

Presentation - Education, democracy and difference: imaginative twists of gender, sexuality and race¹

Apresentação - Educação, democracia e diferença: torções imaginativas de gênero, sexualidade e raça

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ABSTRACT

This presentation essay seeks to situate the proposal of the especial issue *Education, Democracy and Difference* and to condense, even if briefly, some provocations of the gender, sexuality and race studies to the ontological assumptions of the legal-colonial order of liberal democracy. His general argument points to how a vigorous general economy of thinking about difference requires paying attention to the ethical-political tensions that these intellectual fields bequeathed to the composition between education and democracy. Therefore, in the first part, we go through the effects of what we call political-conceptual echoes of difference and how they feed a policy of imagination to trace existing alternatives in the hegemonic systems. In the second part, we present how the component texts of the special issue state an expansion of politics and highlight the many and multiple ways overflowing and changing in the relationship between education and difference. It is a relationship committed to reverberating as those bodies that were never made to appear in public space generate and regenerate worlds and produce the possibility of imagining democracy in another way.

Keywords: Democracy. Difference. Gender. Sexuality. Race.

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RESUMO

Este ensaio de apresentação busca localizar a proposta do dossiê *Educação, Democracia e Diferença* e condensar, mesmo que brevemente, provocações dos estudos de gênero, sexualidade e raça aos pressupostos ontológicos do ordenamento jurídico-colonial da democracia liberal. Seu argumento geral mostra como uma vigorosa economia geral do pensamento da diferença exige prestar atenção às torções ético-políticas que esses campos intelectuais legaram à composição entre educação e democracia. Para tanto, na primeira parte, nós percorremos os efeitos do que chamamos de ecos político-conceituais da diferença e observamos como esses ecos alimentam uma política de imaginação para traçar alternativas já existentes em sistemas hegemônicos. Na segunda parte, expomos como os textos componentes do dossiê percebem a expansão da política e salientam os muitos e múltiplos modos de transbordamentos e transformações da relação entre educação e diferença. Trata-se de uma relação comprometida em reverberar como aqueles corpos que jamais foram feitos para aparecer no espaço público geram e regeneram mundos e produzem a possibilidade de imaginar a democracia de outra maneira.

Palavras-chave: Democracia. Diferença. Gênero. Sexualidade. Raça.

The living organism, in a situation determined by the play of energy on the surface of the globe, ordinarily receives more energy than is necessary for maintaining life; the excess energy (wealth) can be used for the growth of a system (e.g., an organism); if the system can no longer grow, or if the excess cannot be completely absorbed in its growth, it must necessarily be lost without profit; it must be spent, willingly or not, gloriously or catastrophically. [...] Woe to those who, to the very end, insist on regulating the movement that exceeds them with the narrow mind of the mechanic who changes a tire (BATAILLE, 2013, p. 22-23).

This special issue is a tangle, at the same time, theoretical, political and affective. It supposes, first of all, a restlessness. Above all, it stems from a desire to intervene in the relationship between democracy and education that emerged from a friendship in the different times and spaces of our interlocutions. From quilombola schools in Bahia to drag-queens at school parties in Rio de Janeiro, our research fields are connected to the gender, sexuality and race studies in order to analyze how these categories do in Brazilian curricular thought. The triad that serves as its title and the problems it raises have emerged from our multiple stories of conversations and exchanges; stories that give consistency

to our intellectual and research trajectories and that, if not explained, at least locate the invitation that guides this special issue, so kindly received by *Educar em Revista*². In this context, our main point here is the conjunction of education, democracy and difference, suggesting that the phrase in question demonstrates a possible relationship and not a given identity. In this presentation, therefore, we condensed, even if briefly, some provocations of the gender, sexuality and race studies to the ontological assumptions of the legal-colonial order of liberal democracy.

