

## **Conversations with Youngsters and Schools Throughout Movies and our Lives**

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**ABSTRACT – Conversations with Youngsters and Schools throughout Movies and our Lives.** This article is the result of different related investigations from the Cultural Studies on Education and Arts Research Group and were developed in spaces of grassroots public teaching spaces. This research is aimed at the production of investigative resources that favor the update of educational practices, appealing to recent advances of visuality studies as creator and reader of visual images. Thus, assuming cinema as a filmic realization and a metaphor of life in schools, we articulate reflections upon ways in which the quotidian define juvenile lives as imagery events with open and attentive cues that will benefit young students and the construction of a present school.

**Keywords: Youth. School. Cinema. Visual Culture.**

**RESUMO – Conversas com Jovens e Escolas que Passam pelos Filmes e por Nossas Vidas.** Este artigo é fruto de pesquisas distintas que se articulam no Grupo de Pesquisa Estudos Culturais em Educação e Arte e são desenvolvidas em espaços de ensino público popular e visam à produção de recursos investigativos que favoreçam a atualização das práticas educacionais recorrendo aos recentes avanços dos estudos das visualidades como forças criadoras e leitoras das imagens visuais. Assim, partindo do cinema com realização fílmica e metáfora das vidas nas escolas, articulamos reflexões acerca dos modos de fazer cotidianos que marcam cada vez mais as vidas juvenis como acontecimentos imagéticos, cujas leituras abertas e atentas só beneficiarão os jovens estudantes e a construção de uma escola do presente. **Palavras-chave: Jovens. Escola. Cinema. Cultura Visual.**

## Youths, Schools and Movies

Looking for an effective contribution to update the thoughts about new generations' school formation, we have been taken to a maze created by several approaches of youngsters' universe. Almost all paths are marked by the current presence or crossing of visual images. Problematizing the relations between school formation and youngsters will fatally imply in scanning, thus, the complexity of visual culture in which youngsters, schools and their cities circulate. From personal images to videogames, from packages of the products they consume or wish to consume up to TV shows they follow and that, in certain and many ways, are created due to this affection, attraction, identification and, most of all, for consumption of this wide and complex group. Video clips, live appearances, for instance, constitute the flow of images that surround and interact with youngsters in their multiple cultures and identity transits.

Among many possibilities, as we emphasize, we chose the world of visual images, therefore, the Visual Culture (Hernández, 2010), to undertake the work here. We take cinema as a reference to think about the youth and their various paths of formation, here not restricted to formal school spaces, but to many experiences that cross and dialogue with them. Important experiences to update the school still understood as a territory dedicated to the adventure of invention of the world in the sharing, unfolding and maintenance of the collective heritage constituted by the sciences, arts and other disciplinary fields, today *unbordered* and enlarged as it is pointed and even demanded by the adventure of the elucidation of contemporary life.

In the perspective of this possible *unborderment* of knowledge, we seek in art, specifically in the cinema, references to advance the reflection upon young generations and their relations with formal Education. Thus, we are interested in what the cinema would elucidate or offer in term of clues, or even as a reading key, and also in understanding the relevant aspects of formation that the school would be able to perform. At a certain angle, it would be as if we also inquire what they do, what they propitiate or imply, sooner or later, on the scripts, scenarios, imagetic or imagery and even imaginary conceptions that are undertaken in the school quotidian. Which cuts and mounts have been interesting to accomplish both in the pedagogical practices as well as in the research carried out to readjust, preserve or expand the institutional functions of Education.

Certainly, in order to minimally contemplate these questions, even in parsimonious considerations, we would consider writing much more than an article. So, we have chosen to deal with some aspects of the filmic relationship with some faces of the youth universe in their diversity of worlds, cultures and transits, defending as the intersection space of this diversity the school territory, without neglecting its unquestionable singularities and complexity.

