

Between restraint and transgression: An interpretation of women's experiences in the novel *A Vida Invisível* de Eurídice Gusmão (2016) /

Entre contenção e transgressão: uma leitura sobre as experiências femininas no romance 'A Vida Invisível' de Eurídice Gusmão (2016)

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Received: 07 ago. 2026. **Approved:** 12 ago. 2026.

How to quote this article:

ANDRADE, Maria Clara Menezes; QUEIROZ, Carlos Eduardo Japiassu de. Between restraint and transgression: An interpretation of women's experiences in the novel 'A Vida Invisível' de Eurídice Gusmão (2016). *Revista Letras Raras*. Campina Grande, v. 15, n. 2, e7708, sep. 2026. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.22543057.

ABSTRACT

This article analyzes Martha Batalha's novel *A Vida Invisível* de Eurídice Gusmão (2016), seeking to understand how the female experience is shaped by dynamics of regulation, containment, and invisibilization. Through a reading

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informed by the melodrama genre, this study investigates how conflicts experienced in the private sphere relate to broader social structures, particularly with regard to gender norms, sexuality, and expectations surrounding marriage and motherhood. The analysis of Eurídice and Guida's trajectories highlights two distinct modes of female experience. While Eurídice undergoes a gradual process of adaptation and silencing, marked by the containment of desires and the internalization of social norms, Guida represents the transgression of these expectations and is, therefore, subjected to processes of exclusion and precariousness. Drawing on contributions from Gender Studies and Cultural Studies, the article discusses how the female body is configured as a space for the inscription of practices of control and discipline, highlighting that invisibility is not limited to a lack of recognition but results from different forms of social regulation.

KEYWORDS: The Invisible Life of Eurídice Gusmão; Melodrama; Female Experience; Invisibility.

RESUMO

Este artigo analisa o romance A Vida Invisível de Eurídice Gusmão (2016), de Martha Batalha, buscando compreender como a experiência feminina é atravessada por dinâmicas de regulação, contenção e invisibilização. A partir de uma leitura orientada pelo gênero melodrama, o trabalho investiga como conflitos vividos no âmbito privado se relacionam a estruturas sociais mais amplas, especialmente no que diz respeito às normas de gênero, à sexualidade e às expectativas em torno do casamento e da maternidade. A análise das trajetórias de Eurídice e Guida evidencia dois modos distintos de experiência feminina. Enquanto Eurídice vivencia um processo gradual de adaptação e silenciamento, marcado pela contenção dos desejos e pela interiorização das normas sociais, Guida representa a transgressão dessas expectativas, sendo, por isso, submetida a processos de exclusão e precarização. Com base em contribuições dos Estudos de Gênero e dos Estudos Culturais, o artigo discute como o corpo feminino se configura como espaço de inscrição de práticas de controle e disciplinamento, evidenciando que a invisibilidade não se limita à ausência de reconhecimento, mas resulta de diferentes formas de regulação social.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: A Vida Invisível de Eurídice Gusmão; Melodrama; Experiência Feminina; Invisibilidade.

Introduction

This article offers an analysis of Martha Batalha's novel *A Vida Invisível de Eurídice Gusmão* (2016), with the aim of investigating how the narrative challenges norms of gender, sexuality, and corporeality in shaping the female experience. It is based on the assumption that the woman's body, far from constituting a merely biological dimension, functions as a privileged space for the inscription of symbolic struggles, where social expectations, moral prescriptions, and practices of silencing intertwine and directly influence the production of subjectivities. In this sense, rather than merely representing these dynamics, the novel exposes them in their everyday dimension, highlighting the tensions between autonomy and regulation that permeate the characters' experiences.

Within the context of twentieth- and twenty-first-century Latin American literature, narratives that foreground processes of constraining female desire frequently recur, often in connection with institutions such as the family, marriage, and motherhood. These spaces, far from being restricted to the private sphere, function as normalizing mechanisms responsible for defining legitimate forms of existence and for excluding practices that fall outside hegemonic

parameters. In this regard, Batalha's novel is significant for demonstrating how these mechanisms operate in diffuse and recurrent ways, naturalizing gender hierarchies and restricting possibilities for agency.

