

Conceptions of Education and Its Influence on the Brazilian Educational System: Some Examples Derived from the Socio-Cultural History

Marina Massimi

The Contemporary Crisis in Education and the Resumption of the Historical Roots

In Brazil, the education crisis is somehow permanent. A text written in 1954 (2003) by philosopher H. Arendt can help us understand the reasons for this crisis. The text highlights the evidence of a profound crisis in education in the context of the American society, and, in the author's opinion, this crisis would spread to the entire Western world. Arendt states that this crisis should be taken as an opportunity to "explore and investigate the essence of the issue": "the essence of education is the natality, the fact that human beings are born to the world" (1954/2003, p. 223). It is a fact that, in light of contemporary pedagogical theories, "prejudices disappeared", but it is also appropriate to consider that "we lost the answers that we ordinarily relied on" and that "these were answers to questions." (Arendt 1954/2003, p. 223) Right now, "the crisis forces us to go back to the same questions and demands new or old answers, but, anyway, it demands direct judgments" (Arendt 1954/2003, p. 223). A crisis could become disastrous in that "we respond to it with preformed judgments, namely with prejudice"; such an attitude, according to Arendt, not only sharpens the crisis, but it also deprives us of "the experience of reality and the opportunity of its provided reflection" (idem). Referring to the specific context of the Americas, Arendt argues that the issue of education becomes more politically decisive because the social contexture mainly consists of immigration, and the instruction and education of children are essential tools for the fusion among remarkably diverse ethnic groups. Arendt points out the "continuous role that immigration plays in political consciousness and in psychic structure" (ibid., 223–224) of the continent as decisive factor for reflection on education in the Americas.

M. Massimi (✉)

Universidade de São Paulo, Campus de Ribeirão Preto, São Paulo, Brazil
e-mail: mmassimi3@yahoo.com

Nowadays, this process occurs throughout the West, and multiculturalism has become a challenge of global proportions.

Arendt focuses more specifically on the history of North America and continues her discussion examining peculiar aspects of this country, centered on the ideal of constituting a “new world order” (1954/2003, p. 224), eliminating poverty and oppression. In this context, the attention given to children and their education immediately assumes a political connotation. The American utopians were not only inspired by the revolutionary ideal of J.J. Rousseau, but also by “all political utopias that, from ancient times,” consider “natural to start a new world with those who are young by birth and nature” (idem, p. 225).

Also according to Arendt, the ascription to the education of a political role in a land of immigrants implies triggering a process in which children and their families are induced “to get rid of an old world and enter a new world”; the illusion that this new world and its new order would be built through the education of children is inculcated in children and families (idem, p. 226). This position entails serious mistakes, according to the philosopher: on the one hand, the use of the intervention of the political reforms (and of their authors), instead of persuasion and willingness to take the risk of failure; on the other, “the attempt to produce the new, as if the new no longer existed” (idem, p. 225). As a result, “the fact that each generation turns into an ancient world belongs to the very nature of the human condition, in a way that preparing a new generation for a new world can only mean to tear away the own opportunity facing the new from the hands of the newcomers” (idem, p. 226).

According to Arendt, the most serious consequences of this position are evidenced in the American context, especially since the 1930s. In the United States, the “modern educational theories” that emerged in Central Europe were tested on a large scale; “an impressive miscellany of sense and nonsense carries out, under the motto of progressive education, a radical revolution in the whole educational system” (1954/2003, p. 226). In such manner that, “what remained in Europe an experiment, tested here and there,” in America totally dropped all established traditions and methods of teaching and learning; especially because of these theories, “all the rules of normal human judgment were set aside” (idem, p. 227). However, Arendt continues, in discussing political issues, the disappearance or renunciation of the use of common sense, which is the use of “human judgment in an attempt to provide answers,” entails serious crises insofar as “this kind of judgment is actually the common sense by virtue of which we and our five senses are adapted to a unique world common to all of us, and we move in this world with that help” (ibid.,).

Arendt points out three basic assumptions of the “progressive” educational proposal, which considers the causes of failure: first, the belief that there is a world of children, and a society formed by them, independent from the adult world where the adults do not have authority. Thereby, the authority is shifted from the adult to the group, and this authority is “stronger and more tyrannical than the most severe authority of an isolated adult” (1954/2003, p. 230). Thus, instead of emancipating and being free, the child is subjected “to a more terrifying and truly tyrannical authority, which is the tyranny of the majority” (idem, p. 230), before which the

child can neither rebel nor argue, nor escape. Arendt lucidly comments on the possibility that the reaction of the child to this situation is either conformism or delinquency—or even worse, a mixture of both. It is impressive to see the processes that happen today, which Arendt advocated in 1954 when she wrote this essay.

The second assumption concerns teaching. Under the influence of scientific psychology and of pragmatism, pedagogy became an educational science in general, entirely emancipated from the actual topic to be taught. The training of the teacher is thus focused on the tutorship method, and it neglects his or her competence in the specific topics.

