

**REFLECTIONS ON CISHETERONORMATIVE PEDAGOGIES AND THEIR
EFFECTS ON LGBTQIAPN+ SUBJECTS AT SCHOOL**

***REFLEXÕES SOBRE AS PEDAGOGIAS CISHETERONORMATIVAS E SEUS
EFEITOS EM SUJEITOS LGBTQIAPN+ NA ESCOLA***

***REFLEXIONES SOBRE LAS PEDAGOGÍAS CISHETERONORMATIVAS Y SUS
EFECTOS EN LOS SUJETOS LGBTQIAPN+ EN LA ESCUELA***



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ABSTRACT: The objective of this paper is to reflect on the effects of cis-heteronormative pedagogies in schools, as well as to briefly point out some of their consequences for the LGBTQIAPN+ population within a context grounded in a classist, patriarchal, white, and cis-heterosexist norm, which, either explicitly or implicitly, defines the “standard” subject, the imagistic model of the individual within these structures. As a consequence of this oppressive scenario, a selective democracy is established, which legitimizes citizenship only for those who fit into the logic of the “universal human.” To this end, we conducted a bibliographic review and gathered data through the cross-referencing of keywords, namely: cis-heteronormativity and school, LGBTQIAPN+phobia and school, sexual diversity and school, cis-heteronormative pedagogies and school. In doing so, we highlight the urgency and necessity of (trans)gressing this model of cis-heterosexist pedagogy, aiming at the development of a qualified and safe education for all individuals.

KEYWORDS: Gender Disobedience. School Institution. Cisheteronormative Pedagogies. LGBTQIAPN+ population. Sexual Dissent.

RESUMO: O objetivo deste trabalho é refletir sobre os efeitos das pedagogias cisheteronormativas na escola, bem como apontar, de maneira breve, algumas de suas consequências para a população LGBTQIAPN+ nesse contexto, pautado em uma norma classista, patriarcal, branca e cisheterossexista, que, velada ou explicitamente, define o sujeito “padrão”, o modelo imagético do sujeito dentro dessas estruturas. Como consequência dessa conjuntura opressora, instaura-se uma democracia seletiva, que legitima a cidadania apenas para aqueles que se inserem na lógica do “humano universal”. Para isso, realizamos uma revisão bibliográfica e levantamos os dados por meio do cruzamento de palavras-chave, a saber: cisheteronormatividade e escola, LGBTQIAPN+fobia e escola, diversidade sexual e escola, pedagogias cisheteronormativas e escola. Apontamos, assim, a urgência e emergência da (trans)gressão desse modelo de pedagogia cisheterossexista, visando o desenvolvimento de uma educação qualificada e segura para todas as pessoas.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Desobediência de Gênero. Instituição escolar. Pedagogias Cisheteronormativas. População LGBTQIAPN+. Sexualidades em dissidência.

RESUMEN: Los objetivos es reflexionar sobre los efectos de las pedagogías cisheteronormativas en la escuela, así como señalar brevemente algunas de sus consecuencias para la población LGBTQIAPN+ en la mencionada institución, esa que se basa en una ideología clasista, patriarcal, blanca y cisheterossexista que, velada o explícita, define cual el cuerpo “estándar”, el imaginario del sujeto dentro de estas estructuras. Por consecuencia de esta situación opresiva en el cual se instaura una “Democracia Selectiva” (Oliveira, 2020) y la legitimación de la Ciudadanía sólo a sujetos incluidos en la lógica “humana universal”. Se realizó una recolección de datos en cruce de palabras clave, las cuales fueron: CIS-heteronormatividade y escuela, Diversidad Sexual y escuela, pedagogías cisheteronormativas y escuela. Resalta la urgente y emergente necesidad de la (trans)gresión de este modelo de pedagogía Cisheterossexista para que sea posible desarrollar una educación calidad y seguridad para todas las personas.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Desobediencia de género. Institución de la escuela. Pedagogías Cisheteronormativa. Población LGBTQIAPN+. Sexualidades LGNTQIAP+ en disidencia.

Introduction

The 1988 Brazilian Federal Constitution, in its Article 205, establishes public and free Basic Education as “a right of all and a duty of the State and the family, to be promoted and encouraged with the collaboration of society, aiming at the full development of the individual, their preparation for the exercise of citizenship, and their qualification for work” (Brasil, 2016, p. 123, our translation). However, what has been observed over the years is a school institution guided by classist, patriarchal, white, and cisheterosexual⁵ norms, which, either implicitly or explicitly, define a performance model for an idealized standard subject, recognized as universal within structures presented as norms (Oliveira, 2020).

In light of the above, the "all" referenced in the legislation does not, in fact, encompass all individuals and their singularities/subjectivities across diverse gender identities and sexual orientations. Instead, it continues to restrict which individuals are granted legitimacy within school institutions, based on a sex-gender-sexuality system rooted in hegemonic perspectives (Oliveira, 2020).