Even so, the novel does not merely reproduce these forms of regulation. By rendering visible experiences that challenge social expectations, the narrative also reveals the fissures that run through these normative systems. The life trajectories of the sisters Eurídice and Guida, in this sense, should not be read as opposites, but as distinct paths, both equally constrained by the limitations of negotiating with structures that predate them. While Eurídice strives to conform to the roles assigned to her, Guida embodies an experience that challenges such prescriptions, even though this deviation entails specific forms of exclusion. The novel, thus, does not establish a simplistic opposition between submission and resistance, but rather highlights the complexity of these positions within social life.

A picture thus emerges in which individual projects are continually pulled in different directions by the demands of domesticity, marriage, and motherhood, revealing the structuring nature of these norms in the organization of the female experience. These dynamics are linked to broader discursive formations that regulate bodies and produce distinctions between what is acceptable and what is deviant. From this perspective, the female body takes on analytical centrality as the surface upon which these mechanisms are inscribed, as suggested by Butler and Foucault. More than merely highlighting processes of disciplining evident in the containment of desires, the naturalization of social roles, and the disqualification of dissident practices, the narrative also offers a glimpse into forms of agency that, although situated and limited, nonetheless operate as displacements within these structures.

To understand these dynamics, drawing on melodrama ¹as an interpretive framework proves particularly productive in this context. By emphasizing moral and emotional conflicts embedded in the private sphere, the genre not only dramatizes individual experiences but also situates them within a broader social framework in which values such as guilt, sacrifice, and vigilance play a central role in regulating the female experience.

¹ Melodrama emerged in France as a consequence of the Revolution and the fusion of other traditional art forms, marked by the play *Coelina*, or *The Daughter of Mystery*, written by René Charles Guilbert de Pixérécourt. The genre serves as an essential tool for understanding narratives that reveal both individual and social conflicts, especially those related to the construction of female identity in contexts permeated by rigid norms and power dynamics.

In this sense, Martha Batalha's novel mobilizes melodramatic strategies not merely as an aesthetic convention, but as a means of heightening the visibility of these tensions. From this perspective, this study develops a theoretical-critical analysis that seeks to understand how the female body is configured as a site where these dynamics are inscribed, drawing on contributions from Gender Studies and Cultural Studies. In doing so, the aim is to demonstrate that the processes of invisibilization and silencing do not operate in an absolute manner, but are constantly intersected by fissures that allow other forms of existence to emerge, even if they are precarious and contingent.

2 Melodrama and the legibility of social tensions

In this study, the use of melodrama goes beyond its understanding as a strictly aesthetic category and comes to function as an interpretive key capable of highlighting the tensions that permeate the female experience. By focusing on conflicts embedded in the private sphere, this narrative mode reveals broader social dynamics, making it possible to understand how family relationships, moral norms, and collective expectations directly influence the formation of the characters. In this sense, the genre not only structures the narrative but also makes visible the regulatory mechanisms that operate subtly in everyday life, especially in the formation of subjectivities.

Within this context, the female body assumes analytical centrality by emerging as a privileged space in which these tensions are inscribed. It is through corporeality that processes of control and discipline become visible, revealing how social values and cultural norms permeate women's modes of existence. A melodramatic reading thus allows us to understand that individual conflicts are not confined to the private sphere but point to broader social structures, in which suffering, the suppression of desires, and symbolic punishment are intertwined with historically constituted power relations.

This perspective resembles Foucault's reflections, for whom the body constitutes one of the main targets of disciplinary practices, since, according to the philosopher, "the human body enters a machinery of power that scrutinizes it, dismantles it, and reassembles it" (Foucault, 2014, p. 135, our translation). Learning to behave, move, and act in a precise manner involves a continuous process of training, in which gestures, emotions, and behaviors are produced by

techniques of subjugation. In this process, the body becomes both useful and docile, as behaviors come to be shaped by socially established norms. This understanding reveals the female body as a privileged space where these practices take effect, highlighting how social expectations and moral values structure the characters' experiences.

