

## Education and Barbarism: Educational Propositions in times of Pandemic

*Educação e Barbárie: Proposições educativas em tempos de pandemia*

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### ABSTRACT

The article is the result of a conference, whose aim was to bring into discussion and reflection the role of art and philosophy in the process of human sensitization and development. As educational propositions in times of pandemic, the possibility of including animated short films, photographic images, and texts about art and philosophy is presented as relevant materials in the process of human development sensitization. Regarding the problem of barbarism, it seems fundamental to adopt educational practices that lead to an anti-barbarism process, as art does, by sensitizing and awakening critical thinking to ensure education for emancipation in a democratic society.

Keywords: Arts, barbarism, education, philosophy

### RESUMO

O artigo é resultado de uma conferência, cujo objetivo foi trazer para discussão e reflexão o papel da arte e da filosofia no processo de sensibilização e formação humana. Apresentam-se como proposições educativas em tempos de pandemia, a possibilidade de inclusão de vídeos de animação imagens fotográficas e textos sobre a arte e a filosofia como materiais relevantes no processo de sensibilização da formação humana. No que tange ao problema da barbárie, parece fundamental a adoção de práticas educativas que conduzam a um processo de antibarbárie, como o faz a arte, ao sensibilizar e despertar para o processo crítico a fim de garantir uma formação para a emancipação numa sociedade democrática.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Artes, barbárie, educação, filosofia

## INTRODUCTION



Fonte: [https://youtu.be/Rsj\\_z43oNRK](https://youtu.be/Rsj_z43oNRK)

The main clash of the first half of the 21st century will not be between religions or civilizations. It will be between liberal democracy and neoliberal capitalism, between the rule of finance and the rule of the people, between humanism and nihilism.” (Achille MBEMBE, 2022)<sup>1</sup>

We begin this conference with an animated short film that puts into question the life of a professional. Whether an educator, a librarian, a scientist, an artist, an engineer, certainly, it is someone surrounded by knowledge produced by society and materialized in printed works which, as the video points out, escape the desire of the child, more spontaneous and not yet 'formatted' by society. Another issue is that the same video also deals with memory, with the time of childhood, while the violin, perhaps, represents the memories, the childhood days of the character always surrounded by shelves, books and tasks, that is, of a life that does not allow him to follow the dreams of the child who is in his affective relationship. However, in this arid scenario of everyday life, persists the insistence of the child, who can also be the inner child (ABRAMS, 2006), attracted by a violinist, who awakens his feelings, making him desire to share beauty, even though he is occupied with the demands of his automated routine. In the same direction as the animated short film, photographic images express realities that denote the relevance

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ihu.unisinos.br/categorias/186-noticias-2017/564255-achille-mbembe-a-era-do-humanismo-esta-terminando>

of memory, of childhood and of freedom for the full development of the subject, even if formatted by neoliberal imperatives.

From these initial considerations, we feel provoked to problematize to what extent art and philosophy enhance education leading to the possibility of emancipation, above all, in our contemporaneity, in which technological development has been compromising the human dimension and the potential of a life guided by art and ethics.

In this context, we seek dialogue with Walter Benjamin and Theodor Adorno, in order to discuss the issue of art and philosophy as elements that enhance sensitivity and critical sense, in favor of a human education for emancipation, supported by a democratic process.

#### TEARING AND SCRUTINIZING THE IMAGE

Seriedade e jogo, rigor e desobrigação manifestam-se entrelaçados em cada obra de arte, mesmo que em graus muito variáveis de participação[...]. A função social decisiva da arte de hoje é o exercício nesse jogo conjunto (BENJAMIN, 2012, p.44-45).

[Seriousness and play, rigor and un-obligation manifest themselves intertwined in every work of art, even if in very variable degrees of participation [...]. The decisive social function of today's art is the exercise in this joint play].

Benjamin made it clear in his work *Little History of Photography*, published in 1933, that if we do not become visually literate, we would run the risk of needing captions to understand the image, which in fact happened, since, as it became more a product co-opted by the culture industry, its formative and contemplative potential was emptied, just as would later happen with cinema. However, while on the one hand photographic images and cinema deprived the artwork of its aura of authenticity due to technique and its reproducibility, as Benjamin asserted, on the other hand, by doing so, a new geography of perception was traced, now based on a dialectic of the image from its non-linearity, which fostered an education of the gaze on social reality and, from this perspective, space was opened for nonlinear play, linked to the second technique, called the "once-is-never" in opposition to the "once-and-for-all" (Benjamin, 2012, p. 43).

In the case of the first, it alludes to the game between nature and humanity, while the second is founded on ritual, on human sacrifice that places itself entirely in the process of constructing art, and on the lack that cannot be repaired. The technique of "once-is-never" mobilizes man and is related to the experimental, thus being able to contain the shock capable of awakening or, as it is popularly said, making the "light bulb go off" — that is, when the unveiling of a truth that was neglected or forgotten occurs.

The shock arises from a traumatic situation, such as, for example, the barbarity in which we currently live and which can cause us a shock, given that it is the moment to lift the veil and see what surrounds us. Generally, the shock is softened, and, in the Freudian sense, it happens when it is supported

by our conscious mind, which activates our capacity to live an experience that is not a sterile event, but relevant for the awakening of the person.

