

FEMINIST EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES IN THE FORMATION OF BRAZILIAN EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Regarding the history of Brazilian education, some gaps are evidenced, among them, the role of women in the construction and deconstruction of the training process, which consequently served as motivation for the writing of this article, taking into account that since the earliest times some stereotypes have fallen on women, thus causing them to be placed on the margins of society in different ways. As a result, this article aims to present discussions about feminist educational practices in the formation of Brazilian education, and for this, it relies on bibliographic research, as it seeks to highlight the presence of two women, the poet and educator Cecília Meireles with her works published in newspapers, magazines and books and the researcher and educator Aparecida Joly Gouveia with her research published in books and notebooks. Thus, we seek to relate to feminist studies and theories in the light of authors such as Angela Davis (1944), Bell Hooks (2017 - 2019), Michelle Perrot (2007), and Margareth Rago (1998), as well as establish this dialogue with other theorists such as Marta Araújo (2001), Bhabha (1998), Lôbo (2010) and Niskier (2003). We hope that this article to reverberate the appearance of these women as contributors in the formation of Brazilian education so that it will open the way for studies that highlight the feminine force as a mechanism of creation and resistance.

Keywords: Feminist Practices. Education. Cecília Meireles. Aparecida Joly Gouveia.

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INTRODUCTION

When we hear or read about the history of Brazilian education, this fact is usually related to the presence of male figures such as Anísio Teixeira (1900 – 1971), and Paulo Freire (1921 – 1997), which consequently caused concerns that motivated the proposal of this research regarding the invisibility and/or erasure of women in the history of the formation of Brazilian education.

Thus, it has become more than necessary to have a historical appearance of the presence of women in education and educational practices in the history of education in Brazil, so this article aims to highlight the presence of women so that they are contextualized in this process of construction of education through the events of society, taking into account the feminist educational practices of two important authors such as Cecília Meireles through their writings as poems and chronicles, as well as the reflections present in Aparecida Joly Gouveia's research on the process of feminization in teaching, the role that was conferred on women and the way this happened in the history of the formation of Brazilian education.

Such a survey will be possible through bibliographic research, because, as Gil (2002) points out, this is developed in material already prepared, consisting mainly of books and scientific articles on gender studies and feminist studies on gender inequality to understand the participation of women, the way they were inserted, sometimes erased, silenced or made invisible in the formation of Brazilian education. Based on contemporary feminist authors, such as Angela Davis (2016), Bellhooks (2019, 2020), Simone de Beauvoir (1960/1980), Margareth Rago (1998), Virginia Woolf (1985), this qualitative research is based on a theoretical study that deepens the knowledge of the reality of Brazilian education relating to contextual, political and social aspects.

In a conception of social approach, this article becomes relevant, as it seeks to present the importance and contextualize the challenges of women in the scenario of education formation in Brazil through gender discussions, in addition, it seeks to highlight the struggle for female emancipation and an emancipatory education through feminist practices. For the academic environment, we hope with this study to contribute to the emergence of other social and educational scenarios that highlight the presence of women, especially that of women educators and researchers, reverberating the power of their writings and their echoes of feminist resistance.



PATRIARCHY AS A PRECEPT OF INVISIBILITY AND ERASURE

From the past to the present day, the civilizational framework linked to patriarchy placed women as the property of their fathers, husbands, brothers or whoever was the head of the family, and when thinking about this scenario about the social space, it is notorious that stereotypes have also fallen on women in other spheres that we seek to delimit, in the educational sphere.

The understanding of the presence of women in the emergence of historicity about the formation of Brazilian education is based on their access to the educational environment, that is, at the beginning of the initial years, which consequently generated a contradiction that caused divergence in the assemblages of what would be the role of women, where they were sometimes incorporated as students and sometimes as teachers. That is, at first being placed with an intellectual capacity inferior to men, but at the same time presenting "instinctive" characteristics to perform the function of mother or caregiver, a discourse loaded with misogyny and total gender prejudice.

About this conflict of contradiction, Antonia Telles (2014, p. 5) points out that at the beginning of Brazilian educational formation, there was a certain distinction about the type of education between boys and girls and that schools were differentiated, thus making their models for "being a man" and "being a woman",³ that is, it determined what both sexes should be and how they should behave in society, which completely influenced their vocational choices when choosing was the privilege of the male gender only or authorized by them.