Along the same lines, Jean-Marie Thomasseau understands melodrama as a narrative mode characterized by the intensification of moral conflicts and the depiction of situations marked by injustice, in which individual drama takes on a broader social significance (Thomasseau, 2005, p. 19). In this context, the characters' trajectories are no longer understood as isolated experiences but come to highlight historical conditions that shape the subjects' ways of life. These circumstances illustrate how collective values and social hierarchies are incorporated into individual experiences, revealing mechanisms of control that often operate silently in everyday relationships.

This interpretation is related to discussions about the genesis of melodrama in the context of the transformations of modernity. As tragedy shifts from the heroic realm to ordinary life, suffering ceases to be the preserve of exceptional figures and comes to be experienced by ordinary people, whose experiences reflect broader social tensions.

[...] melodrama would be the tragedy that the emerging mechanistic civilization set out to produce, or, alternatively, the form best suited to the new horizon opened up by the bourgeois revolution, from both an artistic and an ideological perspective. For this very reason, his career is not limited to Romanticism, but goes far beyond it (Huppés, 2000, p. 10, our translation).

As pointed out by Huppés, melodrama can be understood as a narrative form suited to the context of bourgeois modernization, transcending the boundaries of Romanticism and establishing itself as a continuous mode of representation. In this context, the genre comes to prioritize everyday experiences in which moral and social conflicts manifest themselves through family and romantic relationships. A breach of socially established expectations tends to trigger forms of symbolic punishment, reinforcing the association between morality and behavioral regulation. These dynamics become particularly evident when related to sexuality, marriage, and motherhood—elements that repeatedly shape women's life trajectories.

The domestic sphere thus becomes a decisive factor. Often associated with stability and a sense of belonging, it also emerges as a territory of control and normalization, where emotions, values, and mechanisms of discipline are intertwined. Family relationships come to function as regulatory forces shaping the female experience, reinforcing expectations and limiting

opportunities for action. Through its emphasis on these experiences, melodrama brings to light forms of symbolic violence that permeate everyday life, shifting to the narrative plane conflicts that, in the social sphere, tend to be taken for granted.

3 Body, power, and the creation of feminine subjectivity

In the novel *A Vida Invisível de Eurídice Gusmão*, the construction of the female experience is articulated through strategies that reveal subtle and progressive forms of silencing. The narrative focuses on the ordinary dimension of daily life, highlighting the repetition of gestures, the organization of domestic life, and the accumulation of frustrations. Invisibility, in this context, does not present itself as a one-time event, but as a gradual process sustained by repeated practices that become normalized over time. The attention to the details of daily life reveals that the characters' restraint is established through small adjustments and successive sacrifices. The limitation of individual possibilities does not occur abruptly but consolidates progressively, accompanying the reorganization of expectations and adaptation to family demands.

And Eurídice, who had never seen life beyond that house and that neighborhood, or beyond her parents' house and neighborhood, thought her husband was right. Antenor knew what he was talking about. He had studied accounting, worked at Banco do Brasil, and discussed politics with other men. (...) Antenor was the one with a vision—a vision shaped by everything he saw from the streetcar on his way to work. But even Antenor's vision was broader than anything Eurídice could have imagined, since she saw only the walls of the house, the market stalls, the grains in the warehouse, and the immense emptiness that troubled her (Batalha, 2016, p. 32, our translation).

By focusing on the characters' inner lives, the novel emphasizes the conflict between desire and social norms, revealing a continuous process of adjustment that defines the female experience. In Eurídice's case, this dynamic manifests itself in the recurring interruption of her plans and the subordination of her aspirations to the demands of domestic life. This restraint is not imposed through direct prohibitions, but through a succession of concessions that, when accumulated, limit her scope for action. The repetition of tasks, the lack of recognition, and the constant need to adapt produce a trajectory marked by renunciation, in which silence plays a defining role.