We note in our argument that the new generations cannot be reduced to the characteristics commonly used in a recent time to circumscribe an age group, understood many and mistaken times as belonging only to the same cultural or social identity. Here, then, we have one of the initial problems in approaching youths, whose pluralization only softens the problem. Probably the group we call young people has always been, along the years, the encounter of diverse conditions, in irregular cultural, social, affective, aesthetic intensities. The predominant common trait would be a cut or age range. This characteristic has been weakened in recent decades due to the effects of global economic policies that have required expansion or, in some cases, a decrease in youth time.

If a few decades ago it was acceptable the sudden incorporation into an almost institutional adult characterized by other institutions such as formal marriage, entry into the world of work and a certain economic autonomy, a reality that has been going on for some time is evidenced by the loosening of these passages and by the permanence both in the economic dependence as in the hedonistic practices, facilitated by diverse interests of the market. This way the ease of pointing and delineating a generalizable youth is diluted. Once the problem is given, we have the challenge of thinking the formation of this population almost as unpredictable as well as concrete and evident. A population that is affirmed through amateur affinities, playful activities, radically intimate relationships with aesthetic elaborations and great dedication to the productions of their personalities and collectivities as poetic creations. Transient creations that dialogue or even duel with the pitfalls of the market and its seductive strokes. We propose, therefore, to consider the school auditorium as a cinema audience that suddenly reveals the power of radical interaction with what goes on the screen, and can transgress the institutionality of the boundaries between enunciator and receiver, even changing the end and the theme of the story that it was intended, regardless of the acceptance of those who still believe to have the projection and conduction of the script.

Here we allude to the tension between a state of the arts resulting from regulation, from which the school and its students were and are targeted, and the insurgencies resulting from current conditions. Students, of course, no longer attend, or no longer fit into the traditional categorization of school institutions. Just as young people, children and the "adult world" also overflow the category addresses assigned to them. Perhaps the reductions that these populations have suffered over time have always been inadequate and even unfair. The juvenile condition, *teacherality*, *adultcentrism*, the various applications of *agerism* and other organizations of governmentality demand their problematizations through broader, more relativistic and, above all, more frank considerations, in the face of the impositions of interests opposed to the game of difference. Being young, adult, teacher, student is first and foremost singular within the collective amalgams. And so it is a question of applying the knowledge offered by each enigmatic case that silences

institutional translations for various crimes, discrepancies, transgressions and daring.

School lives, like movies, are as concrete as unreal. They are as editable, adjustable, as a bountiful set of images allows for makes and remakes, giving plural discourses without missing the truth of the event, though in new terms, a more poetical rather than a scientific truth, keeping here the still modern meaning of such terms.

This way, images in conflict, in their constant dynamics between emerging energies and regulatory reactions, are constituting the realities of schools and their processes of achievement. As in a film that is renewed with each projection, the plots are reconfigured, the protagonists change without losing the prominence in the act of collective creation. We could say that, in addition to the many and often apparently poor statements of intent, the characters of the daily life of youth in schools offer clues to a very new episteme which content is the power of meeting and receiving others and what happens in their settings. No matter the economic fragility, they create undeniable existential and relational wealth (Maffesoli 2000, p. 175).

Resuming the referential element for this article – cinema and film – we take the cinema as the field of knowledge that encompasses the process that results in the realization of the film and everything that affects this work. The film, in turn, would be a sequence of moving images accompanied or not by a soundtrack synchronized to the projected images, which tell an event or a story, filled with challenge or purpose to produce and offer an aesthetic and visual experience that enchants and or snatches the attention of its audience. However, not all films tell stories explicitly. The form of the narrative is one of the aspects of the author's inventiveness or poetic force and manifests itself in different forms without compromise with canonical formulas or other traditions. The creative act in art is, in many ways, an act of teaching and learning where we can see transgression and updating of vocabulary and procedures.

For some decades now, cinema has given examples of the plasticity of narratives and argumentation, scripts, scenarios, reconfiguration of time, which characterize what is called the seventh art and which, in one way or another, contributed to the remarkable contemporary production of visual images and audiovisual narratives, no matter if full of interest and artistic purpose, mere leisure or scientific advice. The fact is that cinema, among many appropriations, can be taken by means of two important and distinct angles, that is, as one of the best examples of contemporary artistic production and of relevance in many cultures as well as in opposition to this favorable and positive view, as one of the most relentless market actions of manufacturing and circulation of cultural artifacts, which involves industrial production and diverse political interests, from purely financial objectives to those of ideological imposition, undergoing various unfavorable effects to the spectators, as the industry of Hollywood has been criticized for a long time.

