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The Anti-Military Collage of Sylvia Plath: Gender and North American Emotional Regime during the Cold War[1]

A colagem antimilitar de Sylvia Plath: gênero e o regime emocional norte-americano na Guerra Fria

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Abstract: Sylvia Plath (1932 - 1963) was a poet considered as a paradigmatic writer of the 1950s and 1960s, whose identity was associated with suicide and psychological suffering. Thinking critically about academic constructions of her identity, my main source is an image (a collage, specifically) made by her in 1961. This article intends to take Sylvia Plath's collage as an example of an artwork that can translate the emotional regime of the Cold War in the politics of the American government. From a historical perspective, I attempt to understand this context as a period of anxious emotional regime; based on the postulates of the History of Emotions, the aim of this article is not only to renew specific interpretations of Sylvia Plath, but also, at the same time, to establish the importance of understanding historical periods from the perspective of the concepts of emotives and emotional regimes of William Reddy. Furthermore, I intend to establish a connection between the emotional regime and gender relations, considering that Plath's imagery production in the aforementioned collage synthesizes the author's criticism of the role of women in North American political discourse.

Keywords: gender, collage, Cold War, History of Emotions, American politics, Sylvia Plath.

Resumo: Sylvia Plath (1932 - 1963) foi uma poetisa considerada uma escritora paradigmática das décadas de 1950 e 1960, cuja identidade estava associada ao suicídio e ao sofrimento psíquico. Pensando criticamente sobre as construções acadêmicas de sua identidade, minha principal fonte é uma imagem (uma colagem, especificamente) feita por ela em 1960. Este artigo pretende tomar a colagem de Sylvia Plath como exemplo de uma obra que pode traduzir o regime emocional da Guerra Fria na política do governo americano. De uma perspectiva histórica, procuro entender esse contexto como um período de regime emocional de ansiedade; a partir dos postulados da História das Emoções, o objetivo deste artigo não é apenas renovar interpretações específicas de Sylvia Plath, mas, ao mesmo tempo, estabelecer a importância de compreender os períodos históricos na perspectiva dos conceitos de emotivos e regimes emocionais de William Reddy. Além disso, pretendo estabelecer uma conexão entre o regime emocional e as relações de gênero, tendo em vista que a produção imagética de Plath na supracitada colagem sintetiza a crítica da autora sobre o papel da mulher no discurso político norte-americano.

Palavras-chave: gênero, colagem, Guerra Fria, História das Emoções, política americana, Sylvia Plath.

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Introduction

The Soviet and American relations were central in the Cold War period and are historiographically conceived in diverse perspectives. In order to approach the international dynamics between these two centers, the historian Pechatnov (2016, p. 107) divides the Cold War into five different stages: Early Cold War (1945-53), Competitive Coexistence (1953-69), Détente (1969-76), Late Cold War (1976-85) and, finally, End of Cold War (1985-91). In the present work, my focus will be the second stage, "Competitive Coexistence". This competition can be explained in several instances, with the two most significant being: the nuclear arms competition and the ideological competition. The historical context of this stage can be better understood with the end of the Second World War in mind: in 1945, the American atomic bombing in Hiroshima and Nagasaki inaugurated a new political perspective based on the impact of the new nuclear weapons. In a scenario of destruction that the world had been suffering from the war, the United Nations (UN) arose to contain new conflicts that could, potentially, destroy life on Earth (Hoopes; Brinkley, 2000, p. 5-50). Nonetheless, if the UN's objective was to promote world peace and security, the following years were exponentially threatening, as the atmosphere in the first stages of the Cold War – mostly the "Competitive Coexistence" – demonstrates. Hence, taking the atomic and ideological "race" of the 1950s and 1960s as a starting point, I will centre my analysis on an artistic piece elaborated by the American poet Sylvia Plath in 1960: a collage of magazine clippings, known as *The Anti-Military Collage*.[3]

In the image, we have the president of the United States, Dwight Eisenhower, in the centre, sat in front of a table, with a card game in his hand accompanied by the phrase "Change your thinking" and a badge on his jacket with the inscription "sleep". In the central right corner is the vice-president, Richard Nixon; in the upper right corner, a phrase, "Electric Scale-Model Racing America's fastest growing sport... SCALEXTRIC duplicates to 1:30 scale, individually controlled", accompanied by the image of two men playing with the Scalextric slot car, whose racetrack ends at a jet fighter pointed at a woman. The fighter, a B-58 Hustler, developed by the company Convair in 1956, carries a nuclear warhead. The target-woman, dressed in a bathing suit, is on a pedestal together with a Rheingold beer can and the phrase, "Every man wants his woman on a pedestal". In the upper left corner, there

