

The social disappearance of differences in exception policies: lives and memories of children and women for the reinvention of democratic education¹

O desaparecimento social das diferenças nas políticas de exceção: vidas e memórias de crianças e mulheres para a reinvenção de uma educação democrática²

Raquel Gonçalves Salgado*
Leonardo Lemos de Souza**

ABSTRACT

Democracy has been a recurring theme in Brazil for the past decade, due to the emergence of conservative narratives and movements impairing public debate on issues that bring differences to the social field, such as racism and gender/ sexual violence, in addition to calling for the re-edition of the ongoing exception policies in the Brazilian civic-military dictatorship. Thus, the main objective of this paper is to analyze the meanings of democracy and education based on incursions into the past of the military dictatorship, as a way of problematizing the current exception policies in Brazil at present. To this end, it is intended to discuss: (1) the necropolitics that affected the lives of children and women in the military dictatorship, based on testimonies about torture by State agents, extracted from the report of the National Truth Commission, and their relations with necropolitics in the current Brazil that refer to racism and gender-based violence, grounded on criticisms to

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* Universidade Federal de Rondonópolis. Rondonópolis, Mato Grosso, Brasil. E-mail: ramidan@terra.com.br - <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-8730-3025>

** Universidade Estadual Paulista. Faculdade de Ciências e Letras de Assis, São Paulo, Brasil. E-mail: leonardo.lemos@unesp.br - <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-3331-1847>

the notions of protection and development in their colonizing effects; and (2) the social disappearance as a policy of exterminating memory and its harmful repercussions on education. Finally, it is aimed to highlight the devastating process of differences, whether gender, sexual, racial, ethnic and age, implemented by past and present exception policies, and how a democratic education, which stands against these policies, may be resistance to barbarism.

Keywords: Feminism. Childhoods. Military dictatorship. Democracy. Education.

RESUMO

A democracia tem sido tema recorrente no Brasil da última década, devido à emergência de narrativas e movimentos conservadores que interditam o debate público sobre assuntos que trazem as diferenças para o campo social, como é o caso do racismo e das violências de gênero e sexuais, além de fazerem apelos à reedição de políticas de exceção vigentes na ditadura cívico-militar no Brasil. Desse modo, o objetivo principal deste artigo é analisar os sentidos de democracia e educação a partir de incursões no passado da ditadura militar, como forma de problematizar as políticas de exceção vigentes no Brasil do presente. Para tanto, pretende-se discutir: (1) as necropolíticas que incidiram sobre as vidas de crianças e mulheres na ditadura militar, a partir de depoimentos sobre torturas praticadas por agentes do Estado, extraídos do relatório da Comissão Nacional da Verdade, e suas relações com necropolíticas do Brasil atual que remetem ao racismo e às violências de gênero, com base em críticas às noções de proteção e desenvolvimento em seus efeitos colonizadores; e (2) o desaparecimento social como política de extermínio da memória e suas repercussões nefastas na educação. Por fim, busca-se salientar o processo devastador das diferenças, sejam de gênero, sexuais, raciais, étnicas e etárias, implementado por políticas de exceção do passado e do presente, e como uma educação democrática, que se posiciona na contramão dessas políticas, pode ser resistência à barbárie.

Palavras-chave: Feminismos. Infâncias. Ditadura militar. Democracia. Educação.

Introduction

The Brazil of the last decade, more precisely the second of the 21st century, is a scenario full of elements that invite us to reflect and critically put

ourselves on issues that we believed to have solved: democracy is one of them. In the sceneries of this current Brazil, conservative political movements and narratives make repeated calls for the resumption of a supposedly lost *status quo*, regulated by zealous families for the surveillance and protection of children innocence and shielded by social and cultural codes that guide the status of life and subject, as well as the grammar of white, masculinist, heteronormative, Christian and bourgeois primacy. They are narratives that sound like the melody of a tune that, in unison, is accompanied by calls for a return to the repressive and austere State of the civic-military dictatorship in the country, exposing, in broad daylight of our century, the many open wounds of the lives and bodies that bled in the past and, by breaking the siege of oblivion, make their cries for justice resound in the present time of the disappearance and extermination policies that nourish the Brazilian neoliberal State bowels.