In the company of Ann Laura Stoler (2016), we felt, although not always in an intelligible way, that it was a question of beginning to recognize the ways in which incarnations of gender, sexuality and race are continually reshaped in so oblique and opaque ways that, many times, sometimes include the conceptual work itself. Therefore, the line of force that inspired us was not so much to denounce the absence of democracy, whose deprivation, almost always tends, as Angela Davis (1998a, p. 99) noted, “to affirm the whiteness of democratic rights and liberties”. On the contrary, in fact, this special issue documents a willingness to go beyond the sometimes suffocating circle of denunciation to point out, with Judith Butler (2020), the irrevocable irrevocability of democracy: the way it will never be present once and for all in social fabric because it is always short of life, and must remain so in order to echo from within the alterity that aims to recognize and take seriously and even the last consequences “the radical reconceptualization of the struggle for democracy” (DAVIS, 1998b, p. 281) woven into the beating heart of gender, sexuality and race studies. In this way, we seek to bring together in this presentation and in the component texts of the body of the special issue, approaches that face an expansion of politics and highlight the many and multiple ways of overflowing and changing the relationship between education, democracy and difference.

Political-conceptual echoes of difference

More than two decades ago, gender, sexuality and race came to be described categories, without blinking, as territories of silence in the curriculum, according to a term popularized by Jurjo Torres Santomé (1995). In recent years,

2 We are also grateful to the *ad hoc* reviewers who agreed to evaluate and revise the submitted texts in a short period of time and without which the final composition of this special issue would not have been possible, as well as the essential partnership with the journal's editorial staff.

however, they have become grounds for an unprecedented conceptual explosion in the Brazilian curriculum field³. This plot has proliferated a unique capacity to attract new generations of students who, arriving in our classrooms, crave a new thought that promises, finally, to engage in a provocative dialogue with difference. However, thanks to the seductive power of their language, an almost enchanting implication with the lives of infamous men (FOUCAULT, 2006), with the only apparent simplicity of the argument and the passion that transpires on each page of authors who have become canons, we started to fear how this profusion could give rise to a somewhat “thoughtless” adhesion and lead to that “the sloganeeringly reductive style”, criticized by Edward Said (2003, p. 33).

Not without awakening, on the other hand, a discomfort in the epistemic cardinalate of reason and order and, we know, in reactionary temperaments in general, not only to the right but to the left of the current political spectrum. It is not uncommon for the contestation of a universal training project to be promoted by the curricula to be the target of judgments that associate the agendas of difference with the eclipse of neoliberalism and the related corrosion of democracy. Even in curricular thinking, in which the inflection of difference has been formative for an entire generation of researchers, there is an attempt, here and there, to try to devitalize its strength. “The twilight of equality”, about which she writes about Lisa Duggan (2003), threatens, notes the author, the very conceptual plane by taking out of the scene how it has been precisely a criticism of the ways in which neoliberalism organizes political and material life in terms of race, gender and sexuality as well as class and geopolitics that was put at stake. It is that a kind of *accursed share* – “part of a dialogical and polymorphous network of perversions that contradicted notions of decency and citizenship” (FERGUSON, 2004) - is particularly touched upon through these categories. Here is why our emphasis on Georges Bataille’s (2013) fascinating contribution to political economy. The irremediable loss of energy produced by life in its realization renews, in our view, the democratic challenge, as it includes a flagrant criticism of the devices of the colonial state imaginary and its liberal economies of difference.

Wouldn’t a formulation of the size of the epigraph provide an inspiring arrangement of the relationship between education, democracy and difference? Couldn’t difference be another name for a general democratic energy economy? In any case, it would not be necessary to affirm that education has been taken

3 To retain some evidence, with regard to gender and sexuality studies, for example, in the past three years, at least four collections have sought to gather an overview of research that explores curriculum, gender and sexuality (MACEDO; RANNIERY, 2017; LOPES; OLIVEIRA, A.; OLIVEIRA, G., 2018; PARAÍSO; CALDEIRA, 2018; RODRIGUES; CAETANO, SOARES, 2020).

