

**““Educating for alterity”: Shoah History Teaching and use of USC
Shoah Foundation audiovisual testimonies**

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Abstract

This work, in the theoretical light of the History of Present Time, proposed to construct an analysis of the History Teaching of the Shoah, more specifically from the audiovisual materials of the USC Shoah Foundation Institute for Visual History and Education, expanding the Brazilian academic research in the field of studies called “Teaching Pedagogy of Collective Traumas”. We will try to discuss the set of materials chosen, which include testimonies of survivors of the Shoah, appropriating a content analysis. It was established what these materials elucidate on the teaching of this subject, problematizing its methods and objectives, as well as about the proper role of the teacher as a tool of this teaching. From this perspective, Shoah's History Teaching establishes itself as a possible tool in the fight against fascism, in the negation of revisionist theories, and in the understanding of a new worldview about the moral, ethical and juridical values of society in the post-war.

Keywords

Shoah. History teaching. Collective Traumas.

**“Educar para alteridade”: o ensino de História da Shoah e o uso dos
testemunhos audiovisuais da USC Shoah Foundation**

Resumo

Este trabalho, sob a luz teórica da História do Tempo Presente, propôs-se a construir uma análise do Ensino de História da Shoah, mais especificamente a partir dos materiais didáticos audiovisuais da USC Shoah Foundation Institute for Visual History and Education, expandindo a pesquisa acadêmica brasileira no campo de estudos denominado “Pedagogia de Ensino dos Traumas Coletivos”. Buscou-se discutir o conjunto de materiais escolhidos, que incluem testemunhos de sobreviventes da Shoah, apropriando-se de uma análise de conteúdo. Foi estabelecido o que esses materiais elucidam sobre o ensino dessa temática, problematizando seus métodos e objetivos, bem como sobre o próprio papel do professor como ferramenta desse ensino. Partindo dessa perspectiva, o Ensino de História da Shoah estabelece-se como uma ferramenta possível no combate ao fascismo, na negação de teorias revisionistas e ainda no entendimento de uma nova cosmovisão acerca dos valores morais, éticos e jurídicos da sociedade no pós-guerra.

Palavras-chave

Shoah. Ensino de História. Traumas Coletivos.



**“Educar para alteridad”: la enseñanza de Historia de Shoah y el uso
de los testimonios audiovisuales de USC Shoah Foundation**

Resumen

Este trabajo, bajo la luz teórica de la Historia del Tiempo Presente, se propuso construir un análisis de la Enseñanza de la Historia de la Shoah, más específicamente a partir de los materiales didácticos audiovisuales de la USC Shoah Foundation Institute for Visual History and Education, ampliando la investigación académica brasileña en el campo de estudios denominado “Pedagogía de Enseñanza de los Traumas Colectivos”. Se buscó discutir sobre el conjunto de materiales escogidos, que incluyen testimonios de sobrevivientes de la Shoah, apropiándose de un análisis de contenido. Se estableció lo que estos materiales elucidan sobre la enseñanza de esta temática, problematizando sus métodos y objetivos, así como sobre el propio papel del profesor como herramienta de esa enseñanza. A partir de esa perspectiva, la Enseñanza de Historia de la Shoah se establece como una herramienta posible en el combate al fascismo, en la negación de teorías revisionistas y aún en el entendimiento de una nueva cosmovisión acerca de los valores morales, éticos y jurídicos de la sociedad en el post período de la guerra.

Palabras clave

Shoah. Enseñanza de Historia. Traumas Colectivos.

1 INTRODUCTION

The word Shoah, which comes from the Hebrew word meaning annihilation/catastrophe, is the most common term when referring to the genocide of the Jews of Europe, especially since Claude Lanzmann’s 1985 film, Shoah, and it was included in Israel’s declaration of independence in 1948. Regarding the historical research on Shoah, it has experienced growth for more than half a century, to the point that it is almost impossible for historians to have a comprehensive view that is both sufficiently detailed and / or complete. Holocaust Studies, where issues related to the theme are discussed, including the “limits of representation of Shoah”, is characterized by its openness and dynamism. The generation of Leon Poliakov¹, Raul Hilberg², Saul Friedländer³ laid the foundations of studies on this phenomenon.

