LUMEN ET VIRTUS

# Education and curriculum – An analytical and critical look

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**ABSTRACT**

The article "Education and Curriculum: A Critical Look" analyzes the evolution of the educational curriculum, highlighting its interrelationship with social, political, and economic contexts. Through a historical approach, the text examines the transformation of the curriculum from ancient educational practices, such as the trivium and quadrivium, to contemporary proposals that defend an integrated and holistic view of the curriculum. Critical pedagogy is emphasized as a tool to challenge the limitations of traditional education, proposing an inclusive education that promotes social justice. The article concludes that the democratization of the school and the formation of critical citizens will only be possible through a curriculum that integrates theoretical and practical knowledge, elaborated with the active participation of society.

**Keywords:** Curriculum, Critical Pedagogy, Education, Social Justice, Interdisciplinarity.

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## INTRODUCTION

When one observes the social, political and economic transformations that gave rise to the Modern Age, one cannot disregard the role of education that began to develop from the eighth century onwards.

> At the end of the eighth century we witnessed a consolidation of the societies that emerged from the meeting of Romans and Germanic barbarians and also a great awakening in the field of culture and school (MANACORDA, 2006, p. 131).

Charlemagne, who recreated the new Western Roman Empire, turned his court into a center of intellectuals. Monks who acted as philosophers and pedagogues, both from the region that is now Italy and from the Celtic and British regions, flocked to the Frankish kingdom, giving rise to what came to be scholasticism, developed from the ninth century onwards (VICENTINO, 2003) At the beginning of the Middle Ages, the intellectual heritage destined to the dissemination of knowledge was a genre of didactic literature, As it was oriented towards the liberal arts, such as *the trivium* – grammar, logic and rhetoric – and the *quadrivium* – arithmetic, music, geometry and astronomy – this practice can be considered as the embryo of the curricula, as it is conceived today (DE LIBERA, 1989).

These conceptions of the field of education, born in the Ancient Age and developed in the High Middle Ages, come to compose the so-called *Neoplatonism*. Augustine of Hippo (354-430), heir to the thought of Philo of Alexandria (25 B.C. – 40 A.D.), Origen (185 – 254) and Plotinus (204 – 269), elaborated the conception that came to be the basis of religious education in the first medieval phase. In his work The City of God, he proposes a divine order guiding humanity. For Augustine, the city of God is represented by the Church as an institution. It is nothing more than a form of divine government located above society, the earthly city (OLIVEIRA, 2000).

On the acquisition of knowledge, the fundamental Augustinian motto was the *credo ut intelligam*, that is, I believe so that you can understand. In other words, knowledge can only be achieved by faith and not by seeking through studies (ARANHA; MARTINS, 2009).

However, the Augustinian faith was not directed to any deity other than the Church, a material organization born from the decision of Constantine, Roman emperor between the years 324 and 337. With Augustine, the spiritualizing pedagogy of primitive Christianity gives way to the pedagogy brought by the philosophy of the Fathers of the Church, the *patristics.*

From the ninth century onwards, the decline of patristics begins, culminating in the changes that occurred in the field of culture. Around the eleventh century, a new philosophical expression emerges within Christian philosophy: scholasticism, which conceives knowledge as coming from reason, although reason is the servant of theology. With Thomas Aquinas, scholasticism reaches its culmination (ARANHA; MARTINS, 2009).

The fundamental factor for the advancement of *scholasticism* was the emergence of universities in Europe. As centers of intellectual investigation and promotion of the search for knowledge, the taste for the rational developed and, between the tenth and fourteenth centuries, more than 80 universities were founded in Europe (ARANHA; MARTINS, 2009).

If Neoplatonism was the expression of Platonic thought, mixed with the conceptions brought by Christianity, and which expanded with *patristics*, in *scholasticism* Aristotle reigns absolute, especially in the work of Thomas Aquinas. With the Summa Theologica, Aristotelian-Thomistic philosophy is consecrated. Based on Aristotle's Metaphysics, Aquinas states that if reason cannot know the essence of God, it can demonstrate His existence or the creation of the world by Him (ARANHA; MARTINS, 2009).

However, after Thomas Aquinas, the debate between reason and faith was fragmented, giving rise to other currents of thought, mainly related to a debate that was quite intense between the eleventh and fourteenth centuries, which was the *question of universals*, a discussion about genera and species. The solutions found to the controversy by some of the currents of thought came to become the opposition between the bourgeois and conservatives who fought for the maintenance of the feudal system that was collapsing (ARANHA; MARTINS, 2009).

This entire educational structure built from the beginning of Antiquity to the end of the Middle Ages collapsed with the arrival of the Modern Age. *"Modern society [...] constantly revolutionizes production techniques, which incorporates knowledge as a productive force"* (SAVIANI, 1989, p. 9) (emphasis added).

## SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC FOUNDATIONS OF THE ORIGIN OF EDUCATION

In Europe, nascent capitalism, combined with a series of inventions and discoveries, revolutionized the ways of *seeing* the world.