as a synonym for making this general economy of difference explicitly useful. When the difference is the direct path to this “reign of excesses” (RANCIÉRE, 2014, p. 17), it would be up to the educational task to hide this excessive overflow through the figure of the “democratic consumer drunk on equality” (RANCIÉRE, 2014, p. 41). The awakening of the feeling of hatred for democracy, at least as formulated by Jacques Rancière (2014), is not opposed to it, but it has been able to reconfigure and refound it from a paradigm that seeks to get rid of the “revolutionary fantasies of the collective body” (RANCIÉRE, 2014, p. 24). At the heart of the hatred, therefore, is a renewed fear as to where the movement of difference can take us and how “constantly wrest the monopoly of public life from oligarchic governments, and the omnipotence over lives from the power of wealth” (RANCIÉRE, 2014, p. 121).

The assertion that everyone is equal before the law not only disappoints, suggests Greg Gardin (2011), but comes to root out the projects of alternative future and common public space that shape hopes and transformations. Apparently, this trend repels the evasion of excess, the beauty of risk, stated Gert Biesta (2013), leading, in the end, to the annihilation of education itself. This is because it is in this tuning fork, in ephemerality and rambling, and not in useful identity and functional resistance, that the political-conceptual echoes of difference emerge and can be better characterized by “frictional forces, discomfiting encounters, and spurts of unsynchronized delinquency (PUAR, 2007, p. 222) in the relationship between democracy and education. Our meeting began with a resounding question about how the untimely insistence of gender, sexuality and race, understood as breaking out, disturbing and intervening in an apparently well-ordered political scene, implied some suspicion as to whether these categories function as evident, identifiable, transparent and accessible. without major problems for education. Such categories are not only mostly indistinguishable and indifferent from each other, but they also retain a stubborn aversion to explanation (CHOW, 2007). So the trigger point jumped to suggest mobilizations of the concepts of gender, sexuality, race beyond the boundaries that the divisions of intellectual work came to draw and ask about the contributives that they bequeathed to any possibility of democracy.

In our research, the perception of the centrality that democracy assumed in the debates about education and difference, therefore, seemed to us only very partially describable from the approaches we inherited. Whether education was a substrate for projects of improved training of subjects in the name of difference, whether identity as a political category to be recognized in the curricula, whether it was difference with an element of irreducible individual experience, or even the categories of gender, sexuality and race as knowledge to be taught in the curricula, all criticism of the constitution of difference seemed

to leave us as a residue, or perhaps as an effect, the constituent character of pedagogical discourses. We felt that education oscillated between idyllic terror and redemptive salvation in a type of affective dyad that corrects difference, as Saidiya Hartman (1997) showed, in the mythical apparatus of rescue, redemption and emancipation. This movement obscures the claims of otherness by activating the language that aligns education and curriculum to the project of more civilized and progressive individual school identities.

Somewhat disturbed, we began to perceive some need to explore that friction zone, to which Anna Tsing refers (2005). It is here that the fruitful life of difference has to be translated, made translatable into any concept or category of what Peter Taubman (2009) called the language of pedagogy so that, finally, it is possible to enjoy the right to live. It was as if we were, more and more, facing a kind of gap, conceptual spaces and real places, in which powerful demarcations of this language do not travel very well; that betting on failure has been better than betting on success (HALBERSTAM, 2020). These spaces are opened in contexts in which the projects of citizenship and recognition of identities - to remember two current terms in recent curricular policies in our country - cannot go so far as to change everything according to their own plans. In these spaces, although certain perspectives prevail more strongly than others, and this is evident, it also happens that the limits of hegemony become more clearly visible and offer “the possibility of a disruption of their univocal posturing” (BUTLER, 2003, p. 58). These zones, without a doubt, proliferate uncertainties, and now seem somewhat more urgent the more threatened it is and the more the saving of life erodes the little democracy (BROWN, 2019) that we thought we had in Brazil.

