

EDUCATION, HOMOPHOBIA AND BARBARITY

EDUCAÇÃO, HOMOFÓBIA E BARBÁRIE

EDUCACIÓN, HOMOFÓBIA Y BARBARIDAD



Fernando Teixeira LUIZ¹
e-mail: f.l Luiz@unesp.br

How to reference this paper:

LUIZ, F. T. Education, homophobia and barbarity. **Nuances: Estudos sobre Educação**, Presidente Prudente, v. 34, n. 00, e023020, 2023. e-ISSN: 2236-0441. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32930/nuances.v34i00.10241>



| Submitted 07/09/2023
| Revisions required: 19/10/2023
| Approved: 20/11/2023
| Published: 30/12/2023

Editors: Prof. Dr. Rosiane de Fátima Ponce
Prof. Dr. Paulo César de Almeida Raboni
Deputy Executive Editor: Prof. Dr. José Anderson Santos Cruz

¹ Sao Paulo State University (UNESP), Assis – SP – Brazil. Assistant Professor at UNESP, Assis Campus, Department of Education.

ABSTRACT: The article is an excerpt from a larger research, entitled Mosaic of Images: school, prejudice, and Violence in the Debate on LGBTQIA+ Audiovisual Production, and it aims to disagree with the documentary: If This School Were Mine (2017) by Felipe Marcelino and Letícia Santos. Considering the need to focus on the object, this study prioritizes the statements of some interviewees and their respective relationships with schools that still flirt with the cisgender and heteronormative hegemonic model. Texts by Teixeira Filho (2013) and Butler (2021) were used to analyze the material, which basically focused on issues involving violence and hate speech. In general, dissatisfaction was detected among LGBT adolescent groups in the classroom. This dissatisfaction led young people to abandon their studies or migrate from one school to another to find a safe space that welcomed differences and did not naturalize barbarism.

KEYWORDS: School. Documentary. Prejudice.

RESUMO: O artigo configura o recorte de uma pesquisa maior, intitulada Mosaico de imagens: escola, preconceito e violência no debate da produção audiovisual LGBTQIA+, e tem como meta discorrer sobre o documentário *Se essa escola fosse minha* (2017), de Felipe Marcelino e Letícia Santos. Considerando a necessidade de recorte do objeto, o presente estudo prioriza as declarações de alguns entrevistados e suas respectivas relações com escolas que ainda flertam com o modelo hegemônico cisgênero e heteronormativo. Para análise do material, recorreremos aos textos de Teixeira Filho (2013) e Butler (2021), que se centram, basicamente, em questões que envolvem intolerância, violência e discurso de ódio. Em linhas gerais, detectou-se a insatisfação de grupos adolescentes LGBTs com a sala de aula. Tal insatisfação impulsionava os jovens a abandonarem os estudos ou a migrarem de uma escola para outra em busca de um espaço seguro que acolhesse a diferença e não naturalizasse a barbárie.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Escola. Documentário. Preconceito.

RESUMEN: El artículo es un extracto de una investigación más amplia, titulada Mosaico de imágenes: escuela, prejuicio y violencia en el debate sobre la producción audiovisual LGBTQIA+, y tiene como objetivo discutir el documental *Si esta escuela fuera mía* (2017), de Felipe Marcelino y Letícia Santos. Considerando la necesidad de centrarse en el objeto, este estudio prioriza los dichos de algunos entrevistados y sus respectivas relaciones con escuelas que aún coquetean con el modelo hegemónico cisgênero y heteronormativo. Para analizar el material utilizamos textos de Teixeira Filho (2013) y Butler (2021), que se centran básicamente en cuestiones relacionadas con la intolerancia, la violencia y el discurso del odio. En términos generales, se detectó insatisfacción entre los grupos de adolescentes LGBT con el aula. Tal insatisfacción llevó a los jóvenes a abandonar sus estudios o migrar de una escuela a otra en busca de un espacio seguro que acogiera la diferencia y no naturalizara la barbari.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Escuela. Documental. Intolerancia.