> Science, in the sense of knowing, of mastering knowledge, is converted into *a practical lever* for the expansion of production. Rural production, previously decisive in the creation of wealth, with predominance over the art of transformation, represented by handicrafts, is subordinated to industries. These, increasingly dominant in urban areas, which began to be transformed into large commercial and manufacturing centers, became the true producer of wealth. The cities were breaking with the primacy of the countryside, and the countryside itself began to urbanize (SAVIANI, 1989).

The forms of education developed in ancient societies still had some influence from the mythical and philosophical consciousness, dominant in the period. One of the factors that led to the passage of this type of consciousness to the scientific view of the world was the change in the modes of production known until then. Although the capitalist mode of production was organized from the seventeenth century onwards, its beginnings are already "designed" throughout the European Middle Ages, between the fourth and fourteenth centuries.

In this period, Europe had land as its main source of wealth, from which everything necessary for the survival of society was extracted, such as cereals, wood and minerals, in addition to the production of food for animal husbandry.

As land was the main source of wealth, whoever owned it held power, and at that time those who owned it were the feudal lords, but they shared power with the high clergy, who, in addition to also owning large properties, also held spiritual power over society.

> As it was an agrarian-based society, its trade was reduced and restricted to exchanges between villages, cities were few and small and the life of the population was shaped by religion, in this case Roman Catholic (MEKSENAS, 2003).

In the middle of the fourteenth century, rapid transformations led to the decrease in importance of the agrarian world, because "[...] Europe has moved towards the urban-industrial world" (MEKSENAS, 2003, p. 28). It is true that in this period the transformations were still incipient and slow, compared to the speed of the current world.

However, if the Middle Ages occupied a historical period of about ten centuries, in three centuries there was a total change from the feudal mode of production to the capitalist mode of production. From the seventeenth century onwards, the Western world, especially the European continent, began to experience another organization, both in the work sector and in all branches of human knowledge. Instead of just continuing to explain or question nature, man began to intervene in it, seeking better ways to use it.

This movement in search of practical solutions for the life of the individual and society as a whole, created the need to guide knowledge in other spheres than only in the studies of the arts, literature, etc., but also in a technical interpretation of the world. One of the most prominent scientists to follow the empirical method, a modern model of doing science, was Galileo Galilei (1564-1642), who bequeathed his influence to many scholars from his discoveries (MEKSENAS, 2003).

With the emergence of scientific consciousness, under the new ways of acting on nature and facilitating production processes, new means of transport were developed, such as caravels, which revolutionized the production relations that had existed in Europe until then.

With the caravels, it was possible to move more cargo, with less time, to more distant places. The vessels required the construction of large shipyards for their construction, triggering the new system of carrying out work, hence the emergence of wage-earning, something unnecessary in the feudal mode of production.

Rural labor, which was the source of all the social organization of the European feudal world, began to lose ground to the nascent urban-industrial society in Europe, from the fifteenth century onwards (MEKSENAS, 2003). The land, which was the source of all wealth, became the supplier of

raw material for the new source of wealth that emerged in the period: the industry of consumer goods and production goods.

This change, which radically shook the foundations of a mode of production that had existed for about a millennium, is considered a revolution and, like any revolution, resulted from a process. This process took place over approximately three centuries and, for the sake of understanding, can be divided into three phases. According to Meksenas (2003, p. 28-30):

> *In the first place*, it was an *economic revolution,* because the organization of work changed profoundly: from the society stratified into only two large estates, a new very important social group emerged, the layer of free merchants and artisans: people who, from the fourteenth century onwards, no longer depended on the land, but on purely urban activities. Secondly , it was a *political revolution*, because the old feudal nobility eventually lost control to the economically stronger bourgeois class. While in feudalism a policy that represented the interests of the feudal lords and the clergy persisted, it was now the businessmen who began to organize politics and, from there, the modern State was born, that is, the forms of government elected by vote and governed by a Constitution were born. Parliament is born, and the power of the State is divided into executive, judiciary and legislative.
> *Thirdly, it was an* ideological *and* scientific revolution, because the worldview under capitalism changed: the idea of progress spreads, as well as the idea of enrichment. Life, dynamic and competitive, gives rise to the feeling of individualism. Science [...] originates from new methods of interpreting nature. From the observation of the facts, decomposition into parts (analysis) and their reordering (synthesis) a nature governed by laws is interpreted. (emphasis added).

From the above, it was also clear the influence that these changes had on education as a whole, even emerging, in an incipient way, what we now call vocational technical education. The new techniques employed in production needed to be taught to the workers who were going to engage in the newly invented mechanisms.

## EDUCATION IN BRAZIL

Even with the gigantic transformations that occurred in European society, especially in the world of work, due to the Industrial Revolution, education did not cease to be a phenomenon with few differences in relation to its original formation, which occurred in the Carolingian period, as a palatine school, intended to serve the children of kings and nobles. In Brazil, from colonial times, through the two Kingdoms and the Republic, to the present day, Brazilian education seems not to have found a path that puts it at the service of society as a whole.

The first Brazilian schools were built by the Jesuits who arrived in Brazil together with the first Governor General, the Portuguese Tomé de Souza, in 1549. The command of these priest educators had been entrusted to Father Manoel da Nóbrega, and the colleges founded by them were missionaries.