Democracy is undoubtedly one of the most disputed narratives in the country. As if it were a type of antidote or alibi capable of easing tensions and conflicts or safeguarding interests at stake, democracy appears as the speechword with the power of conciliation and consensus. However, these rhetorical traps, produced since the beginning of the post-dictatorship “democratic transition” process, starting in the second half of the 1980s, are far from responding to the deep historical ills of our society, marked by the terrors of slavery, the dictatorial state of exception and the colonization processes still in force, which grow up to the skies, such as the “pile of ruins”, mentioned by Walter Benjamin (1985, p. 226) when he alluded to the angel of history in the face of the accumulated catastrophe for progress.

In this article, we intend to immerse ourselves in this shifting terrain that is democracy in Brazil, discussing its meanings and relations with education, from an incursion into the past of the Brazilian civic-military dictatorship as a way of problematizing the ongoing policies of exception in Brazil at the present time. More specifically, we have embarked on this discussion, assuming the following biases:

a) the necropolitics that affected the lives of children and women in the military dictatorship, based on excerpts from statements about torture by State agents, extracted from the report of the National Truth Commission, and its relations with necropolitics in the current Brazil, which refer to racism and gender-based violence;

b) the social disappearance as a policy of exterminating memory and its harmful repercussions on education.

The first axis is organized around criticisms about the notion of protection historically and culturally associated with children and women and how, in the specific case of childhood, it is consolidated as one of its most important

prerogatives and requirements for its development. The political effects of the rhetoric of protection for these subjects are lost when their lives are socially marked so as not to meet or conform to the regimes of visibility and intelligibility that demarcate ideals of childhood and femininity. More than the loss of the prerogative of protection, necropolitics that promote the suspension of children and women rights to life and public mourning are triggered in their lives. In this list of criticisms to the notions of protection and development, in their effects of colonization of life, the gender debate gets importance through intersectionality³, in which social markers, such as race, social class, sexuality and age, are articulated in the composition of the meanings of childhood and femininity and in the ways in which State violence is mobilized against children and women for whom protection policies are no longer valid.

The second axis revolves around the discussion about the production of social disappearance as a policy of exception that affects the collective memory, in the sense of operating forced forgetfulness and the infeasibility of public mourning. Unlike memories of past experiences, memories are assumed here as narratives of the present, which turn to the calls of the past, in order to free it from oblivion, not in the sense of describing it as it actually occurred (BENJAMIN, 1985), but in the way it responds to the concerns of the present. Producing “holes” in the developmental and totalitarian narrative of life and history, as suggested by Peter Pál Pelbart (2011), is the analytical path that we intend to take when using the dictatorship’s memories and tensioning them with the violence set in motion by the State of exception of the present, in the sense of highlighting the devices of forgetfulness and the erasing of public mourning as a necropolitics that affects memory.

In summary, what we intend to emphasize is the demeaning and devastating process of differences, in all their forms of otherness, whether gender, sexual, racial, ethnic and age, put into practice by the civic-military dictatorship, but nor started by this regime, and still in force in 21st century Brazil, characterized as democracy. What are the influence and the challenges that education has in face of the policies of the devastation of differences, turning them into the ruins that are left behind?

3 Theoretical-methodological perspective proposed by black feminists, as a critique of feminism that assumes white women and their demands and social conditions as applicable to all women. The term “intersectionality” was originally coined by Afro-American jurist Kimberlé Crenshaw, in the late 1980s, with the purpose of giving visibility and theoretical and methodological consistency to the impossibility of structurally separating capitalism, racism and patriarchy, in order to articulate markers difference in their cultural, political and subjective effects. (AKOTIRENE, 2019).

Gender, protection and development: which lives matter?

An analysis of the effects of developmental and protection policies that have historically been directed at children and women has demonstrated the exclusionary and normalizing effects of lives that escape the hegemonic models of childhood and femininity. Herein, we intend to discuss how these effects, in the form of biopower (FOUCAULT, 1988), combined with feminist and *queer* perspectives (BURMAN, 2008; PRECIADO, 2013; BUTLER, 2016; 2018), can materialize in social and educational relationships. On the other hand, we seek to address how these perspectives can offer us tools to think of education as a privileged and powerful social space for breaking with actions to annihilate difference in its most diverse aspects.