Figure 1. The Anti-Military Collage by Sylvia Plath, 1960
Source: PEEL, R. 2006. Body, Word, and Photograph: Sylvia Plath1s Cold War Collage and the Thalidomide Scandal. *Journal of American Studies*, **40**(1):71–95. Archive: Mortimer Rare Book Collection, Smith College, Northampton, Massachusetts.

is a figure of a woman and a man wearing sleep masks with two phrases beside them: "America's most famous living preacher whose religious revival campaigns have reached tens of millions of people both in the U.S and abroad" and "It's 'HIS and HER Time' all over America...". In the lower right corner, there is an image of a woman representing tiredness with the phrase, "Fatigue Build-Up... America's growing health hazard". Finally, close to the table where president Dwight Eisenhower is, there is, dispersed, the figure of antacid Tums, a golf ball with the Pioneer V satellite, and the phrases: "The worldly new look of the case of eagle's bugged beak"; "I admit that Consolidated Aluminum has an attractive starting salary and good fringe benefits, but Allied Instruments offers all that, plus optional early retirement", and "Luxury Lovers – You can economize!".

[3] Regarding the collage, Robin Peel (2002) states that "It is impossible to know if the collage was the product of an idle afternoon or whether it had a more urgent genesis and purpose" (p. 58). The collage was never published by Plath and belongs to Smith College, located in the catalogue of The Mortimer Rare Book Collection. This image can be seen in: BAYLEY, S. 2007. I have your head on my wall: Sylvia Plath and the Rhetoric of Cold War America. *European Journal of American Culture* **25**(3):155-171; PELL, R. 2002. *Writing Back: Sylvia Plath and Cold War Politics.* Madison, Farleigh Dickinson University Press, 289 p.; BRITZOLAKIS, C. 2007. Conversation Amongst the Ruins: Plath and de Chirico. In: K. CONNORS; S. BAYLEY (ed.), *Eye Rhymes: Sylvia Plath's Art of the Visual.* Oxford, University Press, p. 167-182; BRAIN, T. 2001. The Other Sylvia Plath. London, Routledge, 252 p.

The microcosm of Sylvia Plath's collage evidences how anxiety and the fear of a nuclear (and communist) threat marked fundamental aspects of American Cold War society – including the "official role" attributed to women in political and scientific discourses of that period. Thus, by situating the Cold War in the field of cultural expression, and especially in Literature, Langer (1978, p. 62-63) signals the impact that not only the Holocaust but also atomic bombs had on fictional and poetic genres. Death and annihilation are elements present in these texts and represent the atrocities felt and transformed into language. In what concerns specifically North American literature, Sylvia Plath was one of the most significant names of the period and brought to her oeuvre elements corresponding to death, victimisation, patriarchy, nature, the self, body, maternity, sexuality, and love.

In these respects, regarding the breadth of her artistic work, Sylvia Plath extrapolates the definition of "poet": although her work was mostly poetry writings, she endeavoured and tested her creativity in other artistic manifestations, such as short stories, novels, and paintings. In the academic researches that have been conducted about the author, the focus on Plath's textual works has left her iconography works little-explored when in comparison to, for example, what has been produced so far on the novel "The Bell Jar", the books of poems "Ariel" and "Colossus", and even her diaries and letters. Ergo, I consider the other artistic manifestations of Sylvia Plath – paintings and collages – to be indissociable from her texts, and the existence of these artistic expressions places her in a different artistic threshold so that in my research I consider her to be a multimedia artist. Hence, the collage is not detached from her textual literary production. It is possible to notice that, in "The Bell Jar", the content speaks to some of the imagetic productions of the author such as the Anti-Military Collage, in which the context of its making coincides with the moment in which Plath wrote "The Bell Jar", and in some stories has the political matters of the Cold War as the backdrop.[4] The Anti-Military Collage was created in 1960 and The Bell Jar in 1961, a historical context plagued by a global tension of an armed conflict between the Soviet Union and the United States. Shortly afterwards, the missile crisis in Cuba reinstalled the fear of nuclear power and the destructive effect of the atomic bomb, in a recollection of the north-American act of war globally witnessed in 1945, namely the explosion of the atomic attack to the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Thereupon, the atmosphere of fear and anxiety experienced by Plath in both works is similar to the scenario narrated in "The Bell Jar" by the character Esther Greenwood. Esther, when introducing the reader to the memories of her psychiatric hospitalization, dates back to the historical context in which she lived before being tormented by depression. "It was a queer, sultry summer, the summer they executed the Rosenbergs, and I didn't know what I was doing in New York." The couple's death reverberated in Esther's thoughts wherever she went, just as the expression of the North American President Eisenhower was seen by Esther on the faces of new-born children. In the historical context of the Cold War in 1950, the couple, Ethel Rosenberg and Julius Rosenberg were accused of the crime of espionage and were convicted for providing the Soviet Union with the prototype of the atomic bomb. The couple's conviction of death by electric chair was a remarkable episode in North American history; several manifestations happened for and against the conviction, where the protests against the conviction were driven by the understanding that antisemitism had influenced the jury's decision, given the couple was of Jewish origin. Therefore, the summer when the Rosenberg couple got killed, described as "Sultry", not only indicates the atmosphere of the environment but also drives the reader to understand that moment as claustrophobic, where the North American policy against communism, previously propelled by Senator McCarthy, impacted Eisenhower's political decision of denying the couple's leniency application. This request was made specially by Ethel Rosenberg, who insisted she was innocent, and due to her social status as a mother, wrote a letter to the President's wife pleading for empathy for the fate of her two sons. Notwithstanding, despite the inexistence of concrete proof of her participation in the crime, Ethel was convicted of being the mastermind of the crime of espionage by the North American authorities, the most culpable.