In spite of having brought education to the Colony, whose native inhabitants were the indigenous people, the proposal was to educate for the Catholic religion, a catechizing mission. As

the employees of the metropolis had children, they also needed basic education aimed at pursuing higher studies, which would be carried out in Europe, mainly in Coimbra, Lisbon and other advanced centers, including Salamanca, in Spain – where Father Manuel da Nóbrega was educated – and Paris, in France.

Segundo Ghiraldelli (2014, p. 25):

> Manoel da Nóbrega forged a teaching plan adapted to our country, according to what he understood his mission to be. [...] it contained the teaching of Portuguese, Christian doctrine and the "school of reading and writing" – this as a basic level. After this phase, the student entered the study of instrumental music and orpheonic singing. Once this phase is over, the student could either finish his studies with professional learning related to agriculture or go further with grammar classes and then complete his training in Europe (emphasis added).

It should always be emphasized that only the children of the highest officials, as well as of the large landowners, could complete their education in Europe.

However, Sebastião José de Carvalho e Melo, Marquis of Pombal, Minister of Portugal, undertook: [...] reforms in order to adapt that country and its colonies to the transformations [...] that were taking place in Europe (GHIRALDELLI, 2014, p. 26). To this end, in 1759, Pombal decided to expel the Jesuits from Portugal and Brazil, putting an end to a project that had prevailed for more than 200 years.

With the expulsion of the Jesuits, the Portuguese State took over education, but only in the metropolis. In Brazil, according to Ghiraldelli (2014, p. 27):

> [...] the humanities course disappeared, leaving in its place the "royal classes". They were single classes in Latin, Greek, philosophy and rhetoric. In other words: the teachers, by themselves, organized the workplace and, once they had put the "school" to work, they requested from the government payment for the teaching work (emphasis added).

The text above reveals one of the characteristics of Brazilian education that persists to this day; the government's neglect of education. The expulsion of the Jesuits dismantled part of the educational structure created by them, leaving only what was strictly consistent with the interest of the Crown: the royal classes.

In Nóbrega's plan, the principles of vocational education were visible. But we can also see that since then Brazilian education has been dualistic: one aimed at the elites, prepared for intellectual domination and, with it, the control of society; the other, aimed at preparing workers, labor to serve the interests of the classes that held economic power, based on agricultural production, since the Brazilian economic base, at the time, was still agrarian.

This discriminating and excluding duality remains to this day. The explanation for the origin of the problem, as well as the causes that lead Brazil to remain in this precarious situation in the educational field, must be sought in the history of Brazilian education, especially in the monarchical period.

Since our independence – which in practice did not really mean independence, either political or economic, considering that in both directions Brazil continued to be dependent and subservient to foreign powers – both the First and Second Empires revealed, as it could not be otherwise, elitist interests in education. This is what Aranha (2012, p. 220) states when he says that:

> In the second half of the nineteenth century [...] coffee cultivation expanded, reactivating trade. [...] The United States consumed more than half of coffee exports. In this way, alongside the *dependent agrarian-export model,* the consolidation of the *dependent agrarian-commercial-export model began.* (emphasis added).

Education, harmed as a result of subservient policies that were reflected in the economy and in the formation of the interests of the dominant classes, was not a government priority (ARANHA, 2012).

As the majority of the population lived in rural areas, education was not made for them (ARANHA, 2012). For the urban population, if descended from a privileged family, access to education existed, intended to prepare for entry into higher education. It is important to emphasize that attempts to promote elementary education for the entire population, despite being provided for by law since the First Empire, never got off the ground effectively. The children of the elite were educated privately, usually in their own homes or in some place paid for by a group of parents with sufficient purchasing power to do so, by private teachers, with no link to the State. The primary level was not a prerequisite for continuing studies at the secondary and higher levels. On this issue, Santos (1970, p. 416) expresses himself as follows:

> With the proclamation of independence and the founding of the Empire of Brazil in 1822, national education became one of the central themes of the Constituent Assembly. [...] In the discussions that arise and in the projects that are presented, it is verified that education is understood as an instrument for the formation of personality and the development of the nation. But the problem does not move from the plane of theoretical digressions to that of practical achievements. And the dominant interest is still higher education.

In the same sense, corroborating what is contained in the cited text, Aranha (2012, p. 224), states that:

> The coup de grace that harmed Brazilian education once and for all came [...] from an amendment to the Constitution, the Additional Act of 1834. This reform decentralized education, attributing to the Crown the function of promoting and regulating higher education, while the provinces (future states) were assigned to elementary and secondary schools. In this way, the education of the elite was the responsibility of the central power and that of the people, entrusted to the provinces (emphasis added).

This form of decentralization of education proved to be a problem, since the organic unity of Brazilian education was impeded. With elementary education in charge of the provinces, and as they did not yet have the structural conditions to serve the educational sector, decrees and bills on

education, prepared by the legislative chambers, did not have the slightest effect on the local educational reality (ARANHA, 2012).