Benjamin cites as an example, “The shock experience felt by passersby in the crowd corresponds to the ‘experience’ of the worker with the machine” (Benjamin, 1989, p. 126). In this case, the shock Benjamin refers to does not awaken, but anesthetizes, keeping the subject alienated.

As for the shock that causes awakening, according to Benjamin (2000, p. 44), it is an experience identified by Freud and that appears in Baudelaire’s artistic works, considering that:

A função peculiar da defesa em relação aos choques pode-se, certamente, definir como a tarefa de: marcar para o acontecimento, à custa da integridade de seu conteúdo, um lugar temporal exato, na consciência. Este seria o resultado último e maior da reflexão. Ela converteria o acontecimento em uma *experiência vivida*. No caso de funcionamento frustrado da reflexão, produzir-se-ia o espanto, agradável ou (mais comumente) desagradável, que — Segundo Freud — sanciona o fracasso da defesa contra os choques. Este elemento foi fixado por Baudelaire numa imagem crua. Fala de um duelo no qual o artista, antes de sucumbir, grita de espanto. Este duelo é o processo mesmo da criação. Portanto, Baudelaire colocou a experiência do choque no coração de seu trabalho artístico. Este testemunho é da maior importância. E é confirmado pelas declarações de muitos de seus contemporâneos. Embora a mercê do espanto, Baudelaire não deixava de provocá-lo [...]. A experiência do choque é uma dor que se tornou decisiva para a formação de Baudelaire (Benjamin, 2000, p. 45).

[The peculiar function of defense in relation to shocks can certainly be defined as the task of: marking for the event, at the expense of the integrity of its content, an exact temporal place in consciousness. This would be the ultimate and greatest result of reflection. It would convert the event into a lived experience. In the case of frustrated functioning of reflection, astonishment would be produced, pleasant or (more commonly) unpleasant, which—according to Freud—sanctions the failure of defense against shocks. This element was fixed by Baudelaire in a raw image. It speaks of a duel in which the artist, before succumbing, cries out in astonishment. This duel is the very process of creation. Therefore, Baudelaire placed the experience of shock at the heart of his artistic work. This testimony is of utmost importance. And it is confirmed by the statements of many of his contemporaries. Although at the mercy of astonishment, Baudelaire did not cease to provoke it [...]. The experience of shock is a pain that became decisive for Baudelaire’s formation]

Baudelaire, according to Benjamin, "... speaks of the man who plunges into the crowd as into a reservoir of electric energy. He immediately defines him, describing the shock experience as 'a kaleidoscope endowed with consciousness'" (Benjamin, 2000, p. 54).

As the philosopher pointed out

O de uma-vez-por-todas vale para a primeira técnica( ali se trata da falta, que nunca poderá ser reparada, ou da morte sacrificial, enquanto substituição eterna). O uma-vez-é-vez—nenhuma vale para a segunda técnica (esta tem a ver com o experimento e sua incansável variação (Benjamin, 2012, p.43).

[The once-and-for-all applies to the first technique (there it is about the lack, which can never be repaired, or the sacrificial death, as eternal substitution). The once-is-never applies to the second technique (this has to do with the experiment and its tireless variation)].

Thus, the game is constituted by rigor and un-obligation, which allows us to infer, then, that the second technique is a possibility of revolution desired by society to emancipate itself from the productive forces to which it is subjected, for, while on the one hand it dispenses with man, on the other hand, it is in experimentation that the possibility is constituted for this man to play against what is socially imposed.

For the German philosopher, “at the moment when the measure of authenticity no longer applies to artistic production, the entire social function of art is revolved; instead of being founded on ritual, it comes to be founded on another praxis: politics” (Benjamin, 2012, p. 35). Thus, art becomes politicized, reaching its revolutionary and, therefore, transformative potential. From this perspective, both photography and cinema reveal what Benjamin called the optical unconscious, since both highlight what escapes the naked eye and, under the lens, can emerge as fragments capable of awakening the gaze of the most unsuspecting observer to the spark of an image that announces itself in their memory, given that

É uma natureza diferente da que fala à câmera ou aos olhos; diferente especialmente na medida em que, em vez de espaço impregnado da consciência pelos homens, surge um outro, embrenhado pelo inconsciente. Deste inconsciente óptico só se tem conhecimento através da fotografia, da mesma forma que só através da psicanálise se tem conhecimento através da fotografia, da mesma forma que só através da psicanálise se tem conhecimento do inconsciente instintivo. (Benjamin, 2012, p.100)

[It is a different nature from that which speaks to the camera or to the eyes; different especially insofar as, instead of space impregnated with consciousness by men, another emerges, penetrated by the unconscious. This optical unconscious is only known through photography, just as the instinctive unconscious is only known through psychoanalysis.]