The third assumption, directly derived from pragmatism, is “that it is possible to know and understand what we did ourselves” (idem, p. 232), thus replacing learning by doing. Therefore, the aim of teaching should not be to transmit knowledge but inculcate skills. In this process, the distinction between work and toy is merged, and the child’s activity is totally focused on playfulness. Such a pedagogical position tends to make the world of the child absolute; the child becomes artificially excluded from the adult world. The artificiality is based on the fact that the natural relationship between adults and children is extinguished, and the fact that the childhood condition is a temporary stage in the process of human development is concealed.

By contrast, according to Arendt, education conveys to the child the world in which the child must take responsibility, and the educator mediates between the old and the new—among the past, the present, and the future. Education demands respect for the past and becomes “the point at which we decide whether we love the world enough to assume responsibility for it, and with that gesture, save it from the ruin which would be inevitable unless there were renovation and arrival of the new and young people” (idem, p. 247).

In face of this challenge, a historical and critical reinterpretation of the Brazilian sociocultural world is appropriate, and specifically of the concepts of education that prevailed in this area. Taking into account the multiethnic and multicultural diversity featuring the country, we need to recognize the existence of a multiplicity of conceptions regarding education, which were present in several forms throughout history, using various expressive methods and instruments. In this chapter, it would be impossible to use up the knowledge of all of them, but we focus on just a few that deserve special mention for having played a decisive role in the course of Brazilian history and in the Brazilian educational system: the concept of education in oral, indigenous, African and Lusitanian cultures, whose past we know indirectly by reports from missionaries and travelers; the concept of education proper to the Jesuit missionaries who endeavored in the challenge of providing educational experiences in all locations of their operations in Brazilian territory; and the modern conception of education of the twentieth century, especially the groups that in Brazil became spokespeople and project handlers of American progressive education. Other immigrant groups belonging to diverse ethnicities, over the centuries, brought to Brazil their traditions (coming from Western and Eastern Europe, Asia, North America) and made the educational process an important ambit for the preservation and transmission of traditions to new generations. It would be

impossible to account for the complex and diverse wealth of contributions and for articulations that were created in the brief space of these pages. Therefore, this chapter has absolutely no intention to exhaust the subject, but only to trace some aspects of this topic and, thus, contribute to the framework of a broader and desirable historical reconstruction.

Education Conception of the Indians and of the Oral Traditions in Brazil

The contexture of Brazilian popular culture is especially marked by the plurality of contributions yielded by encounters among people and different sociocultural groups. Orality constituted a common and immediate communication channel among different cultural realities that suddenly found themselves interacting and living together. Orality characterized cultures proper to the various indigenous ethnic groups present in Brazil at the time of the arrival of Portuguese settlers; orality also characterized the African populations that were massively deported to Brazil after being abruptly uprooted from their countries of origin. Orality was also a common parlance among European settlers and missionaries present in Brazil; most of the settlers also came from a tradition of oral prevalence, such as Lusitania of the sixteenth century. On one hand, orality allowed immediate exchange relations and, moreover, led to the establishment of expressive cultural forms of performative nature (e.g., gestures, songs, chants); on the other hand, it hampered the direct transmission of information through written language. This is how the written record concerning the educational concepts and practices proper to African and indigenous cultures came to us only indirectly by the mediation of European colonizers and missionaries, a mirror of strange glances facing the new experienced by the authors, more than the trustworthy report of the observed facts. Somehow, however, taking into account this feature, it is rich documentation of interest to the reader of the twenty-first century.

Unprecedented aspects of Indians' interactions with their children gave rise to the curiosity of the Portuguese visitor missionary, Jesuit Fernão Cardim (1540–1625). He notes that from an early age, indigenous children take part in the social world, living together and going through a rapid process of socialization. While still babies, they are held in slings by the mothers, who take them to the fields. As soon as possible, parents take the children to the subsistence activities of the community, hunting and fishing, so that they participate in an early age. Cardim reports that the boys play and live “with much quietness and friendship... Among them we do not hear bad names, neither raillery, nor calling names to fathers and mothers, and rarely when they play, they disconcert, or quarrel for some reason, or argue for something, they rarely fight with each other, or wrestle.” (1583/1980, p. 93).

With regard to parental feelings, the narrator says that the Indians “extraordinarily love their children” (p. 91) and “do not give them any kind of punishment”

(p. 91). Cardim also underscores that the natives “do not have any kind of punishment for the children, neither there is father or mother in their whole life who punishes or touches the children, so much parents regard them” (1980, p. 153). He verifies that, despite this, “the small children are extremely obedient to their parents, and everyone is very kind and pleasant” (ibid., p. 153)—a fact that likely really intrigued the mentality and the pedagogical concepts of the European Jesuits, who considered punishment as necessary in the educational relationship according to the practice of that time, when it was common to punish college students, princes, and kings.