Julius and Ethel Rosenberg's conviction of espionage, a crime which was considered "worse than murder" (Harris, 1984) by the North American jury, inculcated once more the fear of a nuclear war, a fear which was haunted by the images of the bodies of the people who survived the effects of the atomic bombs in Japan. For the American government, the certainty of no longer being the only great power with nuclear weapons power resulted in a state of watchfulness by the authorities around the American communist parties, and this state of vigilance resulted in the practice of reporting to the authorities per-

[4] The publication of Johnny Panic and the Bible of Dreams, edited by Ted Hughes, revealed Plath's experiments in short stories. Some tales like "Mothers" (1962), "Johnny Panic and the Bible of Dreams" (1958), and "All the Dead Dears" (1956) had Cold War elements, such as the author's critique of motherhood, the traumas of war, anti-Semitism, and psychopathology/psychiatry.

ceived "deviant" conduct by people who could be considered suspected of "espionage". That is the context behind Esther Greenwood's speech about the "Sultry summer" in which the Rosenbergs were convicted, and it is an example of how Plath's writings relate to the images. Regarding the collage, the assembly of the images dates back to the aforementioned context, in which the observer sees a male figure such as President Eisenhower, and the presence of nuclear power represented by a warhead aiming at a woman's body, in which case it is my understanding that it refers to the role of women in North American society.

Considering that most of the academic productions on Plath have been aimed at studying the author's personal matters and her relationship with literary production, little research has focused on the historical context lived by the author, and little has been discussed about the aforesaid collage. In order to contextualise Plath in the Cold War atmosphere, Peel (2002, p. 24) evidences how much the poet is neglected by Academia in her historical dimension (in comparison to her "literary dimension").[5] In other words, he draws attention to the historical richness present in Plath's body of work and to the need to understand it, essentially, against the backdrop of the Cold War. Meanwhile, by correlating artistic expressions with historical context, the author emphasises, though in a peripheral manner, something that comprises the basis for my investigative interests: Emotional Regimes - in particular, those that were created around the Cold War period and helped to enhance and maintain the polarisation of the world between the United States and the Soviet Union.[6]

By understanding that the Cold War was a period prone to the creation of apprehensive, fearsome, and apocalyptical discourses and Emotional Regimes, the key contribution proposed by this paper is to show how scholars can use an image as a source to historicise the emotions from a historical context. Thus, I seek not only to renew the specific interpretations of Sylvia Plath, but also to establish the importance of understanding historical periods from the perspective of the History of Emotions, particularly based on the concepts of Emotives and emotional regimes from William Reddy (2001). Thus, this article seeks to historicise the so-called Emotional Regimes of the Cold War period in the United States through the emotional expression announced by Sylvia Plath in her *The Anti-Military Collage*. In order to analyse this collage, I shall not refer to Sylvia Plath's other sources, as the connection between her literary texts and the collage is being developed in my doctoral dissertation.