It is precisely in the optical unconscious that Benjamin believed the possibility of educating the senses for a new perception lay, awakening the sensitivity of the image reader, who would seek in it something that, in some way, referred not only to their own history and experience, but to that of others, since both photography and cinema bring the masses closer, because, in the case of photography, unlike painting, due to technical reproducibility, it faithfully captures the features of a face that could be of the anonymous worker and, in this sense, could provoke reflection on the part of the reader. Cinema, in turn, could reach the masses due to its aspect of collectivity, fostering revolutionary thought.

Benjamin's essay, *Little History of Photography*, from 1933, discusses photographic images and the statuses arising from them. Benjamin draws attention to how much a photograph can surprise us, given the various possible resources of a “slow motion, a magnification” (Benjamin, 1994, p. 94), which means that the author is considering both images of humans and images of landscapes. However, in photographs of human beings, it ends up being possible to capture the inner mood of the subjects,

such as sadness or joy. Only photography can reveal the optical unconscious, just as only psychoanalysis can reveal the instinctual unconscious. Therefore,

As características estruturais, tecidos celulares, com os quais operam a técnica e a medicina, tudo isso tem mais afinidades originais com a câmera que a paisagem impregnada de estados afetivos, ou retrato que exprime a alma do modelo. Mas ao mesmo tempo a fotografia revela nesse material os aspectos fisionômicos, mundos de imagens habitando as coisas mais minúsculas, suficientemente ocultas e significativas para encontrarem um refúgio nos sonhos de outros, e agora, tornando-se grandes e formuláveis, mostra que a diferença entre a técnica e a magia é uma variável totalmente histórica (Benjamin, 1994, p. 94-95)

[The structural characteristics, cellular tissues, with which technique and medicine operate, all this has more original affinities with the camera than the landscape impregnated with affective states, or a portrait that expresses the soul of the model. But at the same time, photography reveals in this material the physiognomic aspects, worlds of images inhabiting the smallest things, sufficiently hidden and significant to find refuge in the dreams of others, and now, becoming large and formulable, shows that the difference between technique and magic is a totally historical variable].

Notwithstanding the non-realization of a revolutionary project due to the co-optation of both media by the Culture Industry, we are interested in examining the dialectical process of the image, taking into account the different ways of accessing the reality that the image provides, tensioning past and present in a clash that ends up sensitizing and bringing to light the critical dimension. It is in this direction that we seek to analyze the selected images from the animated short film *Alike*, and two photographs. We understand that both express the hegemonic process, as well as the possible lines of escape against the barbarity of such process.

We begin the 6m:45s animated short film, originally titled *Alike*, produced in 2015, in Spain, by the video animators Daniel Martínez Lara and Rafa Cano Méndez. The narrative deals with a view of capitalist urban space, in which characters transit without establishing any dialogue. It is worth mentioning that in translation, *Alike* means “semelhante” [similar], but in Brazil it was translated as *Escolhas* [Choices].

Considering the translation of the term *Alike* as *Choices*, we deem it pertinent, for the purposes of the exposition presented here, to discuss both perspectives, namely: similar and choices, as we understand that, semiotically, they resonate in the interpretation of our objects and, consequently, in the provocations that our problematization may raise.

The semiotic approach aims at the production of meanings elicited by the image in its condition as a materialized sign perceived by our senses in the different contexts of production in which it is configured, which leads us to Walter Benjamin’s considerations about language communication turning to itself, because

Todas as linguagens se comunicam a si mesmas. A linguagem deste candeeiro, por exemplo não comunica o candeeiro (porque a essência espiritual do candeeiro, na medida em que é comunicável, não é de modo algum o próprio candeeiro), mas, sim, o candeeiro-linguagem (Benjamin, 2012, p.151)

[All languages communicate themselves. The language of this lamp, for example, does not communicate the lamp (because the spiritual essence of the lamp, insofar as it is communicable, is by no means the lamp itself), but rather, the lamp-language].

In other words, we can say that, semiotically, the production of meaning materializes in language beyond the linguistic code, since it contemplates much more than the name assigned to it, as in the example of the lamp in the excerpt above, which carries within itself other processes of significance, that is, of importance/value for the reader and/or interlocutor, whose memories, affections, time and spaces produce other meanings.

In this context, we observe that the first five minutes of the narrative point more to the term “similar” as an adjective than as a noun, since it implies the grayish color that characterizes much of the setting to which the characters are amalgamated. As for the term “choices,” it is a feminine noun, which expresses the action of choosing, of giving preference to something, just as the narrative expresses through the actions of the adult, and in this case, choosing also means the impossibility of opting for something due to alienation.

It is in this context that the animated short film *Alike* uses some strategies to criticize the logic of modern society; one of them is the predominantly grayish setting that circumscribes the routine of the characters, supposedly father and son. The same is also shown in the cars that move toward the homogenized center, while people come and go without realizing anything beyond their objectified lives.

Amid this setting, initially, the child, the adult (the supposed father), the tree, and the violinist in the square stand out due to their different colors from the others, as well as from the colors of the school and the workplace. However, throughout the day, the father's color gradually fades, becoming the same as that of the other characters with whom he has no connection, except for the synchronous sound of the typewriters. In this case, there is no possibility of choice on the part of this adult, already similar to his coworkers and to the inhospitable office environment.