This study, therefore, aims to reflect on the effects of cisheteronormative pedagogies in schools and briefly highlight some of their consequences for LGBTQIAPN+⁶ individuals within these institutions. To achieve this, we engage in discussions on the history of LGBTQIAPN+ populations in Brazil, examining the role of schools as (re)producers of a hegemonic social standard for individuals while disregarding alternative forms of being and existing. Lastly, we propose a reflection on the impacts of pedagogies here termed as cisheteronormative on gender-disobedient and sexually dissident individuals in school settings.

Furthermore, for this study, the concept of cisheteronormativity is grounded in the work of Preciado (2022), who defines it as a system of socially developed hegemonic norms that only legitimize cisgender and heterosexual individuals and subjectivities, universalizing the characteristics of a particular cis-heterosexual subject as normative social standards. Consequently, this system sustains a societal framework that perpetuates practices of oppression and erasure of dissident subjects, including LGBTQIAPN+ individuals.

This study employed a literature review methodology, which is understood as a process of surveying and critically evaluating published materials on a given topic (Hohendorff, 2014).

⁵ Cisheterosexual is a model of social organization, based on the sex-gender-sexuality system, becoming a regime and also an ideology that systematizes both sexual orientations (heterosexuality) and gender identities (cisgender).

⁶ A community that makes up the political movement of subjects in gender identities and sexual orientations, lesbians, gays, transsexuals, transvestites, queer, intersex, asexual, pansexual, non-binary, and all existing sexuality identifications and gender identities included in the + sign.

Through this approach, we sought to address the research question: What are the effects of employing and perpetuating cisheteronormative pedagogies on the lives of LGBTQIAPN+ individuals in schools? To answer this question, a strategy was outlined for collecting bibliographic material using specific keyword combinations, including: Cis-heteronormativity and School, LGBTQIAPN+Phobia and School, Sexual Diversity and School, and Cisheteronormative Pedagogies.

The databases utilized in this process included Google Scholar, SciELO, and the Virtual Health Library of the Brazilian Ministry of Health (BVS/Brazil). National and international materials (scientific articles, dissertations, theses, and books) addressing the objectives of this study were considered. Additionally, manual searches were conducted during the writing process to refine the theoretical corpus and deepen the proposed discussions.

Brief Notes on the History of the LGBTQIAPN+ Community in Brazil

Addressing the historical trajectory of the LGBTQIAPN+ movement in Brazil is a challenging endeavor, as this population has consistently been subjected to processes of silencing and erasure of its subjectivities. These processes have been perpetuated through the imposition of hegemonic logics and a colonial, binary sex-gender world system. This system, throughout colonial history, enforced moral and biological/natural norms for gender identity and sexuality categories. In this context, Quinalha (2022, p. 17, our translation) observes that the history of LGBTQIAPN+ individuals takes shape as an “inventory in the negative, composed of absences, gaps, and silences.”

It is evident that countries colonized by Europe experienced, and continue to mirror, the colonizer’s ways of life, which became normative standards regarding gender identity and sexuality. This legacy of the colonizer’s worldview encompasses aspects of culture, politics, epistemologies, ideologies, and religions, among other domains. In these domains, colonized peoples often reproduce systems of oppression that disqualify, marginalize, and violently suppress ways of being and existing that deviate from hegemonic norms. These norms, which perpetuate the colonial status quo into contemporary times, are established as rigid and strategic standards, operating to control and shape individuals within a capitalist and (neo)liberal societal framework, exacerbated by the uncritical use of communication and information technologies.

Sex, gender, and sexuality are understood in this research through the theoretical frameworks of Michel Foucault (2021) and Judith Butler (2020). In simplified terms, both

authors conceptualize these categories as discursive practices, aligned with socio-historical and culturally established productions. Through these practices, a dynamic interplay of knowledge and power exists, exercised through power relations, enabled by specific conditions of possibility in a given time-space, contributing to the constitution of subjectivities.

Foucault argues that “sex” itself is a fictitious category interpreted as the source and cause of desire. The body is not naturally “sexed”; rather, it becomes so through cultural processes that utilize the production of sexuality to expand and sustain specific power relations (Spargo, 2019, p. 42, our translation).

In *The History of Sexuality: Volume I - An Introduction*, Foucault (2021) defines sexuality through the concept of the *dispositivo*: a set of discursive and non-discursive practices responsible for exerting power over bodies and managing them under control, integrating them into a politics of the body, that is, biopolitics or “bionecropolitics,” as Duque (2013, p. 12) terms it.

Thus, the “*dispositivo* of sexuality is [a] potent and perverse strategy, not of repression, but of the management and control of the production of bodies, subjectivities, and populations” (Cassal; Gonzalez; Bicalho, 2011, p.466, our translation), which can be observed in the institutions of modern and contemporary society.

Butler (2020) builds upon Foucauldian studies to propose a conception of gender identity, understanding it as a culturally anchored category rather than one rooted in bio-physiological-morphological aspects.

Following these lines of reasoning, wherein sex and gender are analyzed through the constructions of discursive practices developed through numerous inter-relational, interdisciplinary, and discursive factors, Foucault affirms that “sexuality is socially constituted” (Spargo, 2019, p.24, our translation).