¹ Poliakov, a prominent Shoah historian, won the 1975 Anisfield-Wolf Book Award for Nonfiction for his work *The Aryan Myth: A History of Racist and Nationalistic Ideas in Europe*.

² Hilberg was a historian who wrote his doctoral thesis on the bureaucracy behind Shoah's perpetration and won awards such as the Anisfield-Wolf Book Award for Nonfiction in 1968 with his book *The Destruction of the European Jews*. He was also honored with the National Jewish Book Award for Holocaust in 1986 for the same work.



Just like the fall of Rome or the French Revolution, the Shoah is one of those historical events that represents an era. Its complexity still raises questions about its moral choices and moral reasoning, as well as the darker side of human nature and the immorality of indifference. It was in the face of these questions and the need to understand the great crises of the twentieth century that History, as a field of study, was dimensioned, enabling a crucial critical role in relation to the dominant structures of thought, a sign of change in the conception of historiography and society's relationship with its history.

Historian professor Yehuda Bauer, honorary president of the 31-nation International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, summed up the problem in *Reflexiones Sobre El Holocausto* (2008) when he realized that Shoahs often turned into vague lessons of the danger of hatred or prejudice at the expense of really trying to understand the reasons and motivations of genocide.

Emile Durkheim, the first to advocate for a moral education, identified as fundamental the values that underpin human dignity and the protection of life. Durkheim further considered that it was the responsibility of schools to reinforce these values (Durkheim, 2088). These issues are at the heart of any Shoah teaching curriculum, and they can easily serve as a springboard for discussions about justice, human rights, survival, tolerance and civic responsibility today. Effective Shoah teaching must provide substantive knowledge and understanding, challenge popular misconceptions, and address difficult and profound issues.

In this paper, we seek to discuss about the responsibility of teaching sensitive subjects, such as Shoah, in a perspective that is no longer taught about this event only “so it is not forgotten and never happens again”. This goal no longer holds, it is no longer enough and not the only possible explanation, after all, Shoah as a historical phenomenon will no longer occur, because historical phenomena do not repeat. Thus, it becomes necessary to discuss even larger issues, based on an education for otherness.

³ Friedländer is an Israeli historian and current professor of history at UCLA. He wrote important works for the study of Nazism and Shoah, being honored by the National Jewish Book Award for Holocaust in 1997 for his work *Nazi Germany and the Jews: The Years of Persecution, 1933-1939*. Other important works include *The Years of Extermination*, winner of the Leipzig Book Fair Prize for nonfiction.

For this reason, Shoah education goes through issues such as ethics, commitment and duty, all of which are embedded in the concept of responsibility. After all, within schools, there is a variety of beliefs, ethnicities, genders that need not only to be recognized, but to feel as such. Our knowledge of the other is fallible and finite. This, however, does not diminish our ability to relate and take responsibility for them.

Following this line of thought, we will analyze 2 teaching materials that use audiovisual testimonies to address specific issues within the Shoah universe, such as moral aspects and discussions about individual responsibility and the consequences of our actions. The materials chosen were: 1) *Lala / Reflections on Prejudice*; 2) *Use Your Voice*. Throughout this analysis, it is possible to notice the central points, which, to some extent, represent the way this teaching can be established pedagogically. The modus operandi of this work, through an analytical treatment of documentary research, sought complementary interpretations, defining meanings within each material to be worked on. The discussions on these materials have their importance in the fact that oral testimony brings a higher quality of this teaching when it is intended to project on the student some kind of personal recognition with the stories of the survivors.

2 “USE YOUR VOICE”: THE USE OF AUDIOVISUAL TESTIMONIES IN THE CLASSROOM

In the immediate postwar period, Shoah's lack of awareness and education meant that the tales of Jewish survivors were seen only as part of general stories that emerged from World War II. Since the testimonies of survivors, most notably those published by Primo Levi and Elie Wiesel became increasingly popular, the demand for survivors to play an active role in Holocaust education increased, and so did the survivor involvement in various educational practices, particularly during the late 1980s and 1990s.



