

Do luto à luta / From Grief to Struggle

Directed by: Evaldo Morcazel
Montage: Marcelo Moraes
Produced by: Leila Bourdoukan and Renata Rudge
Date: 2005
Running time: 75'
Country: Brazil
Language: Portuguese (English subtitles)
Availability in the UK: Queen Mary, University of London, Library

Do luto à luta offers an alternative view of Down's syndrome, capable of – as some critics have stated – exorcising the stigma attributed to that condition, which is fuelled by lack of knowledge. This is a story of the contrast between the initial devastation of the parents – influenced by society's ignorance about the matter – and what Down's syndrome people can actually accomplish in life at many levels. The film shows successful outcomes in Down's syndrome people's lives: marriages, jobs, ambition (one of the interviewees wants to be a filmmaker as famous as Spielberg), educational performance, capacity for expressing emotions and love.

The opening images show a group of people dressed up in masks, shouting and chanting. When they stop, they take their masks off to reveal a group of Down's syndrome adults. There are interviews in a maternity ward with parents of disabled children who are 'mongoloid' or have Down's syndrome, expressing their feelings of anger, heartbreak and desolation as they found out that their children had Down's syndrome.

The film is structured mainly through interviews with Down's syndrome people of all ages and their parents. There are many eye-opening interviews with Down's syndrome adults who have done well educationally and emotionally, and talk about their lives, their likes and loves, etc. Some of them have jobs or are members of musical bands. They talk about their condition and the tremendous prejudices that society has against them. They demand equal rights and to be respected as any other member of society.

The documentary ends on a celebratory note: a couple of Down's syndrome people get married, and as a celebration of the marriage, all the Down's participants attend a concert with a band which is also made up of Down's syndrome people. Their dancing and shared happiness is the final token that this film offers us about their potential in life.

Real characters are presented on location.

RELATED INFORMATION

Other documentaries by Evaldo Morcazel include:

Os invisíveis / The Invisible (2006)

À margem do concreto / On the Fringes of Concrete (2005)

A margem da imagem / On the Fringes of São Paulo (2002)

Mensageiras da luz - Parteiras da Amazônia / Messengers of Light (2004)

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