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THE FISSURES BETWEEN BEING AND MUST BE: SELF-REFLECTIONS FROM A PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHER

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ABSTRACT: Since the 1980s there has been a certain fascination with the theme of the reflective/researching teacher. Little is said, however, that this discussion is part of a larger one, which criticizes positivism and rationality. Following the tradition of Critical Social Theory, some theoretical and methodological assumptions were discussed in order to then reflect on the teaching practice and the school context in which this author is inserted. Violence and indifference as inherent to the civilizing process, of which education is part, and the confrontation of the contradictions between the teacher's being and "must be" as an antidote to the reproduction of barbarism, appear as central themes. The use of records and memories of the period of initiation to teaching and insertion in the work environment (years 2019 and 2020) was made, with attention to my doing teaching and a latent "teacher must be" in daily school life, in its interconnections with social and cultural aspects. In the elaboration work (cognitive and affective) of the experience, the little rationality prevailing in the school space was one of the key points of the analysis, revealing itself, among others: the insistence on rhetoric and educational postulates, at the expense of denying reality; the predominance of the principle of competition, especially among peers and with singularities that relate to gender issues; and the difficulty of facing violence in physical education classes. It ends with some notes on teacher self-reflection, especially the urgency that the ethical-political principle overlaps merely instrumental/performative objectives in this process.

Keywords: Experience, physical education; critical social theory.

DAS FISSURAS ENTRE SER E DEVER SER: AUTORREFLEXÕES DE UMA PROFESSORA DE EDUCAÇÃO FÍSICA

RESUMO: Desde os anos 80, há certo fascínio pelo tema do professor reflexivo/pesquisador. Pouco se diz, contudo, que essa discussão é parte de uma com escopo maior, de crítica ao positivismo e à racionalidade. Seguindo a tradição da Teoria Crítica da Sociedade, discorreu-se sobre alguns pressupostos teóricos-metodológicos para então refletir sobre a prática docente e a conjuntura escolar em que esta autora se insere. A violência e a indiferença como inerentes ao processo civilizador de que a Educação faz parte, e o enfrentamento das contradições entre ser e "deve ser" docente como um antídoto à reprodução da barbárie, aparecem como temas centrais. Fez-se uso de registros e memórias do período de iniciação à docência e inserção no ambiente de trabalho (anos de 2019 e 2020), com atenção ao meu fazer docente e um "dever ser professora" latente no cotidiano escolar, em suas interconexões com

aspectos sociais e culturais. No trabalho de elaboração (cognitiva e afetiva) da experiência, a pouca racionalidade imperante no espaço escolar foi um dos pontos chave da análise, se revelando, entre outros: na insistência na retórica e nos postulados educacionais, ao preço de negação da realidade; na predominância do princípio da concorrência, sobretudo entre pares e com singularidades que remetem a questões de gênero; e na dificuldade de se enfrentar a violência nas aulas de educação física. Encerra-se com alguns apontamentos sobre autorreflexão docente, especialmente a urgência de que nesse processo o princípio ético-político se sobreponha a objetivos meramente instrumentais/performativos.

Palavras-chave: Experiência, educação física, teoria crítica da sociedade.

DE LAS FISURAS ENTRE SER E DEBER SER: AUTORREFLEXIONES DE UNA PROFESORA DE EDUCACIÓN FÍSICA

RESUMEN: Desde los años 80 hay una fascinación por el tema del profesor reflexivo/investigador. Sin embargo, poco se dice que esa discusión es parte de otra con mayor alcance. Siguiendo la tradición de la teoría crítica de la sociedad, se discurre sobre algunos presupuestos teórico-metodológicos para reflexionar sobre la práctica docente y la coyuntura escolar desta autora. La violencia y la indiferencia inherentes al proceso civilizador del cual la educación hace parte, y el enfrentamiento de las contradicciones entre el ser y el “deber ser” docente como un antídoto a la reproducción de la barbarie, son centrales. Se utilizaron registros y memorias del periodo de iniciación a la docencia e inserción al ambiente de trabajo (años 2019 y 2020), con atención a mi quehacer docente y un “deber ser profesora” latente en el cotidiano escolar, en sus interconexiones con aspectos sociales y culturales. En el trabajo de elaboración (cognitiva y afectiva) de la experiencia, la poca racionalidad imperante en el espacio escolar fue uno de los puntos clave de análisis, revelándose: en la insistencia en la retórica y los postulados educacionales, al precio de negación de la realidad; en la predominancia del principio de concurrencia, sobre todo entre pares y con singularidades que se refieren a cuestiones de género; y en la dificultad de enfrentarse a la violencia en las clases de educación física. Se cierra con algunas conjeturas sobre la autorreflexión docente, especialmente sobre la urgencia de que en este proceso el principio ético-político se superponga a objetivos puramente instrumentales/performativos.

Palabras clave: Experiencia; educación física; teoría crítica de la sociedad.

INTRODUCTION

There is a certain fascination with the theme of the reflective teacher/researcher, which has become a trend in much of the world (CORREA MOLINA, THOMAS, 2013) since the 1980s based on the writings of Donald Schön. In recent decades, in the area of Education (and also Brazilian Physical Education), partly driven by the promise of protagonism in teaching and the inversion of consolidated hierarchies regarding the production of knowledge (TARDIF, 2010), research on practice knowledge has multiplied, teacher's life history, work knowledge, professional life cycle, and autobiographies (NÓVOA, 2007; TARDIF, 2010; GAUTHIER, 2006).

Rescuing the main ideas around the notion of reflective professional and its intellectual context – from criticism to positivism and rationality, from a return of the actor to the social sciences and the emergence of the notion of knowledge of action and competences, in the wake of cognitivism – Tardif and Moscovo (2018) point to the limited use of the concept of reflection in the Educational Sciences in general, not only due to the predominance of the reference to Schön but also due to the instrumentalized view of its production (directed towards teaching effectiveness) and the lack of delimitation regarding the object/content of the reflection, since the notion of “professional practice” encompasses countless possibilities.