Another Jesuit, José de Anchieta (1534–1597), sought to understand the motives of some parenting practices that were particularly curious and strange to European eyes, such as the fact that, after birth, the father is the one receiving care and visits, not the mother. According to the author, the fact is explained by the reason that the Indians “consider that real kinship comes from the fathers, who are the agents; and that mothers are nothing more than sacks, in respect of parents, where children are reared.” (Sixteenth century/1988, p. 460).

In the context of indigenous traditions, the narrative, or *poranduba*, is a common ritual in the villages of the Indians as well as in the interior of Brazil—“oral expression of Indian odyssey, the faithful summary of what was done, seen, and heard in the hours away from the family camp” (Cascudo 2006, p. 84). At the same time, it is a means of transmitting “joyful stories, fables, tales, unmistakable dance rhythm” (ibid., p. 85). The children participate in this ritual, as the sources developed in the course of the sixteenth century and cited by Cascudo underscore (idem). These narratives transmitted to children in the Tupi language are relayed by them after their schooling in a language that mixes the Tupi with the Portuguese and is also reworked by them.

African cultures have very old narrative practices: the narrators and storytellers have specific roles in African societies. The *akpalô* is the creator of the tales and *arokin* is the narrator, who even walks from place to place to transmit them. The child is the main recipient of these narratives. In Brazil, this role was played by wet nurses as well as by women who walked through the mills telling stories to black women who were wet nurses. The writer José Lins de Rego portrays in his autobiographical novel *Menino de Engenho* (1932/2010) the figure of the “old woman Totonha” that “occasionally knocked on to the mill” (p. 71) and “lived off telling stories,” walking from one mill to another mill: “great artist to dramatize,” “in a voice that gave all tones to the words,” “she had a prodigious memory” and “she recited whole tales in verse, occasionally interspersing pieces of prose.” Totonha put a fusion of traditions in her narratives, led by kings, queens, shipwrecks, murderers and miracles, wanderings of Christ and the apostles. Rego emphasizes that one of the qualities of these tales was the ability to recreate the scene depicted by the words in order to insert it in the context of life of its listeners, giving a “local color” to the narrative of events that were even distant in space and time: “When she wanted to paint a kingdom, it was like she was talking about a fabulous mill. The rivers and forests where her characters walked looked very much like Paraíba and Mata do Rolo. Her Bluebeard was a sugar planter from Pernambuco” (idem,

p. 73¹). Totonha's stories "were always new," once she owned "a piece of genius that never ages" (idem, p. 75).

The few written traces that are available to us, slight indications of a distant past, may find greater support in the consideration of other languages proper to the orality, which are transmitters of the past in peculiar ways. Cascudo (2006) emphasizes the importance of childhood pastimes as practices of cultural transmission and examines the historical roots of some games and some toys, still used nowadays by children in Brazil. "Ring a ring o'roses" folksongs from the Iberian and Portuguese matrix, wooden spinning-tops from the Greek matrix, and *parlengas* (traditional rhymed and rhythmic literary formulas) constitute a patrimony consolidated over a long period of time and inherited by each child born in a sociocultural context that minimally preserves and transmits it. They transmit not only content but also forms of socialization. They also evidence a conception of education centered on child inclusion as protagonist and carrier of the culture of the people.

In short, in Indian and African traditions as well as in Lusitanian popular culture, education, society, and culture are deeply intertwined. The child does not occupy a separate place in the life of the adult; on the contrary, the educational process happens within the core of social relationships, and the child is soon responsible for the elaboration and transmission of culture—the active subject and creative heir of a past that is recreated and updated. Thus, in these cultures, the process is preserved whereby "each new generation, and, indeed, each new human being, inserted between an infinite past and an infinite future, must discover and laboriously pave again" (Arendt 1954/2003, p. 40).

Education Conception of Jesuits and Their Contributions to Brazil

In Brazil, during at least two centuries, Jesuits had a significant social and cultural presence. Despite being immersed in the context of the colonial regime, deeply imbued with contradictions and conflicts, and subjected to the rules and games of the royal power, the missionaries of the Society were responsible for creating the first school system in the country and for the construction of numerous works, aimed at the integration of indigenous cultures and European cultures. The plays, poems, and compendium of Tupi-Guarani language grammar, written by Anchieta (1988), stand out among others. The relevance of the contribution of the Society of Jesus in the elaboration of knowledge and of Western science, from the sixteenth century, has been pointed out by several scholars (Giard 1995).

In the perspective that the Society of Jesus assumed, especially from the second half of the sixteenth century stimulated by the demands of European society

¹The location is in a borderline region between Pernambuco and Paraíba.