Among these models, we can imagine a stereotyped education in moral values aimed at the education of women where the only way for her to be included in the social space was through marriage, thus, through it "she takes her name, associates herself with her cult, integrates herself into her class, into her environment; belongs to his family" (BEAUVOIR 1960, p, 169), otherwise, she was discarded, that is, despised and rejected, which caused her invalidation before society. Even though she was accepted and married, Angela Davis in her book *Women, Race and Class* (2016, p. 71) points out that the institution of marriage had several harmful effects on women, for the philosopher "marriage robbed them of their property right, making them economically and morally dependent on their husbands", in addition to starting to live according to their marriage, The woman still depended on her husband in every aspect of her life.

³ Term used by the author as a criticism of the educational model that distinguished boys and girls.



To better contextualize this scenario, we use the concept of "*in-betweens*" coined by Bhabha (1998), which seeks to point out a certain eminent landmark that now separates and limits, but which also allows approximations between time and space, that is, to create approximations between the past context and the current context. The eminent landmark present in this construction begins with the patriarchal civilizing process, being separated and limited by space-time, since such prejudiced perceptions no longer serve as a primordial guide for the retelling of the historicity of women in the formation of Brazilian education, but will still serve as a starting point to present the historical context, which, as Bhabha (1998 p, 23), cross "the fields of identity, subjective or collective, in intercultural relations and processes".

In this exclusionary educational scenario it would be no different, but in an attempt to emerge the new, Fleuri (2003, p. 22) and Apud Bhabha, (1998, p. 19-20) state that these "in-betweens" provide the ground for the elaboration of strategies of subjectivation — singular or collective — that initiate new signs of identity and innovative posts of collaboration and contestation in the act of defining the very idea of society, It is through this provided terrain that several women have created strategies to resist. And speaking of contestation, why not contest the misogynistic way of thinking about women's daily lives, which is often related to the fact that they are seen in an objectified way, made invisible in their intellectualities, and erased in their particularities and multiplicities? Michelle Perrot (2007, p. 17) states that "women are imagined, represented, instead of being described or told". Hence the a need for the appreciation and historical, social, and political survey of women's participation in Brazilian education, triggering their trajectories as a way of bringing their existences, achievements, and struggles to visibility.

At the time of Colonial Brazil, the struggles of these women were concentrated on needs such as the right to have and position themselves in the political sphere so that they would have access to the vote, the right to education, the right to divorce, and free access to the labor market. Margareth Rago (1998, p, 7) in *Feminist Epistemology, Gender, and History*, "exhaustively observed the issue of women's sexual relations and specifically the struggles for the emancipation of this subject previously defined as the weaker sex".

In various social sectors, women suffered from exclusion or invisibility in the face of the centralizing male role. Angela Davis (2016, p. 71) states that "as a consequence of women's condition of inferiority within marriage, they were also subject to inequalities in educational institutions and careers". As if the gender inequality in their marriage were not



enough due to their biological condition as women, they suffered and still suffer to the present day in other atmospheres, given what has been exposed, we observe that since those times there has been a need to question the invisibility and attendance of women in general, but specifically in the formation of education.

FEMINIST PRACTICES IN BRAZIL

In the early 1980s, feminist studies were not considered authentic and, therefore, were not part of a science project, as Rago (1998) shows us:

(...) the "studies of women", the latter should not be thought of as a predetermined biological essence, before History, but as an identity socially and culturally constructed in the game of social and sexual relations, by disciplinary practices and by instituting discourses/knowledge. (RAGO, 1998, p. 6).

The entry of feminist studies caused destabilization and ruptures added to patriarchal values as a normative discourse, and it was also strange that a woman even considered the possibility of being independent, always in the condition of submissive and subordinate she was considered incapable of thinking or writing satisfactorily about a man.

These feminist studies together with the feminist movement were primordial for the emergence of the fields of studies that evidence the emergence of the presence of women in the history of the formation of education, these movements led women to promote debates, lectures, and discussions in the academic environment, magazines, etc., making more women have access to information so that they could free themselves from this role of oppressed and become storytellers and protagonists of their own Stories.