Art and History of Emotions

The development of this paper is grounded in the field of the History of Emotions. Based on the general explanations developed by Boddice (2018), we can understand how historiography can work with emotions:

> *Emotions change over time: that is to say, emotions are as much the subject of historical enquiry as anything else; Emotions are not merely the effect of historical circumstances, expressed in the aftermath of events, but are active causes of events and richly enhance historiographical theories of causation; Emotions are at the centre of the history of the human being, considered as a biocultural entity that is characterised as a worlded body, in the worlds of other worlded bodies; Emotions are at the centre of the history of morality, for it is becoming increasingly unlikely that any account of human virtue, morals or ethics can be devoid of an analysis of its historical emotional context. Taken together, the history of emotions is, therefore, putting emotions at the centre of historiographical practice. Emotions cannot be sidelined as another (soft) category of historical analysis, peripheral to the weighty subjects of identity, race, class, gender, globalism and politics (Boddice, 2018, p. 10).*

Historiography suggests several directions for studying emotions, and some scholars stand out in providing possible methodological approaches. Sullivan (2018, p. 113-131) is one among many historians who seek to expand the methodologies of the History of Emotions into little-explored sources within this field, such as literature, music, and art. Although her specialty is England's literature and drama in the Modern Age (17th century), she has recently proposed to expand her methodological reflections to the arts in general. In this context, Sullivan's contributions inspire me to do an analysis of *The Anti-Military Collage* by Sylvia Plath.

Although there are many possible ways to approach and analyse this montage, I understand this artistic creation as an emotional experience. Then, it is possible to understand that a main theme the image expresses are the Emotional Regimes of the Cold War, through which the collage can be historicised. Sullivan (2018), by studying the modern English poetry portraying pain and mourning, concluded that, through these poems, we

[5] "Yet, what is striking about the discussion of Plath's writing, is the remarkable dehistoricisation of it from the period 1960 to 1963. This surprising critical omission needs to be addressed. It seemed insufficient to mention world events and places and then pass over them: they need to be evaluated as important contemporary discourses and sites with which Plath's work intersects" (Peel, 2002, p. 24).

[6] Emotional Regimes, as we will see below, are expression and repression codes created and applied by societies and governments (Reddy, 2001, p. 128–29).

have access not only to the social codes orienting pain and mourning, but also to a literary work imbued with the effort to articulate, through words, a clear meaning for these emotions. Thus, Sullivan (2018) thinks that poetry is a "world reflected" and also a "world being created"; in other words, the author understands poetry as the depiction of emotion in the text (or performance), as communication of this emotion to the public, and as a vehicle of experience. The idea of experience, in fact, is essential in Sullivan's approach to thinking emotions in the arts. For the author, "the aim of such works is not just to mirror experience, but also to produce it in the minds of audiences and readers, and in this sense, they go far beyond functioning as a second-best repository for the scant-of-evidence" (Sullivan, 2018, p. 119).

In this sense, Plath's collage can be interpreted as a "mirror" of a period of war, and also as a way of conveying and creating the "emotional climate" of this war through the montage of images. The collage is an artistic form that responds to a historical moment when transformations in quotidian life and in technological advances had an impact on the way of seeing time, space, and sensibilities. In this sense, if we regard the collage as a mirror of experience and also a creation of experience (as Sullivan sees pain and mourning in modern English poetry), what does Plath's context indicate about this collage? What historical baggage does each image in the collage have? What meaning does this fusion of images possess? My reading identifies a coherence and central meaning in what the author intended to convey and create: the position of women in the Cold War.

To answer these questions, I use the structure elaborated by the historian Reddy (2001). In his book "The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions", he formulated an analytical structure based on the idea that emotions can be interpreted as a speech act. Based on Austin's (1962) work, Reddy (2001) formulated the concepts of "Emotive" and "Emotional Regimes". Emotives are understood as "a type of speech act [...] which both describes [...] and changes [...] the world, because emotional expression has an exploratory and a self-altering effect on the activated thought material of emotion" (Reddy, 2001, p. 128). In other words, Emotives function as translations of emotions that are always imperfect because we cannot represent entirely an emotional state. Emotives are part of what Reddy (2001) calls "Emotional Regimes". The Emotional Regime is "the set of normative emotions and the official rituals, practices, and emotives that express and inculcate them; a necessary underpinning of any stable political regime" (example: government, church) (Reddy, 2001, p. 129). Even though Reddy (2001) concentrates his concept mostly on written language analyses, in my interpretation I see the collage as an emotive of Sylvia Plath, a form of language in which, through images, she creates a translation of her emotions under the Emotional Regime she lived through.