Introduction

The demand that Auschwitz not be repeated is, first of all, for education. In such a way, it precedes any other requirement that I believe is not possible nor necessary to justify. I cannot understand how it has received so little attention until today. Justifying it would have something monstrous in view of all the monstrosity that occurred. But the little awareness regarding this demand and the questions it raises prove that the monstrosity did not deeply affect people, a symptom of the persistence of the possibility of repetition as far as the state of consciousness and unconsciousness of people is concerned (ADORNO, 1965, p. 01, our translation).

This article is part of a broader research, entitled *Mosaico de imagens: escola, preconceito e violência no debate da produção audiovisual LGBTQIA+*², to which I have dedicated myself over the past five years. This scientific investigation aims to problematize, specifically, a genre that is seldom addressed in the audiovisual field and also of considerable appeal among adolescents and young people: the documentary, examining how three national productions appropriated the debate related to school, prejudice, and sexual diversity in recent decades.

In general terms, it aims to map the representation process of the LGBTQIA+ population inscribed in narratives, images, and sounds that recover experiences of bullying in the classroom and that have been disseminated, on digital platforms, through three Brazilian documentaries: *Se essa escola fosse minha* (2017), *(Sobre) vivências* (2018) and *Depois da tempestade* (2018). Given the need to narrow down the object, this study will focus solely on the documentary *Se essa escola fosse minha* (2017), which has 33,539 views on the YouTube digital platform.

Before delving into the specifics of the aforementioned documentary, however, it is worth tracing the antecedents that led to the choice of the theme, the methodological option, and the affiliation with a particular theoretical corpus. Over four years of practice as a Literature teacher in Secondary Education at a private school in Presidente Prudente (SP), I noticed that themes involving the universe of gender identity and sexual orientation always caused some discomfort among students and their families.

Parents often condemned the school for adopting titles by Babette Cole, Aluísio Azevedo, or Caio Fernando Abreu because of the presence of LGBT characters. Cinematographic productions of this kind, directed by Pedro Almodóvar or Ang Lee, similarly faced retaliations. However, when I proposed, in a class on linguistic variation, to discuss

² Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, Transsexuals, Queer, Intersex, Asexuals, and other gender orientations and variations.
Nuances: Estudos sobre Educação, Presidente Prudente, v. 34, n. 00, e023020, 2023. e-ISSN: 2236-0441
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32930/nuances.v34i00.10241>

inclusive language and neutral pronouns, the discourse of hatred and intolerance towards transgender or non-binary groups became explicit. Expressions, laden with hostility, religiosity, or irony, such as "there are only two genders", "God created man for woman", or "this is lack of shame", served only to confirm a hypothesis formulated soon after I began my journey as a Basic Education teacher: a significant portion of those adolescents, aged 14 to 17, had incorporated, from their parents and some teachers, a worldview that was quite conservative, stereotyped, and based on religious fundamentalism. They informed themselves primarily through content circulating on YouTube or WhatsApp groups.

Meanwhile, students looked up to evangelical lawmakers who delivered transphobic speeches or other politicians who were elected through homophobia. Contemporary cultural production aimed at children and adolescents seems to further reinforce prejudice. The representation of most protagonists in movies, comics, and graphic animations still appears to adhere to heteronormativity, to the image of cisgender. It's as if the advancements propagated by the cultural industry still reveal boundaries, demarcations, and frontiers. In essence, it was acceptable to introduce one or two Afro-descendant heroines, but insisting on highlighting an LGBT character remained unfeasible. At most, the condition of a supporting character, with highly stereotypical tones, as can be seen in the visual construction of the shark Lenny (*Shark Tale* (2004)) or the controversial and diabolic figure of the androgynous antagonist Him (*The Powerpuff Girls* (1998)).

Such concerns led me to reflect on current public policies and curriculum guidelines that focused on gender and sexuality issues in the school environment. Therefore, it is worth emphasizing that terms such as "pluralism of ideas" and "tolerance" are already included in the National Education Guidelines and Bases Law (9394/1996). In 1998, the National Curriculum Parameters already signaled the debate around sexual orientation, including this topic as a cross-cutting theme. In this sense, considering the contribution of the Common National Curriculum Base (2018) became imperative, since such guidelines supported pedagogical practices, presenting detailed objectives regarding the content that should be covered in the classroom.