In the various forums we usually visit, we observe, not without some discomfort, as the “unstoppable alterity” (PATTON, 2002, p. 210) – of which, at least for us, the categories of gender, sexuality and race speak – were readily converted into a kind of subset of social life rather than constituting political relationality and, thus, crucial to flourish a “nonsovereign conception of democracy that rejects the that sheds the desire to define self-rule in terms of control and mastery” (DAHL, 2018, p. 187). Not infrequently, when the difference is “addressed”, it becomes thematic (the different subject) or substance (a different culture) - an “object in the midst of other objects”, in the terms of Franz Fanon (2008, p. 103) - that would inform educational policies in its narrowest sense. It is this “paradigm of the Other”, named Sueli Carneiro (2005, p. 20), which is at the heart of the provocations to the conjunction of democracy and education, given the related idiomatic functionalization of difference that places complete disjunction as a perpetual promise that is never nor can it be entirely achievable. Once placed in terms of a legible and apprehensible identity

only on the path of opposition, any tenacious insistence on difference would be nothing more than an index of both physical death and what Orlando Patterson (1995, p, 57) called social death, because “can never be brought to life again [...], will remain forever an unborn being”.

How, then, can we imagine democracy in collaboration with feminist, queer, gender, sexuality, ethnic-racial, Amerindian, post-colonial, decolonial, disability, multispecies and so many others studies coming to life? Would a conceptual exploration that could facilitate new alignments between education, democracy and difference be able to enable interference from these intellectual projects in the current situation? Or even more speculatively, how this work of conceptual alliance composes critical spaces for those *dreams that matter*, about which Amira Mittermaier (2010) wrote, moving democracy, politics and education beyond the universalist fantasies we inherited? These questions inhabit, in different levels of tension, the texts of this special issue and seek to circumscribe a certain annoyance regarding a simplifying and somewhat sterilizing reduction that gender, sexuality and race studies may suffer. To evoke, with some license, the famous statement by Audre Lorde (2019, p. 137), it is not too much to insist that “the master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house”. And, to continue with Lorde (1982, p. 226), is it not without purpose to ask how long it will take for the education to realize that “our place was the very house of difference rather than the security of any one particular difference”? In other words, that there is no democracy without residence in difference?

In fact, there are innumerable examples of research in education and curriculum that, in the last two decades, have studied and unfolded the politics of difference. It is worth remembering that these policies are themselves products in which academic speeches in the area of education and speeches from various social movements have come into fruitful articulation, although not without conflicts. Recognizing, however, that much of this turn can be found in education does not mean that the political-conceptual inflections of difference have been taken seriously. It would be fearful to take this hybrid origin – a concept popularized around the difference in the curricular field – as a guarantee of building compatible agendas, given that the circulation itself in the political space leaves us subject to the imponderable. This weightlessness raises a suspicion as to the biting custom, according to which the difference needs to be debated, discussed, talked about - and all these verbs associated with a rational political community - as long as it leaves at the school gate everything that can question our ontological assumptions and politicians of what democracy is and what education does.

Although alterity can be accepted as indomitable to be flattened, except for the force of violence and violation, as a rule, education is almost always taken as

the field of “canvases of representation” (HALL, 2001, p. 342). In effect, to write with Denise Ferreira da Silva (2007), the difference is ontologically engulfed by the phantasmatic belief in the transparency of representation. This driving force of the colonial fantasy of universalism inflates a considerable part of the current political imagination with which we think and act when it comes to democracy and education. The question, once asked by Gayatri Spivak (2010) about the possibility of otherness to speak, has not lost its vitality at all. Not to conclude that difference cannot speak or that it is only when difference says that democracy is constituted. Rather, to insist on the relevant criticism of Ramon Grosfoguel (2009, p. 121) about how the paradigms of criticism and political theory do not always draw conclusions from the “subordinate places dug by the colonial moat, which found expression in the academic environment through ethnic studies and feminist studies”. If we accept the association between democracy and education as undoubted, working with gender, sexuality and race therefore challenges the direct slide of the former as a legal process conducted “within contemporary political arrangements in relation to certain requirements of the liberal state” (BUTLER, 2019, p. 107) by promoting the second.

