branch out and go natural. I stopped getting a relaxer and let my natural coils grow out for the first time since I was a little kid.

My transition was inspired by the few girls I saw on my college campus who were wearing Afros or their natural hair straightened with a hot comb (most of them were not native southerners). These girls had a sense of style that was beyond anything I'd seen in my Georgia hometown or even on TV. Whereas many women I admired wore weaves and wigs that were long and flowing—the goal was always longer hair—these ladies valued "the look." A style that set them apart in some way.

[image]

I went natural as gradually as I could. Instead of doing the big chop and going bald, I cut my armpit-length hair up to my chin. I didn't dare go bald for fear of looking like a boy.

My hair was innately connected to my idea of femininity and prettiness. Then for months, I kept straightening my kinky roots instead of renewing my relaxer and trimming away the straight ends. Eventually it had grown out enough that my entire head was kinky.

[image]

[advertisement]

At that point, I started wearing my natural curls out. I remember being so nervous that no one would find me attractive without long, straight hair—like I would automatically get bumped off the cute college girls list. (Freshman year is a fragile time for self identity—small fish, meet big pond.) This fear became a reality when I went home to GA for the holidays, where long weaves were still the pervasive trend. My family was so confused at my choice to go natural. Was I a lesbian now? Was this some sort of rebellion? Were the '70s cool again? One family member even told me that my new style made me look like a boy, and I was so much cuter with straight hair.

That's when I realized that some people weren't going to like my new hairstyle. Prospective boyfriends, family members, followers on Instagram—everyone would have an opinion. I could either take their feedback and change my look to fit in, or I could let my own voice be the loudest praise around. If I love my hairstyle, is there really any other opinion that matters?

Looking back, it was a pivotal moment in my personal development. That first year of defending my choice to go natural and standing up for the way my hair looked made me more confident in my choices. In the following years, I made a lot of decisions for myself that other people would question. Traveling to Bolivia solo. Moving to NYC without a job. Shacking up with a boyfriend after only a few months of dating. Just like with my natural hair, my attitude became: Don't like it? Too bad.

[image]

The bigger my hair got, the bigger my personality got. I was so used to being the quiet one in my friend groups (although my family always knew that I had an inner drama queen). With my natural hair, I became more noticeable, and I started to embrace that. I became the girl with the big hair, bold glasses, and bright smile. I was proud to walk into a room and be noticed. Now, my natural hair is such a part of my personality that I feel like an imposter whenever I get it straightened.

Finally, the things I learned about caring for natural hair during my transition eventually led me to become a beauty editor. When I went natural in 2007, I had two friends who also had Afro hair. (Now, all of my girlfriends except one is natural. The trend really took off!) In the

beginning, information was sparse. My friends and I still laugh about how I would do twist outs in my dorm room with shea butter, aloe vera juice, and olive oil. (I should have started my YouTube channel back then—big regrets.) The journey of finding the right products led me to love beauty. Now I spend my entire day sharing beauty products I love for both hair, skin, and makeup as a beauty editor. I always knew I wanted to be a journalist, but it was the lack of representation of natural hair that really inspired me. I wanted to bring more women of color and Afro-hair ladies to national magazines, changing the beauty standard.

These days I often give advice to women transitioning from relaxed to natural hair. There are so many products and tips that I've learned over the years to make the process easier. But I also tell women that the journey—the struggle—is one of the most important parts of going natural. My personal journey helped shape me into the confident, loud, driven, beauty-editing woman I am today.

1.2. NARRATIVE 04

Hi, I'm [name]!

I would describe my hair as coily voluminous. I've noticed that my hair has different textures in certain sections making it hard to identify myself with one hair type.

[picture]

The Journey

Phase one of my journey started like many others, it was the “I hate my hair” and “I don't know what to do with my hair” phase. Growing up I had this overwhelming desire to be liked, more specifically to fit in. I didn't want to be different, being different made you a target for ridicule from peers. I should also probably mention that I grew up in a predominately white suburb where I would eventually only have one black friend.

When I bring up my natural hair journey I can't start at the moment I decided to start slowly and steadily cut off my relaxer in October of 2017 because it's so much more than that. I realized I had developed this hate for the color of my skin, eyes and hair early on. I grew up with my white mother in a white suburban community. It was rare that I saw anyone that looked like me in school, on my sports teams and in the community. I loathed the idea that I didn't look exactly like, or even a little bit like my mother. Or anyone.

I felt like I didn't belong at a young age, not fully understanding why I looked so different from everyone else. In middle school the last thing you want is to be different in any way, that makes you a target for ridicule. After much consideration, I decided that the most reasonable thing I could change was my hair. After all, no one, including myself really knew how to manage it or

style it. Don't get me wrong, my mom and aunt made a great effort to try to do my hair in ways that I would like, but nothing worked. In 2007, I saw the movie *Princess Diaries* and if you're familiar with that movie you know that Mia went from having curly "bushy" hair (at least that's what they called it) to straight silky hair. That's when I realized that it was actually possible to go from curly hair to straight hair, so I begged my mother relentlessly to straighten my hair until one day she finally said yes. She made me an appointment at the local [place] with 1 of the 2 black hair stylists there. When I saw my hair straight for the first time I cried tears of joy. My joy quickly turned to fear- what were all the kids at school going to say? I thought it couldn't possibly be worse than what they said about my curly hair. I was willing to take the risk. For some time it paid off, I got lots of compliments and all the attention I wanted.