Under a social structure governed by cisheterosexist logic, which legitimizes only cisgender and heterosexual subjects and subjectivities, numerous attempts have been made to erase and render invisible the historical trajectory of the LGBTQIAPN+ movement. These efforts rely on violent, stereotyped narratives sustained by mechanisms of knowledge/power management maintained throughout history by regimes of discrimination and prejudice. One such regime, heterocentrism,

imposes its rules and violence—from machismo to misogyny, the presumption of universal heterosexuality, the binary view of sex, and rigid gender roles, to hatred and persecution directed at lesbians, trans people, and

gay men. This regime thrives and expands daily, emanating from church pulpits, mosques, schools, courts, families, radios, television, and the press (Sáez; Carrascosa, 2016, p. 7, our translation).

Nevertheless, even within this oppressive context, scholars such as Trevisan (2018) and Mott (1992) highlight the existence of affective-sexual experiences and identity expressions among subjects belonging to the LGBTQIAPN+ community before the arrival of Portuguese colonizers in Brazilian territory. These expressions were evident in the arts, monuments, myths, accounts, and historical and documentary records.

During the period of enslavement and the transatlantic slave trade conducted by European nations, which forcibly brought African people to Brazil, records demonstrate the presence of subjects with non-Europeanized subjectivities. One example is the figure of Xica Manicongo, the first African Black Cross-dresser documented in the sixteenth century. Trafficked from the Congo region to Brazil, she subverted norms of race, gender, and sexuality (Nascimento, 2021, p. 86).

Non-cisheterosexual identities and relationships began to be labeled as immoral, deviant, sinful, and/or illegal only with the establishment of colonization in Brazil. This was primarily due to the imposition of Christian moral-religious conduct, the proliferation of Eurocentric ideologies, and the creation of mechanisms to control and discipline subjectivities through colonization, particularly with Jesuit education. These processes, which persist to this day, carry stigmas, stereotypes, and prejudices against LGBTQIAPN+ individuals.

Discrimination and prejudice, as forms of violence, constitute a structural LGBTQIAPN+-phobic matrix of oppression that is a direct consequence of colonialist regimes. This regime continues to traverse and regulate the structures of power and knowledge relations in contemporary Brazilian society through a coloniality framework that remains operative despite formal decolonization.

Moreover, this violent mechanism of oppression can be understood as:

An arbitrary manifestation of designating the other as one's "opposite," contrary to the norm, inferior, or abnormal. This process is promoted by the hierarchical organization of sexualities in contemporary society, where heterosexuality becomes the standard against which all other forms of sexuality are measured. As a result, LGBTQIAPN+-phobia affects all individuals who challenge the normative body-sex-gender-sexuality-desire framework: in addition to homosexuals, bisexuals, intersex individuals, asexuals, cross-dresser, transsexuals, and many other forms of being that diverge from cisheteronormativity (Conselho Federal de Psicologia - CFP, 2023, p. 35, our translation).

In recent years, particularly between 2018 and 2022, Brazil has maintained an extremely hostile environment where LGBTQIAPN+ individuals face precarious living conditions. Their rights and citizenship are repeatedly denied or unrecognized by modern/colonial institutions. For instance, the pathologization of LGBTQIAPN+ identities, perpetuated by the scientific community, psychiatry, and psychology under the “Sexual Difference” regime throughout history, materializes a social structure aimed at mortifying the existence and singularities of subjects who resist and dissent from the gender, sex, and sexuality norms imposed upon them (Preciado, 2022).

We also highlight the contemporary manifestation of Necropolitics as developed by the Federal Government during the years 2018 to 2022. This was evident in discourse that incited hatred against diverse forms of human existence, as well as through the propagation of distorted, false, and fabricated information about the LGBTQIAPN+ movement on social media platforms. Examples include the fictitious “Gay Kit” and the spurious concept of “Gender Ideology.” These “fake news” narratives aimed to generate moral panic among a specific segment of Brazil’s conservative population, which often lacked knowledge about gender identity and sexual orientation studies. This population, inundated with misinformation, was led to fear that their worldview, values, morality, and ethics were under threat. Such occurrences intensified and normalized discriminatory and hateful reactions, particularly within educational institutions, families, and other social structures (Castro Rocha, 2021).

In addition to the issues outlined above, the mentioned federal administration not only provoked but actively encouraged and legitimized violence against LGBTQIAPN+ individuals throughout its tenure. By promoting false narratives that fomented hatred toward these modes of existence, the government contributed to sustaining a societal framework marked by rigid and extreme conservative sovereignty. This framework disregarded the plurality of individual subjectivities, upholding the notion that so-called “universal subjects” (cisgender, heterosexual, white, and bourgeois individuals) are entitled to subjugate, harm, and even kill those deemed “abject subjects.” These abject subjects, although alive, are not recognized as human.

If certain lives are not qualified as lives or if, from the start, they are not conceivable as lives within certain epistemological frames, then these lives will never be lived or lost in the full sense of those terms [...] There is no challenge that recognition offers to the form of the human that has traditionally served as the norm for the condition of being recognized, as the person is that very norm [...] Indeed, a living figure outside the norms of life not only becomes the problem that normativity must address but appears to be what

normativity is fated to reproduce: it is alive, but it is not a life (Butler, 2023, p. 13-20-22, our translation).