These narratives behave as vectors in both formal and informal educational contexts, in the classroom, in museums, and in visits to memorials. However, the need to debate Shoah without resorting to survivors or other witnesses who are able to go to classrooms and debate with students has already become a reality in education in almost all, if not all, countries. Younger survivors today are about 80 or 90 years old, and many, or most, are unknown and do not hold memories of concentration camps or resistance movements. Therefore, this form of teaching is replaced by one that resembles as much as possible the experience of hearing a survivor personally.

In this scenario, narratives of people who lived and suffered trauma, such as genocide and other outrages, help students understand more deeply the human and inhuman dimensions of tragic moments in history. They complement what is learned from historians and other sources by offering unique insights into the difficult and sometimes impossible situations that individuals were forced to face in times of violence and collective injustice.

There are extensive collections of oral reports available for use in whole or in part in the classroom. The USC Shoah Foundation Institute for Visual History and Education, and other institutions, made this teaching possible. Founded in 1994 by Steven Spielberg, its goal was to film survivor stories and make them available for educational purposes for later generations. Developing a platform called IWitness, the foundation proposed access to a portion of the Institute's complete archives through activities that broaden existing curricula in various areas, including social studies, government, foreign language, world history, and character education. The mission with this feature is to encourage teachers to teach effectively Shoah as well as related moral and civic lessons. In addition to containing primary documents, each lesson contains file-specific witness clips (ECHOES AND REFLECTIONS, 2005).

These testimonies, of course, need to be inserted into the curriculum and placed in their historical context as part of the historical narrative and ensured in proper documentation. By understanding that history has a direct impact on the lives of people and their communities, that they personally play a role in history, one has a basis for understanding memory places for present society, given that the teaching of Shoah is performed by the memory of the victim. Most of the survivors who gave their testimonies were children or adolescents during Shoah. This allows students to identify



with stories from a youth perspective and to engage with the story on a more personal level through the medium best suited to their virtual reality: video. "The use of audiovisual resources promotes a break in the educational processes based on this traditional lineage" (ECHOES AND REFLECTIONS, 2005).

One of the materials provided by the IWitness platform is called *Lala / Reflections on Prejudice*⁴. Like other materials prepared by the USC Shoah Foundation, this lesson seeks not only to teach what Shoah was like, but also to understand the impact that historical events of genocide and collective trauma have on individuals, communities, and society as a whole. Lala is the testimony of a Shoah survivor named Roman Kent, in the form of 360-degree animated video and action, who shares the story of his time in Nazi-occupied Poland with his dog Lala. This resource is designed for elementary school level 5 to 6 students, which in Brazil is equivalent to the 5th and 6th grades of elementary school (children from 10 to 12 years old). Through guided visualization of the audiovisual testimony of Shoah survivors, students reflect on the impact of prejudice on individuals and their resilience when facing oppression.

The virtual reality movie is a mix of animation and 360° live-action video from Shoah's survivor. Roman Kniker, born in Lodz - Poland, on April 18, 1929, son of Emmanuel Kniker and Sonia Kniker, and brother of Leon Kniker. In 1939, shortly after the Germans invaded Poland, Roman and his family were expelled from their home and had to move to an empty room in their confiscated father's factory, but they did not last long. They were sent to the Lodz ghetto, where conditions were severe. In the fall of 1944, the ghetto was liquidated and the family deported to Auschwitz -Birkenau. To be transferred, Roman and his brother Leon pretended to be merchants and were sent to Gross-Rosen and later to Flossenbug.

During a death march on the way to Dachau, they were released by the US Army. The brothers then traveled to Sweden, where they met their sisters in a hospital in Lubeck. In June 1946, Roman and Leon immigrated to the United States. After college, the brothers moved to New York and changed their last name to Kent, because it was easier to pronounce. Roman met his future wife, Hannah, in New York,

⁴ USC SHOAH FOUNDATION. *Lala / Reflections on Prejudice (K-2)*. Available at: <https://iWitness.usc.edu/sfi/activity/detail.aspx?activityid=3977&retainfilter=true>. Access in: 2 Jan. 2019.



and they got married in 1957. Roman got involved in Shoah education in April 1996, when he gave his interview to the Foundation, and it was substantial to creating *Children of the Holocaust*⁵, a documentary dedicated to the memory of children who died during Shoah.