If we look at the collage, we can see how the magazine images that she chose and the arrangements created by cutting and pasting speak of her "being-in-the-world", and how the female body (the woman in the crosshairs of an atomic fighter) has an 'impression' on the world (Ahmed, 2004, p. 25-42). As Reddy (2001) says, emotives describe and execute emotions in a context, and this image describes and executes something that Plath, as an individual, was suffering. It describes a gender problem[7] that could be found in the 1960s, especially seen and explained in an American feminist book, "The Feminine Mystique", published in 1963 (Friedan, 2010). The American politics during the Cold War Era had an emotional regime and, to better understand it, I will present a debate about the Cold War, whose contextual approach will be based on emotional regimes produced by the American government about the place of women[8] in this historical moment – in particular in the above-cited second period, the "Coexistent Competition". This article does not intend to show the changes of Emotional Regimes in the selected contexts, but to articulate Sylvia Plath's collage specifically with Emotional Regimes of North American politics in the Cold War from gender regulations and the central role of the nuclear race.

The worldly new look of the case of the eagle's bugged beak

In Sylvia Plath's collage, below President Eisenhower, in the lower left corner, there is a composition with two phrases: "The worldly new look" and "of the case of eagle's bugged beak". "Eagle's bugged beak" is the name of one of the most famous cases of Soviet espionage. It

[7] The gender problem exposed by Friedan (2010) refers to the symptoms of emptiness, anger and sadness experienced by middle-class American women. The "nameless problem", as she puts it, is said to be an epidemic among American women. In this sense, the author identifies, in magazines and advertisements, a "feminine mystique" around the constructed identity of a woman who should be "healthy, beautiful, educated, concerned only with her husband, her children and her home" (p. 135).

[8] In this paper, the theoretical discussion on gender relations and their emotional implications in Plath's life and works are tangential due to the lengthy discussion needed to achieve this specific goal. That being said, whenever I refer to gender in the text, I am supported by Joan Scott's (1986) definition: "Gender is a constitutive element of social relationships based on perceived differences between the sexes, and gender is a primary way of signifying relationships of power. [...] The theorizing of gender however is developed in my second proposition: gender is a primary way of signifying relationships of power. It might be better to say, gender is a primary field within which or by means of which power is articulated" (p. 1067).

all started when, in 1945, the Ambassador to the United Unites in the USSR, Averell Harriman, received a present that represented a cordiality from the Soviets to the US for their relations during the Second World War. The gift was a handmade, wood-carved replica of the Great Seal of the United States and was hung at the library of the Ambassador's residence in Moscow.[9] In 1953, seven years after receiving this gift, a radio frequency bug was discovered at the eagle's beak tip. This discovery of Soviet espionage represented one of the greatest North American "fears" during the Cold War: the USSR technological advance, and its espionage capacity and "copy" of American technology, in particular because this advancement and copying could touch on of the main elements of competition between the two countries: the development of atomic bombs.

In Sylvia Plath's collage, the atomic bomb is represented by the B-58 fighter. Thus, we have the espionage and bomb imagery as depictions of those fears – after all, the relationship between the USSR and the atomic bomb is as old as the US'.[10] Since the Second World War, the Soviet leader Joseph Stalin had been developing projects of nuclear weapons. Yet, only in August 1949 the final result of this project was announced: the first Soviet bomb – the RDS-1 – was complete (Holloway, 1994). It was tested in Kazakhstan and had characteristics similar to the American bomb Fat Man, detonated in Nagasaki, that is: it was a plutonium implosion bomb. The RDS-1 launching is considered by some historians as a landmark, because it marked the end of the American nuclear monopoly and intensified the nuclear race between the USSR and the USA (Craig, 2016). In response to the RDS-1 technological advance, the American President Harry Truman was pressured by Congress, civilians and scientists to take some measure against the Soviets. The United States Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) exerted strong pressure so that Truman would approve the construction of a bigger and more potent bomb – the hydrogen bomb, known also as "H bomb", an artifact hundreds of times more powerful than the bombs of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. According to Bernstein (1984), Truman's decision was popularly secure. The President affirmed to be against the use of these weapons, yet, he said: "We had to go on and make them because of the way the Russians were behaving; we had no other course" (Bernstein, 1984, p. 16).