An example of these policies is linked to anti-gender movements, strongly inspired by the crusade against gender studies and their debate in schools, called by these groups “gender ideology”. Such movements materialize in prohibitions and retaliations against sex education and the insertion of curricular content in schools and national, state and municipal education plans that contemplated themes related to gender and sexuality diversity (JUNQUEIRA, 2018). Moreover, they have manifested themselves in different ways over the past few decades, but they are not movements inaugurated at the present time. Inspired by ultraconservative actions of those who defend the patriarchal and sexist models of gender relations and the family structure organized around a cisgender man and woman, these movements were also present during the military dictatorship which, based on conservative integralist and catholic ideas of the 1930s, cultivated images of homosexuality and dissident femininity as being threats and dangers to national security, traditional family morals and “good customs”, a view that legitimized the violence against LGBTQIA + people and women identified as “subversive” in that period (BRASIL, 2014b).

The anti-gender narrative locates any and all presentations and / or discussions about gender and sexuality differences as dangerous to the maintenance of patriarchal family values. Deeply related to Christian religious movements, this narrative, that is supported by the discourse of abnormality, pathology and abjection, has gained strength in recent years (JUNQUEIRA, 2018) as a counterpoint to the movements of conquests for the rights of women and LGBTQIA + people (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, *queer*, intersex, asexual and other dissidences) that had historically been mobilized to fight inequalities and exclusion.

Several examples can be mentioned. From the most recent ones, such as the “School without Party” movement, with the purpose of emptying the school

contents of criticality, excluding the dialogue between different perspectives and creating a single narrative about history, which cancels the voices that are dissonant to the interests in the maintenance of a patriarchal conservatism; to those that go back to the principles of the civic-military dictatorship in Brazil, with the movement in defense of the family, combined with the anti-communist discourse, which focused on the need to maintain patriarchal models, based on the idea of the subordination of women and children to the male heads of the family (GALINDO et al, 2017). The protection of these models and, in turn, of the figures that compose them, according to the established script of these hierarchies, guarantees and drives society towards development-progress.

As one of the facets of biopower, such practices of annulment and extermination of singularities follow the script of management and control of the bodies of women and children, aiming to reference the models that one wants to predominate: the examples of women who meet the normativeness of feminine and maternity – in the function of care and reproduction; in submission to man for the perpetuation of the family; in the example of children, who must follow the gender script according to the genitals with which is born, establishing the skills and competences that boys and girls must acquire or make emerge to love, work and live in society.

Other determinants come into play, such as skin color and social class. They also act as triggers for the places provided for each poor black woman and child in society: social abjection by skin color inserts them in a list of attributes, such as animality, indiscipline, marginality, promiscuity, lack of hygiene and others, that threatens white society and at the same time makes it work to maintain the *status quo* and *modus operandi* of a ruling class and the privileges of whiteness.

Anete Abramovicz's analysis of biopower (2020) in the forms of racial extermination of black children in Brazil signals this imperative mechanism of white hegemony and its effects on the bodies of black children and women, marked by the submission of these bodies to regimes of slavery (updated in the form of precarious work), which is felt in the lives of the majority of Brazilian black population. Black women and children serve the State as a workforce that needs to be disqualified to generate white superiority and, concomitantly, these people are perceived as abject (bestialized, minimized and subjugated), whose bodies, experiences, stories, memories and lives become targets of rejection in the social fabric, to the point of being the object of extermination policies.

Paul Beatriz Preciado (2013), in the debate of the context of the family movement in France, against a certain gender ideology, argues about the alliance of parents and family members in defense of a narrative that, in contrast to protecting children in their self-determination of gender and sexuality, condemns

them, guaranteeing the protection of the existence of the patriarchal and heterosexual model. The protagonism over their bodies and desires is canceled.

Erica Burman (2008), in the wake of these analyzes, identifies how, in different contexts, the development narrative (economic and social) articulates with psychological science, and produces exclusions by not considering the singularities and cultural and material conditions of existence of children and women in the world. In this respect, it supports the feminist perspective as a critique of the developmental narrative in psychology, derived from the speeches about a childhood and its caregivers / educators, whose references are idealized and abstract subjects, detached from the concrete lives of children and women. Burman (2008) also joins the criticisms about the discourse of progress, which encompasses children and women from different contexts, named as outside the norm and, therefore, who become invalidated as citizens if they do not conform to policies control (in psychotherapeutic practices, in social and educational development policies, for example). Children and women, who do not meet the Western, white, heterosexual and patriarchal model of living in society, become targets of coercive and corrective measures to fit the narrative of this model, otherwise they are liable to extermination. In their analysis, policies do not address the singularities and differences in the ways of being and living of these people, in order to produce more exclusion and vulnerability.