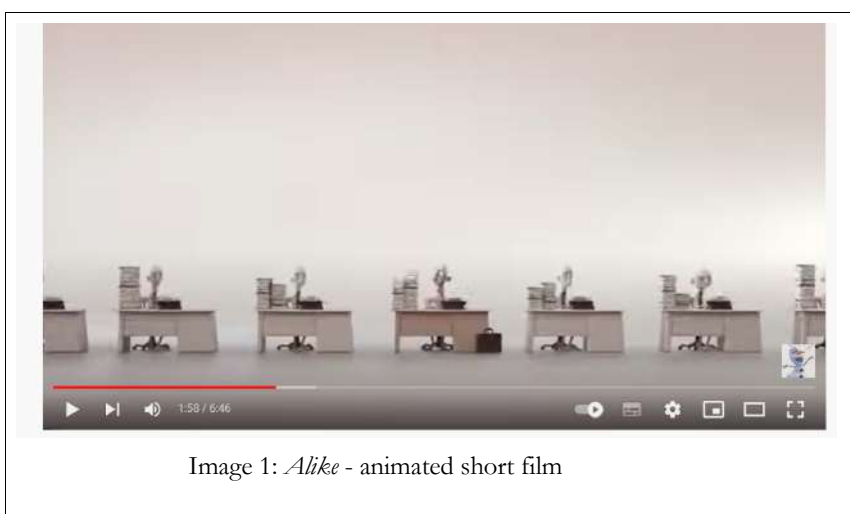


Image 1: *Alike* - animated short film



Something similar occurs at school, since the teacher does not accept the child's production who draws the violinist in the square, instead of copying what was imposed. However, the child is still cheerful, and at the end of the activities, when meeting with the father, magnetizes him with his joy. But the father, without understanding the son's pleasure in drawing the violinist in the square, feels uncomfortable by imagining the time wasted in creating instead of following the rules established by the teacher. Thus, the school that should be the space of pleasure and playful learning, becomes tedious for the child who gradually becomes automated, submitting to what is socially accepted, and like the father and the other characters, gradually loses vitality.

Image 2: *Alike* - animated short filmImage 3: *Alike* - animated short film

The square and the violinist, although objects of desire and admiration, are increasingly set aside by obligation, which leads us to question whether the education offered to children has awakened sensitivity and autonomous thinking. As Adorno said, “education that aims to prevent repetition must focus on early childhood” (Adorno, 2003, p.121), otherwise, there will be no formation, but rather formatting, as can be seen in the first five minutes of the audiovisual narrative.

The images above (2, 3) highlight the child's formatting, already with his head bowed in submission or training to the school rules. However, there is still color in his life, showing that art remains there, even if somewhat asleep, and this is important, as it will sensitize the father. Both head to the square, but the violinist is no longer there, and the child, disappointed, turns their back to the colorful tree, but now empty.

This could have been the end of the story, however, the father acts differently, and, under the tree, pretends to play a violin; thus the boy returns and hugs him, at which moment the father regains his color. It is noticeable that other characters pass by them, initially curious about the man unusually playing his imaginary violin, but they continue on their way, while father and son recover their joy. By acting



differently, the father breaks with the reification and alienation to which he was subjected, corroborating that, for Adorno

O alegre na arte é, se quisermos, o contrário do que se poderia levemente assumir como tal: não se trata de seu conteúdo, mas de seu procedimento, do abstrato de que sobretudo é arte por abrir-se à realidade cuja violência ao mesmo tempo denuncia[...]. Sua profundidade mede-se pelo fato de poder ou não, pela reconciliação que suas leis formais trazem às contradições, destacar a real irreconciliação. ( Adorno, 2001, p.11).

[The joyful in art is, if we wish, the opposite of what one might lightly assume it to be: it is not about its content, but about its procedure, about the abstract which above all is art by opening itself to reality whose violence it simultaneously denounces [...]. Its depth is measured by whether or not, through the reconciliation that its formal laws bring to contradictions, it highlights the real irreconciliation].

Pointing out social contradictions also reiterates how the image, now embodied in the movement of video animation, can create a new educational perception for society, and it is in this direction that we will carry out the analysis of photographic images<sup>2</sup>, as proposed for this essay. Before that, however, it is pertinent to briefly discuss the Surrealism, an important element for thinking about photography.

It is no surprise that Walter Benjamin considered Surrealism the most radical aesthetic in terms of opposition to the bourgeoisie, which it challenged and refuted using images that united life and dream, that is, unconscious and conscious, escaping the instrumental reason that prevailed in society, which is still present. Surrealism symbolized, thus, the desire to restore the creative capacity of man, whose energy could be directed toward a new perception and, in this sense, toward a revolution that would subvert bourgeois values by revealing the unconscious and the repressed desires of society. According to the German philosopher,

A linguagem só parecia autêntica quando o som e a imagem se interpenetravam com exatidão automática, de forma tão feliz que não sobrava a mínima fresta para inserir a pequena moeda a que chamamos “sentido”. A imagem e a linguagem têm precedência ( Benjamin, 2012, p.22-23)

[Language only seemed authentic when sound and image interpenetrated with automatic precision, so perfectly that not even the slightest gap was left to insert the small coin we call "meaning." Image and language take precedence]