Taking the political-conceptual echoes of difference seriously fuels, therefore, some claim to reactivate the concept of democracy and its composition with education to imagine, not some kind of fantasy from another place, but existing alternatives to hegemonic systems (HALBERSTAM, 2019). Alternatives that directly affect what is meant by education and democracy, that is, that will cause effects on the asphyxiation of the imagination and “encourage us to have an expansive perspective on the theorizing process.” (HOOKS, 2013, p. 87). Thus, if intellectual work with gender, race and sexuality aims at an intervention practice in the public space, it carries with it an eminent need to bring to the scene the immanent tensions and irreverent forces of control projects into writing, to follow with the problem of a differential multiplication of the overlap between education and democracy. What was a concern about the use of conceptual categories gave way, therefore, to a transition from epistemological correction to ontological irreducibility (PUAR, 2017). And, not that we are opposing epistemology and ontology. We are just refusing that difference is another name for introducing knowledge to be taught in the curricula as a guarantee of democratic success and accepting how it correlates with ontological variations.

The fourteen texts gathered evoke the exercise of involving democracy in vibrational, material, tactile sensations which are at the heart of every voice (EIDSHEIM, 2015) taken by a minority - women, children, gays, blacks and black women and their intersections - and to ask how to keep echoing these vibrations in the conceptual writing itself and in the delicate fabric of political articulation. We hope, therefore, that this special issue can be read, on the one

hand, as an appeal for a relational and alteritarian conception of democracy that recognizes “the productive role of relations of colonial domination in shaping democratic thought and culture” (DAHL, 2018, p. 189). On the other hand, we hope that it will be taken as a speculative exercise that reverberates the constitutive mark of the insurrection promoted by the subjected knowledge in the western political tradition and, thus, it produces “the possibility of imagining humanity [and democracy] otherwise” (NYONG’O, 2018, p. 27). Less than describing the modes of participation or appropriation of education and/or democracy by the policies of difference, these articles take the difference as an indicator of imaginative transformation of the two terms to which we seek to link it and, therefore, are a sign of refusing the gravitational pull of “coercive mimeticism” (CHOW, 2002, p. 126) of representation policies. By reading the research that supports them, we hope to indicate that this movement to occupy political language and return to our present an unknowable future is already underway.

Thinking with André: a presentation

Our invitation to reading and the gathering of texts and authors that we seek to promote follows the rhythm of Saidiya Hartman’s (2008) formulation on critical fabulation. This is a job of reimagining democracy by avoiding the complacency of recovering or speaking for the obliterated lives and launching “a series of speculative arguments and exploiting the capacities of the subjunctive (a grammatical mood that expresses doubts, wishes, and possibilities), [...] to amplify the impossibility of its telling” (HARTMAN, 2008, p. 11). Our interest in adding the term difference to the composition once metamorphosed by John Dewey (1959) in the early twentieth century is, so to speak, poetic; if by poetic we follow the meaning that Achille Mbembe (2019, p. 54) gave him, of healing “not only material infrastructures but psychological infrastructures too, through the denigration of the Other, through the assertion of the latter’s *worthlessness*”. Securing these infrastructures of the imagination is no less disconcerting, as we are led to face something that the practices mapped by the articles have been formulating, namely: the right to live in school in its own way⁴, to occupy it reciprocally (NODARI, 2018), in as the school occupies life. Practices that thus appear as the imaginative articulation of the relationship between democracy

4 We suggest checking out Ranniery (2017a, 2017b) and Oliveira (2017, 2019).

and education depend, more than ever, on reactivating the epistemological and political significance of otherness on the political map.