The teaching material is accompanied by a Mini Lesson to prepare students to watch Lala. Additional resources, including clips, links, and an Info Quest activity about Kent, are also available. The learning objective described by the activity is: “To reflect on the impact of prejudice and individual resilience in the face of oppression, demonstrate understanding and synthesis of information extracted from audiovisual testimony, and draw connections to their own lives” (USC SHOAH FOUNDATION. *Lala/Reflections on Prejudice*).

The whole approach to Lala's lesson is divided into three parts. The first part, entitled Prejudice and Its Impact on Individuals, is designed to prepare students for the testimonies to be presented. Questions are planned such as: 1) What can we learn from the past? 2) What is the impact of prejudice and hatred on individuals and societies? 3) What is resilience and how can we develop it? 4) What kind of information does the audiovisual testimony of those who have experienced history, such as Shoah, give us about the length of time that other sources cannot?

The activity goes on to indicate that the word “prejudice” is projected on the board so that students think calmly about what comes to mind when they read this word. Then, they are urged to reflect on a time when they have been biased or have felt different and excluded because of a personal trait, a group to which they belonged to or because of their beliefs (or someone they know). The teacher is required to ask some more questions: 1) If you have had or have observed a prejudice experience, how did it make you or the person involved feel? 2) If you have not had nor observed an experience with prejudice, imagine how it would make you feel. 3) Why do you think they were targeted? 4) How has this prejudice experience affected you (them)? 5) What do you think has helped you (them) to get over the experience or deal with it?

⁵ *Children of the Holocaust* (2014) is a series produced by Fettle Animation in conjunction with BBC Learning. Capturing the lives of six people who were persecuted as children during the Nazi regime - placed in concentration camps, separated from their parents, sent abroad or witnessing brutality during Kristallnacht - the series offers an intimate insight into the long-term effects of the Shoah.

Student responses will demonstrate the various ways students and individuals deal with prejudice and exclusion - which is at the core of resilience.

After the discussion, a mini biography of the survivors presented in the clips of this lesson should be shared. At first glance, Kent's compiled testimonies and one more survivor, Eva Freedman⁶, should be reproduced to the end without interruption. At the end of the videos, it is proposed that students should think quietly about what stood out to them in the stories the survivors tell. Then, the clip plays a second time, so that students now pay attention to body language, facial expressions, voice and tone, as well as the background and date / time period when the statement was given. During this second visualization the students would receive two drawings of faces, one sad and the other happy, and would be instructed to use them based on the perception of actions, words and feelings that would be just or unfair. They should share the "happy face" when Eve shares something they think is fair and use the "sad face" when hearing her say something that seems unfair. After gathering student reactions to the testimonial clip, it is suggested to explain to students that people often judge others based of their differences.

The visualization sequence suggested by the material provides students with examples of prejudice and hatred in pre-war Poland (Roman Kent) and Czechoslovakia during war (Eva Freedman). They are short testimonials, about 3 minutes each, in which the life experiences of each survivor, even in different parts of Europe, intersect in the feeling of helplessness in the face of barbarism projected by the genocidal politics in Germany from 1933-1945.

The second part of the lesson, titled Lala - The Virtual Reality Experience, is where students will see the six-minute virtual reality movie. It uses live action and animation to tell the true story of Roman Kent's pet, Lala, and how the dog gave the Kent family a sense of continuity in their lives and strengthened the family's resilience in the face of the terrible ghetto conditions⁷. An important message in history is Roman's belief that "love is stronger than hate". The video lasts about 6 minutes and

⁶ Eva Freedman, born in July 1934 in Bratislava, Czechoslovakia, recounts her experience hiding in an apartment building, moving between an upstairs bedroom and a basement for about eleven months, along with her family.

⁷ USC SHOAH FOUNDATION. *Lala / Reflections on Prejudice (K-2)*. Available at: <https://iWitness.usc.edu/sfi/activity/detail.aspx?activityid=3977&retainfilter=true>. Access in: 2 Jan. 2019.



the story is produced on the most remarkable experience of Kent's life, to have hope in the midst of all the horror of the war.