However, according to Filipe, Silva, and Costa (2021), the Common National Curriculum Base (BNCC) is defined as a project in which school education plays the role of preparing the student for adult life, with preparing for the job market as the main focus. The document is based on principles of skills and competencies, offering learning experiences that are often limited to basic knowledge and appeal to the seductive discourse of autonomy and self-teaching. In general terms, they offer the working class the minimum knowledge necessary

to adapt to the prevailing capitalism and to the job market. As the mentioned authors point out, this consolidates a vision of education as a service to be offered by the State at sufficiency levels rather than excellence.

Silva (2020), on the other hand, adds to this debate that, in the process of approving the BNCC, important topics related to gender and sexuality faced clear resistance from conservative sectors of society, thus suppressing terms, expressions, or concepts that referred to the debate around LGBT issues. In this sense, "the process that led to the approval of the BNCC in December 2017 was marked by a verticalization of decisions, as was the case with gender and sexuality issues, which were removed from the document by the National Council of Education at the guidance of the Ministry of Education" (SILVA, 2020, p. 145, our translation).

Therefore, confronting the silencing of the debate on gender and sexuality in contemporary public policies with the dissonant voices echoed in the documentary *Se essa escola fosse minha* (2017) ultimately emerged as one of the aims of this research. However, given the need for a broader scope of the object, we will only consider the verbal discourse, that is, the statements inscribed in the core of the interviewees.

The School and the Diaspora

Documentaries, in general terms, are defined not only as an audiovisual genre sustained by a monophonic sense effect but, above all, as semiotic systems guided by a particular point of view about reality (MELO, 2012) in close articulation with the strands of journalism. They are characterized as media vehicles that carry a certain political conception of the world, a place of speech, and, mainly, a vision of education. The documentar *Se essa escola fosse minha* (2017) was developed by the Social Communication academics Felipe Rocha Marcelino and Letícia Eunice Leotti Santos at the University of Brasília.

The audiovisual material, available on YouTube's digital platforms, seeks to reveal the experiences, hardships, and pitfalls of the LGBTQIAPN+ population in the classroom. In general terms, the documentary aims to: "a) Portray the experiences, aspirations, fears, reflections, and worldviews of students who do not fit into the dominant patterns of femininity, masculinity, and sexual orientation; b) Highlight the socializing and normative role of the school, which can be configured as an excluding space by silencing the subjectivities of the

bodies within it; c) Generate reflection on strategies and policies to combat gender and sexual orientation discrimination in schools" (MARCELINO; SANTOS, 2017, p. 15, our translation). To this end, it interweaves the voices of different subjects who are in the classroom or recall experiences involving prejudice, pain, and exclusion from their time in school.

Comprising a highly heterogeneous and complex framework grounded in various biographies, the video also incorporates testimonials from LGBTQIAPN+ teachers, parliamentarians, artists, managers, representatives of activist groups, and researchers from the fields of Psychology and Anthropology. They are responsible for problematizing, from different perspectives and fields of knowledge, the phenomenon of homophobia and its impacts on various life trajectories. These revelations are presented to the viewer throughout the 40-minute duration of the film. Overall, it features contributions from the following interviewees³: Victor Stoimenoff, Mickael Pederiva, Taya Carneiro, Iana Mallmann, Matheus Oliveira, Fábio Felix, Luan Oliveira, Jef Cardoli, Nilton Aguilar, Vitor Gomes, Melissa Massayury, Eduardo Kimura, Graça de Paula, Tatiana Lionço, Mariah Gama, José Zuchiwschi, Silvero Pereira, Murilo Silva, Felipe Cordeiro, and Erika Kokay.

The title of the work, *Se essa escola fosse minha*, refers, through intertextuality and the viewer's affective memory, to the popular nursery rhyme *Se essa rua fosse minha*⁴, marked by a loving and sometimes sentimental tone: "If this street/ if this street was mine/ I would bid/ I would bid someone to tile it/ With pebbles/ with pebbles made of diamond/ Only for my/ only for my love to walk by⁵". The conditional conjunction ("If") that opens the subordinate clause, as well as the use of the verb "to be" in the past imperfect subjunctive ("were"), transparently conveys the information that the school does not belong to the speaker. A school, consequently, is distant, unattainable, and absent. The modalization of the statement may also suggest a lamenting aspect on the part of the speaker: it is a school that, unfortunately, does not belong to him, a factor that generates sadness, anguish, and languor.