As a result, to present the articles, we evoke the short story *O primeiro dia* by Geovani Martins (2018). In this story, the expectation of André, a boy who lives the transition to the second cycle of elementary school, points to a more down-to-earth school, so to speak. The first day of school caused so much anxiety that the boy was unable to sleep in the night before. The change of school generated a great expectation. He would study with the big ones, “knowing that everyone respects his future school because the kids there are neurotic, he dreamed of being neurotic too” (MARTINS, 2018, p. 46). Among the plans organized on the sleepless night, was the decision that “I would enter the first fight to defend the school, and fight with so much love for the shirt, that it would fall in the taste of the older kids” (MARTINS, 2018, p. 46). About the common link between schooling and life projects, André says little. In one of the daydreams, questions about the future quickly appear and among the possibilities, consider “being a businessman, a soccer player, a parachutist?” (MARTINS, 2018, p. 47). He also wanted to study English “because everyone says it gives money, and also because of video games”. According to him, “if I learned the language that the characters of the favorite games of the guys spoke, I would be invited by everyone to play together” (MARTINS, 2018, p. 47). André’s questions and concerns demand to be taken seriously.

Recreation becomes a crucial moment, as André “knew that to survive there, he needed to stand firm in the face of any terror” (MARTINS, 2018, p. 48). André courageously faces even the great challenge of that first day of school: the “Loura do Banheiro” test. All André’s expectations revolve around sociability at school and the elaboration of strategies to be accepted in the social webs, whether defending the shirt in fights, learning English to be summoned to the games or facing the challenge of saying “blond from the bathroom” three times in front of the mirror. When the content is interesting for video games, the patio is the space to show yourself firmly in front of the older ones, the bathroom is the place for challenges, the school itself is presented from another perspective. The short story presents not only a student who is distant from the desires related to the learning rights that should be guaranteed to citizens, in the democratic state of law, in terms that have become celebrated by the Curricular Common National Base (BRASIL, 2017). André is definitely someone for whom “it was necessary “to construct oneself, one would have to be able to invent oneself without a model and without an assured addressee” (DERRIDA, 2001, p. 82-83), an addressee that cannot be presumed.

André can be inspiring to situate how, among the different stories that populate the articles, one works to manufacture a kind of vaccine against the

desire to create a definition of what democracy would be like once and for all and say that, since the education would be committed to everyone, we would live, in short, in a democracy. Defining democracy and proclaiming its existence is not an ideal for equality, but just a recipe for complacency, which is another name for necropolitics (MBEMBE, 2018). With André as a companion, the relationship between education and democracy only exists implied in a commitment to the experience of difference as such, that is, while differing, diverging, differentiating as a condition of the democratic alliance. In other words, it is a principle that indicates how the experience of difference only leads to essentialism if we are not able to jump from the level of apparent insurmountable contradiction with difference to another in which difference is not a matter of contradiction, but becomes productive. However rooted in colonial reason, the educational impulse to dialogue - it never hurts to remember Paulo Freire - has never been able to get rid of you and wants to deal with strange languages and alternative worlds that reason does not like to recognize. However, education does not have to blame itself for being ingrained to colonial reason. As Jacques Derrida (2004) wrote, the problem of inheritance is not the fact of receiving it, but what will be done with it.

In summary, the articles show how the difference makes democracy also “a fold in itself”, as stated by Marcelo Moraes (2018, p. 177). When being bent on itself (on its norms, conflicts and internal tensions), democracy is forced to deal with the specters that were constituted under its regime and emerges, simultaneously, “violent and welcoming, closed and open to the other” (MORAES, 2018, p. 177). This spectrality signals “the future to come [that] can open democracy to more just societies”, while it “shows the openings of an unjust, obscure democracy, the other of a democracy of light” (MORAES, 2018, p. 177-178). In the ambivalence of these two modalities, the difference is not only a sign of monolithic and overwhelming subjection, but also shows the relationship between education and democracy in dissonance. A dissonance in which lies the inventive power of gender, sexuality and race initiatives in order to resist “coercive instrumentalization in the present” (BUTLER, 2015, p. 156) and assume that they are useful for a radical democratic policy. It is that those who were embarked in the holds of the world, *the wretched of the earth*, in the beautiful expression of Fanon (1968), could never hope to be included to “generate and regenerate worlds – changing their coordinates, altering their spatiotemporal foundations, reconfiguring the position of human beings within them, reconstituting the very conditions of their existence” (CHERSTICH; HOLBRAAD; TASSI, 2020, p. 155).