The *Index of Deaths and Violence against LGBTI+ Individuals in Brazil*, published in 2023 through the collaboration of three organizations: *Acontece Arte e Política LGBTI+*, *Associação Nacional de Travestis e Transexuais (ANTRA)* and *Associação Brasileira de Lésbicas, Gays, Bissexuais, Travestis, Transexuais e Intersexos (ABGLT)*, reveals that, in 2022, there were 273 cases of homicides characterized by extreme violence, as well as suicides and various other forms of violence against LGBTQIAPN+ individuals.

The report by these non-governmental organizations indicates that out of the 273 documented cases, 228 were homicides, 30 were suicides, and 15 involved other forms of violence. According to the report: “This indicates an absence of measures and actions that include this population in public policies and protection mechanisms. Without these actions, the exclusion, violence, and denial of rights—especially Fundamental Rights such as the right to life—are perpetuated” (Acontece; ANTRA; ABGLT, 2023, p. 9, our translation).

We further emphasize that analyzing the effects of structural LGBTQIAPN+phobia on the lives of LGBTQIAPN+ individuals is an exceedingly complex task. These effects permeate various social spheres, including schools, the labor market, the public healthcare system, and even familial environments.

Moreover, these effects become deeper, more intense, and more complex when intersecting with other social markers of difference, such as race and social class. As highlighted by scholars like Mombaça (2021) and Oliveira (2020), trans individuals, non-binary individuals, and effeminate Black queer men, particularly those from peripheral communities, are especially vulnerable to violence. This vulnerability stems from a cisheterosexist context of extreme hostility and the marginalization of their bodies and subjectivities, exacerbated by the overlap of multiple stigmatized social markers.

However, in light of this critical scenario, the Brazilian State remains not only negligent but actively fosters practices and knowledge that legitimize violence against members of this community, sustaining an unequal system that contradicts the principles of democracy (Grupo Gay da Bahia - GGB, 2022). This reality is evidenced by the persistence of an education system grounded in cisheteronormative pedagogies, which continue to render LGBTQIAPN+ individuals and modes of existence invisible, marginalized, and subjected to violence within educational institutions. This normativity is entrenched at the very foundation of socialization, using school education as a disciplinary device (Oliveira, 2020).

The School Curriculum: The Production and Reproduction of Cisheteronormativity

Before delving into theoretical formulations regarding the concept of school, it is essential to frame the institution within a network of knowledge and discursive practices that shape curricula, documents, and educational guidelines. The first two refer to what is formally planned, while the third concerns materialized classroom experiences, reflecting the socio-historical productions of power, norms, and epistemic standards. These standards function as regimes of truth, delineating the selection, organization, hierarchization, and assessment of what is deemed valid knowledge, as well as the school's role in shaping citizen subjects.

Historically, Brazilian school institutions partially adhered to principles associated with values inherited from the colonial period, predominantly through Jesuit education. These values encompass notions of civilization versus primitiveness, establishing norms and beliefs that elevate certain individuals to the status of subjects while segregating others deemed as “the other”: those who are not recognized as subjects but rather perceived as strange, inferior, sinful, diseased, perverse, criminal—essentially, those who deviate from the references of adulthood, masculinity, whiteness, heterosexuality, bourgeois status, and “normal” physical and mental conditions (Junqueira, 2012).

As Dayrell (2001, p. 139, our translation) notes, “The school is seen as a unique institution with uniform purposes and objectives, aimed at ensuring access for all to the body of knowledge accumulated by society.” However, in stark contradiction to this ideal, the school's structural constitution perpetuates inequalities and injustices by failing to critically address the historical and social origins of its students in a country whose colonial roots remain evident in contemporary times. This omission obstructs the dismantling of entrenched superiority complexes, hierarchical systems, and other mechanisms that segregate and differentiate individuals based on their identities. Each individual is already a subject, shaped by a unique set of subjective experiences acquired in various life contexts.

In a neoliberal and accelerationist capitalist⁷, political framework, schools reproduce a form of hierarchization closely aligned with technocratic curricula, publicly exposing social differences tied to gender identity, sexuality, race, class, religion, ethnicity, and physical condition—all of which are marked by historically pre-determined social inequalities that have

⁷ “An accelerationist policy involves the attempt to take capitalism and its entire socio-technological process to its ultimate consequences. It is about expanding capitalism, accelerating capitalism until there is a mutation, or its elimination” (Leopoldo, 2020, p. 244, our translation).

yet to be fully redressed through public policies or affirmative actions. While some progress has been made, driven by social movements, these advancements are often accompanied by failures that are, to some extent, deemed “acceptable.” This is because schools are increasingly guided by market-oriented and privatization-driven principles, reducing political issues to economic considerations and neoliberal rationality.

From this socio-historical perspective, it becomes evident that schools have been adapting to the heterogeneous modes of the capitalist system, supplying the knowledge and workforce necessary for its functioning. This gradual process shapes subjectivities in a “liquid life,” generating and transmitting values that legitimize dominant interests while masking alternatives for social governance. It also fosters the internalization of structural domination through a consumerist lens, perpetuating inequality among those who deviate from the normative social standards of being and existing.