The authors criticize this capture and reduction of the concept of reflection in the field of Education since the self-reflective bias is part of a broader scope discussion, which says about the spirit of a time. Thus, they point to other uses of this concept, neglected by the field, and the urgency of its rescue “as a social experience, as recognition and as a critique of relations of domination” (TARDIF, MOSCOVO, 2018, p. 408), in which go beyond recurrent usage, which reduces self-reflection to (meta)competence.

In this research, one of these secondary thought traditions is taken as a starting point to (self)reflect the teaching practice: the Critical Theory of Society – and some of its developments in the area of Education and Physical Education. According to Pucci (2021a, p. 73), “the educational power of self-reflective thinking” is one of the (possible) theoretical axes of Theodor Adorno's work, presenting elements to think about the educational issue not only in texts or pedagogical conferences but especially in the philosophical ones, running through all of his work.

From this framework, we intend to add efforts to the theme of the reflective teacher/researcher, both by shifting the usual use of the nomenclature, and by its object: instead of the interest in procedures that would make teaching efficient, it is taken here as analysis guide the failure of Education – this was already pointed out in the 60s by Adorno (2003), and remains current: despite all the scientific and technological advances, humanity has not yet been able to achieve emancipation, the holocaust not being a historical excrescence, but the extreme expression of barbarism that germinates in everyday life (PUCCI, 2021b, for a current example). Therefore, it is about placing an ethical-political principle at the center of the reflection, as opposed to a certain fetish for efficiency, which corroborates the idealized image of the teacher.

Being consistent with the Frankfurter tradition, new ideals, and principles for Education will not be built, but question their precarious effectiveness, proposing a reflection on the contradictions between the Enlightenment ideals that supposedly should guide pedagogical practice and the less-than-rational vectors that are currently the ones who lead the classes – and in a very particular way those of Physical Education. It is not uncommon (ALBINO et al., 2008) for divergent motivations to be observed in them, which are not always in line with the “critical” and well-intentioned expectations of the teacher, who is faced (not sporadically) in the face-to-face of classes, with explicit violence and its variations: gender issues, prejudice/exclusion, power relations in their subtle and/or gross forms.

According to Pucci (2021a, p. 72), “Adornian thought distrusts affirmative theories, as they are unable to express the libertarian potential rooted in the contradictions of society; rather, they sterilize that potential, molding it into a watertight, individualized form of interpretation”. Thus, in this process of research/elaboration of experience, knowledge was sought as something that occurs “in a bundle of prejudices, intuitions, innervations, self-corrections, anticipations, and exaggerations, in short, in the compacted experience, founded, but in a somehow transparent at all points” (ADORNO, 2008, p.76). This indicates that it is a possible way to escape the justification and concealment of contradictions –

betting, on the contrary, on the potential of opening towards hitherto unknown elements of a phenomenon, breaking with the accepted facade, the common view of it.¹

Aiming to be consistent with this conception, the focus of this investigation was the conflicts between being and “must be”, faced in the individual sphere of teaching by this teacher-researcher, as a beginner in the profession (an apprentice among other experienced teachers) and in socialization process at the College of Application of the Federal University of Santa Catarina, which took place between 2019 and 2020. This unique experience crosses and is crossed not only by the history of many other “apprentices”, but of the Physics Education area, which presents a similar dilemma, albeit in another dimension: the search for legitimacy in the educational field, in which the attempts to understand the divergences between progressive theoretical production in Physical Education and what is (not) effective in the exercise of teaching is a constant (BRACHT, 2000; SILVA, BRACHT, 2012). The discussion, however, is broader, as will be seen in the following pages, involving malaise in culture, the place that the body occupies in it, and the limits of reason – and consequently the expectations of the pedagogy that is recognized as critical.

Some theoretical-methodological assumptions are presented below for a self-reflection on the pedagogical practice and the school environment, especially based on the writings of Theodor Adorno (2003; 2008). In the next chapter, there is a brief description of the context of the pedagogical experience and talks about how violence and indifference are inherent to the civilizing process of which Education is a part, and how the confrontation of the contradictions between being and “should be” can be an antidote to the reproduction of barbarism. The following chapter, entitled “Self-reflections”, is composed of small reports, written from records and memories, as an exercise in elaboration regarding my teaching work and the pains that are inherent to it, and as a critical analysis of a “duty being a teacher” latent in the school routine. Finally, there are some considerations about the writing process and the main points of the analysis are resumed, in which the little rationality prevailing in the school space is key. It ends with brief notes on teacher self-reflection, in particular the urgency that an ethical-political principle prevails over merely instrumental/performative objectives.

THEORETICAL-METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS FOR A SELF-REFLECTION ON TEACHING'S DOING

If people were not profoundly indifferent to what happens to everyone else [...] then Auschwitz would not have been possible. (Theodor Adorno, Education after Auschwitz)

The debarbarization of humanity is the immediate prerequisite for survival. This must be the aim of the school, no matter how restricted its scope and possibilities may be. And for this, it needs to free itself from taboos, under whose pressure barbarism reproduces itself. (Theodor Adorno, Taboos on the Magisterium)

This writing is the result of a self-analysis exercise of my learning path regarding a “duty to be a teacher”, in the context of initiation into teaching and socialization in a new workplace, after passing a public tender at the *Colégio de Administração da Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina*, acting as a Physical Education teacher for fourth and fifth-grade classes of Elementary School². This professional insertion took place in 2019, after initial and continued training dedicated to the academic career, being a member

¹ A powerful analysis exercise of this type, carried out in a public elementary school in Brazil, can be found in Gomes, Gruschka and Zuin (2021). It differs from this work, however, in that it contains narrative and biographical elements.

² Students are currently admitted to the UFSC College of Application through a public lottery, with some reservations for specific vacancies. Thus, the school zoning law is not adopted, and the school is open to children, adolescents and young people from different regions of Greater Florianópolis. Despite the socioeconomic variety, in relation to the elements of material and immaterial culture presented daily, a socioeconomic study carried out in 2021 “pointed out (...) that 37.58% of families received more than 3 minimum wages and 62.11% survived with up to 3.3 thousand reais per month. The percentage of families that received up to 1 minimum wage reached 14.02%” (SILVA, 2022, p. 68).

of a research group on the Critical Theory of Society, and having some sparse experiences as a teacher in Early Childhood and Basic Education, in Higher Education, and Graduate Education.