The sequence of interviewed agents and their respective testimonials, both as students, teachers, or researchers, highlights homophobia as the main trigger of exclusion. This enables the school to become a distant environment and, at the same time, devoid of any identification by the students. It is in the classroom that students who do not fit into the cisgender or heteronormative model encounter humiliation, offense, shame, and hate speech. The response

³ Available at: <http://www.alguemavisa.com.br/2017/07/14/documentario-se-essa-escola-fosse-minha-fala-sobre-agressao-sofrida-por-jovens-lgbtqia/>

⁴ If this street was mine.

⁵ Available at: <https://www.lettras.mus.br/cantigas-populares/134098/>

to such behavior can be seen in the high dropout rates among students. In other words, faced with the lack of support from the school community, the constant attacks from other students, and the omission of a significant portion of teachers, leaving the classroom emerges as the best (or perhaps only!) alternative among the victims.

Such data is corroborated by the testimony of student Melissa Massayury (29 years old): "And then they forbid me from using the women's restroom. At that time, I didn't know what to do. Should I use the men's restroom? Exactly. They made a deal with me, five minutes before break, I could use the men's restroom. Then, there was a meeting of teachers to say that I could leave five minutes early, but they didn't hold a meeting with the institution to discuss the matter further. So, I started having to use the men's restroom. Then I dropped out. I realized it wasn't a place that welcomed me well."

The fear of violence and the search for a school open to sexual diversity are concerns that drive LGBTQIAPN+ youth on a constant pilgrimage through various educational institutions, almost like a diaspora in search of a place that provides a sense of belonging and, consequently, offers security. This is what we can observe, for example, in the testimony of Mickael Pederiva (16 years old): "I changed schools many times until I found one that was okay, that respected my name and where I could use the bathroom without being threatened."

Similar observations take on even more poignant contours in the testimony of Taya Carneiro (23 years old): "Every day, in every class, wherever I went, I was the faggot of the room. And I always got beaten up". Matheus Oliveira (17 years old), in turn, echoing the other voices conveyed by the documentary, also expressed his anguish regarding school, the students, and the teachers. He revealed that the administrators reprimanded him because of his mannerisms, which further exacerbated the discomfort of being in the educational institution: "I just wanted to leave school... because it was too much... You know? I wasn't welcome in that environment."

According to Butler (2021), hate speech, marked by a peculiar lexical selection, raises the question of which words or verbal representations hurt and offend. "To be hurt by speech is to suffer a loss of context, that is, it is not knowing where one is" (BUTLER, 2021, p. 15, our translation), thus leaving the recipient "out of control" (BUTLER, 2021, p. 15, our translation). The verbal sign, immersed in a social, historical, and political context, expresses worldviews about reality shared by a particular group. The American philosopher emphasizes that to claim that language "hurts," that words "harm" or "maim," implies combining words from different

semantic fields. "The use of a term, such as 'hurt,' suggests that language can have effects similar to physical pain or injury" (BUTLER, 2021, p. 16, our translation).

Formulations like these indicate that linguistic injury operates similarly to physical injury. The idea that speech hurts reveals an intrinsic relationship between body and speech, as well as, consequently, between speech and its effects. Teixeira Filho (2013), also attentive to hate speech, explains that condemnations of homoerotic practices trace back to the Middle Ages. In that context, the word "homosexuality" did not yet exist, and instead, the term "sodomy" was used.

The prohibition of sodomy was based on Hebrew codes that sought "to separate the pure from the impure, order from disorder, both among people and among animals and their relations with each other" (TEIXEIRA FILHO, 2013, p. 123, our translation). In this line, Jews had clear restrictions and severe punishments directed at sexual practices that were not procreative. Thus, concerning homoerotic relationships, the problem they detected resided in ejaculation, that is, in the fact that "semen would be wasted" (TEIXEIRA FILHO, 2013, p. 123, our translation). Consequently, both masturbation and anal sex became condemned practices, criminalized, and conceived as sins against human nature and against God's will regarding the possibility of procreation. Rejecting same-sex relationships through words, verbal signs, and lexical selection that leads to pain became a constant practice and, as evidenced by the documentary's accounts, is still prevalent in contemporary times.