However, it is essential to consider that the school institution is not the controlling ideological force of the system we refer to. On the contrary, one of its primary functions is to produce conformity and consensus to the extent that it can, utilizing its internal instruments, institutionalized limits, and legally sanctioned mechanisms to control and maintain the status quo of a societal organization based on the hierarchization of individuals according to identity categories. Therefore, the desired changes in this field cannot be merely formal but must be substantive, aimed at promoting the democratization and radical transformation of social inequalities (Mészáros, 2008).

From this perspective, it is essential to recognize that no space is neutral; all spaces are imbued with moral values, ideas, ideals, traditions, customs, and aspirations. In schools, the challenge lies in acknowledging and embracing diversity and plurality, fostering critical reflection and tolerance toward what is still perceived as “unknown” or “different,” while emphasizing the need to link the contexts of knowledge production to broader social life, extending beyond academic and scientific realms (Perez Gomes, 2001 *apud* Oliveira, 2003).

According to Perez Gomes (2000), schools appear to lack initiative in addressing urgent and contemporary demands, remaining tied to historically questioned and/or outdated knowledge, as well as to retrograde approaches. This occurs because, while schools persistently impose modes of subjectification, conduct, thought, and relationships aligned with a given society's normative and regulatory framework, they also possess the autonomy to enact radical changes influenced by their surroundings. As Foucault (2021, p. 105, our translation) asserted, “Where there is power, there is resistance.”

For instance, we propose employing decolonial theory as a lens to reflect on potential changes through alternative epistemological, philosophical, and ethical frameworks that are counter-colonial.

Decolonial theory [...] critically reflects on our common sense and scientific assumptions regarding time, space, knowledge, and subjectivity, among other key areas of human experience, allowing us to identify and explain the ways in which colonized subjects experience colonization, while also providing conceptual tools to advance decolonization [...] Decolonial thought and theory demand critical engagement with modernity theories, which tend to serve as epistemological frameworks for European sciences and humanities (Bernardino *et al.*, 2018, p. 29, our translation).

Building upon this observation, it is crucial to highlight that a historically entrenched pattern exists within school culture, reinforcing mechanisms of adaptation and domination through legislative processes, regulatory documents, guidelines, instructional materials, pedagogical theories and methodologies, organizational structures, management practices, and political decision-making processes aligned with the interests of a specific population identified as universal subjects who maintain a monopoly on power relations. This pattern is particularly pronounced and evident in a nation-state like Brazil, which has had 201 years of independence and decolonization. Coloniality continues to operate through axes of the subject constitution, including *being-knowing*, *being-power*, and *being-self* (ethics), within processes and mechanisms that shape subjectivities.

This historical reality of school institutions permeates the legislation and recommendations issued by public entities that claim democratic principles. In other words, schools, as institutions embedded within the structure of a nation-state shaped by colonization, enslavement, and institutionalized policies of exclusion and erasure—particularly regarding access to education as a fundamental social right for Afro-Brazilian, Indigenous, and LGBTQIAPN+ populations—become the primary institutions tasked with “educating” citizen-subjects within a formally defined framework. This is often achieved through the naturalization and/or normalization of social inequalities.

However, the school as an institution is broad and possesses the capacity to restructure itself based on lived daily experiences, determining its particularities, singularities, and ethical historical framework of the nation. When adopted as reparative policies, these practices can foster a culture that encompasses and addresses the needs of a country characterized by immense diversity (Silva, 2006).

However, it is essential to emphasize and critically examine whether schools effectively function as inclusive institutions for all, per Article 205 of the Constitution of the Federative Republic of Brazil. As Louro (1997) observes, schools have historically produced differences, distinctions, and inequalities, as they were originally designed to separate those already integrated into the educational system from those excluded from it. Moreover, schools are marked by contradictions, as despite being conceived to welcome everyone without distinction, the reality reveals that certain individuals are included while others are denied access due to factors that condition them to social subordination.

Over time, however, schools have faced pressures from political and social movements demanding transformations aimed at including populations in situations of social vulnerability. Although the origins of the school system lacked a social focus and were not designed to address historical demands, these changes were imposed by the struggles and demands of progressive political parties and anti-racist social movements, shaping an institution where "organization, curricula, facilities, educators, regulations, and evaluations would, explicitly or implicitly, 'guarantee' — and also produce — the differences between individuals" (Louro, 1997, p. 58, our translation).

Thus, it is pertinent to reflect: what would be the ideal school environment to embrace the diversity of individuals in contemporary society, considering the plurality of subjective and identity-based existences? While this question might seem straightforward, the reality is far more complex. Idealizing a perfect school risk leading to homogenization, standardization, and rigid categorization, ultimately constructing a distant utopia — a goal that should not be pursued. Instead, schools must critically address prevailing social conditions, develop methods and onto-epistemologies that confront inequalities and discriminations, and actively resist oppression in its multiple forms.