In any case, cinematographic, professional, industrial, amateur or craft creations make up a significant phenomenon for contemporary societies, not only in the West, but in the whole planet, insofar as the means of circulation are unlimited and the making ones have become accessible and simplified handling. The film, specifically, since the nineteenth century when it was created and already in the early twentieth century in its initial forms, relied on the continuous and rapid projection of still images, the frames, to give the perfect sensation of movement. The movement of the represented actions offered the concrete possibility of witnessing, as many times as desired, a certain event. Both creating and observing an event whenever desired was the great move of this new art. For the movies, everything was more and more possible. Soon there would be no limits for the imagination of the creator of the films that the technical investment could not surpass. Soon the cinema became a breathtaking aesthetic experience of great impact.

The moving images make use of different artistic languages, from scenography to other arts of the scene, from music to the artifices of photography and literature, not to mention the participation, most of the time, vital for the film work, of the actors. Considering the performance of this most current network of professionals from so many areas, allied to the technology of increasing sophistication, cinema becomes a complex expressive language or medium of many aesthetics and a prominent role in contemporary cultures. The film industry, although one of the greatest economic powers of the planet, could not be reduced to just a marketing phenomenon, since it is undeniably also an artistic phenomenon of great cultural strength.

The cinema had initially become known as a technology of luminous projection of successive images which, allied to a certain speed, was intended to create the illusion of real movement thanks to the activation and illusion of the visual perception of its spectators. In common sense, cinema is understood as the room intended for the projection of films to a large audience. However, with the same Greek root of other terms linked to the movement as kinetics, kinesiology and others, cinema means, above all, a universe of creations and procedures around the visual image in motion and its endless horizon of appeals. Films, short films, animations or even videos of any type and form center their strength on the intensity of the aesthetic experience and on the creative voluptuousness of any subject, considered artistic or not. Technically, the important thing is that the resulting imagery is projected onto a support in which it can be seen and enjoyed.

The projection rooms do not differ much from the classrooms, in which the movement and the statement are reserved to the teachers who occupy the screens of projection of the programmed disciplinary contents. From old blackboards or slates to interactive whiteboards, in fact great computer monitors going through the various resources of the projection and use of visual images. The teacher occupies the regency of the official pedagogical action and his/her performance includes the maintenance of the diagram of this cinema, in which the audience

should not have any other behavior besides the disciplined stillness in front of the images that are presented to them. Images not necessarily breathtaking or full of aesthetic strength, but almost always ideological, subordinated to certain rigid systems of truths. However, like cinema clubs, in which projections are accompanied by productive debates and the making of cinema mixes with the presentation of productions, the classrooms are crossed by the individual and collective films of their populations who, at the same time, enjoy the images and produce the visualities. The forms of assimilation of what is heard or witnessed always belonged to the intimacy of private experience, above all, through the silencing imposed by conventional cinema-class, while the expansion of sources of knowledge, knowledge and/or learning empties the projection rooms of the classes of their function affirmed and immobilized in the mythical past in which movie was film and audience, only audience. Students are not just learners immobilized in silencing and subject to the rules of class direction and their script. The interaction, co-authorship of personal and collective formations, has become more and more evident, although, and probably the deeply human action of intervening in the conditions and contents of what we are condemned to apprehend may never have been as blatant as in days of today. The elaboration of images, their reproductions and unlimited dissemination are inexorable indications of the power and disposition of recent generations to create poetically beyond the social and political organizations that defined or tried to impose functions, to recognize capacities and to legitimize productions, products and producers in the field of art and others.