(O'Malley 1999), education and the establishment of schools as educational environments become the main path of missionary work. The emphasis on education as ministry of the Society of Jesus goes back to its origins: Inácio de Loyola narrates in his autobiography that in 1524 he realized the need to devote himself to the study in order to help the souls, and he was convinced that there was close correlation between the acquisition of virtue and the study of letters. In a letter sent by Pedro Ribadeneira requested by Inácio to the Emperor of Spain Felipe II, where the commitment of the Society regarding the foundation of colleges is justified, it is stated that all humanity and Christianity welfare depends on suitable education of the young.

In Brazil, the educational efforts of the Jesuits concerning children are founded on the humanist conviction of religious people that the cultural inferiority of the native people is due to a lack of education and not the anthropological or psychological structural diversity. This is what Manuel da Nobrega declares in the text *Diálogo sobre a conversão do gentio* in the imagined conversation between two Jesuits representatives of two different emerging positions in the society about the methods and goals of missionary work. By comparing the “rudeness” of Indian to the civilization (“policy”) of the pagan peoples of antiquity, one of the speakers says: “The fact that Romans and other gentiles had more policy than the other did not come from naturally having better understanding, but from having better rearing, and from been more politically reared” (1988, p. 240). José de Anchieta states in a letter that the children of the Indians reared in the schools of the Society “will be strong Christians” (letter of 1557, ed., 1988, p. 159).

Thus, the conviction about the possibility of man “making himself” through the education process, characteristic of Humanism and the Renaissance, created a large laboratory for experimentation in the Brazil recently discovered by Europeans. Through education, religious people intended to transform the natives, their culture, and society into members of the “Christian social body” of the colony.

However, this transformation did not involve the denial of the other culture, at least in the aspects recognized as valuable, and as we saw above, they were pointed out by the missionaries. In this sense, one of the criteria that guided the pedagogical work of the Jesuits was the accommodation process, which involves a dialogue between different identities. This dialogue searches for points of convergence and renders porous the borders that demarcate the various socio-cultural identities. The “accommodation”—the rhetoric standard proposed by Cicero in *De Oratore* and used by the Jesuits—is thus propitiator of the mediation in search of more humane methods of interaction in a conflictual and violent context, such as colonial Brazil. This standard also implies the psychological knowledge of the other as the basis for the establishment of new social relations; its application is described in the reports about the Jesuit practices for the indigenous population in Brazil in the sixteenth century, such as letters and other informative documents (Freitas and Massimi 2007).

Due to the application of this criterion, the Jesuits aimed at adapting methods and educational resources derived from their cultural traditions to the methods and cultural traditions of the other individuals who were present in the colony,

especially the ones of the indigenous tradition, by introducing typical aspects of this tradition in their educational project (such as dance, singing, Tupi-Guarani languages, and the languages of other ethnic groups present in Brazilian territory). The accommodation, used as a resource for effective communication in a culturally different population, shapes, for example, the composition of Anchieta theater—a theater with eminently pedagogical purpose (Barros 2008). Among the autos of Anchieta, the best known and first to be composed in 1561 (*Auto da Pregação Universal*), an allegory of the story of human sin, was written in Portuguese, Spanish, and Tupi, with the following characters: Adam (miller), Guaixará and Aimbiré (devil and his servant), Angel, 12 white sinner men (led by the devils), and 12 Indian boys (dancing with feather costumes), (Anchieta 1997). In general, the autos represent the fight between good and evil and have indigenous children among the characters. According to Barros (2008, p. 85), “the characters in the autos are adjusted to the customs of the Indians with positive or negative accentuations.” Thus, for example, “customs that, according to the Jesuit vision, demonstrated the richness and beauty of Indian culture” were valued, whereas those who were opposed to the Christian vision preached by the Jesuits were thematized as “inventions of the devil.” Still, according to this author (2008), the autos are “a method of appropriation of indigenous signs” that aimed at “transforming the Indian imaginary” so that the Indians would see themselves as Christians (p. 85).

The important role of the Jesuit schools should also be highlighted. The first schools built in Brazil were designed to teach reading and writing. Initially, the students lived with the missionaries; however, after the promulgation of the *Constitutions* (1556) that prohibited this coexistence, they moved in with families. At the end of the sixteenth century, Alexandre de Gusmão founded the first genuine Jesuit college: the Seminário de Belém da Cachoeira (Salvador). In several places of missionary presence in Brazilian territory, the Jesuits created primary schools for teaching the catechism and literacy, Latin and grammar schools (for example, in schools of Salvador and São Vicente), schools for the study of classics and the practice of theater and rhetoric, and courses in philosophy and arts, mathematics and physics, moral and dogmatic theology. The studies in these schools were structured by precise rules condensed in the *Ratio Studiorum* (1559). Among others, the *Ratio* recommended that the studies should be free, the schools should accept students from all social classes, the teaching methods should take into account the psychological characteristics and character of each student, and there should be equilibrium between scientific and humanistic education.