By understanding that it is in the school setting that my condition as a teacher (professional woman) takes effect, the analysis focused on what I learned in the school routine, particularly in the non-institutionalized forms of instruction, in the knowledge and teaching practices that were designed daily explicitly or implicitly: in what was recommended, valued, seen, criticized.

As an apprentice and a stranger/foreigner (the school to me and me to the school), with greater or lesser awareness, a double game was played of incorporating the *métier*, but also of refusing complete integration, maintaining a certain distance from that reality – something that her trajectory as a researcher favored. Integration into the collective and reproduction of a certain performance sometimes stemmed from fear, due to the combination of an extremely difficult reality: many students expressed as violent³; my little experience with teaching in basic education, which led (with a mixture of relief and disturbance) to the repetition of what was already known; living with work colleagues who never tired of putting me to the test, which made me avoid exposing the difficulties; and the very situation of being on probation. Such a challenge led to a fraying of the pedagogical procedures, revealing threshold aspects that, in other situations, perhaps, would be less evident.

For this research, the work *Minima Moralia* is taken as the main methodological reference, work which Adorno (2008) dedicates to a unique form of investigation: “a path that, against the grain of the tasks imposed by the division of intellectual labor, redirects the scientific eagerness for what he disregards in advance and despises on principle: the individual experience” (MUSSE, 2011, p.170). Such an undertaking is due not only to opposition to positivist science but also to the understanding of the Frankfurtian that, in the administered world, only the research of the alienated configuration of life, “of the objective powers that determine even in the most recondite the individual existence, allows know the truth about life as it is given” (ADORNO, 2008, p.9). Thus, in *Minima Moralia*, in an (apparently) mere description of personal facts, Adorno dedicates himself to exposing how barbarism multiplies in all aspects of life, configuring subjectivity.

In this work, the self-reflection presented here aims to transcend my individual experience as a learner, paying attention to what it says precisely about the contemporary experience in general, aiming to apprehend how the school, in its daily life, contributes to the (re) production of bourgeois subjectivity – with special attention to its socializing function (GRUSCHKA, 2014) and the marks left on those (and by those) who teach. To this end, notes and memories from 2019 and 2020 were used to then meticulously investigate my knowledge and actions and those with whom I learned, considering elements of the school and educational context in their interconnections with social and cultural aspects.

To be faithful to reality in its complexity and to Adorno's thinking, it was decided to focus on the contradictions between what is predicated/idealized and what takes place in school practices. It is about looking at the open wounds of everyday school life: the place of gaps, failures, inadequacies, and inconsistencies since they potentially call into question what is most important to Education, its educational postulates/principles, and, consequently, the Enlightenment tradition (*Aufklärung*), and its aspirations for freedom, both by overcoming obscurantism and by social ills. Not by chance and not uncommonly, failures are recurrently concealed under different justifications such as execution errors, the result of a bad day, or, even, infrastructure problems. As Gruschka (2014, p.176) reveals, “the optimism that the effort to teach could lead to success does not yet represent an idealization, it is, in general, the condition to start the class”. However, this optimism insofar as it makes (self)criticism difficult, contributes in a particular way to the perpetuation of barbarism, as will be seen in the following pages.

To unravel this plot, we decided (among other argumentative constructions that would be possible) to explain the prototypical clash of humanity that crosses the social function of the teacher and the divergence (and its negation) between the predicate and the performance: in the collective imagination about of the teacher, he is the one who “teaches” the ethical and moral principles on which civilization is built, giving them body/materiality (in himself and the other, educating). In the inexorable

³ In 2019, teachers who already had more than twenty years of teaching experience reported that those classes were, in disciplinary terms, the biggest challenges of their careers.

inconsistency between the ideal and the human, he personifies all the malaise related to the cultural superego, already described by Freud (1997, p.97): “The price we pay for our advancement in terms of civilization is a loss of happiness by intensifying the feeling of guilt”, due to an always precarious balance between the satisfaction of the immediate desires of the “I” versus ethical and moral principles.

Not by chance, Horkheimer and Adorno (1985, p.61) stated that the “history of civilization is the history of the introversion of sacrifice. To put it another way, the story of resignation. He who practices renunciation gives more of his life than he is given back, more than the life he defends.” (HORKHEIMER; ADORNO, 1985, p.61). The result is countless resentments against the community/society and its ideals, but ambiguously also against everything that still reminds (in itself and the other) that condition of Nature, forcibly suffocated/repressed from a long civilizing process (ELIAS, 1994) – which is partially updated with each generation.

This condition has specific consequences for the profession since a large part of this function is delegated to education, something bitter to civilize, in which various disciplining mechanisms, from early childhood (RICHTER; VAZ, 2010), are used to erase signs of incivility: inabilities, lack of control, sexuality, weaknesses, deformities, different mixtures, laziness, etc. Most of this process will take place through bodily deprivation, as it is always in the body that a lack of control and training materializes. In the forge of the human, the body is an “other” (Nature in us) to be dominated by the spirit, from a split (real and fictitious) into subject and object:

It is only the culture that knows the body as something that can be owned; it was only in her that he distinguished himself from the spirit, quintessence of power and command, as an object, dead thing, 'corpus'. With the self-relegation (sic) of man to the corpus, nature takes revenge for the fact that man has degraded it to an object of domination, of brute matter. The compulsion to cruelty and destruction originates from the organic repression of proximity to the body (...)(HORKHEIMER; ADORNO, 1985, p.217).

Some of the consequences of this split are the disciplining of the body, but also the opposition between intellectual and manual work, theory and practice, in addition to the hierarchization of relations between University and Basic Education, and the place occupied in school by “intellectual” subjects and corporal/aesthetic, such as Arts and Physical Education (VAZ, 2002). Another development, as read above, is the compulsion of cruelty and destruction. Thus, part of the resentment against the teacher stems from the memory of the fear and pain suffered in this disciplining process, as he is seen as the one who punishes, even when this already seems to be an outdated way of educating – and this is one of the most important taboos about the magisterium. According to Adorno (2003, p.106)

Society remains based on physical force, managing to impose its determinations when necessary only through physical violence, however, remote this possibility may be in supposedly normal life. In the same way, the provisions of the so-called civilizing integration that, according to the general meaning, should be provided by education, can be carried out under the conditions still in force today only with the support of the potential of physical violence. This violence is delegated by society and at the same time it is denied by the delegates.