This problem dragged on throughout the Second Empire, with aggravating factors. The foundation of the Colégio D. Pedro II, in 1837, directly subordinated to the Crown, aimed at educating the intellectual elite. Also according to Aranha (2012, p. 224-225):

> With regard to secondary education [...] there was a pseudo-decentralization, because in 1837 the Colégio D. Pedro II was founded in Rio de Janeiro, which came under the jurisdiction of the Crown. Intended to educate the intellectual elite and to serve as a standard of education for the other lyceums in the country, this college was the only one authorized to carry out split exams to confer the bachelor's degree, indispensable for access to higher education.

With this measure, secondary education was consolidated as a propaedeutic without professionalizing characteristics, making the general and scientific training necessary for the development of students even more remote.

In 1879, according to Rocha (2010, p. 130), the Leôncio de Carvalho Decree:

> [...] It was characterized as a true new paradigm of education policy [...] The striking feature of the novelty he brought is the controversial issue of "free education". [...] There, any public control, except morality, over the offer of education outside the public system was abdicated, establishing quality stimuli on such offer similar to the products of free competition.

The above proposals, transformed into law, were an innovation in the country, which would mean, if they had been put into effect, the transformation of education towards the conditions desired until today.

According to Aranha (2012):

> The Leôncio Carvalho Bill defended freedom of education, attendance, religious belief, the creation of normal schools and the end of the prohibition of slave enrollment. In addition, the organization of schools with diverse proposals was stimulated, including those with a positivist tendency[3], which valued the teaching of sciences, which would lead to the overcoming of the traditional teaching of colonial times. But the project was short-lived, overcome by the existing trend in Brazil to create religious schools, contrary to what was becoming frequent in the rest of the world: the secularization of education.

In addition to the initiative of the Catholics, there was also the initiative of the Protestants, especially the Americans, from the last decades of the nineteenth century, with the following being highlighted:

> Mackenzie College, in 1870, in São Paulo, the American College in 1885, in Porto Alegre and the International College in 1873, in Campinas, in the province of São Paulo. They aimed to introduce innovations in American education in the country (ARANHA, 2012).

[3] A philosophical current that expresses confidence in scientific knowledge, initiated by Auguste Comte (1798-1857), who defined Sociology as a *social physics* (ARANHA, 2012. p. 205).

Industrial development in Brazil began after the First World War (1914-1918), when the slow change in the agrarian-export model of our economy began. The reduction of imports and the nationalization of the country's economy began, giving rise to an urban industrial bourgeoisie.

> This was only possible because there was a reasonable number of Italian and Spanish immigrants, among whom the elements of the workers who were beginning were recruited. During this period, the organization of workers' unions, with anarchist influence, began (ARANHA, 2012).

For Aranha (2012), since the end of the nineteenth century, the Brazilian State has initiated a schooling model based on serial schooling, creating school groups, mainly with the purpose of demonstrating the government's interest in public education.

Promulgated in 1891, the Constitution reaffirmed the decentralization of education, with the Union being in charge of higher and secondary education; Primary and primary education would be the responsibility of the states. It happened that, in the period, secondary education was a privilege of the higher classes, intended to prepare them for higher education courses, consolidating what was already a current practice in previous centuries, since the colony: less attention to elementary education.

In the same line of thought, Kuenzer (2009, p. 27) points out that:

> [...] Until 1932, the primary course had the alternatives of the rural course and the four-year professional course, which could be succeeded by other alternatives of exclusive training for the world of work at the junior high level: normal, commercial technician and agricultural technician. These modalities [...] did not give access to higher education.
> For the elites [...] primary education followed by propaedeutic secondary, completed by higher education, which is divided into professional branches.
> [...] the formation of workers and citizens in Brazil was historically constituted from the category of structural duality [...] in a society whose development of the productive forces clearly delimited the division between labor capital, translated in Taylorism-Fordism as a rupture between the activities of planning and supervision, on the one hand, and execution, on the other.

It is clear that intellectualized academic training, detached from instrumental actions, was intended for the children of the elite. The workers should be content with professional training aimed at preparing them to perform exclusively their role: labor in the productive effort of the country.

The Military School, founded in 1874, with positivist influence, moved away from the humanist and academic tradition, however, unlike what happened in Europe, where teaching privileged science, the Brazilian positivists were unable to move away from that traditional character. The attempts failed due to the format implemented in the country, which contradicted the positivist proposal of free education, without interference from the State.

With the beginning of industrialization in the early twentieth century, the anarchist ideas brought by immigrants led to the foundation of Workers' Leagues and founded "workers' schools" in various parts of the country. Soon state repression was felt, including legislation at the service of this

repression. In 1907, a law was created that allowed the expulsion of foreigners who endangered national security. Ideologies of socialist and libertarian inspiration were considered subversive. One of the anarchist theorists of the period was José Oiticica, who states the following text about bourgeois education:

> The key to this bourgeois education is prejudice. The state, by exactly the same process used with the soldiers, is engraving, by dint of repetitions, without demonstrations or with false arguments, certain capital ideas, favorable to the bourgeois regime, in the brains of children, adolescents, adults. These ideas, prejudices, become, little by little, true indisputable dogmas, perfect subjective idols. [...] This idolatry imbues in the child's mind the so-called civic duties: obedience to institutions, obedience to laws, obedience to hierarchical superiors, recognition of private property, intangibility of acquired rights, love of the homeland to the point of sacrifice of life, worship of the flag, exercise of the vote, need for parliaments, courts, armed force, etc. (OITICICA, 1983, p. 30).