The video is narrated by Kent along with the animated images. The survivor says that even after his family had been expelled from Lodz, where they lived, they had taken Lala to the hiding in Kent's father's old textile factory. At the time, Lala walked with her puppies, and with the arrival of the Nazis in hiding, Kent and his family were taken to a residential area, being forced to leave everything behind, including Lala. At the age of 10, during the walk to the gueto, Kent states that he could not understand the implications of what was happening, and he did not care a lot, because he was with his parents. Kent's mind was solely and exclusively worried about Lala.

During some night in the ghetto in Poland, while it was raining heavily, Kent and his family heard Lala arrive unexpectedly. He claims not to know how she found them, but the next morning Lala disappeared again. Every night the dog would come to see them and in the morning return to her puppies, that was Lala's routine. Kent states: "No barbed wire, no weapon, nothing in the way could stop this little dog from loving us, coming to us and then returning to her puppies. I wish sometimes people would be more like Lala".

After a few days in this routine, a warning appeared in the ghetto that all dogs owned by Jews had to be handed over to the Germans. These were named after all the families that owned dogs. According to Kent, the consequences of non-compliance were severe. On a normal day Lala always cheered up for a walk with Kent and his family, however, the night she was about to be taken to the Germans, Lala instinctively knew something was wrong and hid. She refused to walk by herself and they had to carry her. After that, Lala was never seen again by Kent or his family. "But still today, after all, I still believe in what Lala taught me [...] the Nazis have long since disappeared, however, right now as I talk to you, I can feel Lala's love. Lala still lives in my heart" (KENT, R.).



In the last part of the lesson, entitled Reflections on Prejudice, students should discuss some questions: 1) What do you think is the meaning of “love is stronger than hate”? 2) Did the stories you have heard and watched in this lesson help you think differently or, in any way, change your opinion about prejudice? If so, how? If not, why not? 3) Do you think this lesson will influence how you interact with people different from you in the future? If so, how? If not, why not?

It is noticeable that the lesson is to, through thorough and responsible historical analysis, enable students to develop a sense of historical contextualization in order to engage in a state of empathy. The lesson involves an affective connection with the situation someone else faces, which is shaped by our cognitive understanding of the person's perspective and the strenuous circumstances surrounding it. As students reflect on this in historical characters and understand that the human perspective is rooted in the social, political, economic and cultural context of their day, this understanding provides the advantage of analyzing and evaluating their own beliefs and actions and of others in the present.

Kent's full testimony, which is available at the USC Shoah Foundation collection, brings harsh information about this wicked event. Thus, the adaptation of the story of this survivor, made in animation, brings up the discussion about how it is possible to teach such young children this tragic event without traumatizing them. This age adequacy is essential for achieving the study objective. Educating children about Shoah at this young age mainly involves making sense of what they have heard and experienced as part of a multi-ethnic society.

Therefore, as with any dark theme in human history to which children may be exposed, the idea is to give them the information they need to create a sense of affective responsibility for each other's lives. The whole approach to this subject can be maintained in a spiral way, so that each year the students are presented to more and more of the subject, for the emotional burden of an event like Shoah is immense. One of the most important things to understand is that learning about Shoah must take place within a framework of an educational process. Educators must be constantly focused on the value of the activity they build for children and must ask themselves what exactly is being achieved.

As children begin to work with survivor testimonials in a constructive learning environment, learning gains are considerably greater, and a path to personal connection is established. It is not just about telling them “let's talk about these different people”, it's about talking about them and how they live their lives, and then talk about people and connect our lives to theirs.

It is clear that what is needed in 21st century Shoah education is an approach to teaching that emphasizes learning the history of the event, while moving towards a broader analysis of human behavior, choices, stereotypes, bullying and prejudice. Controversial discussions, as one of the most effective ways to engage students in social studies, ultimately provide them with real evidence-based learning and discussion opportunities. It also gives students a chance to begin formulating their world-view based on history and the present day.