In 1953, after the end of Truman's term, the new President, Dwight Eisenhower, had a different posture regarding the nuclear race. Emblematic speeches, such as Chance for Peace (1953) and Atoms for Peace (1953), marked his political stance aimed at an alleged nuclear disarmament campaign, because Eisenhower's political orientation to economic and ideological strengthening prevailed over more belligerent issues. According to Tal (2001), Eisenhower's disarmament proposal was, nonetheless, complex and contradictory, because

> *The result was that the production of atomic bombs took a quantum leap during the Eisenhower presidency: the stockpile of 1,430 atomic weapons in 1953 stood at more than 24,150 by 1961. This massive increase in the nuclear arsenal was accompanied by a cut in US military personnel from 3.55 million in June 1953 to 2.8 million three years later and to 2.4 million by 1960. Defence expenditure declined concomitantly, from $49.6 billion in 1953 to $41.7 billion in 1956 (Tal, 2001, p. 178-179).*

Ironically, in 1954, after several tests and adjustments of the hydrogen bomb, the United States Atomic Energy Commission launched the Castle Bravo bomb, the most powerful bomb ever detonated by the country. The detonation of this bomb had unexpected impacts, because after the explosion nuclear ashes (that is, radiation) spread into the air and contaminated the region, including the Japanese fishing boat Daigo Fukuryū Maru (Smith, 2009, p. 51-52). The destructive force of the hydrogen bomb caused widespread panic and an apocalyptical imagery in the population of several countries, and their respective Civil Defence had to create strategies to control popular fear. This attempt at control went hand in hand with a gradual discredit as to the usefulness of Civil Defence, since after the Castle Bravo explosion people became aware that there was no way of protecting themselves from radiation (Barnett, 2015). The apocalyptical climate led to a renewal of survival speeches created by the Civil Defence, and this was because they needed to re-establish trust of the population in the state and convince people of their efficacy in the atomic discussion (Grant, 2010, p. 81).

Thus, at that moment, the atomic bomb (whether the classic, of uranium and plutonium, or the hydrogen bomb) was a constantly improving project both in the Soviet Union and the United States, and it signified each nation's power. At the emotional level, this arms race meant, for civilians, the effective development of the

[9] Curiously, the "eagle's beak was bugged with a device invented by Lev Sergeyevich Termen, known in the United States as Léon Theremin. Theremin is more famous by inventing the Theremin, a musical instrument based on electric signs" (Glinsky, 2000, p. 256–259).

[10] The US started to develop the atomic bomb with the Manhattan Project in 1939. While the weapon was being developed, Soviet espionage followed it closely. American informants, such as Klaus Fuchs and Theodore Hall, passed on secret information to the USSR. Of these atomic espionage cases, the most famous was that of the Rosenberg couple: condemned to death in the electric chair, they even figure in the first sentence of Sylvia Plath's only novel, *The Bell Jar*, published in 1963.

worst, most terrible, and most feared weapon, capable of exterminating all life on the planet, and anxiety was part of the subjects' experience. They lived with the threat of an atomic war that never happened.

According to Iriye (2016), some historians believed that the Cold War did not become a Third World War because both countries (USSR and USA) knew that if nuclear weapons were used, the destruction would be immeasurable, and maybe biologically irreversible. Yet, although this supposition is arguable (especially because some historiographical perspectives do not consider the atomic bomb as a fundamental element of the Cold War), in my perspective, the development of the atomic bomb is indeed a central element that shaped the course of Contemporary History (which is seen, in its centrality, in Sylvia Plath's collage).[11] It was from the fear of the bomb that popular civilian movements in favour of disarmament arose; that the danger of radiation on nature led to discussions of international environmental agreements; and that the need for a Human Rights commission arose (Ruding, 1990, p. 54-55).

In this sense, by seeing Sylvia Plath's collage as a mirror of experience and also creation of experience, I draw the reader's attention to the possibility of thinking about the author's intentionality in disposing the woman in the crosshairs of an atomic rocket loaded in the B-58. From this image and the discussion presented above, I think that it is plausible to see the influence of the atomic bomb on the social organisation of individuals. In the case of the United States, through national and moral security policy, the American government in many cases made use of the fear of the bomb and the fear of the Soviets to indicate the role of women in the Cold War – that is, to regulate Emotional Regimes centered on gender relations.

Every man wants his woman on a pedestal

"Every man wants his woman on a pedestal" is the phrase that accompanies the clipping of a woman in the central left corner. She is on a pedestal, in the crosshairs of an atomic rocket. Both the phrase and the pedestal belong to a lingerie ad of the Rogers brand. The pedestal is a metaphor for an imaginary of the ideal American woman, who would be "worshipped by husband, children and servants for her spiritual goodness and her unswerving devotion to those she loves" (Rogers, 1982, p. 60). The original propaganda contained images of women considered exemplary or coy, but in opposition to this ideal feminine Sylvia Plath chose to replace the original housewife in the ad with the image of another woman, one reminiscent of a pin-up, that is, a sensual and erotic woman whose aesthetics was present during the Second World War. Pin-ups were women whose images evoked sexual desire in soldiers at war and decorated bombs and airplanes. In other words, pin-ups were women whose aesthetics was propagandistic and acted directly for the male gaze and desire (May, 2017, p. 68-69).