The conflicting interests between liberals and conservatives, as well as anarchists and socialists, were marked by broad debate, permeated by the influence of extreme right-wing groups led by the integralists and the military, a segment that also had interests in education.

In the hope of achieving the democratization and transformation of society through the school, the democratic liberals reacted to the individualism and academicism of traditional education, in the proposal to create a single, compulsory and free school. It was the so-called escolanovistas, led by Anísio Teixeira, among others, who launched, in 1932, the Manifesto of the Pioneers of New Education. Its inspiration came from the movement called Escola Nova, born in Europe at the end of the nineteenth century and which criticized traditional education and defended activist education through the renewal of pedagogical research and the search for the scientific and philosophical foundations of more effective educational practices, which had as its motto "learning by doing".

> With the advent of the 1930 Revolution and, especially, with the Estado Novo coup (1937-1945), the Getúlio Vargas government controlled and submitted to the power of the State the entire existing union structure. In addition to promoting the repression of the opposition, especially those of a leftist orientation, since his government nurtured fascist sympathies, he also promoted populist measures that attracted the sympathy of the workers. In the economic aspect, it increased the substitution of imports by domestic production and the implementation of basic industries, such as the steel industry (ARANHA, 2012).

The structure and organization of education in Brazil is a reflection of the social and economic conditions of Brazilian society; Its history served as an indicator of the policy in force in certain historical periods. For Libâneo, Oliveira and Toschi (2010), from the 1980s onwards the neoconservative tendency indicated the tone of Brazilian politics, revealing the proposal of a minimal State, which increasingly moved away from its role as responsible for public services, such as health and education.

The model was installed, but technological advances around the planet, led by central economies, led to the demand for increasingly qualified workers. As a result, a bottleneck arose in

the country; If the role of the school is to train the citizen for life in society, in all its aspects, including the world of work, who would form this citizen?

## CRITICAL PEDAGOGY

Critical pedagogy was born with the purpose of examining schools from their historical context and their insertion in the social and political fabric of the society in which they are found. Escaping from the positivist, non-historical and depoliticized analysis, traditionally employed by liberal and conservative critics, he takes a radical critical approach aimed at overcoming the problem established by centuries of a bourgeois and exclusionary education.

Known as the New Sociology of Education, it makes advances in social theory, new categories of research and new methodologies in interpretation and intervention in order to promote inclusion, reduce social inequalities and strive for the extinction of social injustices created and maintained throughout history. The most important aspect of critical pedagogy is to apprehend and understand the role of the school in the social, political, and cultural life of communities.

From the beginning of the twenty-first century, authors dedicated to the phenomenon of education have focused on the problems found in schools, in an attempt to discover, understand and transform the role that this institution plays in social life. Politics, culture, economics, in addition to the other human problems experienced by the communities, both have repercussions on the school in particular, and on education in general, and are susceptible to the influences that the school exerts on them.

Problems that began to be observed and studied from the second half of the twentieth century, such as ethnic conflicts, issues of gender, sexual choice and orientation, as well as the representativeness of these phenomena in the world of work and their unfolding in culture, politics and security issues, have in the school the initial laboratory of studies. The results of the conflicts faced by education operators at all levels, from kindergarten to third grade, often mismanaged, are disseminated in society in countless ways. In a society based on the foundations of the Capitalist Mode of Production, where private ownership of the means of production maintains class division through the exclusion and expropriation of the wealth produced by the right operator of labor, the school is simply the center of production and reproduction of the *status quo*. The positivist and conservative view of education, by not starting from a critical stance, observes the phenomenon of education only as an institution determined to fulfill the role of maintainer of the established culture and politics.

From a vision directed to breaking the static condition of the school in relation to education, thinkers concerned with the need to overcome the existing framework theorized about the role of teachers in the implementation of an education that contemplates the junction between knowledge

and power. Considering the deleterious role of banking education (FREIRE, 2013) on the minds of people from disadvantaged classes, it is understood that teachers have a fundamental role in promoting a liberating education, which leads students to understand their role in the history of the society in which they live and the need for their participation in political life, cultural and socioeconomic.

Traditional education, in a static and unalterable way, transmits a certain volume of knowledge, much of it anachronistic, when not outdated, which serves only as an accumulation of empty erudition, without changing the way the student sees the world, much less interprets it. What the critical proposal intends is to lead students to reflect on the world around them, to understand the political and economic mechanisms that make them the way they are, in addition to promoting the understanding of social, political and economic phenomena that transform and maintain society in a state of diversity in which certain social and political classes hoard the benefits that would be the property of all citizens, keeping the mass excluded from these benefits.