Alexandre de Gusmão (1629–1725), a Jesuit from Bahia, founded the Seminário de Belém da Cachoeira, of which he was the rector. The author of several pedagogic books, he stands out for producing the allegorical novel *História do Predestinado Peregrino e de seu Irmão Precito* (Lisbon 1682: see Massimi 2012) and the treatise *Arte de criar bem os filhos na idade da puerícia* (1685). The education conception that inspired him is synthesized in the statement that opens the treatise: “From the teaching and education which you give your children early in their lives, you may know what they will come into being.” (1685, p. 4). The *Arte*

de criar bem os filhos is inspired on the conception that “the human being as a child is arranged in such a way that any image can be formed” (idem).

The goal of the voluminous treatise is already placed in the Proem: the formation of a “perfect child, so that in the years to come in Adolescence he/she becomes a perfect young adult” (p. II). The treatise aims at explaining to parents what the “good rearing” is and also “how they will do it with success” (p. III). It should also be underscored that this book is also aimed at women (“daughters and mothers”) (p. IV).

With respect to the method, in the *Prologue to the Reader*, Gusmão states that it is based on the experience of the Society of Jesus: in fact, education is a “special obligation” of the Order, “and the Institute is responsible to teach the good arts and to inculcate the good morals to all for greater Glory of God” (p. III). The experience acquired by the Society in over two centuries is cited through numerous examples. It is not the mere presentation of a pedagogical theory, but the discussion of acquired results through experience: in this sense, the work of many Society educators is quoted by Gusmão. The argumentation method used by Gusmão to support his positions interweaves the doctrines of the ancient and the experiences of the modern peoples.

In the treatise, the educational process is considered in its various phases: the need for parents to take responsibility in first person concerning childrearing since the first years of life is emphasized. Gusmão warns mothers about the importance of breastfeeding their children themselves, and Gusmão dedicates a whole chapter to this need. The given reasons are several: firstly, the confirmed fact by the authority of Galeno and Avicena that “the mother’s milk is the healthiest to the child” (p. 180); and secondly, a reason of psychological content, extremely interesting—the fact that with the milk the “inclination” is communicated (p. 184). Gusmão defends the need for females to receive education in the first letters and in the liberal arts equal to man—a revolutionary assertion if we consider that, at the time, education was forbidden to women in the Colony and Metropolis (Massimi 1990). Caring for psychological development is proposed along with care for moral development: this approach, so different from ours, is, however, proper to the tradition that underlies the culture of the seventeenth century. The integration of the psychological dimension in all the other dimensions of the human being, including ethics, characterizes the conception of man and the psychology of this tradition.

The central thesis of the book about the “importance of the good rearing of the Boys,” as stated in the title of the first chapter of the treatise, is based on the conception of Aristotle in *Ética a Nicomaco* (text base of Renaissance Aristotelianism). Gusmão states that “all the welfare of the boys depends on their good rearing” (1685, p. 2) and then discusses the purpose of education in a perspective entirely inspired by Humanism, assuming that “the liveliness of the boys are as a tabula rasa that a distinguished painter has equipped to paint any picture, whatever he wants to paint will be represented, if Angel, Angel; if Demon, Demon will be represented. Whether it is well or badly painted, the picture depends on the first few lines that the Painter drew, so, whether the child is well or badly reared, it depends on the first directives that the father outlined in the child, while being a tabula rasa” (ibid., 2–3).

The pliability of the human being—namely, the infinite possibilities of being that he can choose for himself—was commonplace in the philosophy and humanist pedagogy of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. As Cassirer (1977) notes, the famous *Oratio de hominis dignitate* of Pico della Mirandola reversed the traditional sense of the relationship between *being* and *carrying out*, and that human dignity will not reside in *being* anymore, in the place where man situates in the cosmos and that prescribes, once and for all, the direction of his path of formation. Instead, the being of the man is born in his carrying out. Thus, the man reared as “neither angel nor demon, neither heavenly nor earthly” can give himself the form that he chooses for himself as “free artificer” (Cassirer 1977). The educational process is an expression of this “making himself” of the man, paraphrasing an expression of the Spanish humanist Luís Vives (in Delumeau 1994, vol 2).

Gusmão emphasizes that, the same way that the diversity and success of the possible “paintings” in the tabula rasa, which is man in his birth, depend on the “first lines of the first blurs,” also “the same happens in puerile liveliness, which as tabula rasas they are willing to form any pictures in them. According to what the first doctrine is, according to the first education, which you give to your children, you will be able to know what they will come into being: they will be good children, if they are well reared in puerility, and bad if they are bad reared in principle; because the panel being well or badly painted depends on the first sketching, over which the officer launched his hand; in such manner that the child being well or badly reared depends on the first rearing that his father did to him/her” (1685, p. 4).

A very important social consequence of this process is that well-educated children also educate their own children when they become parents, and so on. Thus, generations that have good behaviors are formed. In some generations, certain virtues reign and certain other vices are hereditary. The theme of social and political utility of education and the relevance of the Jesuit mission in this ambit are introduced—a topic largely developed by Gusmão in the fifth chapter of the first part of the treatise: “it is, therefore, of great utility to the Republic the good rearing of children in the puerile age insofar all of the Republic welfare depends on this, as well as its lack leads the Republic to its entire ruin” (ibid., p. 38).