The family relationships play a central role in this process by functioning as a regulatory force. The domestic space ceases to be merely a place of belonging and begins to operate as a territory of surveillance, in which the organization of daily life contributes to the dilution of individual aspirations. The routine, marked by repetition and predictability, acts as a mechanism for containing the female experience. In this scenario, the body emerges as the surface upon which these dynamics are inscribed. The containment of gestures, the repression of desires, and conformity to socially defined roles highlight how corporeality is permeated by norms that regulate behaviors and emotions. These are processes that take effect through the internalization of values, making the body simultaneously a space of expression and limitation.

The affective dimension also fits into this framework. The desires of Eurídice are constantly redirected, so that her aspirations cannot be fulfilled. Frustration, in this sense, results from an accumulation of sacrifices that produce a feeling of displacement. This dynamic aligns with Simone de Beauvoir's thoughts, highlighting how the female experience is shaped by the internalization of social roles that restrict autonomy (Beauvoir, 1980a, p. 10). The cinematographic adaptation directed by Karim Ainouz expands on these issues by shifting the female experience to the sensory plane. While the novel privileges interiority, the film materializes these tensions through bodies, silences, and the composition of spaces, intensifying the perception of restraint.

4 Eurídice and the internalization of the norm

Martha Batalha's novel depicts Eurídice's journey as the gradual development of an experience marked by the suppression of desires and the internalization of social expectations. From the outset, the character is portrayed as possessing intellectual curiosity and a wide range of interests, as "If she were given complex calculations, she would design bridges. If she were given a laboratory, she would invent vaccines. If she were given blank pages, she would write classics" (Batalha, 2016, p. 11, our translation), which reveals a creative disposition that manifests itself in various endeavors.

However, this potential is progressively strained by the demands of domestic life and the norms that guide her role as a wife and mother. Therefore, the character's transformation does not occur abruptly, but through small, everyday sacrifices that, accumulated over time, lead

to a reorganization of her expectations and her own subjectivity. In this context, the repetition of household chores, the expectation of total dedication to the family, and the lack of recognition for her initiatives contribute to the creation of a dynamic in which her personal projects come to take a back seat.

Eurídice could host a cooking show on the radio; she could write a column in *Jornal das Moças!* She could start a cooking class for newlywed young women. Her big eyes grew even bigger. It was possible—she just needed to talk to Antenor. Yes, she just needed to talk to her husband. Her eyes grew smaller. She took two sips of cachaça before pouring the drink into the turkey's gizzard (Batalha, 2016, p. 31, our translation).

The recurrence of this dynamic throughout the novel lends the passage an emblematic quality. Whenever Eurídice envisions new possibilities for herself, the figure of Antenor reappears as a point of reference against which these possibilities are evaluated. Although his presence is not always manifested through a direct prohibition, his gaze and perspective occupy a privileged place in the organization of the character's experience, causing her own desires to be continually confronted with what she imagines her husband expects of her. As Nancy Fraser observes, family and domestic work constitute political dimensions of social experience, which helps us understand that the novel highlights a shift away from the centrality of Eurídice's subjectivity, whose plans cease to be guided by her own tastes and are progressively subordinated to her husband's gaze, transforming this relationship into a recurring image of the asymmetry that structures married life.

By challenging welfare-state paternalism and the bourgeois family, they exposed the deep-seated androcentrism of capitalist society. By politicizing "the personal," they expanded the boundaries of resistance beyond socioeconomic distribution—to include domestic labor, sexuality, and reproduction (Fraser, 2024, p. 15, our translation).

In this process, Eurídice does not immediately abandon her interests, but begins to adapt them to the demands of the daily routine, reorganizing her priorities and progressively limiting her scope for action. These silent adjustments highlight how individual desire is continually pulled in different directions by social demands, producing transformations that manifest not only in the character's actions but also in the way she comes to perceive her own possibilities for existence.