This mass is kept cohesive in its state of exclusion, castrated in its ability to break the crust of impediment to access to citizenship, through subtle mechanisms of conformation to a state of affairs that would be disapproved of by its victims if these victims were aware of the extent of the deleterious domination imposed on them.

An education aimed at the deconstruction of what seems normal, not simply to deconstruct, but to understand its smallest particularities and, thus, reconstruct this concrete reality in a thoughtful and understood way, to then, *mutatis mutandi*, overcome its negative aspects in favor of society as a whole.

The school is an institution organized and conducted by the dominant power, invariably exercised by the owners of economic power, which is kept in operation through a tripod: a faculty, a student segment and the administrative sector. Contemplating Freire's proposal of the teaching/learning process, one cannot consider school and education taking into account only one of the elements of the tripod. There would be no school if there were no students, but the students alone would not go forward without a teaching staff. In the same way, without an administrative body that organizes the life of the institution, builds and documents its history and the history of students and teachers, as an institution the school could not exist.

However, all segments are made up of members of society. In diversely stratified societies, in which the class division manifests itself in a polarized way between exploited and exploiters, the school ends up becoming a reflection of this polarization.

## CRITICAL PROPOSALS IN BRAZILIAN EDUCATION

Among the various pedagogical theories that emerged in the history of Brazilian education, it is worth mentioning, between the years 1920-1930, the manifesto signed by 26 educators, including Fernando de Azevedo and Anízio Teixeira, a document that became known as the Manifesto of the Pioneers of New Education, in 1932. The manifesto defended compulsory, public, free, lay and quality education as a duty of the State (ARANHA, 2012). It was an attempt to bring to society a curricular proposal that would free students from educational traditionalism. Until then, the student was nothing more than an object of the teacher's action, being the passive depository of the knowledge possessed by the master.

After intense struggles, with advances and setbacks, after the positivist project of the nascent republic, more concerned with higher technical education that would meet military interests, the anarchist proposals, education in Brazil took a turn with the New School movement, which began in the 1920s.

This movement became known as escolanovismo and was born from a movement of European and North American origin, as an attempt to overcome the traditional school, considered excessively rigid, magistrocentric and focused on the memorization of contents.

Socialist and anarchist ideas, in the First Republic, aimed to defend the interests of the workers. The socialists demanded education for all, provided by the State. The anarchists repudiated the State, considering it as another instrument of exploitation of the people in favor of the bourgeoisie, and proposed that the community should assume the task of educating its members. Escolanovismo, headed by thinkers with extensive experience as educators, as well as producers of abundant intellectual work on education, became scientific, with emphasis on Fernando de Azevedo and Anísio Teixeira, among others (ARANHA, 2012);

The scientific character of the so-called escolanovismo was manifested in the knowledge of sociology, psychology, biology and modern pedagogy. The exponents who proposed education reforms in their states of origin were: Lourenço Filho (Ceará – 1923), Anísio Teixeira (Bahia – 1925), Francisco Campos and Mário Casassanta (Minas Gerais – 1927), Fernando de Azevedo (Rio de Janeiro – then Federal District – 1928) and Carneiro Leão (Pernambuco – 1928). Other thinkers of the New School contributed to the attempt to implement a democratic education, extended to all and that, through this new school, would democratize and transform the whole society.

Born in Europe and reflected in the thought of the American educator John Dewey, in Brazil escolanovismo was lost among Catholic conservatives and liberals. For Aranha (2012, p. 303):

> [...] despite the advantages of the new method, escolanovismo was more concerned with the technical aspects, which helped to divert the educational debate from its most important focus, the universalization of popular education.
> In the 1950s, the conception of the pedagogues of the New School suffered other influences and acquired different nuances [...]

It should be noted that among the reasons that led to the loss of focus by the New School movement, the specific moment experienced by the country should be considered. Precisely with the Revolution of 1930, which brought Getúlio Vargas to power, the process of industrialization in Brazil began. For Libâneo (2010, p. 154-155), the Manifesto:

> It was written in response to Vargas' request, at the IV National Conference on Education (1931), for the intellectuals present there to contribute to the elaboration of an educational proposal, which his government did not have.
> [...] The Federal Constitution of 1934 absorbed part of the content of the manifesto, defining the elaboration of the National Education Plan as the main function of the National Education Council. [...] This plan was not implemented due to the 1937 coup, which kept Vargas in power until 1945.

It can be inferred from the above passage that, in addition to the truculence of the Vargas dictatorship, another factor that had weight in the transformations of the period was the fact that industrialization initiated the change in the human geographic profile of the country, with the beginning of the displacement of rural populations to the urban environment. The agrarian productive model begins to be replaced by the industrial one (KOSHIBA; PEREIRA, 1987). At the same time, conceptions about the curriculum, developed by North American thinkers dedicated to education, such as Franklin Bobbitt (1876-1955), John Dewey (1859-1952), William Kilpatrick (1871-1955), among others, influenced Brazilian thinkers in the sense of thinking of education as something aimed at the formation of the integral man and aware of his condition as a citizen.