It is noted that image, sound and language in a broader sense are fundamental for transforming reality, therefore the surrealist aesthetic, by bringing to light, expressed through different arts, the oppressed dream and desire, represents not only an artistic movement, but a critical tool with the capacity

<sup>2</sup> The photographs are part of the personal collection of Thalia Ferreira Silva and were provided on the occasion of the preparation of the master's thesis in Education entitled: NO RASTRO DA MEMÓRIA: FOTOGRAFIA E PEDAGOGIA DA IMAGEM [IN THE WAKE OF MEMORY: PHOTOGRAPHY AND THE PEDAGOGY OF THE IMAGE], under the supervision of Professor Carlos Betlinski, from the Federal University of Lavras, in which I participated as a member of both the qualification and defense committees.

to deconstruct and criticize the existing order to promote a deeper and transformative awareness of social and cultural reality.

Resuming the question of the optical unconscious, photography would reveal, thanks to technique, other realities not seen by the naked eye, but accessed through the image that would elicit the different experiences resulting also from the transformations brought about by Capitalism. It is in this way that the dialectical image can scrutinize history, making barbarism known and, perhaps, finding ways to reverse it by bringing to light elements not identified by human eyes, but captured by the lens of the machine.

By doing so, we look at the fracture brought by photographic art as a possibility to restore our creative and critical sense, and it is in this context that we seek to understand the images below, taking into account their potential as a montage of images constitutive of our society, whose history, marked by bourgeois domination, can be re-signified by producing the shock resulting from the contrast between image fragments in which new forms of struggle against the erasure of history could be forged, thus awakening some hope in the present that, in some way, may be a glimpse into the future, since, as Benjamin asserted in Aphorism 6 of his *Theses on the Philosophy of History*: “Articulating the past historically does not mean to know it “as it really was.” It means to appropriate a memory, as it flashes up at a moment of danger’ (Benjamin, 2012, p. 133).”

That said, let us observe Photograph 1, entitled “Minha poesia no balanço” [“My Poetry on the Swing”] (2020):



Photograph 1 – Thalia Ferreira Silva's Archive

The collage of the fragments presented in Photograph 1, above, namely: a child playing on a swing in an open space, as evidenced by the trees, and superimposing the images of two identities with fingerprints and faces, points to a critique made by Benjamin about imaginative play that was gradually losing space due to toys manufactured by industries. The identities, in turn, suggest the framing of the photo (3x4) to which the child will be subjected upon becoming a cog in the machinery driven by social relations, among which are those of labor.

Originally in black and white, the photograph on canvas also supposes the different perception of the child and the adult; the child, similar to the one in the video animation analyzed earlier, suggests the joyful gaze of someone who is not yet “framed,” and therefore feels free to play outdoors, expressed by the nature represented by the trees.



Photograph 2 – Thalia Ferreira Silva's Archive

Regarding Photograph No. 2, above, the collage created by superimposing the images of a subject wearing a blazer, tie, sneakers, and shorts over urban buildings, without color, and the image of the old yellow mansion, along with the blue sky, may suggest an important questioning for society that contrasts the new and the old, around a blue sky that gradually gives way to opacity. Another point that draws attention is the human figure, whose body seems to move in two opposite directions: labor and leisure, contrasts present in the subject of modernity and our contemporaneity, emptied by the way of life that steals their leisure, a moment that could be one of pleasure and reflection.

All in all, both the animated short film and the photographs refer us to the dimension of art as an enhancer of our creative and critical aspect, since, by denouncing fragilities, they also point to possibilities, and, we want to believe, an education more grounded in sensitivity.

BENJAMIN AND ADORNO – ART AND PHILOSOPHY IN THE FIGHT AGAINST BARBARISM

According to Walter Benjamin (1994), it is essential to understand that a work of art cannot be treated as a neutral element, considering that a work of art is not politically neutral and it cannot be ignored that it interferes with cultural, moral, and aesthetic values, customs, convictions, conventions, and social relations. Therefore, the artist must take a stance, and since their production is not neutral, it is fundamental that “those who cannot take a side must remain silent” (Benjamin, 1994, p. 70).

In his own way, Theodor Adorno, in the essay entitled *Ist Kunst heiter? [Is Art Joyful?]*, suggests the educational and humanizing potential of art, because

A não-finalidade da arte é escapar da coerção da auto-preservação. A arte incorpora algo como liberdade no seio da não-liberdade. O fato de, por sua própria existência, desviar-se do caminho da dominação a coloca como parceira de uma promessa de felicidade, que ela, de certa maneira, expressa em meio ao desespero. (Adorno, 2001, p. 2)  
[The non-purpose of art is to escape the coercion of self-preservation. Art incorporates something like freedom within non-freedom. The fact that, by its very existence, it deviates from the path of domination places it as a partner in a promise of happiness, which it, in a certain way, expresses amid despair.]

For both philosophers, art would then be an emancipatory element insofar as its non-purpose lies the non-neutrality that politicizes it, since nothing in it can be “compatible with the arbitrarily imposed” (Adorno, 2001, p. 2). It can be said, then, that art is a fracture in a society governed by fear resulting from the advance of technique and technology, which have been used as means of domination, reducing life to a cultural, social, and political emptiness, to which people have had to adapt, relinquishing their subjectivity, just as the characters in the animated short film did.