Claudia Lohrenscheit, director of human rights education at the German Institute of Human Rights, reaffirmed that Shoah education has two objectives: the first would be “to not be forgotten”; Second, education is necessary to “develop skills so that it never happens again” (ZAPALSKA; HAUGLAND, 2016, p. 2). This does not mean that this is the only possible explanation. Shoah is no longer taught only “so that it does not happen”, after all, historical phenomena are not repeated, and this conclusion is no longer sufficient in itself. Thus, Shoah education, in addition to demonstrating the need to make individual decisions, should also be a tool for teaching democracy and acts of responsibility. As Lévinas acknowledges in *Ethics and Infinity*, it is essential that we know how to overcome a situation of isolation and dominant superiority so that we can reach the other side, go beyond being, divest oneself in recognition of the call of the other (LEVINAS, 2007, p. 107), educating for otherness.

It is widely recognized that an acceptable way of teaching history in elementary and high schools is through the use of multiple perspectives. Multiple perspectives give voice to various groups that have experienced the same events in history. These varied viewpoints have rich implications for students' learning that by designing such lessons, we can begin to avoid the “dangers of history”. This moves us from a short-sighted view of history to a pluralistic approach. In addition, it is necessary to go beyond the comprehensive history of a group and begin an analysis of the individual experience of a particular event. This tactic allows students to begin to engage with the

nuances of history and make sense of the impact of various factors such as politics, social behavior, and economics.

Focusing on individual history leads to a less apathetic society. The real story takes place in the homes and streets of the world. Witness-based education provides a gateway for people to hear how they may be persecuted for a variety of reasons, many of which are relevant in today's society. They are lessons beyond what was Shoah, they are discussions about values and coexistence, allowing the student to leave the totality of being in himself and open to the otherness. Verônica Kovacic (2017) highlights that educating is how society creates awareness of respect, coexistence and values. It is through this that survivors' reports make sense to educate. The analyzed discourses of these traumatic pasts allow us to build a possible future, through dialogue, with more respect, justice and experience (KOVACIC, 2017):

*Use Your Voice*⁸ is another lesson proposed by the USC Shoah Foundation that brings perspectives to four Jewish men and women who lived in Germany and Poland during the 1930s. They talk about the prejudice they experienced from other individuals as well as from the Nazi government. The objectives of this lesson bring as central questions the discussions about the meaning and manifestations of prejudice, the effects of these behaviors on those to whom prejudice is directed, and discussions about individual responsibility and the consequences of our actions. Being divided into four sections: consider, collect, build and communicate. The lesson begins by discussing the meanings of the term prejudice and sharing experiences from which students may have experienced.

The material goes on to analyze the term bullying, associating it with unwanted aggressive behavior among school-age children that involves a real or perceived imbalance of power, whether it is repeated behavior or the potential to be repeated. The intention here is not to compare Shoah with bullying, from the beginning the material warns:

8 USC SHOAH FOUNDATION. *Use Your Voice*. Available at: <https://iwitness.usc.edu/sfi/activity/detail.aspx?activityid=2533>. Access in: 2 Jan. 2019.



It is important to note that the Holocaust is not like bullying. Nor was the experience of Holocaust victims or survivors the same as the kind of bullying you or someone you know may have experienced. It is important to keep in mind that within individual experiences during the Holocaust there are many examples of bullying, but this is only part of the larger story that must be told within the broader context.

Paul Johnson, in his work entitled *History of the Jews*, wrote that if “anti - Semitism is a variety of racism. It is a very peculiar variety with many unique characteristics. It is so peculiar that it deserves to be placed in a very different category” (JOHNSON, 1989, p. 37). Johnson calls anti-Semitism an “intellectual disease”. Anti-Semitism is over two thousand years old and is the result of the creation of Christianity and the rise of capitalism (ZAPALSKA; HAUGLAND, 2016, p. 2). On the other hand, racism is a new phenomenon that originated during colonialism. Although this distinction is made, one important point should be noted: these feelings grow out of a greater form of discrimination. Thus, the mechanisms behind them are the same. However, it is important to recognize that these are different ideologies that should be communicated to students in order to avoid simplified comparisons but to make them aware of the differences that create bias. And Shoah, as a subject of study, has the ability to show us these aspects of the human condition.