Maybe the time has come to sketch an alter-political concept, stealing Ghassan Hage’s (2015) term of democracy, whose convergence can serve to

build a future praxis with and for education. It is precisely the drift and excess of the difference that could (re)connect and (re)strengthen the bonds between the two terms, education and democracy since the interdependence of a world that “never meant to survive”, as Lorde (1978, p. 3) put it in a memorable way; of a world that, added Tavia Nyong’o (2018, p. 12-13), “never meant to appear” in public space. In other words, this proclamation requires a practice of theorization as being itself an imaginative commitment to echo from the inside the sensitive state of the politics of difference so that the relationship between education and democracy can “exist under the condition of plurality” (BIESTA, 2013, p. 2). If education is part of the ancient work of colonial reason to control and exclude difference to the extent that it was intended to constitute such a reason, we are suggesting that the inflection of difference never lets education be limited to just that.

The conjunction democracy and education is an amalgamation that the difference comes to supplement, to write with Jacques Derrida (2010), in order to make us rediscover practices in democracy is carried out and not to defend democracy from universalist abstractions or, even worse, of our proclamations of faith. The singularity of the conjunction can only come from its double bond, so to speak, with sensitive sharing with and in the face of difference. Anyway, our dream, now, is that this special issue can share the “the futural presence of the forms of life” (HARNEY; MOTEN, 2013, p. 75) and indicate how it makes democracy possible precisely when you are exalting for a radical decision the heterogeneity (FANON, 1968) in education. If, in José Esteban Muñoz’s (2011) argument, political utopia is the insistent search for a “not-yet”, we still don’t know what democracy could be or how education could make it out of our so devouring world how afraid of the difference. Those who have been objects of addressing democracy in educational thought - what education should do for or on behalf of - can now become fabulous fields for a democratic life in education.

It is in the defense that democratic exercise involves, when it does not depend, this constitutive difference that, in *“Many as one”: curriculum policies, social justice, equity, democracy and the (im)possibilities to differ*, Rita Frangella problematizes curricular policies most recent Brazilian studies with emphasis on the Common National Curricular Base. The author questions the discussion of the “common” and the nomination of the “national” triggered by such policies as a promise to achieve equality, equity and social justice and points out the attempts at regulation that expel the difference.

In the following two texts, the difference comes under the link between feminisms and race. Claudia Miranda, Aline do Carmo and Célia de Oliveira, in *Relearnings on Democracy and Education in difference: The perspective of Afro-Latin Women’s Networks* addresses the relationship between democracy

and education built on the political articulation between black women. Anchored in a decolonizing perspective, the authors propose to write in terms of *outsider pedagogies* generated through networks built by women. In the defense of educational processes promoted by thinkers, activists and professionals in Uruguay, Cuba, Argentina and Colombia, outsider pedagogies *weave* paths of insurgency by insisting on Afro-existence in a world that wishes to subsume them. In *Black youth, high school and democracy: the fight for school*, Luciano Corsino and Dirce Zan debate, in turn, how racial issues and feminisms became present in the curriculum of a high school institution, during the school occupation movement from Sao Paulo. It is as if this mobilization of knowledge embodied by young blacks opened, even if in cracks, a democratic, anti-racist and feminist thought at school.

The disruptive presence of feminisms at school is also the subject of the article *Knowing teacher and experiences with feminisms: insurgent curricular reconfigurations* by Carmen Teresa Gabriel and Natália Mendes. Based on the objectification and subjectification processes in the school curricula that destabilize the factual projects of a rational autonomous subject, the authors expose how the teaching knowledge is now challenged by the discourse fields of feminisms in everyday school dynamics and how that knowledge responds and they emerge from experiences of being crossed by unpredictability. It is also from a critique of what becomes possible to be taught in a school discipline that Diego Reis addresses epistemic racism and tenacious coloniality in philosophy curricula. *Crossroads knowledge: (de)coloniality, epistemic racism and philosophy teaching* involves an exercise of racialization of the curriculum, emphasizing the strength of the ethical-political and onto-epistemological issues of teaching philosophy and implying racism with life and death (of people, cultural processes and histories, knowledge).