Regarding the emptiness to which life has been reduced, it also refers to the wounds exposed by the pandemic, denoting, in a frightening and scandalous way, the dehumanization of those who lost their jobs (the family’s livelihood) and their meager savings, as well as relatives, kin, and friends. Wounds difficult to heal were opened, especially in the cities of stone and concrete, where aporophobia is visible in the places where the poor could seek shelter, like any animal, from the cold, the rain, and the danger of being attacked by another human animal. The cities became uglier and sadder because the pain of the economically weakest inhabitants became an open sore. Only those who refuse to see it fail to notice it.

Combined with the COVID-19 pandemic, barbarism, as dire as the virus that spread worldwide in 2020, exacerbating various forms of violence against others, as if they were not our equals as human beings, as we can identify in rude gestures, as well as in depreciative treatments, which have become normalized as routine practice. Yes, the world has grown sadder because we are incapable of



alleviating the pain of those who expect from us, their fellow humans, some dignified and dignifying action in the lives of the fallen, of those who have become “human waste” (Bauman, 2011), of those who have lost hope and the strength to fight. We have become increasingly avid consumers of novelties that do not satisfy us enough, because we live under the imperative of the disposable - “buy”, “enjoy”, among others.

It may seem excessive to repeatedly state that we are living in a period of disturbances, diseases, persecutions, distortions, the reign of Post-truth and *Fake News*<sup>3</sup>, the construction of a discourse that always slips into emotional appeals, in order to convince and rally people who are not always challenged or discussed by authorities and communication specialists; a period that presents a very high level of violence and aggression toward others, as well as defamation, lies, and disregard for other people’s lives. Dystopias (utopias) also contribute to manipulation and acceptance of instrumentalized truths in an alarming way. There are many deceptions in contemporary society, many exclusions and inequalities, unbalancing situations that cause suffering, and even if there is some kind of reparation, some discomforts may forever disturb some people who have experienced processes of exclusion as human beings.

In this pandemic and barbaric context, where are the educators? They are living the same kind of situation as the general population, with the difference that they cannot always confront it, given the working conditions and the hijacking of their authority. How can one educate in the face of growing psychic torture and despair around the world? And it does not seem possible to dream of any safe place, because “...far from fueling a renewed cycle of class struggles, social conflicts will increasingly take the form of racism, ultranationalism, sexism, ethnic and religious rivalries, xenophobia, homophobia and other deadly passions.” (Mbembe, 2022).

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<sup>3</sup> The problem of post-truth is not a contemporary issue, it is historical. In the philosophical tradition and in theology, there has been a dispute over truth between Parmenides and Heraclitus; truth is also discussed by Plato, for example, in the Allegory of the Cave, and in the works of Saint Thomas Aquinas, Luther, Calvin, etc. Currently, the discourse of post-truth is recurrent in dystopias as current pedagogical paradigms, whose “instrumentalização da verdade é a expressão impositiva da pós-verdade. Esta forma de pós-verdade representa o pragmatismo representativo da construção do discurso educativo que tem por alvo instrumentalizar pessoas para que elas reproduzam uma verdade instrumental, funcional” [the instrumentalization of truth is the impositive expression of post-truth. This form of post-truth represents the representative pragmatism of the construction of educational discourse that aims to instrumentalize people so that they reproduce an instrumental, functional truth] (DURÃES; SILVA, 2020, p.135)

The pandemic, in the sense of Agamben (2015), has left us more exposed before the world around us, making explicit our social and human wounds, our flaws and weaknesses in relation to human nature, entrenched in the idea of superiority of some over others. We have witnessed a spectacle of nature against human beings on the planet without distinction of people, beliefs, or ethnicities, and we know that the most affected were the poorest and the frontline workers in health, transportation, pharmacies, and commerce.

As if what the pandemic caused was not enough, many human beings from all over the world ignored the severity of the virus or resorted to all kinds of assumptions. With shallow, denialist speeches, they positioned themselves against science and the scientists who work tirelessly in favor of life on the planet.

It is in this context of pain and struggle against human misery in the face of the global situation that we enter the field of education, compelled to say something, to seek to do something in favor of a more humane education, especially in these times of Covid-19, when we are all suffering and wounded, and the scars go beyond any skin.

We have witnessed, from near or far, the numerous problems of the pandemic and post-pandemic. We have witnessed spectacles of greatness, such as those of healthcare professionals in a fierce struggle to save lives, many of whom lost their own lives, and, regrettably, we have also witnessed spectacles of pettiness in the face of others' and personal pain and suffering. We mention the work of educators and education professionals in schools, who, on the other side of the screen, in an immeasurable attempt to bring education to all social layers and, even though affected by sadness, physical and mental exhaustion, excessive worry, and illness, experiencing something unthinkable. In short, society as a whole lost a great deal during the pandemic, and all that remains is to fight to reduce disparities and conflicts in school learning in favor of an education that embraces sensitivity and effectively works so that human beings do not lose their humanity.