During the Use Your Voice lesson, the testimonies of Esther Clifford and David Faber draw attention. Born in Munich, Germany, in 1920, Ester Clifford and her family were deported to Poland in 1938, where she was separated from her family. Ester says that in 1934 an article called *Die Stürmer Zeitung* (sic: *Der Stürmer*) - *Stormtrooper Journal* was published. The content of the article, which was plastered in every newspaper store, had faces of people with long noses and saliva coming out of their mouths (foaming) - typical reference to the Jewish people in Germany at that time. They were looking at the Gentile children, eagerly looking at the money the children had in their hands as if they wanted to steal their money. They still told terrible stories about Jewish doctors trying to inject poisonous medication into the Gentiles. Ester also states that while going to school everyone read the article and when arriving at school she could not attend the class.

The testimony of David Faber, born in 1926 in Nowy Sacz (Poland), son of an Orthodox Jewish family, says that at school, Catholic students occasionally threw stones at him because of his religious identity. Following the German invasion of Poland on September 1, 1939, David and his family fled to Tarnów, Poland. He was the only survivor of two Nazi shootings in Tarnów. He went through forced labor at the Putskow concentration camp in Poland and was imprisoned at Auschwitz II-Birkenau, Bergen-Belsen, Buchenwald, Glesch, Jawischowitz, Mittelbau-Dora and Szebnie. During his account David tells:

I was once on a street, on a very busy street with traffic - very heavy traffic and I was waiting to cross the road. A boy was pushing me and pushing me saying 'damn Jew' in Polish. Finally he knocked me down. As the track was busy, it knocked me down in the middle of the cars. There was a woman shouting, 'Why doesn't someone call an ambulance? The boy needs to be taken (referring to me), he is in terrible condition'. Then another man standing next to him shouting, 'Well, it's a 'Zyd', it's a Jew. Never mind, let him die'.

The stereotype that had been created about the Jewish people contributed to the advancement of genocidal politics that was established during Nazism. While many people who do not witness prejudice every day may think that it is a problem of the past, those who are targeted know the unhappy truth. Social norms and cultural contexts play a significant role in the types of prejudice a person may have. Racism has figured prominently for centuries. There are several current examples that prejudice against Jews, for example, still exists, as well as other types of intolerance. A recent FBI study found that hate crimes in the US grew 17% over the past year, especially against black people and Jews (BBC NEWS BRASIL, 2018). Officials reported 7,175 hate crimes, motivated by racial, ethnic and ancestry issues. In France, anti-Semitism grew by 69% in 2018, already in the first nine months of the year (RFI, 2018). In Brazil, only in greater São Paulo, there was a 65% increase in racial crimes registered in 2018 (ARCOVERDE; PRADO, 2018).

There is a reason for us to address this in the classroom. The Shoah represents the extreme from which the human being can be driven by prejudice. Genocide is the ultimate expression of hatred and violence against a group of people. As such, Shoah was entrenched in attitudes and behaviors that we see around us every day. It is when these practices manifest at their extreme that genocide may occur; it is the last step in a continuum of actions taken by those who rank the human race. Discrimination comes, the treatment of certain groups of people becomes different, isolation, persecution, followed by dehumanization, which can reach the extreme of violence. Understanding the nature of prejudice, the use of scapegoats, stereotypes and discrimination is the first step in combating these practices.

The lesson further proposes that students create a poster that tells them about the meaning of prejudice, its effects and dangers, also making a connection with their lives and experiences. Thus, the school seeks to confront these different presentations of the past, because with the broadening of the world's horizons, our different views of the past have become, more than ever, one of the factors in conflict. Our view of other peoples, or ourselves, reflects the history we are taught as children. This history marks us for life. Their representation, which is for each of us a discovery of the world, of societal past, encompasses all our fleeting or permanent opinions, so that the features of our first questioning, our first emotions, remain indelible. It is these traces that we must know or rediscover.

According to Marc Ferro, regardless of his scientificity, history has a dual function: therapeutic and militant. At different times, the "cause" of this mission has changed, but not its meaning (FERRO, 1995, p. 36). Ideally, history critically tests memory and prepares for a more extensive attempt to work on a past that has not passed. Historical teaching should therefore aim at a global understanding of historical phenomena and an assessment of the relationship between particular problems (cities, regions, and countries) and the general course of history. Thus, oral testimonies have become central to the writing of history in recent years. Comic books, movies, make use of testimonials or, at least, of types of narration that are inspired from them.