Just as cinema has now crossed the boundaries of leisure, innovating relationships with other arts, and conquering sophisticated pedagogical functions, youths have increasingly developed and formed in familiarity with moving images and their bridges to most distant and unusual worlds. Languages, modes of representation and means of approximation between fields of knowledge are conquered with the aid of films, series, video games and other forms of use of the image articulated with space, time, light and movement. Just as new ways of dealing with the image are constantly realized and expanded through the daily handling of imaging equipment, every day we can see more powerful and accessible technology.

In this overview, in which the demystification of cinema is imposed in the face of the popularization of its industry and the ease of its domestic realization, its formative force gains precise and relevant contours in the universe of Education. Thinking about the visual culture in which film and video, especially on computer screens (Mirzoeff, 2015, p. 150-161) grow exponentially, it is essential for the review and expansion of the educational possibilities of visual images and other relations in the configuration of other images and perceptions of life. Visualities, understood as a mode of production and dialogue with images, cross school, domestic, institutional territories. Urban spaces become, from certain angles, large screens of projection of clashes and imaginary affirmations, in which, unauthorized, transgressive and original images

emerge at various times in various supports. The individual and collective bodies of young people of any social group present visualities by questioning the categorical certainties until recently in use.

Music, an artistic language of great affinity and youthful appreciation, becomes increasingly linked to the imagery productions, present on clips, lives, recorded concerts and disseminated by all means that are educating what they achieve from the looks and ways of capturing life of their interlocutors who are always eager for more aesthetic experiences, while the educational institutions still move slowly in the actions of appropriation, understanding and exploration of these phenomena. The reasons for the distance between the formal school curricula and the effervescence of the true film universe of the youths are of several factors, among which the oxidation of submerged teacher formations in the truths of a time that may have never existed in fact beyond the pedagogical legend. At a time when classes were limited to the active action of teachers and the passivity of the supporting students, just as in theaters where it was believed that an audience would see only and exactly what the filmmaker would want to present.

## Zero for Conduct

Image 1 – Movie: Zero for Conduct



Source: Image from the movie *Zero for Conduct*.

*School films*, varying but relatively significantly, are present in the cinematography of several countries. They may be material of interest to those who work with education. Showing the life in the schools through the cinema is a way, among others, to speak about the education and of its characters. That is, these films are reports or representations of society (Becker, 2009, p. 16-17) that can also be seen for the purpose of thinking and discussing the school. We follow, then, an opposite path to those who have always revealed fears and showed to be reticent in the use of images in their investigations and researches (Alves, 2010, p. 185-187). Instead, we actually understand that cinema is active, one

of the voices of education. A voice that expresses itself through images (and sounds), but that is no less legitimate. An interlocution we will do in two parts of the article, through two French films: *Zero for Conduct* and *The Class*.

Our proposal is to have a dialogue with these films, but rather two important considerations. The first one is that our intention here, then, is not to do any film analysis or criticism. As Jacques Aumont and Michel Marie (2009, p. 12-13) have observed, there are different possible discourses about films. What we mean by “conversation” is part of our understanding, especially from the experience developed after years of working in basic education and currently with the training of educators in the university, about the need for dialogue and a truly interactive and live correspondence among all the possible interlocutions in the field. We wish to entangle the cinema in these conversations, which we believe to be so indispensable. That is, for a more enjoyable meeting between the school floor and other spaces of creation related to education – we include the cinema and with it we talk too. The assumption of a conversation is not only the proposition of a more enjoyable relationship, but we suppose, above all, to be more contagious and engaging. Maybe even more threatening and controversial, however, without abandoning the perspective of being more communicative, non-invasive, among all the characters and communities of education. This is the look and practice of our contact with the featured films.

Now the second consideration, which we present in the form of a question: Could French films help us discuss Brazilian education as well? This is a problem about the identity of the school and its representations that we would like to meet preliminarily. We understand that the school, its practices and experiences, more than an institution exclusively identifiable with the *timespaces* referred to the place, is a social practice that needs to be seen as creating an extended historical context. The school establishment cannot be adequately discussed without being seen in the light of the transformations that wove the modern world from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and the conditions of urban and industrial modernization between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The two French films in question speak of their schools and even their peculiarities, but they also speak, we would say, of contexts of schooling that are globalized through the integrated and global system of capitalism.