In addition to the corporal disciplining mechanisms, there is an implicit threat of punishment, by various stratagems, based on this remote possibility. All these pernicious devices must be the object of (self) investigation, even though knowledge is an advantage that is recurrently used unfairly, as a metaphor for physical strength (ADORNO, 2003).

This whole process of external deprivation occupies a place in the history of humanity, in its civilizing process, insofar as it is transformed into internal violence, into self-control (ELIAS, 1994). It is efficient in the forms of sociability invented over time; its counterpart, however, is that severity/hardness emerges as a privileged means of relating to oneself and others. Indifference to pain (physical or symbolic) appears in various everyday situations (GONÇALVES, TURELLI, VAZ, 2012; CASTRO, ZUIN, 2021, for example) and in resentment against the lack of control/excess/weakness of others, which then unfolds in directing aggressiveness against inappropriate sayings. The basis of human history would therefore be ambivalent, covering another, subterranean, non-evident one, which “consists of the fate of human instincts and passions repressed and disfigured by civilization. [According to the authors of the

Frankfurt School,] Current fascism, where what was hidden appears in the light of day, also reveals history manifested in its connection with this nocturnal side” (HORKHEIMER; ADORNO, 1985, p.215-6). History is full of situations of genocide, in which the said explanations/justifications can be both scientific and moral, applied in defense of the biological life of a people or their social well-being.⁴

The limits of critical pedagogies come, to a large extent, from disregarding the fate of human passions in culture. If it is evident that it is not a question of denying the importance of civilization, it is urgent to face its greatest contradiction (shared with Education): there is an inherently repressive tendency in it, which calls into question the dichotomy rationality/enlightenment versus violence (or of the Enlightenment as opposition to obscurantism). This representative of ethical and moral principles, the teacher is prevented from seeing the violence that he exercises daily, and this, as already mentioned, is one of the great taboos related to his profession.

The non-recognition of this contradiction and its variants in everyday school life is due to a detachment of the principle of reality that plagues the teacher, observable in “their attitude of substituting reality for the illusory world within the walls, for the microcosm of the school, which is isolated to a greater or lesser extent measure of adult society” (ADORNO, 2003, p.109). There is an intrinsic infantile trait to this state that is alien to reality and which, as it will be possible to observe in the self-reflections below, presents many nuances due to the specific condition of women in culture⁵.

Paradoxically, as Gruschka (2014) unveiled, this detachment from the reality principle will revert to an adaptation to the reality principle since everything is kept as it is: idealizations of practice that block access to the concrete, to the human in their passions. In this sense, indifference is perpetuated by the school as (indirect, disguised) coldness, whether in the refusal and concealment of the educators' contradictions or in the fact that students recognize them (better than teachers) in injustices and violence committed against them, in the inconsistencies of pedagogical practices and in what the world (and the school) expects from them: competition instead of solidarity, submission, and repression instead of emancipation, qualification, and selection aimed at success, relationships based on the principle of exchange, the instrumentalization of affections, the predominance of individual interests, among others. According to Gruschka (2014, p.155):

Students who during their time at school cannot find access to what is to be learned become indifferent in their relationship with education. Above all, they learn that the important thing is to deal with school knowledge instrumentally, as is done twice in school exams: by the way of taking the exam and by demonstrating content.

Finally, it is worth quoting Adorno (2003, p. 113), for whom

The solution can only come from a change in the behavior of teachers. They should not stifle their affective reactions, to end up revealing them in a rationalized way, but should grant these affective reactions to themselves and others, disarming the students. Probably a teacher who says: 'Yes, I am unfair, I am a person like you, who likes something and something displeases' will be more convincing than another ideologically supported by justice, but who inevitably ends up committing repressed injustices.

What was intended in this brief explanation was to indicate, based on Theodor Adorno's thought, how a trait of violence is inherent in the civilizing process, and how indifference, in its specific contours in the teaching profession and the school context, is one of the axes around which barbarism

⁴ At the end of the book *In Defense of Society*, Michel Foucault (1999) defends the hypothesis that, in a dynamic of biopower, racism is a form of the State, which defends life, justifying death, when then so-called inferior individuals must be eliminated for the sake of survival and improvement of the race itself.

⁵ The development of the theme goes beyond the limits of this article, but it is worth quoting Horkheimer and Adorno (1985, p. 232) for whom the “bourgeoisie pocketed virtue and modesty with women: as reactivated formations of matriarchal rebellion. For all this exploited nature, she obtained admittance to the world of domination, but as a conquered nature. Subjugated, it reflects to the victor his victory through spontaneous submission: defeat, as devotion; despair, like the beauty of the soul; the violated heart, like the loving breast”. This forced submission, however, has as its unfolding the expression of violence in a veiled way, as well as the free self-association of adult women with an infantile and infantilizing condition.

orbits and continues to perpetuate itself in contemporary society. Such argumentative composition is a texture among other possible ones, because, as Pucci (2021a, p.71) explains, the

Adornian thought gives us the possibility of raising a series of theoretical axes, coordinated with each other, in an attempt to project an objective configuration of education. These axes present the different facets of the object under analysis, are composed, and opposed, none is more important than the other, and allow the company of other axes that, by chance, the interpretation process discovers in its first configuration. Therefore, this way of doing education is open, fragmentary, and procedural.

The themes that crossed this theoretical-methodological chapter have their place insofar as they are closely related to what emerged from the empirical material, following the needs imposed by the researched/experienced object: mastery of the body and introversion of sacrifice, infantile condition/apartment from reality and the feminine, dialectic between rationality and irrationality.