We acknowledge that schools comprise a broad range of diversities, and this characteristic cannot and should not be disregarded or overlooked. Questioning their responsibilities and underlying conceptions is an act of resistance and struggle, requiring a broad, fair, and genuinely democratic stance, inclusive of all. However, there is growing evidence of both physical and psychological violence against diverse modes of being and existing, often justified by so-called moral principles, which, in practice, manifest as acts of oppression and violence (Castro; Santos; Cunha, 2023). As formal and social spaces of education, schools are obligated to uphold equality, freedom, and human dignity. Achieving this requires recognizing that beliefs and customs cannot be imposed, and fostering respect for

differences must be actively promoted and debated, ensuring that diverse identities and existences are acknowledged and valued (Fernandes *et al.*, 2020).

According to Caetano, Lima, and Castro (2019, p. 8, our translation), "A school that claims to be democratic cannot shy away from systematically confronting all forms of violence and discrimination, including rape culture and various types of bullying, while respecting the human plurality characteristic of the society in which it operates."

Thus, we understand that schools must position themselves as spaces where differences are respected and plurality is defended. As democratic institutions, they must break away from paradigms that rigidly shape education, fostering reflections on the concept of citizenship and recognizing the contributions of students of all genders and identities to the construction and organization of social life.

Cisheterosexist Pedagogies and Their Effects on the Lives of LGBTQIAPN+ Individuals in Schools

*Naming the norm is the first step toward a disobedient, anticolonial redistribution of gender and violence because the norm is that which remains unnamed, and therein lies its privilege.*⁸

The norm is only apprehended because it is taught, performed, and constituted through discursive practices rooted in the mutual production of knowledge and the exercise of power. Furthermore, discursive practices are responsible for generating and constituting meaning within our social reality, shaping the subjectivization of individuals over time and space.

Throughout the history of modern society, the evolution of various social sectors during the 17th and 18th centuries (religious, intellectual, scientific, moral, educational, artistic, literary) marked the emergence of a new stage in the history of Western Europe. This stage later extended, through European colonization, to the global Western world: the birth of biopolitics as a process of systematizing strategies for managing and automating life.

Michel Foucault (2021) invites us to reflect on the transformation of control mechanisms in modern societies. Unlike earlier societies, where necropolitics and disciplinary power were tactics directly imposed on individuals, the era of biopolitics operates on a distinct level. In this context, life is conceptualized at the population level, becoming both a product and an object of regulation. The individual, in turn, is produced by discursive practices of

⁸ Mombaça (2022, p. 75).

knowledge-power that promote conformity, normalization, and regulation, defining how life should, will, or must be conducted. These practices constitute tools associated with a rationality aimed at understanding and guiding human existence, a perspective that demands deep reflection, research, and study.

In the biopolitical era, control is no longer exerted through external forces but through discursive practices integrated into the individual's reality, leading them to engage in self-control, self-adjustment, and self-administration. This logic is embedded in the rationality of nation-states ideologically oriented by (neo)liberalism and the capitalist economy.

This *modus operandi*, orchestrated by institutions (schools, churches, hospitals, prisons, families, and media), fosters the normalization of the biopolitical subject. Within this context, pedagogy emerges as a mechanism of power, responsible for producing and regulating knowledge and exercising power that upholds a specific conception of the individual. However, this same pedagogy also encounters challenges. It must contend with contemporary subjectivities that resist binary gender norms (male/female cisgender) and sexual orientation norms (heterosexuality), forming dissidents that demand equal rights, historical reparations, and public policies within the framework of a democratic state.

In Cândido de Figueiredo's Portuguese Dictionary (1993 [1913])⁹, "pedagogy" is defined as "the art of education and teaching; the moral education of children. The ways of a pedagogue." When consulting this material for the definition of the individual who practices and produces pedagogy, the pedagogue, it is described as: "a slave who, in antiquity, accompanied children to schools. Teacher of children. One who practices pedagogy or is concerned with methods of educating and teaching. One who arrogates the right to criticize OTHERS. One who flaunts erudition. Pedant" (Figueiredo, 1993 [1913], p. 1504, our translation).

Nonetheless, when comparing Figueiredo's definitions of pedagogy (1993 [1913]) with those found in Aulete's contemporary dictionary (2011, p. 1042, our translation), we identify similar meanings. Aulete defines pedagogy as: "science and a set of theories, principles, and methods of education and teaching; the craft and practice of systematic teaching; the science encompassing techniques for addressing children and adolescents with learning difficulties; the pedagogical method employed in reeducation or specialized adult education." Therefore, we observe that the meanings attributed to pedagogy in Brazilian Portuguese have historically

⁹ The dictionaries used for this research were chosen because they were contemporary.

occupied a space between normalization and the management of life, starting from the earliest moments of human socialization.

Interpreting the definitions of pedagogy presented by Figueiredo (1993 [1913]) and Aulete (2011), we reference the notion of the dispositive of power tied to the forms of subjectivization and subjection of individuals. This perspective reveals pedagogy as a mechanism operating in tandem with biopolitics, promoting normalization, adaptation, and the production of subjects during their initial phase of social interaction. Within this framework, pedagogy serves to align individuals with the standards established by a normativized society. However, it also aligns with necrobiopolitics, targeting those individuals who deviate from hegemonic norms of being and existence, penalizing them for failing to adhere to the ethical and social standards predefined as “correct.”