In this context of education and barbarism, Theodor Adorno (2003), in the essay entitled *Erziehung nach Auschwitz* (Education after Auschwitz), teaches us that we can consider as barbarism situations such as:

[...]o cultivo do ódio, ódio primitivo, impulso de destruição. Entendo por barbárie algo muito simples, ou seja, que, estando na civilização do mais alto desenvolvimento



tecnológico, as pessoas se encontram atrasadas de um modo particularmente disforme em relação à sua própria civilização e não apenas por não terem em sua arrasadora maioria experimentado a formação nos termos correspondentes ao conceito de civilização, mas também por se encontrarem tomadas por uma agressividade primitiva, um ódio primitivo ou, na terminologia culta, um impulso de destruição, que contribui para aumentar ainda mais o perigo de que toda esta civilização venha a explodir, aliás uma tendência imanente que a caracteriza (Adorno, 2003, p. 155).

[...] the cultivation of hatred, primitive hatred, impulse for destruction. I understand barbarism as something very simple, that is, despite being in a civilization of the highest technological development, people find themselves lagging in a particularly distorted way in relation to their own civilization and not only because the overwhelming majority have not experienced education in terms corresponding to the concept of civilization, but also because they are seized by a primitive aggressiveness, a primitive hatred or, in cultured terminology, an impulse for destruction, which contributes to further increase the danger that all this civilization might explode, moreover an immanent tendency that characterizes it].

In the debate on Hessian Radio (in Germany, on 04/14/1968), Becker dialogues with Adorno on the topic: Education against barbarism. Initially, Becker points out that it is fundamental to turn strictly to the field of education, in order to question "what barbarism is and where it comes from" (Adorno, 2003, p. 155).

For the debaters, it seems fundamental to overcome barbarism in order to de-barbarize it in Germany and in the world. In Germany, by the most terrible example, and elsewhere so that it does not occur. The objective reason for barbarism, according to Adorno, after analyzing the problems related to work and the connections "such as the bankruptcy of culture, the socially imposed perpetuation of barbarism" (Adorno, 2003, p. 155).

It is fundamental that an education against barbarism begin with simple actions, such as a student being able to feel ashamed when, "for example, they rudely attack a classmate or behave brutally toward a young woman; I want people, through the educational system, to begin to be entirely taken by an aversion to physical violence" (Adorno, 2003, p. 165). The success will be overcoming the shame of barbarism or what it can cause in society. For Becker, regarding barbarism, it is a problem that educators must face, because it surely leads to the issue that "concerning this problem, the training of educators is still crawling, if it has gotten that far" (Adorno, 2003, p. 166).

Attention must be given to education, from early childhood, with figures of authority devoid of authoritarianism, in order to avoid violence and insecurity, and also to ensure that the child is not turned into "a greenhouse plant" (Adorno, 2003, pp. 167-168).

In the same work, in the essay entitled: *Erziehung zur Mündigkeit* (Education to Maturity), Adorno begins the interview with Becker by asserting what is the opposite of democracy, considering that in a democracy emancipation must be evident and referring to Kant regarding what can be understood as enlightenment, the emergence of the human being from their minority, in order to make use of their own understanding as a way toward a non-irrational outcome. Becker considers that, deep

down, we are not educated for emancipation. In short, it is fundamental in a democracy to educate to overcome the apartheid of social classes (Adorno, 2003, p. 170).

This philosopher considers that, if we do not educate for emancipation, it is because we are not educating for democracy (Adorno, 2003, p. 172). Becker points out that emancipation is a global issue (p. 174). Adorno states that Kant attests to the possibility of emancipation, but agrees with Becker that this is not a German issue, but a global one, therefore he considers it essential to break with authority, but reminds us that an identity cannot be realized without the child's encounter with authority (Adorno, 2003, p. 177), and, just like the philosopher, Becker agrees that false emancipation is also a serious problem, one that separates teacher and student and imposes a set of manipulations (Adorno, 2003, p. 178). Appealing to emancipation can constitute a process of maintaining minority, Becker notes (p. 180).

Adorno emphasizes that education must lead us to contradiction and resistance, given that the absence of emancipation is a planetary problem. However, Becker says, being emancipated does not mean having immunity against the deceptions that present themselves in society. (p. 185), and Adorno adds: "the urge to transform may come up against easy repression" (p. 185).

We are more worn, and perhaps, maybe more willing to bring about changes in our lives. The struggle to uphold democracy in the political and social sphere is a struggle of the educator, inside and outside the classroom. Groups are coming together in defense of what we had already achieved, but social and political unwatchfulness can fatally wound us, the death of democracy.

It is essential not to forget the role of the bourgeoisie with regard to violence, barbarism, and the arming of the population, because, for Benjamin, "the bourgeoisie forged new weapons of war: worldviews, racial theories, political, human, and philosophical metaphors" (Benjamin, 2013, p.15). The concern of the bourgeoisie throughout history has been to always create "new weapons". It is in this realm that art, as fracture, becomes an element of transformation against bourgeois logic, since within it is implied the freedom through which the subject educates and emancipates himself. Hence, its relevance to the education of the senses, which also refers to educators, who have been suffering all kinds of prejudice, in addition to abject working conditions.