In Preciado (2013) and Burman (2008), the protection policies (institutionalized – family, school, health care) of heterosexuality, patriarchy and whiteness come into play in the surveillance and control of the bodies and desires of women and children. One of the strategies of these policies is to deny and annihilate any form of affirmation of the protagonism of women and children about their existence.

In the current scenario, narratives have been recurrent in order to promote the extermination of differences, of lives singularities that, deviants, threaten the hegemonic ways of life. In the military dictatorship lived in Brazil, for twenty-one years (from 1964 to 1985), torture was chosen as a device to contain, correct and eliminate threats to the regime and the ideas that sustained it: the patriarchal family, Christian morality, capitalism and liberalism. Torture was a strategy to combat and correct deviation. Death and physical and psychological violence were the strategies used to eliminate anything that could contaminate the operative, intelligible and legitimate way of being and living.

Recently, the disruptive *Black Lives Matter* movement in the United States of America has triggered similar actions in other parts of the world. Racial violence is a form of daily torture to which children, young people and women in Brazil and the world are subjected. The case of the black boy, Miguel, 5 years old, that, while his mother was walking the dog by order of the boss,

was left unsupervised by his mother's employer in her building and died after falling from a height of 35 meters, is emblematic to reflect on the current social demarcation between the lives that matter and those that can or should disappear. Miguel and his mother represent millions of women and black children subjected to race relations marked by inequality. The fact that the mother is working in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic, a disease caused by the SARS-COV-2 coronavirus, and without being able to leave her child in a safe place, makes her take him to the workplace to continue guaranteeing their subsistence. The way in which the employer neglected Miguel and his mother's lives was a way of subjecting them to risks and violence that could and were permitted in society for black and poor people.

The disciplinary devices that affect the bodies of children and women (anatomy-politics) are combined with biopolitics in the generation of practices of extermination and control of a population, whose lives seem not to be subject to public mourning. Torture and disappearance take place through the lack of access to health, work, quality education and dignity. Such devices and biopolitics can be understood as planned actions for the management, surveillance and scheduling of lives – what spaces should these lives occupy, what functions should they exercise, who should they serve –, in the course of movements and decisions about management of life and death (who should live and who should die).

Whether by government policy decisions or driven by certain groups that dominate educational institutions combined with anti-gender and anti-democratic perspectives, education has been affected by these movements. Thus, the perspectives, to which we are allied in this paper, can offer tools to think about how the disappearance of certain ways of life in access and permanence in education (basic and higher) means the antinomy and condemnation of a democratic education in which differences are triggers of alliances.

Judith Butler (2016) warns us that lives are precarious by definition, given that their existences are never guaranteed - it is necessary to mobilize actions and forces to sustain these lives, so that they are livable. On the other hand, the condition of precariousness is imposed on certain populations, who suffer from the intentional policies of weakening social / institutional networks of health care, education, work, making their existence unfeasible. For Butler (2016), such policies are fundamentally managed and produced by the Nation-State, making children and women vulnerable to everyday violence that prevent their lives from being socially recognized and lived with dignity. At the same time, this is the same State that manages policies to protect these lives and to offer the minimization of precariousness. Under the discourse of progress and development, children and women are subjected to protection policies that are

violent processes of nullifying the protagonists, disqualifying their capacities and neglecting their material and symbolic needs for existence.

The problem announced by Butler is fundamentally ethical. It is to understand the conditions under which certain people are “recognizable” and others are not, that is, which must be protected from violations and violence (BUTLER, 2016, p. 16) and which will not be. The condition of being recognized precedes that of recognition; we are led to think of the frameworks thus put, as analytical forms of the processes of this recognition of livable lives. The framework, therefore, is one of the resources offered by the standard that makes some recognitions intelligible.

Historically, education in schools and universities has been the scene of disputes between the maintenance of frameworks of masculinity, virility, adultcentrism, science, reason and the shift towards the recognition of lives that do not appear in these settings, but cause fissures in insisting on their ways of existing. Social movements, such as feminisms and human rights movements, play an important role in the visibility of the precarious living conditions of women and children, shared with other social groups. In addition, they are inspirers of a democratic education that prioritizes this recognition of sharing, since it is not just a question of knowledge, but of taking the ethical position of establishing a perspective deviant from the framework norm, so that different expressions of life can coexist and cohabit the world.