## THE EMERGENCE OF THE CONCEPT OF CURRICULUM

For some authors, since the sixteenth century, more precisely in 1582, at the University of Leiden, Holland, the term "curriculum" appears in the records of the institution's students. At the University of Glasgow, in 1633, the time appears referring to the entire course offered at the institution, and which should be completed by the student who intended to graduate from it (SCHMIDT, 2003).

There is no way to define a resume in a brief and summarized way. The concept is so comprehensive that one can speak of curriculum as if it were a whole philosophy of the teaching/learning process in all its manifestations. Nor can one disregard the role that education plays as a process of intervention in society.

This aspect was not considered until the end of the nineteenth century, because what was considered was the watertight and independent character of each discipline. In fact, the contents/activities of each discipline were absolutely decisive for the development of certain mental faculties of the student. For Lopes and Macedo:

> Traditional or Jesuit teaching operated with such principles, arguing that certain disciplines facilitated logical reasoning or even expanded memory. It was only at the turn of the 1900s, with the New School movement in Brazil, that the conception that it was necessary to decide what to teach gained strength and, for many authors, curricular studies began (LOPES; MACEDO, 2016, p. 21).

In traditional education we had a one-way street, where the teacher taught and the student learned. The passivity, in the final analysis, was not only the student's, since if he "learned" passively, the teacher, contradictorily, acted actively/passively. By transmitting definitive and absolute knowledge, because he was the holder of it, he did not accept questioning from the student, who lacked this knowledge. In this aspect, despite acting actively, he revealed a passivity in the sense that he "could" not reveal intellectual inferiority in relation to the student.

With the advance of criticism of traditional methods of education, curricula have become richer as a set of knowledge in constant and dynamic transformation and construction. Today, school curricula are not summarized only in a set of subjects that make up a course, semester or school year. The knowledge that is part of a given school and that is, so to speak, its hallmark, is not contained in the formal curriculum of that school. There is a hidden curriculum, much richer and more diversified than what is contained in the formal curriculum. However, the traditional school does not contemplate this reality, neutralizing the positive aspects of the hidden curriculum in the name of imposing obedience to the formal curriculum. For Giroux:

> A substantial body of research suggests that what students learn in school is shaped more by the hidden curriculum, the underlying pattern of social relationships in the classroom and in the school as a whole, than by the formal curriculum. [...] The hidden curriculum often acts in opposition to the stated goals of the Curriculum to Form, and instead of promoting effective learning, it undermines it. In such conditions, subordination, conformity, and discipline replace the development of critical thinking and social relations as characteristics of the school experience (GIROUX, apud PARO, 2014, p. 66).

In the same way, the playful aspect, so important in the socialization of children in mental and physical formation, especially in the elementary school phase, is almost never contemplated in the formal curriculum of most schools. Paro considers that:

> If the democratic practice must involve the school institution as a whole, it is certain that the organization of the school must be in such a way as to favor such democratic practice, enabling the participation of all in decision-making. [...] Its end-activities (the pedagogical process), as we have seen, are organized from the point of view of traditional education, which does not offer a position of subjects to the students; its activities (direction, services, work coordination, etc.), in turn, are also structured and developed in such a way as not to offer decision-making opportunities to the various groups interested or involved in the school's work (PARO, 2014, p. 69).

Also according to Paro's thought, we consider that, for the effective democratization of the school, it is necessary that the objectives pursued contemplate the student, his autonomy as a future citizen who should represent his social weight in the community in which he lives. For this, it is

necessary that the school, instead of training him, frees him from paradigms consolidated by the segregating and excluding education that we have today. It is necessary for a student from any school, whether public or private, to have access to learning at the same level as all students from any other existing educational institution.

The tripod on which education is based must be, in the proposal discussed here, identical in terms of intellectual and structural quality. It is not possible to conceive of a school where the teaching staff does not have the proper intellectual and psychological preparation to deal with the natural diversity that constitutes the student. At the same time, it is unacceptable that an educational institution does not have the physical conditions for students to remain in conditions of human dignity.

Normally, when we come across critical texts on education, we always find excellent analyses about the need for a prepared teaching staff, democracy in teaching methods, valuing the student's person, etc.; However, we rarely find strong critics about the physical aspect of schools. It is common to find teachers committed to carrying out a democratic and citizen education, but the physical aspects of the school are left aside. It is also common to find schools without bathrooms, at least in the correct sense of the term; The ones we find, especially in most state and municipal schools, are precarious urinals and filthy toilets, true dens of unhealthiness, causing a risk to the health of students, teachers and employees.

Classrooms do not offer adequate conditions for the construction of knowledge, since the precariousness of the physical space makes it unpleasant to remain in it. The construction of knowledge, especially when it is intended to rescue citizenship, depends on adequate physical, psychological, economic and social conditions. If the student comes from a needy social background, it does not mean that the school he attends should be of the same level. The school, as an institution, must be situated in a minimum quality standard, which guarantees human dignity. Below this standard it should not exist, with the State being the executor and the supervisor of the offer and guarantee of this standard.

In the same way that the physical space of the school must have a decent quality standard for all its segments, the teaching staff must have access to something of vital importance for this quality to become productive in terms of student training: teacher training.