SELF-REFLECTIONS

Some brief self-reflections/reports of this period of initiation into teaching are presented here, the first three of which set the tone of the school and the relationships existing there, with aspects related to what is conventionalized in the literature as “professional socialization”, while the others, without following a chronological sequence, cover aspects related to my pedagogical practice. All the small texts were written from notes, and especially from memories that indicate some astonishment in the face of the contradictions experienced and observed but also from memories that carry a persistent malaise related to the environment and the teaching practice. It is a work of elaboration of the experience, in which the act of writing expands the capacity of compression (cognitive and affective) of the lived experience, in what it still has of obscure and painful, but which bets on the revelation of the contradictions as a resource of (self)clarification.

Not by chance *What it means to elaborate on the past* was the subject of reflection by Adorno (2003). In a text with the same title as that of the Frankfurtian, Jeanne Marie Gagnebin proposes to answer this question based on the writings of Paul Ricoeur but also those of Freud and Nietzsche, bringing together “the work of elaboration, which allows one to escape from repetition, and the work of mourning, which enables a new anchorage in life” (GAGNEBIN, 2006, p. 105). It is about “creating *courage* [...] to face the disease, the past, to clarify them; to finally understand them, even if such understanding does not go through a chain of logical arguments and merely rational deductions” (GAGNEBIN, 2006, p. 104).

If in the text *Education after Auschwitz* (ADORNO, 2003), one can read the well-known imperative, addressed to Education, that its efforts be directed so that Auschwitz does not repeat (or anything similar to it), it is understood that the elaboration has an ethical-political dimension, by allowing, through conscience, the exit from the field of resentment, compulsive repetition, indifference – and this both in the collective and individual spheres. “By resuming an object, a situation, one tries to go beyond the repetitive, what is given, in the rescue of living history, sedimented in it in the form of a 'second nature'. This act of resuming is intrinsically educational, it forms sensitivity, perception, and thought” (PUCCI, 2021a, p. 74) and can operate as an antidote against the perpetuation of violence in everyday life.

Before starting the reports, it is worth mentioning that they depart from a conventional format, composing categories of analysis in dialogue with the literature, covering the themes discussed in the theoretical-methodological chapter, however without being limited to mere examples of theory. The aim is to approach – despite all the challenges and limitations – the methodology used in the text of *Minima Moralia*, which has as its specific purpose

the attempt to expose moments of common philosophy from subjective experience, [which] implies that the fragments in no way subsist before the philosophy of which they are a fragment. This is what the loose and detached nature of the form, the

renunciation of the explicit theoretical context, intends to express (ADORNO, 2008, p. 13)

Affections

The entry of another character into a scene certainly alters already established social and affective places, and competition for children's affection can be fierce in the school space, with the use of many stratagems: the discourse of valuing childhood is one of them so that the protagonism given to children returns to those who speak in their favor, as in a mirror reflecting a beautiful image. There is frequent bargaining for the students' expressions of affection, while trophies and medals are to be displayed. In the race to rise in the ranking of affections, the fact that children like the proposed activities garners recognition, making the teacher a hostage – of the children and of the “colleagues” at work who use children’s likes and dislikes, not as a means of reflection, but rather as a resource for depreciation/dispute. It seems that it is always necessary to remain in competition for a space in children's hearts as if this were a sign of good practice in the profession. To some surprise, I observed that this game of affection is also common at the University, especially with those professors who protect their interns from any experience of failure in their teaching initiation. They are in the position of heroes. Perhaps it is this same sense of self-importance that is embarrassingly invoked in some meetings with family members, in which adult women wait painstakingly for their families to recognize them.

Super powerful girls

In the first year of work at the school, a colleague commented, during a lecture, that she did not like those who read a text to the public but rather those who spoke, without any support. I was impressed with the high level of demand and the importance given to performance. She works in the Early Years, just like I do, and something that caught my attention in that short time teaching was how strict the teachers who work with young children are. I indeed have little knowledge of the performance of colleagues in other segments, with adolescents, but from the observations I made, many of them have a “cool” way when talking to students, which gives the impression (perhaps false) that they are less hard and that relations are smoother and more horizontal – perhaps due to the absence of any other alternative. For those who deal with the initial phase of education, those who observe the surface (the words used and the way they are uttered) may not realize how violent the relationships are. Words like “darling” are used equally (no distinctions in the tone of voice) for children, parents, and co-workers. Despite the tiredness that childish tone caused me (which even children don't suit well), I soon mimicked it for the little ones, as if that performance were a password to enter that new universe. I stopped “being sweet”, however, when I realized that I used that “tone” also as a way of disguising anger or impatience, revealing to me the depths of its use: they can be a resource of domination of the other, a way of subdue; something that the strangeness when I heard such words directed at adults already made me suspect. Apparent docility is the privileged form of aggressiveness in this place where the majority of women are present. I soon realized that smiles, subtleties, soft tones of voice, and especially the infantilization of the other, often disguised as zeal – a convenient opportunity to point out the flaws (so poorly tolerated) in someone else's work –, are ways to hide the ferocity of power relations in this very “feminine” space. Rarely do disputes occur openly and if they do, many do not hesitate to resort to fragility (crying) as a warlike resource. Rivalry in this highly competitive environment has many facets: ostentation of material goods or romantic partners, alliances between peers to boycott someone else's place of speech, imposition of personal wills through legalistic arguments or pedagogical sayings, and especially the exaltation of the effort and suffering – there is a real battle over who works harder or who is more devoted to their profession-mission. Self-sacrifice is a perverse means of exercising power: a kind of passport that authorizes the control of others, either by comparing and demanding some form of compensation or tacitly by the guilt it tries to promote and by the constant state of debt in which it places others, who in the comparison appear as lazy or incapable. The impression that teachers are neat girls inhabiting an adult body is recurrent. Girls thirsty for recognition, are quite confused with the disputed affection of children.

It is not by chance that there is also a cross-eyed view of childhood: if it is through contrast that force is exerted, it is pertinent and necessary to construct the other as vulnerable but also as innocent/possessing a unique ability. The heroine finds many figuration places in teaching practice: she protects and dominates. The narratives around childhood feed back this place – social and psychic – of care and (self)control dedicated to women: violence under a fragile mask of civility/sweetness/childishness.