The fear of dying with the survivors of Shoah's memory, being able to remain in an empty space, as well as observing the possibility of a fascism resurrection from the rubble is what motivates the advancement of this oral history. "We had to face the return to terror to make many seek courage, and strength, to devote themselves to the task of reviving the past... beyond pain, shame and discrimination" (SILVA, 2013, p. 51).

It is important to remember that the work with witnessing should not imply generalizations of the event (KOVACIC, 2017), after all, it is only part of history. Just as Shoah's understanding in its entirety should not be ruled out, on the contrary, in addition to this, one must discuss issues related to otherness, differences, and prejudice. We must be able to not only remember, but also turn that past into a hope for the future (KOVACIC, 2017, p. 23). This is where we humanize the process, making Shoah understandable. This does not mean, therefore, to try to frame it within the scope of normality, but to recognize it as a phenomenon that, despite escaping the understanding of common sense, of "[...] 'normal acting', who can count should do so" (VENEZIA, 2010, p. 70), in an attempt to transmit the unusual to human understanding and experience.

3 CONCLUSION

The essence of Shoah is hard to understand, as are many of the human stories related to it. Learning about this event through historical documentation combined with hearing testimonials from people who actually experienced this period supports make these events more tangible and realistic. As such, it becomes a profoundly challenging task from various academic and intellectual perspectives. Facing Shoah means trying to understand human beings and the way they dealt with extreme situations and deep ethical dilemmas.

Shoah's story is, first of all, a human story. Any discussion about their victims, their perpetrators, or those who stayed and watched should try to understand the human being involved. It is a micro-history, a way of approaching a certain social reality or constructing the historiographical object, "reducing the historian's scale of observation in order to perceive aspects that would otherwise go unnoticed"



(BARROS, 2007, p. 169). It is the story of a person told from a specific and subjective perspective.

Testimonials create empathy without the need for simulation. A survivor who describes his experiences is reliving these events to some extent. Watching their testimony reveals a lot. Not only does it provide authenticity, but also witnessing enables us to bridge the time gap and touch on events that happened dozens of years ago. Survivors do more than talk and write about the events they have experienced; They may also try to give meaning to these events in light of their later experiences or their reflections and knowledge of these experiences.

Using testimony in the classroom is therefore a way to customize Shoah's story for students. This can help them understand that although it was a collective trauma, it was different for each individual living in that time period. Every experience was tempered by place, time, and personal circumstance. Survival depended on many factors, most of which are unquantifiable. It is then that we come to the central point of the role of education: "educating for otherness". Otherness is a social construction that explains social identities. Thinking of social identity as a reflection of how individuals and groups internalize established social categories - culture, race, ethnicity, class - within societies. Therefore, developing a reflection on the function of otherness, responsibility, and ethical action in a broader sense becomes crucial in debates about Shoah.

Within a witness, then, students are able to focus on this event on a micro level, avoiding the abstract notion of six million people and what it really means: humanizing Shoah, putting a face in it, the face of a person who has experienced genocidal politics. It is possible to articulate this story; the ability to take the whole and let it play in the face of the individual seems to give them an opportunity to make some sense of what Shoah is. It is from the individual stories of human beings that people construct meaning by engaging with the world they are interpreting. The pedagogical challenge of this kind of teaching is: to gradually bring students' knowledge to understand the mechanisms of the genocidal process (how did we get there?), and why the Shoah, by its very nature, constitutes a major break, both historical and anthropological. Because it is their voices that reveal what was known and what could be known; theirs were the only voices expressing both the clarity of perception and the



total blindness of human beings confronted by a completely new and utterly horrifying reality. It teaches about human possibilities in extreme and desperate situations, considering the actions of perpetrators and victims, as well as others who, due to various motivations, can tolerate, ignore or act against hatred and violence. This can develop an awareness not only of how hatred and intolerance take hold, but also of the power of resistance, resilience and solidarity in local, national and global contexts.

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