After these preliminary considerations, shall we talk about the two movies?

A very old movie, more than 80 years old, *Zero for Conduct* (*Zéro de Conduite*, FRA, 1933), from Jean Vigo, a half-length film with approximately 45 minutes, already exhibited the recurrent problem of the most arbitrary exercise of power in schools, the same conflicts that we have seen so often today, especially in our classes, involving school authorities and students. In the film, the portrayed institution is an internship for boys of less privileged social origin. Filmed before World War II, it is still current because it helps us reflect on the stable structures of disci-



plinary and punitive practices in school. Practices so reiterated that we almost believe that there could be no schools without them.

**Image 2 – Movie: Zero for Conduct**



Source: Image from the movie *Zero for Conduct*.

But above all, the film not only takes a power approach as a particularly discretionary practice, but it is indicative of the existence of other possible pedagogical directions at school. Artistically, the film is also quite detachable and much of its plasticity is due to the controversial, radical ethics it conveys, but equally to the libertarian pedagogical imagination it suggests.

In *Zero for Conduct*, we see a clear contrast between the moments when students are only among themselves and when they are in the presence of teachers, inspectors or the principal. When they are by themselves, we can witness instants of collective ecstasy, of an extreme fulfillment of life, orgiastic reactions that schools try to extirpate from their daily lives. This situation is very recognizable today in schools, especially among the so-called large public networks, which are favorably frequented by the grassroots classes in Brazil.

**Image 3 – Movie: Zero for Conduct**



Source: Image from the movie *Zero for Conduct*.

The presence of the school authority is always vigilant and manipulative, trying to keep the students hostage and constantly intimidated. Despite the evident authoritarianism that floods the school, in the film there is, besides the rebellious students, another presence that also makes it possible to glimpse other ways for the life in the schools. We are talking about the character called Huguet. Another inspector who is absolutely distinct from everyone else who runs the school. In place of the distrust and dominating attitude of the educators, Huguet assumes a behavior of protection and encouragement of the students. He is not there for the school, but for the students, it seems clear. That is, he has no belief whatsoever in the duty of the disciplinary school to impose itself on young people.

**Image 4 – Movie: Zero for Conduct**



Source: Image from the movie *Zero for Conduct*.

Despite his disagreement over the government of the school, Hugué does not abandon the possibility of being an educator. One of the episodes of pedagogical novel in the film is the ride that he takes with the students, walking around the streets. Against the suffocating regime of school life, his walk is life-giving. The action of knowledge of the city, of discoveries for those who are young, instead of the knowledge inside the school, of the regressive repetitions that guide the conservative ideals of education, suggests an instituting pedagogy. A conception of education that actually seeks another school, other individuals and another society. *Zero for Conduct* is part of a chain that is the anarchist cinema. "Teaching, according to Vigo, must be the place of the formation of the free personality" (Marinone, 2009, p. 140).

As we have said, the boys who in the film seem ungovernable, disobedient are quite similar, in their obstinacy, to many of the students we know and who now also exist in schools. As teachers, we often feel personally affected by their actions. Our faith is that in university and in the internship we have been so prepared to teach and now these young people, who live in the most dangerous areas of the city and practice the most reprehensible "cultureless" ways of life, do not let us work. Daily they deny the importance of the school and our value. And why should not they? This is the intransigence of the film. It does not pay tribute to the supposed sacred and indispensable character of the existing school. The school for the working classes, above all, does not welcome their children and young people. Faced with this daily life, for the anarchist filmmaker Jean Vigo, there should not even be negotiation for these young people.

#### Image 5 – Movie: Zero for Conduct



Source: Image from the movie *Zero for Conduct*.