A particularly interesting chapter is the one devoted to “how there might be parents with children in bad condition” (pp. 134–143). Defining “the children with bad condition” as those who “are not docile in nature to the discipline” (p. 135), Gusmão ascribes this situation to three different causes: the “misunderstanding”, that is, the lack of intellectual capacities; the “rebellious will”, that is, the difficulty in motivation level; and the group of the previous causes. All three conditions are “able to be disciplined” because “no boy has such bad condition which cannot be correctable and domesticated, if there is vigilance and prudence in the parent or teacher to rear him while a boy” (ibid., p. 137). A very important consequence of this statement, in the pedagogical field, is that “parents should not abandon their children who seem to be in bad conditions, distrusting of producing fruit in them, because none can be so naturally bad that indoctrinated and tamed might not be of advantage through good rearing” (ibid., p. 139). When parents feel unable to

accomplish this formation task, they should seek the help of those who have competence in the matter. In this case, it is recommended that the parent “consult the politicians set for this issue, that is, the ones who wrote boy policies, or the experienced ones who may give advice” (ibid., 141–142).

With regard to the available resources in the educational process, among others, the use of moral and physical punishment is contemplated; this use should be moderate—that is, inspired by reason. Gusmão condemns the excessive severity in punishment and warns of the need to punish children at the appropriate time, based on the medical humoralist doctrine of Hippocratic-Galenic derivation: “To prevent these disorders it is good advice not to punish the children in flagrant delict, when the deformity of guilt naturally changes the cholera, and anger breaks into outbursts; by contrast, reserve punishment to night, or dawn... because, once in dawn moods are quieter..., the liveliness is more rested to punish with rigor, suitable to that delict, and not with the excess which cholera compels to.” (p. 323).

The games are considered to be an important resource in the process of formation of the child’s personality, mainly because they take children away from the “idle,” defined as the principle of all vices. Gusmão states that “it is really proper and natural for boys to play and take rest, that the same Latin word *puer* which means boy, in Hebrew it sounds like play, or taking rest; and denying the boys to play is to take away their nature” (idem, p. 368).

A few decades after the publication of Gusmão’s treatise, Manoel de Andrade Figueiredo, born in Espírito Santo and a former student of the Colégio da Companhia de Jesus, the Lisbon Court calligrapher, writes in his book *Nova escola para aprender a ler, escrever e contar* (1722/2010), offered to King João V of Portugal: “the good doctrine corrects the bad nature” (2010, p. 2). Moreover, Figueiredo warns that the learning rhythm of the child should be determined by its real capacity, which is the task of teachers to evaluate and respect it.

In conclusion, the humanist concept of development, with regard to the infinite possibilities of the *being* and to confidence in education, is understood as the process by which these possibilities converge in the choice and effective construction of certain modality of being man. It arrived in Brazil through the influence of the Society of Jesus and its pedagogues. The expulsion of the Society from the national territory and the extinction of its entire works by the Pombal politics in the mid-eighteenth century abruptly stopped its operation in the area of education.

The Education of Modernity

From the perspective of the Brazilian Republican state in the early decades of the twentieth century, school and education are privileged tools for creating a new mentality and society, and the humanities are built in the positivist mold as important instruments of this process. The aim was to propose a new model of man and civil society to be enacted in Brazil, as an alternative to the vision of man and society conveyed by tradition, guiding the Brazilian culture in the Colony period.

The process of introducing Brazil to “cultural modernity” implied rejection of the earlier tradition, especially the one of religious nature, and implied an interest in scientific theories applied to social and political reform, such as social Darwinism (Massimi 1999).

Leading this process were figures such as the doctor and politician Miguel Couto (1865–1934) and the journalist and politician Mário Pinto Serva (1881–1962), a participant of Constitutionalist Revolution in 1930 and 1932. Both authors contributed to elaborating the foundations of the thesis by which education would be the driving element of society modernization. In this sense, Serva argues that the condition would be to destroy the “deforming education of the race,” based on a “false concept of man” “possessing a soul,” whereas in fact “the man is worth for the brain” (Serva 1929, p. 82). Also in this sense, Serva attributes to the Catholic Church and Catholic culture in general the responsibility for illiteracy and educational backwardness of the country, and compares Brazil to Protestant countries, especially the United States, where there would be no illiteracy: “the Catholic clergy never did anything for the instruction of the people (...) introduced positive obstacles while judging that the diffusion of the lights only tends to spread free thought and spirit rebellion” (1924, p. 183).