Children and women, from the ideal of protection to the suspension of right to life

Children and women, in the Western thought system, are conceived as infantilized subjects, with all the semantic load that this adjective carries, of dependence, minority, inferiority, incompetence, attributes marked by the absences and voids that the progress mentality aims to overcome and fill. In this discursive game, infantilization and feminization are devices that apply to people, groups, communities or even nations, to signify a primitive condition, not yet elaborated and progressed, in the staggering of development (BURMAN, 2008). It is no coincidence that, in the colonizing contexts within which these devices are produced, children and women make up a dyad that operates in the regulation and management of the lives of these people to the point of becoming a structuring element of policies. In this biopolitical context and in view of the weak and vulnerable condition of childhood and of women, protection is

presented as a practice and a constant requirement in the recognition rules that qualify children and women to be recipients of this prerogative.

Protection, as a social, political or legal practice, is closely linked to the ontology that validates and endorses the recognition and legitimacy of those who can receive it, since much more than protecting someone, an ideal is protected, a statute of subject, demarcated by rules of existence (BUTLER, 2016). Defining prerogatives and qualifications to exist as people, citizens and bodies, this set of rules, argues Judith Butler (2013; 2016), operates the scrutiny of the lives that are worthy of being lived and protected and of the lives to which repudiation, rejection, threat and abjection turn back. These recognition rules, which mark the status of subject and, in this specific case, refer to the statutes of childhood and femininity, are produced by an intelligibility regime that gives them the necessary validation to have the effect of truth and substantive strength, that is, to create the illusion that its existence does not require any and all social production.

Thus, supported by this intelligibility, the norm appears as nature and, thus, multiplies its effects of power. However, to guarantee the norm effectiveness, in its truth effect and in its demonstration as nature, it is necessary to invest in its reverse, not exactly as what contradicts it, but what appears in social life, as its repudiation, its threat, its dangerous violation. In order to work, the norm must produce the enemy, the idea of evil to be fought. Butler (2015) characterizes this normative investment in the production of its “foundational repudiation” (p. 20) as abject, thus identified as being a constitutive part of the norm by making it work at the moment it is triggered as the threat that it must combat and destroy in the name of “life” maintenance.

What is threatening and dangerous is not protected. On the contrary, protection serves to the attention and life preservation within the rationalized ordering of a habitable world for those who align themselves with its borders. To escape these borders is to take risks for inhabiting the territories of abjection; it is being exposed to rejection and repudiation; more than losing the right to protection, it means being targeted for elimination. On this aspect, Achille Mbembe (2018) emphasizes the rationality of life as the device that produces the idea of the other (marked by difference) as an attack on life, the target of necropolitics action and functioning, that brings together contemporary devices of subjugation of lives to the power of death. The necropolitics, for Mbembe (2018, p. 41), belongs to the context of “late colonial occupation”, in which “worlds of death” are created, in which populations are subject to conditions that imply the status of “living-dead” (p. 71).

Looking at the past, just like the exercise of the angel of history in the allusion of Benjamin (1985), in the work of combing the ruins, we access the memories of pain and suffering from one of the bloodiest periods in the Brazilian

social and political history, gathered under the aegis of a civic-military dictatorial regime, which was characterized by instituting, for twenty-one years (from 1964 to 1985), a State of exception marked by serious violations of human rights, such as arbitrary arrests, tortures of different types (physical and psychological), gender and sexual violence, enforced disappearances, summary executions, decree of institutional acts of censorship in the most diverse fields of social life (arts, culture, knowledge production, information, etc.), concealment of murdered people's bodies, among other atrocities. The access to these memories is through the report of the National Truth Commission (NTC) regulated by Law 12.528, of November 18, 2011, from the Presidency of the Republic Civil House, during the government of President Dilma Rousseff, with the purpose of validating the right to memory. This Committee operated from May 10, 2012 to December 10, 2014, when the final version of the report was presented. This document is composed of three volumes and aims at the reconstruction and historical analysis of cases of serious violations of human rights, bringing to the public facilities, places, institutions, State agents involved in the practices of these violations, through documents, such as police investigations, photographs, testimonies of victims, their families and witnesses, cadaveric reports, among others (BRASIL, 2014a).