Throughout the film some boys plot a revolt that will occur during a ceremony that will gather illustrious authorities. The informality of these characters and so many of our students to rebellion often constrains our belief about the importance of school. In France, shortly af-

ter its screening, the film was banned, confining itself to the cine clubs during its initial career in the country (Gomes, 2009, p. 200). There are those who still believe in the “militarization of schools” (Mendonça, 2014) as an outlet for their administration and pedagogical guidance. However, the film has in no way a vision of absolute denial of pedagogy. Inspector Huguet is an educator. He welcomes the rebellion of the students, but it is not an eschatological vision. Rather, it is a visionary sensitivity of another education. In our view, this is the contemporary dialogue with the film: if for many of its inmates the school did not change that much, the task of transforming the school is still alive and necessary. In fact, as the character Huguet shows, the school is recreated every day and it is possible to be guided by these fragments, by these small luminous events, to reorganize it on other bases, on other principles.

In another memorable scene, Inspector Huguet circles the school playground. He should, above all, watch over students. At one point, he walks like Charlie Chaplin’s character *The Tramp*. The tribute of Jean Vigo is evident. But it is also possible to associate imitation as an insurgent image. The apparent inclusion of *The Tramp* “out of place”, in the shoes of a school inspector, is the proposition of a libertarian eruption in a particularly castrating environment. That is to say, the school must necessarily be admitted as a place of emergencies, of characters and events that tear out its elapsed regularity – or will be ineluctably subject to disobedience and unconditional revolt.

The final scene of *Zero for Conduct*, with students fluttering the pirate/anarchist flag is a poetic image of social revolt as well as student rebellion. However, despite its political similarity with the recent movements of occupation of schools in Brazil and in other countries, it is part of an imaginary about the revolution which is less likely nowadays to be believed that could happen after an insurrection. However, the film’s most perennial images are those that give us a surreal and dreamy view of school life. And they are undoubtedly present by the commotion they provoke.

We also had the opportunity, at different times, to present *Zero for Conduct* for teachers, as well as for young students of Pedagogy and teachers’ formation degrees. Despite the antiquity of the film, it always mobilizes in this audience an attention and pertinent discussions to the experience of teaching in the present time, despite the time elapsed. The fact is that *Zero for Conduct* exceeds its most immediate chronological references. And why does this happen? First of all, Jean Vigo’s film, in spite of the distance of time, puts an antinomy characteristic of modernity itself and its institutions, such as the school, which reaches us today. In the words of the historian Franco Cambi (1999, p. 199-200), “[...] the modern world is crossed by a profound ambiguity: it is guided by the idea of freedom, but it also performs an exact and constant government action”. This is what we find in the film for a debate that remains current: school governance and autonomy of its characters. A rhetorical question: Which side are you on? A question that gets even

more complex when we realize that our response, between varied arguments and circumstances, constantly moves from side to side, cynically or inadvertently.

## The Class

Facing questions that teachers live daily in Brazil today, *The Class* (*Entre les Murs*, France, 2008), by Laurent Cantet, is a film for a more directly identifiable conversation with our time.

**Image 6 – Movie: The Class**



Source: Image from *The Class*.

*The Class* is based on a book with the same title. The main character of the film, François Bégaudeau, is also the author of the book (Bégaudeau, 2009) and a teacher. In the film, his character is the French teacher François Marin, who teaches at a Parisian public school that welcomes a large number of young immigrant families from Africa, Asia and the French Antilles. His students are from different ethnic groups and also from diverse linguistic backgrounds. In some hard aspects, the school of the thirties, from *Zero for Conduct*, and Professor Marin's school at the beginning of the twenty-first century, are even very similar. We are referring to the forms of regulation and the very conception of civilization and culture they represent – students must obey for their “training”. In *The Class*, the conflict will be represented by the meeting between the supposed universality of the school institution and the diverse cultural identity of its students.

For a teacher who teaches in the large public networks (municipal and state) in Brazil, the situation of conflict that we witness in the classroom of Marin is not unusual. Even without facing classes with such diversity of nationalities that appears in the film, the frictions are not so different. Pedagogical impasses occur, in fact, less due to the encounter between different nationalities than to mismatch between different cultures. Students who do not copy the subject, who are distracted by

the cell phone, parallel conversations, a majority who did not perform the reading combined by the teacher, in short, everything that despairs us and makes us feel frustrated in class. But much more, hostilities between teachers and students that constantly culminate in moral and even physical aggressions. In one of the strongest scenes of the film, a choleric teacher breaks through the teachers' room saying that he will no longer teach for his class, that they want nothing and that they will never leave the bad neighborhood where they live.