Fortifications

Emergencies are recurrent at the school and, in the absence of an accessibility fellow, I assisted. I entered the space with the expectation (quite high) of learning from someone more experienced. As soon as she started, I remembered the comment of a common colleague, that the professor thought that the students were scientists of the highest echelon of international research. I wondered if the class was for me or them, so young. My perplexity was received as hostility, but it revealed a difficulty that is also mine: being able to express knowledge in different languages, beyond a concept repeated in a mechanical and empty way. My somewhat spontaneous reaction was a problem. In the school space, the pedagogues are sovereign. I was an invader: the place, the creative process, and her difficulties. I recognize that the resistance of most teachers to remote teaching and exposure in the virtual space was not something that I could consider unforeseen. In this teaching modality, the most critical moment I witnessed was the fierce reaction to the interference of university professors, who, at that moment, proposed to give us certain support in the challenge of distance teaching. I then watched, astonished, as two deep trenches were built. On the one hand, the “trainers”, who, instead of instructing us about the technological resources at our disposal, tried to enter the planning space, while we succumbed to despair for the imminent start of classes. On the other hand, the resistance of teachers to the construction of planning that was collective, and open, and the care to expose the work proposals in a way that was distanced enough so that no flaws or fissures could be observed, shielding themselves from any correction. The four uninterrupted hours of online meetings became a battlefield, with a somewhat bewitched insistence on complying with a research protocol versus persevering insubordination to serve as an “object of investigation” – an attempt to oppose domination, which, however, she let herself be betrayed in the painstaking and repeated act of highlighting (or proving) the quality of her work as Basic Education teachers, in which it is revealed that the place of submission was already given. From the initial optimism of joint planning, a mixture of impotence, embarrassment, anger at the wasted time, and despair at still not knowing the minimum to teach in front of a screen remained. But I was able to better understand the distancing adopted by colleagues/teachers who teach subjects that do not makeup General Education, and also by these teachers concerning the University. It is a field of disputes and a consolidated hierarchy.

Physical Education Content

The first year was endless. As a means found to console, and perhaps demonstrate a capacity for self-improvement (an element so valued in the profession), colleagues told me that it is usually like that in the beginning. The fact that I took office a month after the start of classes and that the children were without a reference for that subject served as an alibi, but I was aware that the problem had much deeper roots, which increased my discomfort. I came across authoritarian and competitive children and, to worsen an already difficult picture, the little experience with that age group and my high level of demand to meet expectations as a new teacher on public examination led to a generalized antipathy by the students due to the constant inconsistencies between the real and the desired, but especially to the hardness in which I dealt with this dissonance. At the time, I was advised to do what the kids asked and then manage the content from there. I didn't. In that specific context, giving in to the immediate will of the children seemed to me to be an act of abandoning the group to the tyranny of the strongest: those who imposed on the others by threatening and carrying out physical aggression, by dominance in speaking moments, by embarrassment and by provocation, leading to the loss of the physical and psychological integrity of the other, weaker and/or emotionally vulnerable. Perhaps he did not give in due to these “theoretical” convictions, which are mixed with ethical principles, or perhaps due to a

“pedagogically well-founded” stubbornness, but probably due to the difficulty of doing it in a way other than the one foreseen. However, many times, I wanted to give in without any “pedagogical” disguise, whenever I was led – so recurrently – to a state of exhaustion. Mediation in that context was a mere caricature. Admitting this, however, seemed reckless, and I succumbed to the suffocating need to show competence and teach the “contents” – something that only made things more difficult and painful.

Games

That year when I started at school, I dedicated myself to perpetuating in fifth-grade classes the legacy of a retired teacher, who developed a pedagogical project based on Vygotsky, of re-signification of games. Confidence in the project, already carried out and also validated in the institution and the academy, was inversely proportional to the knowledge he had about its details, those precious ones, referring to the operationalization of the proposal in everyday life. I had a text in my hands and an exchange of ideas with another teacher who at one point accompanied the project. I was, therefore, groping, in a dazzled way, that new content. The teaching proposal was developed over four months and had the following stages: division of the class into five groups; the construction of a game for each one; a game test; their presentation; then followed by practice by the whole class; and subsequent collective reconstruction of each of the games. After experiencing all the constructed and reconstructed games, each class chose one of them (among the five accomplishments) and taught it to the other two fifth-grade classes at the school. They learned the rules of games from other classes, practiced, and played in the Olympics that year. Those who read the sequential and structured script may not even come close to imagining the chaos that was the obstinate “mission” to make it happen. A fundamental element existed only incipiently in that context: empathy, mutual respect, and adaptability. The original version of the project, developed by the idealizing teacher who is now retired, planned to start with the exhibition of a ready-made game for each group, and then reinvent it later. The decision to let each group create their own game (instead of receiving a ready-made one) took place amid the insistent opposition of students to all previously proposed activities. My revenge was presented as a pedagogical principle: “There will be greater acceptance of what they build”. The first obstacle was the difficulty of creating games from possibilities as endless as the imagination; the second obstacle was the fact that it had to be done in a group, and this both because of the issue of the simultaneous support necessary for all teams, and because of the differences of opinion: which were many and experienced passionately – as happens with most people, regardless of age, but which are so difficult to accept in children. Fateful, however, was the non-observance of these very human traits (the passions) and the format of the class, unknown to students in terms of physical education. I questioned whether I would be teaching if I wasn't directing actions all the time, seeing the more or less veiled requirement that the teacher is in a position of dominance. Finally, they all perfected themselves in the human games of perversity and incivility, through dispute/power relations.

Compulsion

Although the process of creating games with fifth-year students was extremely turbulent, the moments of greatest tension were others, such as during practice, when disagreements within the group about the rules created persisted, or else they were so detailed that they ended up forgetting – something understandable. The demand for collaboration and creation was beyond what was possible for those groups, with so many internal conflicts. Faced with the slightest difficulty, the game/group was said badly, generating conflicts that could drag on into recess and even into the following classes of physical education and/or other disciplines. It was notable that the students competed as to who would collaborate less with their colleagues and/or with the teaching proposal. In addition to the boycott, the classes were still an “open field” for physical and verbal aggression, and also for subtle and malicious actions aimed at emotional imbalance and exclusion, through persecution and ridicule of the other. Enchanted they were, by the will to win at any cost, impenetrable to any argument, in the face of the passions that crossed them. They even cheated in the games they had created. There was no zeal for the other and it didn't matter if they destroyed the game conditions. In most cases, the class boiled down to

resolving conflicts. Thus, I was also enchanted, insisting on exploring the winding paths of each child's emotional patterns (in search of something that could soothe pains that I recognized very superficially) and on continuing with that “(de)training” proposal. The reflections were often forgotten when returning to the large group, as if everyone had succumbed to the seductive state of permanent conflict, in a kind of automated animality.