Since education aimed at the female gender in a historical context watered by moralities linked to structural machismo was related to the functions of the home, Marta Araújo (2001) argues that it was after the independence of Brazil, with the arrival of the national project of forming the new citizen, that education became fundamental for the argument of the educational knowledge of the Brazilian citizen. Consequently, as a result of this project, the figure of women has been occupying other spaces and their presence in the process of insertion, and their emancipation in school is unified with individual and collective desires in the struggle for gender equality not only in academic spaces but also in the professional and personal spheres, as Bell Hooks points out:



In all spheres of literary writing and scholarly bibliography, works produced by women had received little, if any, attention, as a consequence of gender discrimination. Notably, when a feminist movement exposed biases in the composition of resumes, many of these works that had been forgotten and ignored were rediscovered (hooks, 2020, p. 42).

The issues related to education and the inherent achievements of women become notorious with each passing day because denunciations of the different forms of gender prejudice have become increasingly evident, where patriarchal conventions are left aside so that gender equality becomes the mediating bridge in social and educational issues.

Currently, studies that seek to problematize sexism have been receiving more popularity due to the intensification of the feminist movement. It should be noted that in the absence of knowledge about feminist thoughts and theories, feminism is reduced to a group of women who gratuitously preach hatred of men, expressing a desire to become equal to them and end up distancing themselves from the main problem. Given this distancing, what occurs is the postulation of sexism that is divided into two ambivalent subcomponents: hostile sexism and benevolent sexism, as Formigosa points out:

Ambivalent sexism is understood as a set of stereotypes about the cognitive, affective, and attitudinal evaluation of the appropriate role in society directed to individuals according to sex. The forms of sexism are ambivalent, not only because they are indirect, but also because they entail negative and positive emotions, which have double affective valence, especially when considering their traditional discriminatory practice and expression, which are presented as hostile sexism and benevolent sexism (FORMIGA, 2011, p. 193).

These two sets of "benevolent" sexism, which are associated with the positioning of men as defenders who treat women as defenseless, and "hostile", making explicit prejudice against women, both need to be fought.

To challenge and change them, two strands were observed in the process of feminist evolution: the first would be to understand how this sexist idea shaped women and structured patriarchy in such a way that it would privilege only men; and the second, it starts from the need to recognize the gender problem.

In this process of production and writing, sexism sought to privilege only the production of male authorship. Bell Hooks (2020, p. 43) criticizes and states that "the feminist movement created a revolution when it demanded respect for the academic work of women, recognition of this past and present work, and the end of gender prejudices in curricula and pedagogy". In other words, women's demands through the feminist movement



demanded that in addition to being recognized for their productions, they also be considered with the intellectual capacity to produce, educate, and research as much as men.

The feminist movement and the studies that permeate gender discussions serve as a basis for denouncing prejudice and giving visibility to writing and production by women. Feminist criticism emerged in the United States and Europe around 1970 and elevated the process of deconstruction of literary standards. Zolin shows us that:

(...) In the context of feminism, it gave rise to a feminine literary tradition hitherto ignored by the history of literature. Taking as a guiding element the banner of feminism and, therefore, the perspective of alterity and difference, many literary historians began to rescue and reinterpret the literary production of female authorship, in an attitude of historicization that constituted itself as resistance to the ideology that had historically been regulating knowledge about literature (ZOLIN, 2009, p. 327).

It is in this scenario that it becomes important to highlight the feminist educational practices that go beyond the classroom, and that are also found in various spaces, with the social being one of the means of perpetuating education, since this as a whole can also be a stage for educational practices in general, and more specifically on feminist educational practices, as Telles states:

The struggle for the writing of women's history does not simply correspond to requiring women to play a role in history but to demonstrate the renewal of historiography that is capable of presenting the subjects of history, regardless of gender, class, or race. Presenting them in the way they relate to the process and historical facts of humanity (TELLES, 2014, p. 4).

What is sought here, then, is not to reproduce studies and debates about what has already been put forward regarding the silencing, erasure, or oblivion of women, but rather to highlight the presence of women in the construction and history of the formation of Brazilian education, namely Cecília Meireles and Aparecida Joly Gouveia.

CECÍLIA MEIRELES: A WOMAN'S NAME IN THE FORMATION OF BRAZILIAN EDUCATION

Everything, in short, is always a matter of education (MEIRELES, 2001, p. 29-31).