Thus, power relations and their resistances manifest as forces constituting the standard subject and producing deviant individuals, subject to surveillance and exclusion. This exclusion extends beyond a policy of optimizing bodies, manifesting instead in necropolitical practices, illustrating a biopolitical and necropolitical strategy designed to serve the interests of the market, economy, and neoliberal ideology.

In modern societies, the soul is first implanted as a living presence within the flesh. Over time, as it grows, it is sculpted like a bonsai through repetitive training and punishment, linguistic invocations, and institutional rituals aimed at reducing it to a specific identity. Some souls unfold more than others, yet none exist within the garden of the living without being the result of implantation and pruning. Among all bodies, some appear to have existed without souls for a long time. These were regarded as mere anatomy: edible flesh, working muscles, reproductive wombs, and skin to ejaculate into. These have been—and continue to be—those referred to as animals, the colonized, enslaved, and racialized bodies, as well as, in a different sense, women, individuals considered sick or disabled, children, homosexuals, and those whose souls, as 19th-century medicine claimed, were thought to desire migration into a body of different sex (Preciado, 2023, p. 20, our translation).

The interrelations in educational processes, materialized through pedagogical practices, constitute discursive practices that, in the contemporary context, are legacies of historical processes imposed and imported through colonization in Brazil, perpetuated by European modernity. These discursive practices, aimed at the domestication of individuals, are not recent; they trace back to the period of Jesuit education and the imposition of Christian-Judaic knowledge historically associated with biomoral knowledge (biological sciences and moral-Christian doctrines). An example can be found in the model that distinguishes human beings

based on genital characteristics, defining a binary gender division (man/woman) and associating this distinction with heterosexuality as the only legitimate, natural, and dignified form of sexual experience.

In this sense, Nascimento (2021, p. 96, our translation) asserts that “we need to understand discursive processes as creators of our social reality” in order to comprehend how the knowledge-power of a given era operates in constructing regimes of truth. These regimes are legitimized in various fields and areas of knowledge through discourses that reinforce their authority when naturalized and normalized.

The school, as the educational institution we know today, has its origins in Europe. Although it has undergone several transformations over time, the school has always functioned as an extension of the European model of worldview and cosmoperception, sustaining its ideologies, knowledge, practices, discourses, and formats. These structures are rigidly configured to shape subjectivities and identities in accordance with hegemonic modern and neocolonial norms.

Thus, gender identities and sexual orientations become means, modes, and technologies for maintaining this deterministic standard, ensuring the status quo of a world organization that favors such hegemonies. In this way, the school is understood as a true biocropolitical technology, manifested in cisheteronormative pedagogies, which operate in the normalization of subjects in contemporary society.

Heteronormativity is a regime of visibility, that is, a social model that regulates the ways in which people relate to one another. In our times, society minimally permits, although marginally, that people may engage in same-sex relationships; therefore, for certain privileged social strata, we no longer live in the full domain of compulsory heterosexuality. Among urban middle and upper classes, particularly in metropolitan areas, the existence of individuals attracted to others of the same sex has gained clear visibility. In this context, it cannot be said that homosexuality is entirely denied, but society still demands conformity to gender expectations and a lifestyle that upholds heterosexuality as the unquestionable model for all (Miskolci, 2021, p. 46, our translation).

Miskolci (2021, p. 19, our translation) states that “the school punishes and persecutes those who escape control, marking them as strange, abnormal, undesirable.” Based on this author, the very institution of the school, in its physical and organizational structure — such as the distinction between male and female restrooms for cisgender individuals — reinforces and communicates gender binarism, based on anatomical-physiological and morphological criteria applied to students and other members of the school community.

Within this context, various control and framing techniques for bodies emerge in the social relations promoted by the school. Seemingly simple practices, such as forming segregated lines by binary genders (boys and girls), adopting differentiated uniforms, using colors associated with gender binarism (blue for boys and pink for girls), and school materials that reproduce stereotypical representations, exemplify mechanisms of normalization. These techniques function as cisheteronormative strategies that seek to shape subjectivities in alignment with hegemonic gender and sexuality norms, acting as elements of pedagogization that link the sex-gender-desire system to other spheres of life, such as capitalism and the market.

The subject, therefore, is continuously (in)formed by multiple social institutions, with the school being one of the primary agents reinforcing the norms projected by the European modern-colonial model. In this context, cisheteronormative pedagogies, as techniques of disciplining, transcend the educational environment and manifest in other institutions, such as the conservative nuclear family and fundamentalist and extremist Judeo-Christian religious organizations, rooted in cisgender and heterosexist conceptions.

Furthermore, these disciplining practices are inscribed, regulated, and performed by all social subjects, whether legal or physical, who operate under the cisheteronormative logic. These practices include, in extreme cases, the perpetuation of bionecropolitical violence driven by biologizing and moralizing knowledge. This dynamic enables socially privileged subjects to fail to recognize the diversity of subjectivities, dehumanizing those who do not conform to the normative standard, resulting in various forms of violence, including symbolic, affective, moral, physical, and even homicides and suicides of individuals who deviate from gender and sexuality norms.