Faith in reason

In an attempt to escape from that bewitched circuit, from absolute chaos, I repeated it in my “civilized” way: I kept trying the “resource” of enlightenment. There was a certain vain hope that I could defuse conflicts by talking about them. Most of the time, I doubted it, but I stayed in the place of speech as if it were a refuge, a desperate means to make sense of it. Inside the room, I protected myself from the emotional outburst that inevitably followed once the bodies and childhood passions were released into external space. Currently, he ended the class in the classroom, whenever some difficulty made the game unfeasible (that is: recurrently), following the “pedagogical principles”, at the same time that he tried to appease certain emotions while giving vent to others, such as the desire for revenge/punishment. In the classroom, students were then encouraged to identify, through questions, which would be the aspects to improve in the game. I kept trying to force a collaboration (through guilt) that wasn't going to happen. Powerless, I kept repeating: “It's important to see what's positive in what was created by colleagues” or “If I don't see something good in the other, is that my limitation or the other's?”. Sometimes, he made use of other resources, no less obscure: he urged them to reflect based on the experience of being in the place of the other (in this case, me, the teacher, and the other groups) when they were supposed to talk about some situation that had occurred, ahead of the class. The shock of being in a place of speech and not being heard jumped out at the eyes, causing them to become angry or appalled. At the same time that I took pains to ensure that they could express themselves, I also urged them to recognize the malaise in the face of impotence and encouraged them not to do the same with their colleagues. For my part, I used a pseudo-rationality to satisfy irrational principles that also permeated me.

Performances

As the first activity in non-face-to-face teaching, I proposed recording a video with a circuit made with obstacles created inside each person's home. A student, too shy to appear in front of the screen, asked me if the circuit could be for her pet hamster. I was speechless for a few seconds. I think her suggestion seemed insightful to me, as it identified a hidden and nefarious purpose of the activity: a reduction to the status of an animal in training. As I received the children's videos, I realized (not without discomfort) the differences in their homes and how invasive it all was. For those who were already entering adolescence, I noticed that the dimension of exposure was more strongly evident not in terms of the domestic space, but in terms of their bodies in motion. Better than it was the hamster or the little brother that appeared before the screen. As for those who were oblivious to these issues, they generally identified as YouTubers. Amid these dilemmas, I wondered if the joy I felt when I saw them was because of nostalgia or because I remembered my childhood, as I loved creating challenging obstacles around the house, or if it was a satisfaction for the activity carried out, as a sign of strength and self-importance as a teacher, or even relief at being able to accomplish something in blended teaching. Maybe all of that. But, in the end, I thought it was violent, both for those who were forced to be exposed and for those who identified as “internet stars” – a subjective type of violence, but subtle and pernicious like the other. I found comfort when I saw happy faces in the videos when distracted by the actions, but I had a (counter) shock whenever I came across a frightened look, which fled from the encounter with the camera, or even when a family member (out of my range of vision) stimulated something threateningly to the mechanical repetition of the circuit. At these times, the intended ludicity was loaded with the weight of health and mechanical repetition, just as the footage was often just proof of the task's accomplishment.

Assessment

The school is a labyrinth of mirrors and, despite everything that is said, students are evaluated less than the other characters that make up this microcosm. Class councils are permeated with information about behavior and sympathizing with one another. Even the most “serious” disciplines, in which I imagined that the evaluation criteria would be better defined, due to tradition, fall into a more subjective field of analysis than expected. Perhaps the previous academic experience was what led me to impatience, both with the gaps in my practice, and with the inconsistencies of everyday school life, which I accepted so badly, even when I reproduced them. I was a foreigner not only because I was new and a learner, but because I felt like a different species: a non-teacher. The practice of receiving interns, however, pushed me to another place, familiar and strange. There I was placed under analysis, and the narratives of the 1990s, of the “roll-ball teacher”, resurfaced and updated. Placed in the hot seat, I was asked if my approach was developmental – an insult for a professor who identifies with the “progressive” proposals in the area. This is not new, when I was a graduate it was already like this, but I was on the other side. Disconcerted with the situation and with the “title” received, I control the signs of contradiction and talk about the importance of the technique and understanding the context and the objective in which it is taught. I talk about the challenge of facing other themes, which even go beyond “critical” proposals, and about the lack of a well-defined methodology for this. The bewilderment then changes sides, but the blow was hard, not only because of the exposed gaps but especially because of being in that old-fashioned professor's place, which is “under the shade of the tree”. So, I better understand the contrast that seems to be always necessary: the inadequacy versus the heroism of the academy, which intends to “overcome” school practice. The guiding professor states that he would like to “leave something lasting for the school where he does his internship”. The suffering, however, to carry out the intervention project is visible, and the guiding teacher is organically involved as if he were the one being evaluated. There is a huge concern for trainees to have successful experiences as if they were still children to be protected – perhaps they were protecting their status, to some extent shaken by the encounter at school of a character less folkloric than the area, in the nineties, created, but which persists, updated, in the imaginary of opposition between theory and practice (or reason and body).