Therefore, it is another French film that makes a Brazilian teacher who teaches in elementary education see himself/herself there, going through the same problems. "Aliens in the Classroom," the title of an article by Bill Green and Chris Bigum (1995), seems a striking picture of these mismatches in class. Teachers and students seem not only to speak different languages, but seem actually to live in distinct universes, in other civilizations. Another episode also very striking in the film is the (dis)encounter of Marin with the African family of Souleymane. The idea of this meeting with those responsible for the student is the communication about the boy's situation in school. The mother comes with the older brother, who will translate the conversation. Yes, the person in charge of the student does not speak French. So what conversations are there about the conditions of this student? What kind of fate can he have in school?

#### **Image 7 – Movie: The Class**



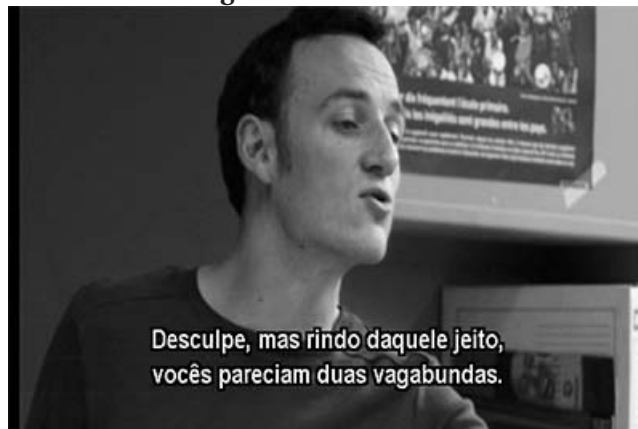
Source: Image from *The Class*.

Souleymane will be expelled from school. The problem, of course, is not in his origin, it is not in Africa or in the suburbs of Paris (or even in any city in Brazil). The school remains unchanged in its cultural assumptions, accepting only conducts and knowledge already established by the pillars of eurocentrism, whiteness and falocentrism. Professor Marin systematically corrects his students and, despite imagining the opposite, this is not just a professional duty towards learning. There is a hierarchical posture that does not relax at any time, always sovereign of the supposed assignments of a teacher. The students, astute, ques-

tion his teaching, but their voices are not sufficiently received. At one point, a young woman, Khoumba, asks why he always offers examples of proper names like “Bill” and never names like “Aissata”, “Rachid” or “Ahmed”, but the teacher does not agree with the objection, he does not accept being questioned.

The strongest episode of the film takes place in another discussion between the teacher and his students. After a class council that counts on the presence of two representatives of the group, a controversy ends in the classroom with the teacher saying that they had behaved like “sluts”.

**Image 8 – Movie: The Class**



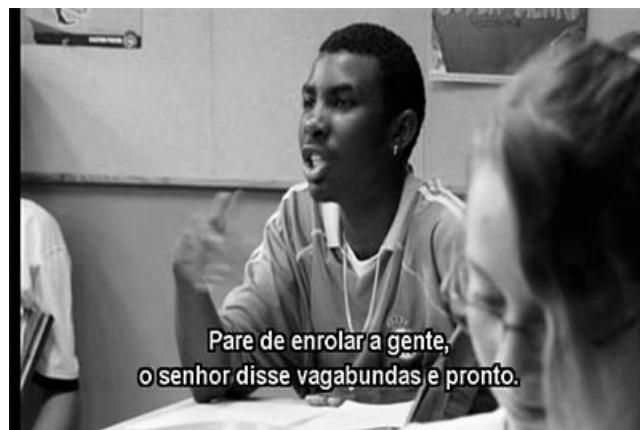
Source: Image from *The Class*.