From this, it can be observed that the restraint that permeates the character's experience does not depend on explicit mechanisms of prohibition, but is sustained by the internalization of norms that come to guide her conduct. According to Ahmed (2022), gender norms guide bodies

and delimit the possibilities for action, causing certain modes of existence to be perceived as natural. As these norms become incorporated into her perception of the world, they reorganize her gestures, expectations, and ways of acting, causing regulation to operate in a diffuse manner. Thus, control is not limited to the realm of actions but directly affects the constitution of her subjectivity.

Such internalization becomes evident in the way Eurídice reorganizes her relationship with time itself and with the space she occupies. The domestic environment, often associated with stability and a sense of belonging, reveals itself as a space of continuous regulation, in which emotions and mechanisms of control intertwine. It is in this context that routine establishes itself as the organizing structure of experience, producing a temporality marked by repetition and predictability. In this process, repetition not only limits her possibilities for action but also redefines the horizon of the possible, making other forms of existence less visible.

Eurídice began to sit at her post, not so much to stare into space as to wait for the sensation to arrive. The sensation would arrive, and it found in the silence the space to grow. And that was how the sensation grew until Eurídice could see it, and Eurídice saw that this was what the sensation was. The sensation was the gift of sight (Batalha, 2016, p. 163, our translation).

Based on this dynamic, the interplay between domestic space and norm-setting reveals that restraint is not limited to a set of external rules, but is embedded in the very organization of daily life. The relationship between the domestic and social spheres reveals how women are continually confronted with expectations that guide their behavior and define the scope of their actions. In this process, invisibility stems not only from a lack of recognition but also from the gradual reorganization of their own desires, which come to align with the demands imposed upon them.

This dynamic thus allows us to understand that the control exercised over the character is not explicitly presented, but manifests itself as a regime of normalization that permeates practices, emotions, and perceptions. This control operates silently yet effectively, sustained both by broader social structures and by the family relationships that reinforce them. The internalization of these norms produces an individual who not only submits but also actively participates in their own restraint, to the extent that they come to recognize the limitations imposed on them as legitimate.

Therefore, her journey cannot be reduced to a narrative of passive submission. The novel highlights the process by which social norms are internalized and normalized, thereby revealing

the complexity of the mechanisms that regulate the female experience. In these circumstances, restraint does not appear as a fixed state, but as a process in constant flux, in which desire, adaptation, and silencing are intertwined. It is precisely in this processual dimension that the narrative's power is revealed, as it exposes not only the limitations imposed on the character, but also the ways in which these limitations come to constitute her very way of being.

5 Guida and the limits of transgression

While Eurídice's journey highlights the gradual suppression of the female body through the internalization of social norms, Guida's experience, in turn, subverts this logic by making sexuality visible as a point of rupture and, at the same time, as a factor that triggers processes of exclusion and symbolic punishment. In the novel *A Vida Invisível de Eurídice Gusmão*, the protagonist embodies a distinct way of living, marked by her refusal to submit her desires to family and social expectations. This refusal, however, does not translate into full autonomy but places her on a path marked by marginalization and precariousness, demonstrating that transgressing gender norms does not eliminate mechanisms of control but rather reconfigures them.

Since the beginning, Guida has been portrayed as a character who challenges prevailing models of femininity. Her decision to run away with her partner and break with family authority constitutes an act that subverts the expectations that guide female behavior. Unlike Eurídice, whose journey is shaped by gradual adjustments to social norms, Guida takes an active stance regarding her desires, directly confronting the structures that limit her scope of action. This confrontation, however, does not place her outside these structures but exposes her more intensely to the forms of regulation that affect those who stray from them.

Seeing her parents so vulnerable made Eurídice want to protect them. She felt she had to bring them double the joy. She promised she would never fight with them again, as she had during her rebellious flute-playing days. Never, ever would she cut herself off from her family, like Guida did; never, ever would she do anything to cause them grief. She was going to be the best daughter ever, the model daughter [...] (Batalha, 2016, p. 72, our translation).