Rhythms

Another place of learning about teaching was the shifts between classes. I looked closely at how the most experienced teachers related to the students. I confess that I was fascinated when I found the fifth-grade classes concentrated on an activity. There was an interest in the miraculous technique used, given the great anguish faced with the loss of control, so recurrent and considered significant in terms of success or failure as a teacher. One way of acting that I quickly learned was managing the timer to give the word attention at the exact moment of its withdrawal. Even recognizing a certain violence in this way of proceeding, this somewhat perverse “art” freed me from the guilt that came from the confusion, due to the unclear boundary, between (the risks of) free speech and the much-recommended child protagonism. Another subtle and delicate game learned as essential is the distinction between what must be given up and what is non-negotiable. The ghost of authoritarianism sometimes causes much bigger problems. Among these dilemmas and ways of doing things, I found playing a less tortuous path. How much lightness in teacher Sofia's ironies, or Maria's songs! But how embarrassed I was (because it's always an exhibition) singing and dancing for the children. When there were no other adults in the room (there are so many scholars, interns, co-teachers, occupational therapists, pedagogical staff, and interpreters!!), sometimes the fourth-year-old children and I became accomplices: we had fun, without so much concern for the content that, in that initial moment, suffocated me. In that environment where I didn't have to save anyone from physical or verbal aggression, then I could be an actress: I imitated voices, made faces, and told jokes. I felt safe with them, the smaller ones, less threatening, and I noticed that there was amazement in their little eyes when I saw a teacher playing and moving freely and with ease. They wanted to be and do the same. And I laughed to myself, with satisfaction and relief, to discover how easy it was to lead them and how good it was to let myself be led. There, I was not afraid.

SOME CONSIDERATIONS

In the experience of writing, from the revisitation of memories and self-reflections made, it was possible to cast an internal and external look at what was experienced at the same time. In writing/reading, the rhythm of the narrative and the tone of each report in particular say about the different degrees of elaboration reached. In some of them, for example, regret and repetition are something that cannot be escaped. It is understood that this whole process that started here remains open, and in the exercise of identifying the contradictions and pains – the fissures between being and “should be” – that crossed my practice and those with whom I work, it is remarkable that there are questions that go beyond the dimension of personal experience and speak about the school universe and culture as a whole, with some particularities referring to Physical Education and the body.

The considerations made here are not intended to be conclusive, with some elements that emerged from the narrative being resumed. The lack of rationality observed in the school space, in opposition to what was idealized by the Aufklärung tradition, was one of the key points of the analysis, revealing varied and not evident facets. The insistence on rhetoric and alleged educational postulates, at the price of denying reality, is one of them. The speech/clarification resource was sometimes revealed as a symptom of a veiled or unrecognized impotence, even as a form of punishment for the students. It also emerged as an attempt at narcissistic validation and/or a desperate attitude to save a self-image (professional person) that showed signs of collapsing, and as a way to combat the fear felt by being in a situation of evaluation. Against reality, or even alien to it, “enlightenment” was a Formation (Bildung) in a very precarious way, being, in many cases, a mere tactic of psychic survival and dispute of strength.

Another facet of barbarism in everyday school life was the massive presence of the logic of competition. In the case of the teachers' interpersonal relationships, the element of gender was found to have unique nuances for pernicious forms of competition. High (and self-)demand, sacrifice, comparison, and the need for validation get involved in everyday actions and relationships, in which personal and professional have undefined limits. This modus operandi of “being a teacher” unfolds in an instrumental relationship with children and their affections, in addition to revealing a need for self-affirmation that brings closer their child's condition – in the sense used by Adorno (2003). How aggressiveness is channeled by the female teachers, in a disguised way, as well as the ideology of the sufferer-heroine, indicate that it is an aggravating factor for the non-recognition of the contradictions inherent in Education, due to the strong identification with the ideals of society and the consequent obstacle to the recognition of the violence inherent to the practices, being a theme that deserves to be deepened in further research. On the principle of competition, it appears in the hierarchization of disciplines, in which in the most diverse and subtle ways the “intellectuals” claim primacy over the bodily/aesthetic ones. This gap also appeared between Basic Education and Higher Education and affects the initial training of undergraduates.

Irrationality still has a singular bias in physical education classes, when violence is seen without so many ruses, in a crude way - common when physical confrontation is its privileged means of manifestation, and it is often the case in the course of classes. If the challenge of facing these situations is immense, due to the physical and emotional exhaustion experienced, it gains depth, on the one hand, from the association between a good class and student control, and on the other, due to the emptiness in the progressive field regarding the subject of violence, generally taken as a mere excrescence of the practice, and not as its pressing theme. If critical pedagogies and/or experience reports deal with an idealization of the pedagogical practice (and even of the human being, of childhood, and of the power of enlightenment), instead of openly facing failures, then they end up contributing to the continuity of the concealment of contradictions, and also their consequences: indifference/coldness, and in all the power games that are constitutive of it, unfolding in barbarism.

Finally, some points about the process and purpose of teacher self-reflection in teacher education. One of them is the centrality that the ethical-political element must have over purely instrumental aspects related to the teacher's performance – something that is of great fascination, especially in the initial phase of the career. Another point to highlight is that the pedagogical practice and the school context are thought together, with all its characters and the relationships that they establish with each other, which includes not only the people/functions in particular, but the imaginary in around

the body, childhood, otherness and the feminine – since female teachers still make up the majority, especially in the Early Years. All of these are themes that presented a unique composition around the notion of bourgeois indifference/coldness and can be the object of study by professors/undergraduates, from the Adornian work as in its developments in the field of Education and Physical Education. Finally, the importance for those who propose to reflect on their practice of preserving the capacity for estrangement, of still being impressed by what they have experienced, and, above all, of having the freedom to express insecurity and impotence. A possible strategy for teacher training, especially for those who are in a position somewhat foreign to the school universe (presumably those at the beginning of their careers and/or undergoing a curricular internship), is the registration, in the light of theory, of these elements that are so poorly accepted in teachers: frustrations, limits, and concerns. Identify, for example, the discomforts in teaching and, especially, the triggers for discomfort; but also recognize one's feeling of impotence and aggressive impulses in the face of what causes a disturbance, as well as the ways found to regain control of the situation/the other: punishments, threats, depreciation, etc., in their multiple and subtle facets. Another fruitful point of analysis is the internal hierarchies of everyday school life, which are praised or devalued in the conduct of professional colleagues and students, as idealized ways of teaching and childhood. It is understood that these are some aspects that can configure a first opening in the confrontation, accompanied by a reflective exercise, of what is based on the contradiction and the daily barbarism.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATION

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest with this article.

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