In this context, in Benjamin, it is understood that the problem of the masses permeates the whole of society, therefore, it seems fundamental to him that art could reach the masses, and in the case of education, that art may sensitize and sharpen the senses of those involved, making them more aware of their potential so that, by understanding their history, they could reverse the disastrous effects resulting from capitalist exploitation.

Utopia or not, the fact is that the philosopher left a pressing legacy of constant revisitation, which leads us to weave a dialogue with the image in the perspective of an education that can overcome barbarism and propose a gaze upon the issues we faced during the pandemic and that were laid bare, visible to the naked eye, and, above all, a gaze that is a proposal beyond the pandemic, considering how much we can or, rather, must learn so that Auschwitz is not repeated.

## CONCLUSION

We initially present an animated short film, with images that sensitize us regarding the world of work today, the time of bureaucracies, the hectic life, the time of production, the workspace that offers no other way out but to overcome bureaucracies and endless tasks. Meanwhile, the world outside, only fleetingly experienced by the worker, offers, for example, an encounter with art, an encounter with their sensitivity. In dialogue with the animated short film, we brought two photographs in which the relationship between work, pleasure, and the desire to break with the ruling classes also became present. The relationships established between school and work, the adult and the child, as well as affectivity and pleasure, lead us to close this text by drawing attention to the images that made us reflect on which game we are playing. How then to understand this game and how to play against it? Are there ways out? Can art and philosophy help us find a way out? Are they paths for us to think about exits from barbarism in order to build a better world?

The educational propositions to which we refer are embedded in the discourses of the authors, concerning the role of art and philosophy, which enable shifts and sensitization. We discuss themes such as barbarism, which, contrary to what is expected in the present century, with cutting-edge scientific and technological advances, many still lack access to and cannot even feed themselves every day. Barbarism is exposed in rude and violent actions against another human being, it continues to be present in our society, and, without a doubt, permeates the school environment and affects us all, just like the pandemic that opened wounds and scandalized the world, shaking with shame societies that call themselves democratic but have not always put democracy into the service and care of people worldwide. We witness spectacles of grandeur and spectacles of sadness, desolation, and suffering.

The world became quieter, but a silence of fear and misunderstanding, farewells and rituals for the dead were abolished overnight. Remote classes were emergency measures, but crying and pain happened on both sides of the screen; students and their families were afflicted by COVID-19, and the educator, with shorter classes more focused on content, felt the absence of physical space, direct eye contact, solidarity with colleagues and students, the collective crying over losses and damages everyone suffered, the looks on content, the unasked questions, the visible fatigue on the screen, but also felt grateful to have a communication channel with students and colleagues. Many parents, more aware after the pandemic of the social, cultural, pedagogical, and formative role of the school, understood and lamented the absence the school represented in their children's education.

Barbarism, fascism, and symbolic and physical violence have generally stunned the planet. Hunger degrades the countryside and the cities, impoverished families have also lost hope and do not always manage to fight for survival with dignity.

We witness grotesque spectacles every day, but the conversations of some media outlets and political figures omit the alarming numbers of those who go hungry in Brazil and worldwide. Entire families are now living on the streets, but calamities are denied and neglected, and the aid and assistance that arrive are insufficient to lift the fallen; unemployment has become alarming; the poorest, many of whom are Black, mixed-race, or Indigenous, suffer from a whole scenario of difficulties that undermine their lives; the representatives of these groups are often persecuted and even eliminated. The pains are daily, but there are also many who fight against aporophobia that has damagefully settled in social spaces; the right to shelter has been denied in cities of stone and cement, and one city scandalously copies another. Amid barbarism, pandemic, impoverishment, and hunger, the SCHOOL resists, the EDUCATORS resist and try, at all costs, to perform their pedagogical functions; families know that school is the place of exchange and learning, and for some, a place to satisfy hunger and thirst, but also to quench the continuous need for knowledge, to work towards the humanization of all who participate in it, and when possible, to bring hope and be a balm. Therefore, we believe that the videos and photographs, as well as the discussion with the authors about the role of art and philosophy, certainly contribute to working on human sensitivity because they are educational resources that can be employed in the sensitization and formation of the human being.

Finally, we can "name" two simple ways to address the barbarism that plagues the world: first, art as a balm and cure for suffering, sadness, and violence, because art reminds us of its power to resist what distances us from life; Finally, we can "name" two simple ways to work against the barbarism that ravages the world: first, art as a balm and cure for suffering, sadness, and violence, because art reminds us of its power of resistance to what distances us from life, and second, we recall the words of psychoanalyst Maria Rita Kehl, in the live session on 09/16/2022, on Youtube.com.br, entitled *Desejo, sentido e narrativa: conversa com Maria Rita Kehl* [Desire, Meaning, and Narrative: Conversation with Maria Rita Kehl], interviewer: Vitor Costa (UFSM), when she reminds us that we can create exit spaces amid barbarism – we can create centers of civility, increase the potential for delicacy because we are very crude, treat our fellow human beings, any fellow human beings, with dignity.

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