Luan Oliveira (15 years old), who is part of the group of teenagers interviewed in the documentary, makes a particularly peculiar statement: "LGBTQIAPN+ people can't just go to any school like other people can do. And just worry about studying. They also need to worry about the place. Whether they will be accepted for who they are. And a place where they will feel safe." Through the transcribed discourse above, one can observe the interviewee's fear of violence against the LGBTQIAPN+ community. Violence, moreover, intensified in the school environment. Revealing oneself as gay, lesbian, or transgender can, in this sense, entail harmful consequences, leading many individuals to hide, adopting a game of masks with the goal of ensuring their survival. In harmony with this argument, Castañeda (2007) points out that homosexuals do not always reveal themselves as homosexual. The heterosexual, however, does.

Heterosexual men and women, in their family, social, and professional relationships, present a fairly predictable scenario: biological sex, sexual orientation, and social roles tend to converge and form a stable identity. "In contrast, homosexual individuals do not move through the world with a constant identity. Their attitudes, gestures, and ways of relating to others

change according to circumstances. They may appear heterosexual in the office, asexual with their family, and express their sexual orientation only in the presence of certain friends" (TEIXEIRA FILHO, 2013, p. 19, our translation). They may also deny their own homosexuality and exhibit behavior distant from their sexual orientation.

Teixeira Filho (2013) adds that the heteronormative premise imposes itself to discipline and control bodies and pleasures through illusory linearity between sex, gender, desire, and sexual practices. Starting from virility and heterosexuality as norms, Teixeira Filho (2013) suggests that homosexual men are victimized because, according to homophobic popular imagination, they are equated with women as potential recipients of a penis.

Homosexual women, likewise, find themselves in a victimized condition, given that they fail to fulfill their reproductive function and are not accepted in the virile universe, even when masculinized, as "by identifying themselves as lesbians, they assume an active stance regarding their sexual desire; but such activity is exclusive to the male universe, therefore, they are rejected by these and by other women, as they break the barrier of silence regarding the supposed female passivity" (TEIXEIRA FILHO, 2013, p. 146, our translation).

Consequently, among the impacts and sequelae of homophobia on the LGBTQIAPN+ population, Teixeira Silva (2013) highlights the subject's denial regarding their sexual attraction, attempts to alter or suppress such attraction, low self-esteem manifested in a negative body image, and, above all, the search for compensatory mechanisms aimed at mitigating the fear and shame of disappointing parents or family members. In this sense, it is common to find gay, lesbian, and transgender youth with good grades and excessive dedication in school. This is a way they find to be accepted in a hostile and intolerant society, which elects cisgender and heteronormativity as the only forms of sexual expression. It is this imprisonment that renders the projection of other alternative identities unfeasible.

Final considerations

Se essa escola fosse minha (2017) ocuses primarily on five topics that drive reflection on the presence and silencing of LGBTQIAPN+ groups in the classroom. These topics include: a) Concerns, doubts, and discomfort with one's own sexuality; b) Bullying suffered in school hallways; c) The dilemmas of LGBTQIAPN+ teachers; d) the relationships between school, family, and the adolescent or child who does not "fit" into the heteronormative and cisgender model; and e) The endless journey from one school to another in search of an education, and consequently, a teaching staff, that welcomes, accepts, and respects differences.

Considering this framework, this article sought to address the last topic, problematizing the dilemmas of adolescents who do not meet the profile advocated by the school, an institution that ends up punishing or marginalizing gay, lesbian, transvestite, or transgender youth. Between one account and another, the denunciation against many educators who still approach homosexuality as a pathology, a deviation, a psychiatric problem, is raised. We would also add teachers who openly declared a certain disgust or discomfort when faced with students with behaviors and sexualities different from what was preached by the norm.

Thus, the student is left to navigate through various educational institutions, and in this context, the metaphor of the LGBTQIAPN+ diaspora is highly pertinent, in search of their survival. On the other hand, persisting in the search for a different school, even when constantly encountering content-focused models that disregard multiculturalism and fail to exercise tolerance towards diversity and adversity, still seems to be a form of resistance for homosexual and transgender students. In this regard, Adorno's words are valid: "that Auschwitz not be repeated. It was the barbarism against which all education is directed" (1967, our translation). Preserving, therefore, the multiple forms of prejudice unfortunately signifies a return to the rubble of Auschwitz, the continuity of barbarism, and, above all, contempt for human life.