This rupture, however, does not lead to a process of full emancipation. On the contrary, the narrative shows that sexuality practiced outside socially accepted boundaries becomes a

marker of exclusion. Upon being abandoned by her partner, Guida begins to face conditions that reveal the precariousness associated with lives that fall outside traditional family models. The economic instability, the lack of family support, and the need to reorganize her life under adverse circumstances are not merely circumstantial factors, but indicate the way in which certain women's experiences are socially neglected.

They teach her that to please, she must seek to please, to make herself an object; she must, therefore, renounce her autonomy. They treat her like a living doll and deny her freedom; thus a vicious cycle is created, for the less she exercises her freedom to understand, grasp, and discover the world around her, the fewer resources she will find in it, and the less she will dare to assert herself as a Subject (Beauvoir, 1980b, p. 21, our translation).

Within this context, the female body emerges as a privileged space of regulation, especially with regard to sexuality. By experiencing it outside of marriage, Guida comes to occupy a position marked by moral judgments that define her social legitimacy. Motherhood, in this case, intensifies this process by placing her in a position of stigmatization, highlighting that the female experience continues to be regulated by parameters that associate social value with conformity to normative models. This dynamic aligns with Beauvoir's perspective, as it demonstrates that the construction of femininity is directly linked to the limitation of autonomy.

Being constantly called upon to define herself in relation to others, a woman's freedom is restricted by a set of expectations that shape her ways of being. In Guida's case, her attempt to assert herself as the subject of her own desires goes unrecognized, but instead triggers mechanisms that reposition her on the margins. Furthermore, her trajectory reveals a bodily dimension distinct from that observed in Eurídice. While in Eurídice's case the body functions as a space for containing and internalizing norms, in Guida's case it appears as a territory that is simultaneously one of self-assertion and vulnerability. Her experience is marked by constant upheavals, material hardships, and the need for reconstruction, highlighting that female autonomy, in contexts marked by gender inequalities, cannot be separated from processes of precariousness.

Now, what uniquely defines a woman's situation is that, being—like every human being—an autonomous freedom, she discovers and chooses herself in a world in which men impose upon her the condition of the Other. The aim is to turn her into an object, to condemn her to immanence, since her transcendence will be perpetually transcended by another essential and sovereign consciousness. Women's drama lies in this conflict between the fundamental claim of every subject—which always presents itself as the essential—and the demands of a situation that constitutes her as inessential.

How can a human being find fulfillment within the female condition?
(Beauvoir, 1980a, p. 23, our translation).

The motherhood, in this sense, plays an ambivalent role. While it intensifies her vulnerability by increasing the material and emotional demands placed on the character, it also points to the possibility of alternative forms of family organization. Far removed from the traditional nuclear family model, her experience as a mother demonstrates that other configurations are possible, even if they remain fraught with difficulties and a lack of social recognition.

The trajectory of Guida thus allows us to understand that breaking with social expectations does not necessarily lead to autonomy, but may entail a reorganization of the forms of regulation that affect the female experience. By asserting her desires, the character does not place herself outside these structures, but rather begins to confront them under more adverse conditions. Sexuality, therefore, takes on an ambivalent character, functioning both as a space for self-affirmation and as a point where control intensifies. In this way, the narrative demonstrates that transgression does not eliminate mechanisms of power but rather makes them more visible by exposing the consequences that befall those who do not conform to established norms. Guida's experience, far from representing a complete break, reveals the complexity of the dynamics that govern women's lives, in which autonomy and vulnerability are inextricably intertwined.

6 Internalization and transgression: configurations of invisibility

The contrast between Eurídice and Guida emphasizes that, although they follow different paths, both are subject to mechanisms that limit their possibilities for existence. While Eurídice experiences restraint through gradual adaptation to social expectations, Guida experiences marginalization as a consequence of breaking with those same norms. These paths, though distinct, reveal that patriarchal structures operate both through the silent internalization of rules and through the exclusion of those who challenge them.