Thus, we see an antagonism between the pedestal metaphor – the ideal American woman – and the pin-up, a "sensual" and free woman. This antagonism dialogues with the complex relation of the place of women in the Cold War. According to Laville (2016), ideological disputes between the US and the USSR can be seen, too, in gender differentiation. A proof of this centrality of gender questions in the Cold War was the so-called Kitchen Debate that occurred between the American Vice-president Richard Nixon and Soviet Secretary General Nikita Khrushchev. The debate happened in 1959, in Moscow, during the exposition of a model of an American kitchen, an occasion at which "the two leaders compared the home life of the average Soviet worker with that of his American counterpart" (Laville, 2016, p. 523). Thus, we can think of the woman as the epicenter of a dispute of ideology and progress, where for the official American ideology, "civilized and advanced societies were those which exacted hard labor from their women" – a clear opposition to the Soviet model of family and femininity (Laville, 2016, p. 524).

From this moment on, the Kitchen Debate continued in an intense manner: on the American side, the rhetoric of technological advance in machines had the purpose of showing American superiority over the Soviet lifestyle. "These were terms on which Nixon felt confident, prompting him to ask if it would not be better to compete on the merits of washing machines rather than the strength of rockets" (May, 2017, p. 20-21). The historian Reid (2009) states that the American housewife had an important ideological function, serving as a parameter that disqualified the Soviet model for not concerning itself, supposedly, with the quality of life of communist women (Reid, 2009, p. 83). Thus, according to Laville (2016), the domesticity celebration in the Cold War brought to the American nation stability in political, cultural, emotional, social, and sexual matters (Laville,

[11] Craig (2016, p. 361) lists some Cold War academics who do not accept the centrality of the bomb: the neorealists, scholars of International Relations who think about the war essentially in terms of political structure, and therefore understand that the emergence of two continental superpowers did not have any relation with the bomb; the Marxists, who see as the war's central focus the ideology and stages of capitalism, also without direct relations to the bomb; and the liberals, who understate the impact of the bomb by understanding that the Western post-war culture would not allow the emergence of a nuclear conflict.

2016, p. 525). For the American capitalist ideology, the family became an important core, where man and woman should have a "care of oneself" with the purpose of maintaining national security against communists. Not by chance, Sylvia Plath's collage is marked by male images (in "war games", such as Eisenhower playing cards and the slot car becoming a B-58 fighter with an atomic bomb) and females (the pin-up and the fatigued women) (Peel, 2002, p. 59).

Furthermore, one of the protection measures of the American government against possible Soviet attacks was the creation of the Federal Civil Defence Administration, a body designed for elaborating defence campaigns for the population's survival in case of war attacks. According to Lichtman (2006), this body created a series of civil defence initiatives, and among them was the idea of the home as a safe space against the dangers of war. That being so, an ideological campaign called Do It Yourself was present in the American Civil Defence discourse: its aim was to encourage families to build their own defences, among them, fallout shelters in their homes. According to Lichtman (2006), the idea of "do-it-yourself became increasingly focused on tasks such as construction and carpentry, which were categorised as tasks for men" (Lichtman, 2006, p. 39). If the construction of fallout shelters was an activity of men, the role of women was to maintain the family structure according to American values, in addition to maintaining emergency supplies in order. In other words, the Do It Yourself official policy was a way of regulating gender relations and, at the same time, encouraging the American society's individualistic character – an element dear to the capitalist ideology of the period, since it directly opposed the collectivity in the Soviet "communist spectrum".[12]

Thus, American domestic discourses encouraged women to be faithful to their social roles, in other words, to remain at home (that is, that they did not work outside the home).[13] One way of maintaining this emotional regime was, again, the atomic threat. The anxiety of nuclear attacks was fed by official ideologies (such as the civil defence), which stressed the "immoral" and disaggregating effects that would come from an atomic mushroom's radiation. An example of this was presented by May (2017) in the description of a paper published in 1951 in the *Journal of Social Hygiene*. In this paper, the physicist Charles Walker Clarke describes the possible effects of the atomic bomb and explains that in a hypothetical explosion:

> *Families would become separated and lost from each other in confusion. Supports of normal family and community life would be broken down [...] There would develop among many people, especially youths [...] the reckless psychological state often seen following great disasters. [...] 'Under such conditions', he continued, 'moral standards would relax and promiscuity would increase' (May, 2017, p. 90).*