Cecília Meireles was born in the city of Rio de Janeiro, on November 7, 1901, known as an illustrious poet in the history of Brazilian literature, which few know, according to Yolanda Lobo (2010. p, 12) although the author is known for the production of various



literary genres such as poetry, prose, short stories and chronicles, her life as an educator is little known.

Learning is always acquiring strength for other victories, in the endless succession of life. Adults often advise children of the advantage of learning, an advantage which they know so little of, and which they would hardly be able to advise themselves. It may be that one day they will change a lot, and give themselves advice. From then on, the world will begin to get better (MEIRELES, 2001, p. 64).

The consent of the poet and educator was not empty and temporary, as a chronicler she showed affection for teaching, as well as addressing issues related to politics and religion, which even in the periods from 1941 to 1943 suffered censorship so that nothing related to politics was published in her column because the one she criticized was the President of the time Getúlio Vargas, which she harshly calls "The Dictator", precisely because it is an extremely authoritarian government. In addition, he also dedicated himself to delicate issues in his profession such as the "reforms of teaching and spelling", Lobo (1966) argues that his vocation for teaching may have been inherited from his mother who was also a teacher.

Cecília Meireles was a journalist, essayist, translator, folklorist, painter, and teacher, in fact, she also raised the flag in defense of education, she longed for a Freirean pedagogy, that is, with ideals based on an autonomous pedagogy that took into account the right to access education through gender equality in a broad way. Her ways of (re)existing, whether through art, politics, or education, made her somehow able to enter different spaces and deal with social differences, as Araújo (2001) points out about the importance of Cecilia in the formation of Brazilian education, as she sought to debate the human and political meaning of the act of educating through socio-educational thoughts, always aiming at a renewed education as an instrument for correcting Brazilian social inequality.

Always concerned with the future of education in Brazil, Araújo (2001 p, 13) says that the articulation of her educational and research culture together with the practice of being a journalist at the *Diário de Notícias* in Rio de Janeiro, led her to create the Education Page where she wrote:

Everything related to education and teaching – from primary school to university – will be the object of constant concern in these columns. Commenting impartially on the acts of the authorities, discussing new ideas, or judging the results of intense experimentation that is being carried out in many schools in this capital and some states, trying to provide the teachers with arguments to closely follow the pedagogical renewal of the moment, and to those who are experts in the subject the



opportunity for a safe judgment about all the new initiatives (MEIRELES, Cecilia. Education Page. Diário de Notícias. Rio de Janeiro - June 12, 1930, p. 5).

Given this, Cecília used the page to take charge of the mission of training people with a critical sense who would converge with the ideals of teachers and other responsible persons who agreed with the implementation of the new educational methods.

The work of the educator-journalist, in these first months of existence of the Education Page, aimed to propagate the guiding principles of a new conception of education. To do this, he organized the Page's articles into two complementary blocks. In his column Commentary, he translated, through a colloquial, clear, unpresumed language – "a conversation" to make "the shadow be born" – fundamental concepts of theories of education. The center column – "A page of ..." – presented characters who materialized these concepts in the work of education in Brazil and the world (LOBO, 2010. p, 32).

His relationship with education arose when he became a chronicler shortly after he graduated from the Institute of Education of Rio de Janeiro where he taught, which later contributed to his involvement in the New Education Movement that was being established in Brazil. On this, the educator/poet was a signatory of the Manifesto of the Pioneers of New Education according to a historical document from 1932, produced by Fernando de Azevedo and signed by twenty-six other intellectuals, of whom we evidence, mostly men, white and heterosexual.

The Manifesto of the pioneers proposed to aim at adequate education, that is, a secular, quality, and accessible education for people affected by socioeconomic problems. Marked by a period of reorganization where the new society that was being established fled from the agrarian society and became an industrial urban society. Among many achievements, Arnaldo Niskier (2003. p, 122) states that in 1934 Cecilia together with her husband founded the "Children's Culture Center", where the first specialized children's library in Brazil operated, located in the city of Rio de Janeiro, in the Moorish pavilion, which at the time had Anísio Teixeira as director of the Department of Education of the Federal District.