It is very common for people who do not have the slightest condition to enter a classroom and face a class of students accessing the condition of teacher. It is rare, or perhaps non-existent, for an educational institution to develop teacher training programs. In the public service, the professional who passes a competitive examination, as soon as he joins the institution, is directed to the classroom, without anyone knowing what his performance will be, what his experience with a group

of students will be, what his conducting skills will be. The institutions understand that approval in a didactic performance board is indicative of quality to teach.

On the part of the teacher, an identical problem is faced by him in relation to the fundamental questions in his work: What should I teach? How should I teach? Who am I going to teach?

In this aspect, it is extremely important to know what is the curriculum adopted by the school, which, in reality, is the curriculum determined by the State, through its bodies responsible for official education. Even if this or that educational institution seeks the application of a progressive curriculum, it is impossible to totally escape the political ideology in force in the state in the history that is analyzed.

## INTEGRATED CURRICULUM PROPOSAL

For Lopes and Macedo (2016), the various proposals for curricular integration can be grouped into three modalities, according to the principles that form the basis of integration:

- Integration by the competencies and skills that must be formed in the students;
- Integration of concepts of the disciplines, without disregarding the logic of the disciplinary knowledge of reference;
- Integration through student interests, referenced in social demands and, where appropriate, in broader political issues.

The first topic aims to integrate the school curriculum through a rational proposal, based on goals, objectives and ways of verifying its achievement (LOPES and MACEDO, 2016, p. 123-124).

The third topic refers to the integrative proposal to be applied in the construction of the curriculum, based on Kilpatrick's thought (Apud LOPES and MACEDO, 2016), which aims to develop, mainly, the socialization of students. One of the concerns is the possibility of helping to promote a better quality of life for people. Kilpatrick's project is developed in four stages, namely: definition of the object; definition of the work plan to solve the project; execution of the plan; evaluation of the project carried out. According to Lopes and Macedo:

> These stages are related to the questions that guide the proposition of a project: how does the student learn? How does learning contribute to a better life? What kind of life is best? (LOPES and MACEDO, 2016, p. 125).

In integration based on interdisciplinarity, the search is for articulation between the various disciplines. All the disciplines that make up the school curriculum, in the didactic aspect, have points of contact that allow the establishment of interrelations with each other. Japiassu considers discipline to be synonymous with science. For him, interdisciplinarity is:

> [...] "a set of definitions and rules of demonstration and deduction – an axiomatic one – common to a group of related disciplines, expressing at a hierarchical level immediately superior to these disciplines, guaranteeing their unity." (apud LOPES and MACEDO, 2016, p. 125).

It is clear from this thought that interdisciplinarity can only exist if there is cooperation and coordination between disciplinary fields. When these fields cooperate with each other, instruments, techniques, and concepts can absorb the contributions of the various disciplinary specialties.

Lottermann (2012), on the other hand, contrary to the proposal of training exclusively for the labor market, proposes a curriculum that contemplates all dimensions of knowledge, such as science and culture. Speaking about the integrated curriculum, Lottermann states that:

> By bringing this vision of totality, it opens a space for thought not to be limited to hegemonic values in Brazilian society. On the contrary, the Integrated Curriculum [...] is an instrument capable of helping students and educators to identify the contradictions that exist in the economic and social system. [...] This political dimension is fundamental for education to continue contributing to the construction of alternative projects for society. (LOTTERMANN, 2012, p. 48).

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Although presented under multiple definitions, the curriculum is an aspect of education that deserves to be exhaustively examined when it is intended to offer a truly liberating education aimed at the formation of the integral man. Since the colonial periods, to stay only in Brazilian education, society has been placed on the margins of proposals for broader intellectual formation.

Considering that only the Portuguese elites, installed here to manage the exploitation of the colony, benefited from the basic education offered locally, there has been educational segregation since the origin of the country. Indigenous people, slaves and other inhabitants of Brazil, as long as they were not descendants of the colonizers, did not have access to any form of intellectual learning. The first forms of education for the less favored were aimed at training them to carry out practical activities, where they would be executors of manual activities.

Even without concern for the concept of curriculum, because the concept was unknown, there was a curriculum developed and applied to education in the country, in a dual and differentiated way. Since then, education has continued to tread this binary path: education for the elite destined to rule the masses, and education for those charged with acting as workers, producers of wealth for the well-being of the ruling class. It is important to understand that the rescue of citizenship, as well as the formation of conscious and critical individuals in relation to the contradictions experienced in Brazilian society, will only be possible through an education that provokes the sense of reality as opposed to the common sense installed in the consciousness of society.

But an education that intends to build this type of citizenship, as well as this type of citizens, will necessarily have to be built from the will of society itself, especially having as actors those who

should benefit from it. On the other hand, in order for the excluded part of society, lacking rights, to be able to march towards building an education in favor of itself, it will be necessary that education operators, such as teachers and technicians, as well as students, achieve this understanding and act in the elaboration and application of a curriculum that integrates knowledge with know-how, allied to the understanding of the processes that allow the production and distribution of wealth in today's societies.

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