Promiscuity was described by Americans as a subversion that would lead women to prostitution and men to homosexuality. In the view of Americans, sexual freedom would destroy the family, and the disintegration of the family unit was regarded as part of the communist ideology. "American popular culture frequently explained political instability and consequent vulnerability to communist subversion with reference to weak or abnormal family structures" (Laville, 2016, p. 525). That being so, "it was not just nuclear energy that had to be contained, but the social and sexual fallout of the atomic age itself" (May, 2017, p. 91). In this sense, morals, for the American citizen, provided that men "would not be tempted by the degenerate seductions of the outside world that came from pornography, prostitution, 'loose women', or homosexuals", and women would turn "their energies toward the family in healthy ways. As long as they were subordinate to their husbands, sexually and otherwise, they would be contented and fulfilled wives devoting themselves to expert child rearing and professionalised home-making" (May, 2017, p. 94).

Thus, it is clear that sexual morality was a central pillar in the Cold War emotional regimes. This sexuality, in a symbolic and visual dimension, can be related to the atomic bomb itself. Already in the 1930s, attractive and sexually potent women were called "bombshells", a term that had been applied as well to artillery used in war (May, 2017, p. 107). Later, in the 1940s, a picture of sex symbol Rita Hayworth was glued to the Gilda atomic bomb in a nuclear test at the Bikini atoll in 1946 – and mere four days after the test, Louis Réard named his new bathing suit design as Bikini in reference to that 'atomic location', which was a common testing site of American nuclear experiences in the post-war period (Caputi,1991, p. 429). Moving to the 1950s and 1960s, Peel (2002) notes the gender norms in relation to the war rhetoric in Sylvia Plath's collage. According to him, the bomb, in the collage, is a phallic symbol pointed at the pin-up's vagina, in a metaphor of sexuality and violence that Plath would have taken from the poem "America', written by Allen Ginsberg in 1956 (Peel, 2002, p. 59).

[12] "If the American housewife in her kitchen embodied the American values of individual consumption, her Soviet counterpart embodied communist values of collectivization, communal effort, and shared ownership" (Laville, 2016, p. 528-529).

[13] Women who worked away from home, in this perspective, became "desexualized", while the (American) housewife would have time and disposition to care for her beauty and femininity (May, 2017, p. 22).

Finally, beyond the subversion of moral values that Plath shows in her collage (the pedestal that carries not a housewife, but a pin-up; the atomic fighter associated with a child's toy; the reference to espionage while Eisenhower carries a badge with the inscription "sleep" and hides his card game, etc.), she also translates the emotional experience of anxiety and fear with cuttings depicting fatigue and the Tums antacid. The images chosen by Plath have an evident negative tone. The poet appears to be making a criticism of the state of health of the USA, as indicated in the headline "Fatigue Build-up America's Growing Health Hazard" in the lower right corner. In my reading, the centrality of Plath's collage is in politics, in the bomb and in gender relations, while health "consequences" sneak in the margins, in a message that these health problems surround the general Cold War climate in the US. Sylvia Plath herself was included in this pathologised margin, since the author was considered mentally ill (and many attribute her early suicide in 1963, at 31 years of age, to this 'disease') (Dunst, 2019, p. 3-4). Furthermore, it was not uncommon that fatigue was considered a symptom of psychiatric disorders, including "Mass Hysteria", after the war. Plath even claimed that psychiatrists were the "gods of our age" (Dunst, 2019, p. 15).

In other words**:** The atomic fear engenders official discourses that go beyond the nuclear concern, and the Emotional Regimes stemming from the bomb centrality in the Cold War affect gender relations, domestic life, social, moral, and political values and, finally, spread through the pathologisation of mental states that, not rarely, stemmed directly from the paranoia and anxiety generated in an ideological cycle by the very bomb. This emotional atmosphere is illustrated in *The Anti-Military Collage* by Sylvia Plath.

Conclusion

In short, this article aimed to show the importance of an analysis that uses emotions (fear) to explain gender and state policy relations. By writing this article, I intended to develop a relationship between fear, atomic bomb, state policy, and gender relations, yet during the bibliographic search I found that historiography constructs 'rational' explanations as if the economy and political agreements could configure a specific historical moment by themselves. Therefore, as a historian and researcher, I believe that this article is the first step toward establishing ideas that I intend to develop in my doctoral research, in particular from the contextualisation of Sylvia Plath's historical experience and the emotional regimes of which she was part. Because of the restricted space that an article provides, it is evident that there are possibilities of further elaboration in all I have written – in the relations between the USSR and the USA during the Cold War, in the development of science and nuclear technology, and in the gender relations constructed in state policy, particularly in what concerns their subjective and emotional dimensions.

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