As a strategy of survival and resistance to these violences, the LGBTQIAPN+ population often adopts and performs behaviors, conducts, aesthetics, and affective relationships aligned with the cisheteronormative model, aiming to avoid gender and sexuality discrimination. A contemporary example of this dynamic is the incorporation and valorization of masculinity by homosexual men in their gender and sexuality performances, frequently distancing themselves from traits and mannerisms associated with femininity. This demonstrates the arbitrariness of the relationship between sexual identity and gender identity, highlighting that cisgender homosexual men can also reproduce misogyny towards feminine performances. However, this practice is not restricted to a specific sexual orientation or gender identity, being observed in different subjects and contexts.

Subjects perform discursive practices that contribute to the normative structure of sexuality and gender identity in hegemony. It is a technique that may not align with gender identity and sexuality norms but conforms to cisgender requirements and affective-sexual relationships that adapt to the norms without subverting them. Even while deviating from the norms, gender and sexuality performances do not break with this cisgender and heterosexist system but adjust to being accepted by this model of life, making them, within the capitalist system, (re)productive beings rather than resistant ones.

The process of self-adjustment of the LGBTQIAPN+ population to the molds of cisheteronormative pedagogies in education is a strategy of normalization and framing of this population within the economic system of productivity.

Whereas previously, everyone was educated for heterosexuality, with those who did not follow it being punished or ignored, the education now shifts to the binary, to being either hetero or homo. In addition to maintaining the normalizing impulse, merely expanding the number of possibilities for a restricted set of identities available today, this form of education places even greater social pressure on children or adolescents, people in formation, to define themselves and adopt an identity. This form of pressure is, in itself, a violence that we can avoid (Miskolci, 2021, p. 18, our translation).

The juxtaposition of subjects within the framework of a structure entrenched by a knowledge power that maintains the cisgender, heterosexual, and patriarchal order does not promote an experience of emancipation and liberation, as proposed by Freire (2009), but rather new banking strategies of education, based on the normalization of subjects considered undesirable for the system, which is then inserted into state-controlled bionecropolitics.

Such strategies of subjugation, stylization, and control of subjectivities maintained in school spaces have negative effects on gender-disobedient subjects and those in sexual dissent, such as the LGBTQIAPN+ population (Torres, 2010).

A study conducted during the 8th GLBT Pride Parade in Belo Horizonte in 2005 concluded that 44.7% of the individuals interviewed had experienced discrimination within the school environment. Furthermore, the school was identified as the third most significant context of discrimination for these individuals, ranking just below the family environment and public leisure spaces (Prado; Rodrigues; Machado, 2006).

Given the hostile reality faced by the LGBTQIAPN+ community not only in schools but also in various social spaces, whether public or private, studies indicate that these individuals are exposed to greater psychological distress. This vulnerability is associated with a higher propensity for the development and/or intensification of psychopathologies, such as

anxiety and depression. Additionally, the data from these studies reveal that this social group has a higher susceptibility to risky behaviors, as well as the use and abuse of psychoactive substances, compared to the cisheterosexual population (Baére; Conceição, 2018; Barbosa; Medeiros, 2018; Castro; Nascimento, 2021).

Final considerations

When reflecting on cisheteronormative pedagogies and their impacts on the lives of LGBTQIAPN+ subjects within the context of Brazilian basic education, we identify the school institution as a powerful agent in the reproduction of a hegemonic worldview. This understanding is based on an idea of the universal subject, which neglects, violates, and excludes those who deviate from the established normative standard. When not excluded, these subjects are compelled to conform, so that, even in their dissent, they do not break from the cisheterosexist structure but remain under control.

In this sense, sexuality and gender identity are central devices for adjusting and regulating subjects, determining ways of being and existing that the school institution monitors. The school, in turn, operates as a microstructure that extends the European worldview. Brazilian society, in producing and reproducing itself under an ideology projecting the universality of the subject, uses various mechanisms to perpetuate this vision, with the school being one of its primary allies. This dynamic maintains a hostile and violent Brazilian context for all who challenge the binary sex-gender-desire norm, including LGBTQIAPN+ subjects.

In light of this, it is understood that cisheteronormative pedagogies operate in the formation of ways of being and existing, grounded in a concept of the subject anchored in a worldview where cisgender and heterosexuality are established as norms. These norms are transmitted and reinforced by the school institution as formative practices of subjects.

We, therefore, reflect that gender performativity and sexual orientation practices are learned, taught, and (re)produced, effectively constituting a pedagogy that dictates how the subject should be and exists in a society structured under a cisheteronormative logic. This logic exclusively legitimizes the ideology of the cisgender and heterosexual subject, relegating dissident subjectivities, such as those of the LGBTQIAPN+ population, to a constant state of rejection and surveillance. These subjectivities are repeatedly marked as incompatible with the prevailing norms, a process that often begins within the school institution itself.

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