[picture]

The Relaxer Phase

Ah I will never forget the smell of burning hair. I was 12 when I got my first relaxer. From that point forward, I would get a relaxer every 6-8 weeks for the next 10 years. The main reason was because I wanted to fit in with the other kids in school- I mean it was the 2000s everyone had bone straight hair that was thing. But the other reason was that I truly didn't know how to take care of my hair or style it for that matter. There wasn't anyone around to show us. I didn't like the idea that I had to rely on someone to feel pretty. I didn't like the idea that I had to spend an entire day off in the salon. Quietly wondering to myself, "Could this be the reason my hair isn't growing?" I was also becoming more aware of the overall health of my hair. It was all bad- dry, limp, brittle all that. On top of all that, it didn't even look that smooth for long. Edges acting up constantly breaking and frizzing up. I was tired. I decided that I was going to start over. I was going to grow out the relaxer just to see what I was working with. Initially, the plan was to grow out the relaxer until my hair was long enough, then relax again. I still had this vision of having really long straight hair. I had been wearing clip in extensions for years by now.

The Transition

I'm not exactly sure when my last relaxer was to be honest. But I do know July 2017 is when I started to see new growth. The ends of my hair were struggling, but I wasn't ready yet to cut them off just yet. I was so nervous about what my hair was going to look like. I mean it had been over 10 years since I had even seen it. I started trying some natural hair techniques, all of which wouldn't go exactly as planned. In October of 2017, I finally decided that my hair was long enough to cut the relaxed ends off. Sometimes I think back and wish I started from scratch and shaved my head, but then I realize my journey went exactly how it needed to go to bring

me to where I am today. Product wise, I was really into the [hair cream product]. Lots of successful and failed wash n gos— it was difficult for me to get an actual curl pattern I liked. I was predominantly using the racking method to apply products. At this time I didn't know about the wonders of two-strand twisting. I was spending a lot of time trying to simply learn how to take care of my hair, I was watching lots of how to retain length hair videos and curly girl routine videos.

[picture]

Developing My Curly Girl Routine

By December of 2017 I really started to research how to take care of my hair. I was on YouTube day and night looking at curly tutorials. I discovered [websites] and [website], which would later become one of my favorite and most used hair care brands. I was sleeping with a silk bonnet on, using a silk pillowcase, and starting to deep condition weekly. I started to try new things— I messed around with wigs for the first time. I loved watching my curls grow. It was exciting to try new things and see what worked for me. I was experiencing a lot of highs and lows.

Like many other naturals, I went through a lot of learning about myself throughout my journey. I can happily and confidently say that I love my hair. I hope that by telling my story, someone else can relate and know that they aren't alone. Because for so much of my journey I felt like I was alone.

1.3. NARRATIVE 05

I've always been pretty picky about who touches my hair. Like most girls, I had one hair stylist for most of my life (after my mom, of course). So, when I got college, I refused to let anyone do my hair. Before I knew it, my relaxer had grown out and I was in tears every night trying to do my hair because my roots were so thick. Soon enough, my roommate was braiding my hair up every few days for me to wear braid-outs, and when I went home, I would get my hair straightened and trimmed by the Dominicans.

By my sophomore year, I was "natural". But, I was still wearing my hair straightened, and still going to the Dominicans. To make it worse, I was coloring my hair every few months with box color. But since my hair was growing and *appeared* healthy when it was straight, you couldn't tell me anything. This continued through my junior year. To add salt to the wound, summer 2014 I even got highlights...with bleach. Then my senior year, I got my first weave. A blessing

and a curse. A blessing because, what a great protective style! A curse because, my leave out was going to blend with the weave, by any means necessary...even if that meant putting heat on it everyday.

By summer 2015 my "natural" hair was heat damaged, stringy, and not healthy under any circumstances. While standing in [supermarket] in the natural hair aisle on Friday, June 12, 2015 with my mom, I had a meltdown because it hit me there was no saving my hair. I mean full fledged tears...in the middle of [supermarket]. Saturday, June 13, 2015, my mom and I went to the [hair saloon], and I got all my hair cut off. My hair was my safety net (hence why I cried in [supermarket]). I always got compliments on how great it looked, and it was ALWAYS laid, no matter how the rest of me looked. So cutting it all off, after thinking about it for one night, was the craziest thing I've ever done. And while I would never do it again (I cried and felt soooo ugly without hair), looking back, it was one of the best decisions I ever made.

Once I cut it all off, about two weeks later I started getting braids. Then, I started doing weaves again, but I was gentle to my leave out this time around. By June 2016 my hair was at a great length, so I got my first [hair product brand]. My hair grew out from the cut great! (see 3rd pic below where it looks like I'm in a mall). Then, I started doing weaves with closures and I LOVED it. My hair was all protected and it was growing great. I also started getting Marley twists occasionally to switch it up. But, I started falling in love with my natural hair, so I could never keep those styles in long (literally I could keep it for 2 weeks).

I got my next [hair product brand] April 2017. By then, I thought my hair was at it's healthiest. But what I learned, is if you continuously take care of your hair, it can get healthier! And curlier! By summer 2017, I was in love with my hair (and still am). I got marley twists for the last time around Aug 2017, and since then, I've ditched the protective styles & been working to keep my hair as healthy as possible. I got my third [hair product brand] December 2017, and my hair was healthy enough for highlights, without bleach! I'm still working on keeping my hair moisturized, and helping it grow. My #1 tip is take time to love on your hair! I do weekly deep conditioners, trim regularly, do low maintenance styles, and ALWAYS sleep on satin pillowcase and/or with a satin scarf. We all know if you take care of things, they grow and become healthy and strong, so do the same with your hair!