Another component of the “modernization” process of education in Brazil was the eugenics movement, which attributed the country’s backwardness to diversity and the blending of races. Therefore, the creation of a new mentally and physically healthy people through “hygiene education” was proposed, which would accomplish the purification of the Brazilian race. One of the Eugenism drivers, Renato Kehl (1889–1974; under the pseudonym Macróbio), writes: “Brazil is a country without homogeneity of culture, sentiments, and racial type,” so that “the habits, education, and culture of one person are sometimes completely different from the habits, education, and culture of the other person” (1931, p. 4). In this context, the task of modernizing education would be to act on “this cultural, civic, and moral patchwork” in the sense of “an approximation, of a homogenization of education,” with the goal of creating “a Brazilian mentality” (idem).

A third component of Brazilian modernization is the *Escolanovista* movement, based on the confidence that the insertion of psychological science would provide a revolutionary renewal of education, to be immediately applied to Brazilian education through teacher training in the *Escolas Normais*. This trend has new purposes for the educational process: to replace the traditional aim (the formation of the individual according to a philosophical or religious ideal), by the aim of the individual adaptation to the environment, together with the statement that adherence to the guiding principles, ideas, and values of the existence will be the result of each individual choice, and not of the work done by educators (Rudolfer 1930). Educational reforms, grounded in this vision, in the ambit of public instruction, were held in Brazil in the state of Ceará, by the work of Lourenço Filho, and in the State of Minas Gerais, by the work of Francisco Campos. The referred concept was inspired by American pedagogical pragmatism headed by J. Dewey and W. James: it is central the statement that the aims linked to social conditions and to

professional insertion of the subject must prevail over the spiritual aims of education, based on an upshot proper to the notion of trust in terms of utility and efficacy.

One of the most significant heralds and builders of this education conception in Brazil was Anísio Teixeira (1900–1971), who was a native of the interior of Bahia and educated at the Jesuit school. Later in 1928, he achieved a Master of Arts, and he was a student of John Dewey and William Kilpatrick in the United States. He contributed to the institutionalization of Brazilian education with several pioneering actions. For example, he implanted preschool education with the “Reforma do Distrito Federal” of 1931; he created the universities of the Distrito Federal and Brasília; he reunited the primary and middle schools and promoted the creation of single and multi-curriculum high school; and he implemented the post-graduation.

According to Teixeira, “Dewey did the formulation of a new method of human knowledge” that highlights the “march of experimental intelligence” in the humanities, “march which will give us a new order, more humane than anything we have known so far” (Teixeira 1959, p. 1). And still, “no great modern philosopher was more explicit than Dewey concerning the need of this educational transformation, imposed by philosophy based on new science of the physical world and on new science of the human and the social” (idem).

In this new perspective, “the educator, studying and solving the problems of educational practice, will obey the rules of the scientific method, just as the physician solves, with a scientific discipline, the practical problems of medicine: observing with intelligence and precision, registering these observations, describing the followed procedures and the obtained results, in order to be appraised by others, and repeated, confirmed, or denied, so that his own practice of medicine also becomes research, and the results accumulate and multiply” (Teixeira 1957a, b: 1–2).

The role of society and the market as decisive instances of the educational process is emphasized. In 1929, Teixeira participated in Columbia University’s first course on *education economics*: “Professor Clark gave us, then, in his first class, a definition of education that I keep to this day and to which I always allude to convince certain spirits that education is not only a process of formation and improvement of man, but also the economic process of developing the human capital of the society”. The definition was that “intentional education, namely, school education, is the process by which men are properly distributed by the different occupations of society”. School education is conceived as “the process by which the population is distributed among different levels and branches of diverse work of modern society,” ensuring the “diversification of functions and specialized occupations.” According to Teixeira, “the modern industrial society further intensifies the process of diversification of functions and occupations, determining, for this reason, an education not only lengthener, but also more varied” (Teixeira 1957a, b, p. 28).

In turn, the state intervention becomes necessary. With the division of responsibilities among the three orders of government, conditions for a national public school system could be created, with an intention to educate people of different ages: in childhood, youth, and adulthood. This system would be in constant

development: Thus, there would be “a true institutional readaptation of the school, opening opportunity for a period of extensive social experimentation in which the country will discover and build itself for its own autonomous destinies” (Teixeira 1958, p. 32). Teixeira believes that reforms in public education policies would accelerate the process by which “education for development, education for work, education to produce” would replace “transplanted and obsolete education, education for illustration, for ornament and for leisure” and that “education tailored to Brazilian cultural conditions” would become “authentic and real, identifying themselves with the country and helping to discover it best, to cooperate, as it should, in the great task of construction of Brazilian culture, the highest flower of its civilization” (Teixeira 1958, p. 32).

Conclusion

We highlighted three conceptions of education in the history of Brazilian culture. The observations of Arendt concerning the historical scenery of American education provide us with a critical criterion to analyze them.