**Image 9 – Movie: The Class**



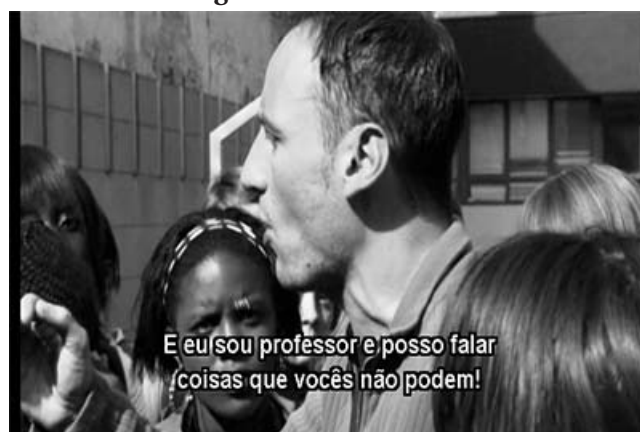
Source: Image from *The Class*.

**Image 10 – Movie: The Class**



Source: Image from *The Class*.

**Image 11 – Movie: The Class**



Source: Image from *The Class*.

At school, there is a methodical care with the way students behave regarding its authorities. Behaviors seen as mistaken are systematically corrected. Marin also exercises his vigilance in the form of treatment and throws punishment when he feels disrespectfully hit. However, in the face of his cursing, the explanations that appeal to the senses of reasonableness go down. His explanations are not accepted by the students. After successively questioned, he appeals to the argument that, after all, he is the teacher and has prerogatives. With this argument, the power that entangles the relationship between management, teachers and students is then exposed without subterfuge. A power that students know exist and never fail to report. In another situation, the same boy who will be expelled from school, Souleymane, at the request of the teacher, hesitates to respond by saying that he could be sent by him to “Guantanamo”. The boy is a Muslim.



It is interesting to note that he is not an exactly malicious teacher. From the conceptions he shares about the profession, he even tries to value his students and surprise them positively, on certain occasions. Other teachers also show consideration for them. However, in the face of everyday conflicts, the balance is negative for students. Just as in the movie *Zero for Conduct*, the group of students belongs to a segment of the population for whom the school seems to exist only to submit and discipline. *The Class* does not have the political identity or the mystique of the revolt and seizure of the power that appears in *Zero for Conduct*. But neither does it see the school condescendingly, presenting in a forceful way the situation of exhaustion of certain educational narratives and practices.

*The Class* has a very ethnographic view of the school life, exposing microphysics of power that could pass unharmed for anyone who scrutinizes the quotidian without a certain capacity of attention regarding their plots, which always develop between lights and shadows. Early in the movie, the new school teachers are told by their longtime colleagues about the students as they look at a list of their names. They talk about “difficult” students, for example. This is not only an anxious practice, but also a school scan that leaves small space for surprise or the reinvention of trajectories, possible events when new characters meet. Information anticipates and sediments images.

At the end of the film, teachers and students play ball excitedly. It is a very interesting scene. It shows that despite regular hostilities, nothing is so personal. Only in the face of the problematics of power (in this case, unequivocally, racial and colonial, but also of social class), guiding pedagogical practices and the very attendance of the school space, especially in the classroom, that conflict arises. That is, they are not the “people”. It is impersonal, sometimes even unconscious among those involved. So it is necessary to think of the school always sociologically. The cinema, in these two films and in many others, tells us this with its images. Thinking about school is problematizing the relations that are established, built historically and socially in broader territories of social life. Only in this way is it possible to acquire, as Paulo Freire (2011, p. 35) claimed, a “clearness around who and what, therefore against whom and against what, we do the education”. *Zero for Conduct* and *The Class*, from distinct aesthetic choices even, weave a more penetrating and honest look at the youngsters in schools. Watching these films is an unusual opportunity for dialogue. Movies talk, but through pictures. They are conversations with which new or renewed visions about the youngsters and the schools can be woven, participating in a very contributory way of our knowledge networks. So often re-educating our look, continually drawing our look about the world.

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