REFERENCES

ADORNO, T. Educação após Auschwitz. In: ADORNO, T. **Educação e Emancipação**. Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 1967.

BRASIL. Secretaria de Educação Fundamental. **Parâmetros Curriculares Nacionais: Orientação Sexual**. Brasília: MEC/SEF, 1998.

BRASIL. Lei nº 9.394, de 20 de dezembro de 1996. Estabelece as diretrizes e bases da educação nacional. **Diário Oficial da União**: seção 1, Brasília, DF, p. 27833, 1996.

BRASIL. Ministério da Educação. **Base Nacional Comum Curricular**. Brasília, DF: MEC, 2018. Available at <http://basenacionalcomum.mec.gov.br/documento/BNCC-APRESENTACAO.pdf>. Accessed in: 15 Jan. 2024.

BUTLER, J. **Discurso de ódio**: uma política do performativo. São Paulo: Editora Unesp, 2021.

CASTAÑEDA, M. **A experiência homossexual**: explicações e conselhos para os homossexuais, suas famílias e seus terapeutas. São Paulo: Editora Girafa, 2007.

FILIPPE, F. A.; SILVA, D. S.; COSTA, A. C. Uma base comum na escola: análise do projeto educativo da Base Nacional Comum Curricular. **Ensaio**: avaliação e políticas públicas educacionais. Rio de Janeiro, v. 29, n. 112, p. 783-803, 2021. DOI: 10.1590/S0104-40362021002902296. Available at: <https://www.scielo.br/j/ensaio/a/PbZbjrWHzzQ3Yt4LBFzK6NF/>. Accessed in: 15 July 2023.

MARCELINO, F. R.; SANTOS, L. E. L. **Se essa escola fosse minha**. Memorial descritivo. Brasília: Universidade de Brasília; Faculdade de Comunicação, 2017.

MELO, C. T. V. O documentário como gênero audiovisual. **Comunicação & Informação**, Goiânia, Goiás, v. 5, n. 1/2, p. 25–40, 2012. DOI: 10.5216/c&i.v5i1/2.24168. Available at: <https://revistas.ufg.br/ci/article/view/24168>. Accessed in: 15 July 2023.

SILVA, E. L. Pânico moral e as questões de gênero e sexualidade na BNCC: debates e posicionamentos em torno da finalidade do ensino de História. **História, Histórias**, Brasília, v. 8, n. 16, p. 143–169, 2020. DOI: 10.26512/rhh.v8i16.31928. Available at: <https://periodicos.unb.br/index.php/hh/article/view/31928>. Accessed in: 15 July 2023.

TEIXEIRA FILHO, F. S. **Psicologia e Teoria Queer**: das identidades aos devires. 2013. 200 f. Tese (Livre Docência) - Faculdade de Ciências e Letras, Universidade Estadual Paulista, Assis, 2013.

Filmography:

As Meninas Superpoderosas. Estúdio: Hanna-Barbera Cartoons. Estados Unidos, 1998.

Depois da tempestade. Direção: Bruno Nomura. Londrina (PR), 2018.

O Espanta tubarões. Estúdio: Dream Works SKG. Estados Unidos, 2004.

Se essa escola fosse minha. Direção: Felipe Marcelino e Letícia Leotti Santos. Brasília (DF), 2017.

(Sobre) vivências. Direção: Leonidas Taschetto e Gabriel Celestino. Canoas (RS), 2018.

CRedit Author Statement

Acknowledgements: Not applicable.

Funding: Not applicable.

Conflicts of interest: There were no personal, academic, or institutional conflicts of interest.

Ethical approval: As this is essay-type research, there was no need for submission to the Ethics and Research Committee.

Data and material availability: The documentary *Se essa escola fosse minha* (2017), the subject of this study, is available on the YouTube platform: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NHJMDuhruz8>.

Author's contributions: The article constitutes a section of a larger research project authored by myself, titled *Mosaico de imagens: escola, preconceito e violência no debate da produção audiovisual LGBTQIA+*, to be conducted from 2023 to 2025.

Processing and editing: Editora Ibero-Americana de Educação.
Proofreading, formatting, normalization and translation.