The involving of the education with issues as crucial as life and death mobilizes the following three texts. In *The right of life and death in a Biology curriculum*, Mayra Paranhos and Livia Cardoso address biotechnologies in arguments produced by Biology graduates about racial characteristics, physical disabilities, eugenics, human reproduction and abortion. The definition of what healthy genetics would be focuses on what would be living bodies and killable bodies in curricula. When articulating gender and sexuality pedagogies to biopolitical frameworks, Michele Vasconcelos, Marcos Melo and Fernando Seffner explore the production of masculinities and the linking of men's bodies to the use of alcohol and other drugs. In *"People are more than men": gender and care in alcohol and other drugs* and the production of masculinities, the authors describe their practices as practices of experimentation, insurgency and transformation that lead to movements of refusal to subject the government to

individualization and openness democratic possibilities. Like those who row against this propagated forgetfulness of the dead, Raquel Salgado and Leonardo Lemos address the effects of violence experienced in times of exception from the testimonies that are part of the report of the National Truth Commission. In *The social disappearance of differences in exceptional policies: lives and memories of children and women for the reinvention of democratic education*, the authors return to the period of military dictatorship in Brazil and defend a democratic education that is opposed to barbarism.

In this wake of not accepting the intolerable, Gregory Correio, in *The queer children and the non-placement of gender in school: notes to an air coloured feminism*, triggers school memories of children traveled to address gender as a matter of a radical difference that escapes binary logic and, inspired by Clarice Lispector, proposes a feminism without a coherent political subject. Pablo Rocon, Maria Elizabeth Barros de Barros and Heliana Conde Rodrigues, in *Learning with trans signs – a disruptive transetopoiesis* problematize the hypothesis that problems hamper access to health by the trans population such as disrespect to the social name, institutional transphobia and pathologization of identities trans would be related to the lack of training of health professionals. In the authors' bet, the very dissonance of the encounter and the relationship opens the possibility of a transetopoietic experimentation. The recognition of identities alone does not necessarily promote democracy, since its backing in essentialism precludes this ethical pulse of difference. This is the argument of José Rodrigues and Josenilda Maués in *Democracy and difference in contemporary political-curricular plots: the school without homophobia under analysis* examines the contents of the *Escola Sem Homofobia* project. When revolving the discourse of sexual diversity at school, the authors point out its performance as a device for controlling and regulating life in the neoliberal tonic.

However, the life of education is not only based on fantasies of controlling difference. In *When the curriculum becomes a catwalk for difference*, George de Melo and Anna Luiza Oliveira deal with fashion shows at a public school conducted by gay students and, in echo, point to the fictionality of social regulations on bodies and as political possibilities reside in the confusion of borders. From another perspective, Sandra Kretli, in *Dis/obeying, un/folding, shredding and weaving a new ethics of existence in the school daily life*, charts movements of resistance created by teachers and students, paying attention to experiments and curricular compositions. Disobedience and unfolding are read as insurgencies in the face of norms that mobilize policies of joy in schools when sadness at the end and the impossibility of agency seems to impose itself on all sides.

Against this claustrophobic effect of capitalism, the special issue ends with the translation of *The inorganic body in the early Marx: a limit-concept of anthropocentrism* by Judith Butler. In this essay, Butler starts from his disagreement regarding Bruno Latour's objection to the task of criticism and dedicates himself to stretching a paragraph from the young Karl Marx's economic-philosophical manuscripts published in 1844. Her argument is not just about suspecting the skepticism of criticism, but especially about how it would be necessary to bring about a reconfiguration of the dependence between body and nature in the face of the environmental collapse on which capital depends to reproduce. No democratic dream will be viable without breaking the distinction between the human species and a sustained and sustainable environment.

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