For the scope of this paper, we focus on women and children as the targets of necropolitics triggered by the totalitarian State of the dictatorial regime in Brazil. Much is known of people, such as intellectuals, teachers, artists, university students, politicians, union leaders and military dissidents to the regime, who had their lives cut short or dismantled by the violations of the dictatorship. Many of these people had historical visibility, as political prisoners, exiles, dead and disappeared. Among these people, there were those who did not have this visibility, even though they were targets of violence practiced by the totalitarian State, such as women, children, LGBTQIA+, black, indigenous and countryside people. Although the NTC report demonstrates an effort to publicize these acts of violence marked by gender, race / ethnicity, sexuality, age, geographic space, there is a need for more in-depth analysis at these intersections, given that, most of the time when these social markers appear, they are addressed in a tangential way. What is important to highlight is the devastation of differences, that marked the twenty-one years of civic-military dictatorship, in all its shades (gender, sexual, racial, ethnic, age).

The following excerpts come from women's testimonies, extracted from the NTC report⁴, of political prisoners during the dictatorship who suffered

4 The survey counted on the collaboration of scholarship holders Amanda Bravo Pereira Almeida and Rayane Aparecida Silveira Soares from the Scientific Initiation Scholarship Program/CNPq - Federal University of Rondonópolis, Mato Grosso.

torture, some of whom were raped when their children (babies) were used as pivots.

In the narratives of these women, there are frequent reports of injuries from torturers that refer to the abject place they occupy for having deviated from the social roles of wife and mother when they entered the political world and, above all, dissident in relation to the regime in force. “Bitches” and “whores” are they, the women who do not fulfill the requirements of the ideal woman, whose place of existence is within the family in dedication to the care of her husband and children, who dare to change the course of a predestined history to transform it into a political struggle against a social system that carries deep inequalities. These women are not worthy of protection and many, in the eyes of the repressive State, are no longer worthy of their lives. Necropolitics are relentless on them. Their bodies have to suffer, bleed, feel the pains of social repudiation and abomination so that gender normative is enforced with rigor. For this necropolitics to work, these women have to become the “winged jabuticabas”, the unspeakable, the beast that cannot exist. The process of producing the abject not only creates monstrosity, but also prohibits the possibility of being, imagining and desiring beyond the norm that sets it off.

In her testimony to the NTC, Maria Aparecida Costa reports tortures she suffered at Oban, between December 1969 and January 1970:

The simple fact, I think, that you are among men, only men. Only men who have a look at you, how would I say? It’s a look that... Just because you are a woman, you also notice that there is maybe, sometimes, much greater anger, I don’t know if it’s for thinking “why is a woman doing this? Why is a girl doing this?” And it is a way, perhaps, of really wanting to disqualify you in all ways. In fact, the least you hear is that you are a “bitch”. They are the welcome. (BRASIL, 2014a, p. 404, emphasis added).

On 01/6/1976, Maria Auxiliadora Lara Barcellos threw herself on the train tracks of the Charlottenburg metro station in Berlin. She had Instantaneous death. Her suffering was recorded:

There were endless days of Sodom. They stepped on me, spit me out, shattered me in a thousand pieces. They raped me in my most intimate corners. It was a time without smiles. A time of exhaustion, of suffocated screams, a scream in the dark [...]. The Apology of Violence. The struggle

for absolute power. The destruction of the other [...] The sacrifice of babies. Where have you seen winged *jabuticaba*, my child? I had eaten a beetle. He hummed inside me furiously, to remind me that imagination bothers a lot of people. Stop imagining, stop being and wanting. Accepting, resigning is good, it brings fresh breeze, coffee with milk, lots of abundance. Aurora, a maiden's place is close to the husband and naughty bitch's place is in the whorehouse, wow. Why do we study arithmetic in the Army? To know that two plus two are four and that there is no sin without being atoned. Maiden lady you didn't want to, dirty bitch you don't want either. My dear, this animal does not exist. (BRASIL, 2014a, p. 423).

The psychological torture practiced against women, involving their children, opened up one of the most cruel aspects of the military dictatorship. The prohibition and use of motherhood against these women were effective and refined methods of imputing pain and suffering to them by attacking and plucking what is peculiar to women, their ability to carry a life in their wombs, as Maria Amélia de Almeida Teles points out in a NTC public hearing (BRASIL, 2014a, p. 407). Applied in different forms, such as forced abortions and wombs destroyed due to torture, which also happened in the presence of children, in addition to the compulsory separations between mothers and children, these methods reminded them that motherhood could not be part of their lives, since they departed from the normative designs of being a woman. Then, the death of motherhood in the life of these women is declared, prisoner mothers of the State of exception, who must pay the price of political dissent with the destruction of their insides and the elimination of any and all signs, even if symbolic (as this is the case with Hilda's children's forbidden photograph), of their maternal experience.