Through this, the characters' experiences reveal that female invisibility takes on multiple forms, manifesting itself both in the suppression of desires and in social marginalization. The

silence that permeates these life trajectories is not merely the absence of a voice, but constitutes a complex form of response to social impositions, oscillating between resistance and adaptation. In this sense, the narrative exposes the constant tension between the attempt at subjective self-affirmation and the assumption of roles that were not chosen, highlighting how the female experience is shaped by processes that limit its intelligibility and recognition.

Eurídice recognized her sister's authority in all matters. And her imagination, the one Guida had mentioned, was filled with exotic places, different people, and unique experiences. It contained everything that lay beyond the walls of the school and the grocery store, the only world Eurídice knew (Batalha, 2016, p. 60, our translation).

In the example of Eurídice, the novel highlights how her individuality is progressively eroded in favor of maintaining family and social order. When confronted by the norms that define what it means to be an ideal woman, the character begins to reorganize her desires, pushing her aspirations into the background. Invisibility is thus constructed gradually, through adaptation to the demands of domestic life and the internalization of expectations that restrict her scope for action. These are not direct impositions, but rather a silent dynamic that reduces her spaces of autonomy and redefines her horizons of action.

On the other hand, Guida's experience demonstrates a distinct form of invisibilization. By breaking with social norms, the character is pushed to the margins, where her journey becomes marked by precariousness and a lack of recognition. Her experience makes it clear that refusing to conform to established standards does not imply full freedom, but can result in new forms of vulnerability, in which the pursuit of autonomy takes place under adverse conditions.

The extra dose cost half of her savings. The second dose cost the other half. The third dose cost her the necklace with the medal of Nossa Senhora that Guida never took off her neck. The fourth dose left Guida lying on the rug in the back of the pharmacy, with her João panting over her (Batalha, 2016, p. 121, our translation).

Unlike the repression experienced by Eurídice, Guida's invisibility is not the result of gradual silencing, but rather of her exclusion from spaces of family and social belonging. Her journey shows that transgression can also lead to forms of erasure, in which the character comes to exist on the margins of dominant structures.

Therefore, the narrative demonstrates that, regardless of the path they take, both women remain embedded in dynamics that limit their possibilities and reshape their experiences. Female invisibility thus arises both from adaptation to social expectations and from the transgression of

these norms, highlighting the complexity of the mechanisms that regulate these trajectories. Through articulating these two paths, the work brings to light the operation of forms of control that function in a diffuse yet effective manner, delimiting spaces, behaviors, and ways of being.

Conclusion

This article proposes to discuss the novel *A Vida Invisível de Eurídice Gusmão*, by Martha Batalha, with the aim of understanding how the female experience is shaped by dynamics that intertwine the body, daily life, and invisibility. The analysis revealed that these processes do not occur as isolated events but are constructed gradually through practices and expectations that shape the characters' modes of existence, reorganizing their desires and limiting their scope for action.

Throughout Eurídice's journey, invisibility manifests itself through progressive self-restraint and the internalization of social norms, which operate silently to restrict her autonomy. Meanwhile, Guida's trajectory shows that breaking with these norms does not lead to emancipation, but rather to forms of exclusion and precariousness, revealing that transgression also remains embedded within regulatory structures. The interplay between these two experiences helps us understand that female invisibility is not merely the absence of recognition, but rather the result of mechanisms that operate through both adaptation and exclusion.

As such, the novel highlights that, regardless of the path taken, forms of control persist that define spaces, behaviors, and ways of being. Lastly, the analysis suggests that restraint and transgression are not polar opposites, but rather complementary dimensions of the same normative regime, in which the female experience is continually intersected by boundaries that are constantly reconfigured, without, however, dissipating.

CRediT

Acknowledgement: Not applicable

Financing: Not applicable.

Conflicts of interest: The authors certify that they have no commercial or associative interest that represents a conflict of interest in relation to the manuscript.

Ethical Approval: Not applicable.

Contributor Roles:

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