We saw how the concept of education that shaped the educational practice of the Society of Jesus in the territory of the colony was inspired by the humanistic view of the individual being pliable in the educational process, and the goal to be achieved was defined in terms of Christian anthropology. Such a process was abruptly interrupted by the political military action of the Portuguese government in the mid-eighteenth century. We also saw that the ideals of education planners in the Brazilian Republic partially resembled the utopian vision of the thinkers of North America; moreover, in the republican period in Brazil and in the United States, education had strong political connotations, as a means of creating the citizen of the new Brazilian state. In contrast, we saw how the multiethnic composition of Brazil resulted in a complex, original, and multifaceted sociocultural universe as a carrier of experiences and diverse educational conceptions. Therefore, a constant tension in Brazilian history between educational experiences created by social subjects and institutional policies is evinced.

Our opinion is that education can become a process centered on the child as an individual and not as an object of educational policymaking if society considers the educational experiences (and conceptions derived from them) that are inherent in Brazilian culture. The future is open.

References

- Anchieta, J. (1988). *Cartas, informações, fragmentos históricos e sermões*. Belo Horizonte: Editoras Edusp-Itatiaia. (Original from the sixteenth century).
- Anchieta, J. (1997). *Teatro de Anchieta*. São Paulo: Loyola.

- Arendt, H. (2003). *Entre o passado e o futuro* (M. W. Barbosa, Trans.). São Paulo: Perspectiva. (Original from 1954).
- Barros, K. A. (2008). *Teatro anchietano: um instrumento da pedagogia jesuítica*. Dissertação de Mestrado em Educação, Universidade Metodista de Piracicaba.
- Cardim, F. (1980). *Tratados da Terra e Gentes do Brasil*. Belo Horizonte: Editora University of São Paulo-Itatiaia (Coleção Reconquista do Brasil, n. 13). (Original published in 1625).
- Cascudo, C. L. (2006). *Literatura oral no Brasil*. São Paulo: Global editora. (Original from 1952).
- Cassirer, E. (1977). *Indivíduo e cosmo nella filosofia del Rinascimento*. (Federico Federici Tradutor). Firenze: La Nuova Itália. (Original from 1927).
- Delumeau, J. (1994). *A civilização do Renascimento* (M. Ruas, Trans., Vol. I). Lisboa: Estampa. (Original from 1964).
- Figueiredo, M. A. (2010). *Nova Escola para Ensinar a ler, escrever e contar*. Lisboa, Carvalho. Fac-simile: Rio de Janeiro: Biblioteca Nacional (Original from 1722).
- Freitas, G. R., & Massimi, M. (2007). Acomodação retórica e adaptação psicológica na Pregação popular dos jesuítas na terra de santa Cruz. *Mnemosine*, 3(1), 111–135.
- Giard, L. (1995). *Les jésuites à la Renaissance*. Paris: PUF.
- Gusmão, A. S. I. (1685). *Arte de criar bem os filhos na Idade da Puerícia*. Lisboa: Deslandes.
- Kehl, R. (Macróbio). (1931). A educação dos sentimentos políticos e a Eugenia. *Boletim de Eugenia*, 29, 3–4.
- Massimi, M. (1990). *História da Psicologia Brasileira da época colonial até 1934*. São Paulo: Editora Pedagógica Universitária.
- Massimi, M. (1999). A discussão sobre psicologia científica e educação na revista a Ordem, de 1930 a 1945. *Cadernos em Psicologia*, 9, 69–83.
- Massimi, M. (2012). *A novela História do Predestinado Peregrino e de seu irmão Precito (1682). Compêndio dos saberes antropológicos e psicológicos dos jesuítas no Brasil colonial*. São Paulo: Loyola.
- Nóbrega, M. (1988). *Cartas do Brasil*. Belo Horizonte: Edusp-Itatiaia. (Original from the sixteenth century).
- O'MALLEY, J.W. (1999). The Jesuits. Culture, Science and the Arts 1540-1773, Toronto, University Toronto Press, 90–106.
- Rudolfers, N. S. (1930). Visita de professores brasileiros aos Estados Unidos. *Educação*, 12(1), 153–156.
- Serva, M. P. (1924/sd). *A renovação mental do Brasil*. São Paulo: Melhoramentos.
- Serva, M. P. (1929). *Problemas brasileiros*. São Paulo: Livraria Liberdade.
- Rego, J. L. (2010). *Menino de Engenho*. Rio de Janeiro: José Olympio. (Original from 1932).
- Teixeira, A. (1957). Bases para uma programação de educação primária no Brasil. *Revista Brasileira de Estudos Pedagógicos*, 27(65), 28–46.
- Teixeira, A. (1957a). Ciência e Educação. *Boletim Informativo CAPES*, 50, 1–3.
- Teixeira, A. (1958). Educação—problema da formação nacional. *Revista Brasileira de Estudos Pedagógicos*, 29(70), 21–32.
- Teixeira, A. (1959). Dewey e a filosofia da educação. *Boletim Informativo CAPES*, 85, 1–2.