Hilda Martins da Silva, wife of Virgílio Gomes da Silva, leader of the NLA (National Liberation⁵ Action) of São Paulo who would become a victim of enforced disappearance. Hilda was preparing to leave the country with her children when she was arrested, on September 30, 1969, and was kept incommunicado at the Tiradentes Prison:

At Tiradentes, I was incommunicado for four months. Everyone had visit and I didn't. [...] Then, one day I agreed with the girls to tell my children to stay on the corner, because in the prison there was a window with very

5 Ação Libertadora Nacional, a resistance group against the military dictatorship in Brazil, led by Carlos Marighella.

small bars and in the front there was a very large plate that we didn't see anything outside, in the front. But on the side you could see it because it was a little far away, so you could see it. Then I agreed with them to tell my children to be across the street for me to see them. They wouldn't see me, but I would see them. Then they stopped there and I made a straw with the newspaper and shook the newspaper so they knew I was there watching them and they waving with their hands. [...] Before that, I hadn't heard from any of my children, so a companion left and I told her to go to my house, [...] to find out if it was true that my children were with my family, or not, for her to give me news. Then she [...] took a picture and everything, showing the boys, and sent the picture to the prison for me to see. Then I saw them in the photo. The first time I ... the first contact I had, was their photo. [...] [But] then the jailer came and said that I couldn't keep the photo, because I was incommunicado. I said, "Why? Is the photo giving me any news? Anything else? What is wrong with the photo?". And she said: "No, you are incommunicado and you cannot keep the photo". Then, all the girls that were there got mad at her, and she left me the photographs [...] (BRASIL, 2014a, p. 316-317, emphasis added).

Not even the children are unscathed from the violations, this is what the excerpt below shows us. Because they are fruits of the womb marked by abjection and descendants of resistance, these children move away from childhood and lose their prerogatives, among which is the protection of the State itself. These children are extirpated from the social category of childhood and live "naked childhoods" (SALGADO, 2019, p. 386), which, in the wake of Agamben's concept of naked life (2002), expose the threshold of childhood and its suspension, demarcating children who are worthy of their prerogatives and those who are deprived of rights, care and protection because they are outside the framework of the social image of the ideal child. In the suspension of these childhoods, as in naked life, the acts of violation and torture practiced by State agents do not count as crimes.

In 1970, after the murder of her husband and her imprisonment by⁶ Oban, Damaris Lucena saw her children Adilson, Denise and Ângela Telma come under state custody:

6 Operation Bandeirantes, created in 1969, by the II Army, in São Paulo, with the objective of fighting organizations that were making political resistance to the military dictatorship in the Greater São Paulo region.

Leaving my children in the hands of those animals, those animals. Ah, neither animal does that. Those are monsters. They threw my children in that juvenile court. [...] The maids themselves, who took care of the juvenile court, said that my children were the children of a terrorist. And they, poor people, humiliated, wet the mattress for the children not to lie down. No, that was something. This one [Adilson] was taken I don't know how many times by the police, they beat him up, punched my son, nine years old. The police! The Atibaia police beat my son. The boy has nothing to do with it. Look, people, it was ... it was a very difficult moment for me, to see my children being slaughtered. I knew, I knew that they were going to slaughter my children for them to talk. (BRASIL, 2014a, p. 410).

The memories of the tragedies that marked the military dictatorship in Brazil, as well as those of so many others in historical moments of predominance of terror, such as the enslavement of black people, have a lot to say and teach about democracy, whose experience puts us before the imperative need not to forget. This need is, in turn, an educational work to resist the production of forgetfulness that operates as a necropolitics aimed at the memories of the tragic to prevent their pains from being felt and mourned, because to admit them is to acknowledge the violated, exterminated and disappeared as dignified lives with full rights; is to live your public mourning.

Social disappearance as a memory necropolitics

Remembering the past is not simply a remembering what happened or referring to a past tense, prior to the present of memories, in accordance with the course of chronology. When we bring the memories of the military dictatorship in Brazil, we do so in a present time that calls us to search this past to understand it, or better, to listen to the voices of the past that still resonate today. Jeanne Marie Gagnebin (2014) affirms the importance of the forgotten episodes of the past being able to challenge each other with the unpredictability of the present, creating another temporal dimension that is far from being the present image of the remembered past. The differences produced are the resonances of past voices that vibrate in the present and which, in the specific case of the military dictatorship, still cry out for justice, not only that of personal damages for the damage caused, but for the memory of the tragic that can never be repeated, trivialized, much less acclaimed.

The democratic debate requires a policy of memory that goes against the policies of oblivion put in place in Brazil for centuries, especially after the amnesty that triggered the end of the dictatorship, based on a conciliatory pact promoted by the military that exempted them from the courts as a bargaining chip for the release of people convicted of the regime for threats to public order and national security. Forced forgetfulness has been the main result of this reconciliation, which continues to this day. It is agreed to suffocate the voices of the past, to decree the interdiction of collective memory and public mourning. Deaths, tortures, enforced disappearances, all violence practiced, with their pain and suffering are extinguished. The elimination of the tragic is instituted in the social imagination and, in its place, the epic rhetoric of development and progress is built as levers of Brazilian society during the military dictatorship. Like sides of the same coin, the tragic and the epic complement and support each other. The fight against the memories of the tragic involves the celebration of the epic as a way of justifying the tragedy. After all, what lives matter for the efficiency of the gear and the increase of the nation's development? Most likely, they are those that do not cause fissures to the ideals of life and the status of subject appropriate to the *modus operandi* of the state apparatus and its social order.

The production of oblivion as the erasure and renunciation of the tragic is a necropolitics of memory, which, when working for the social disappearance of torture, destroyed lives, murders and faded bodies, leaves the door open to the reissue of terror. We are living these scenes in Brazil at present, from the second decade of the 21st century, marked by calls for the return of the military dictatorship, the closure of the National Congress and the Federal Senate and the return of the AI-5, an institutional act decreed on December 13, 1968, which authorized censorship, dismissals of public servants, political persecution, the suspension of *habeas corpus*, the exclusion from legal assessment of all acts covered by it, that is, the decree of naked life by committing crimes against life without the jurisprudence that judges them so.

Resisting this necropolitics requires a policy of memory that insists on fighting against the repetition of terror and on the social appearance of the lives that lived the tragic and the deaths that the tragedy caused or hid under the rubble. This resistance goes through public mourning, through the social and collective recognition of the violence practiced against lives, for which weeping, lamentation, the feeling of loss and death itself were banned, for not having been endorsed as lives.

Concluding remarks

The forgetfulness of the tragedies of the past of slavery and dictatorship reverberate strongly in the indifference of the present in the face of gender and sexual violence, the tortures and deaths of black and indigenous women, men and children, LGBTQIA + people, poor people of the urban and rural peripheries, whose lives do not matter for a state of exception that promotes and benefits from the “worlds of death” (MBEMBE, 2018, p. 71). Indifference is triggered by otherness in ruins, by the non-recognition of the other in its dignified and legitimate difference, in its power of transforming what is already given. Moreover, indifference, for not recognizing the dignity and legitimacy of the other, denies him appreciation and care. These lost lives, as stated by Butler (2016, p. 53, emphasis added), “are not the object of regret, since, in the distorted logic that rationalizes their death, the loss of these populations is considered necessary to protect the lives of ‘alive’”. In this sense, the cultivation of indifference and the prohibition of public mourning go together, they are facets of the same policy of exterminating the memory of the tragic.

We return to the question put initially about the challenges that education has in the face of the devastation of differences policies, present and promoted also by conservative anti-gender movements, and the production of forgetting the dead and tortured of the past of the dictatorship. Understanding and interrogating the past to establish a critical relationship with the present, questioning and creating forms of resistance to the policies of social appearance and disappearance in force at that time, may be one of the possible answers. Democracy and the daily struggle for its defense, so that it is a shared experience in social life, have education as one of its most important pillars. Reactivating the past through the regeneration of poisoned airs, which still contaminate the present, is what Isabelle Stengers (2017) proposes us to do as a form of critical understanding of the remains, which still intoxicate us, so that we can re-inhabit the world. It is possible that this is a possible way of understanding the past and its relationship with the present, which inspires educational practices that resist the repetition of exclusion and exception policies. An education committed to democracy cannot bend to the silencing of differences and the compulsory forgetfulness of the tragic in the name of the narrative of progress and development. A democratic education cannot negotiate with the gags that produce gender and sexual abominations through the insistence to silence the public debate on the suffering and death produced by the necropolitics of the past that are perpetuated in the present. On the contrary, a democratic education

feeds on differences and open debate to its disputes, as well as making public mourning possible as a way to bury the dead of the past because the present needs to feed on its memories so that the future is built as antidote to barbarism.

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