Regarding concerns about education, Cecília elaborated her questions by making surgical criticisms of specialists and politicians who stayed in theory and disregarded practice, for her education could not be criticized by "connoisseurs and specialists" in general, since it would have to take into account issues related to philosophical aspects in a way that met the professional perspectives of each one. In other words, she questioned



whether after completing the course the teachers were aware and prepared for the situations that awaited them, she also stressed the importance of making the school become a stage of seduction in the sense of transforming the school's physical space, not focusing only on the pedagogical relationship.

Araújo (2001, p.) says that "Cecília Meireles was an educator in the broad sense of the term", and in the face of so much data about the personal and professional life of the Poet Educator, it is possible to witness various ways of resisting and positioning oneself in the face of educational issues. Always critical, militant, and in favor of an education far from the conception of banking education, what she wanted was an education based on Freirean perspectives, based on liberating ideals, as Araújo (2001, p. 16) puts it, Cecília "deeply believed that only through renewed education could integral transformations be produced... in this restlessness of his, he made this education a poetics, a passion, a daily battle".

As a promoter of social changes made possible by education, she used her writing as an art of positioning herself in a transformative way about the social environment, which we can relate to feminist educational practices, in which there was a need to modify the scenario in which she was inserted.

APARECIDA JOLY: CLOSING A STORY AND OPENING PASSAGES FOR OTHER WOMEN

Following the idea of bringing to the fore women in the field of the formation of Brazilian education, here I present Aparecida Joly Gouveia. Born on July 15, 1919, daughter of Leopoldina Joly Gouveia and Luiz Furtado Gouveia, from a humble family, without many financial conditions, living in a small town called Itatiba, 100 kilometers from São Paulo, Joly was an important name in terms of classical thinkers in this process of construction and deconstruction of education.

The Researcher-Educator produced several researches, and from these studies and investigations, the history of education took new directions and directions. The objective of this topic is to present the paths that Aparecida Joly faced in her academic productions, where her main motivation, but not the only one, was to research feminization in teaching.

The way Aparecida Joly presents the situation of educational research in Brazil is divided into three periods: the first corresponds to the elaboration of INEP, where the studies revolve around teaching processes and learning assessment instruments taking into account behavioral analysis. The second period followed the creation of the "Brazilian



Center and Regional Centers for Educational Research" (CBPE/CRPE), which aimed at education as social mobility and exemplified issues of race. The third, on the other hand, was related to the records of the resources and financing that Brazilian education received.

Her educational practice was built during the journey and crossing of her research process that sought to describe her methods, but beyond that, she took a cautious look at the processes of teacher training in teaching.

That said, Renata Scherer (2018 p. 318) says that Gouveia "focused on the occupational choice of women, pointing to an understanding of teaching linked to traditional attitudes and values, showing the importance of traditionalism for the vocational choice of teaching", which allows us to have a margin, that is, paths, to advance discussions on the "feminization of Brazilian teaching".

Still in this process of elaborating an education focused on a new society that emerged in the urban environment, another fact that did not go unnoticed was his involvement in the production of the book "Teachers of Tomorrow" which emerged through the construction of a democratic society, as Gouveia (1965) puts it: "our intellectuality was especially involved in political disputes about the construction of a democratic society, with the help of a quality public school".

A sociologist knowledgeable about the country's educational problems, she focused her research on the possibilities of highlighting the concerns in force in such a scenario and drawing up plans that would solve the adversities and conflicts present in that society about the educational space, thus relating the problems of education in Brazil with the problems of society.

Among the problems present in that society, the author exposes the self-rate of illiteracy in Brazil, which was the subject of her article "Thousands of Normalists, Millions of Illiterates" published in 1961, where the researcher fostered discussions and demonstrated concerns regarding the training of teachers in basic education and the democratization of schooling for all.

Another important production presents specific discussions about teacher training, this study is present in her book published in 1940 "Teachers of Tomorrow: A Study of Occupational Choice", which argues and investigates the vocational resolutions of women taking into account a country that faced a slight change in society that leveraged industrialization, and how these changes come to concern the feminization of teaching and the different ways in which women have been inserting themselves in this new society,



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which ends up opening up possibilities for this category. Because she had an interdisciplinary ability, she sought to relate the field of sociology with philosophy and psychology to explain how these currents influenced and contributed to her research object, as well as always seeking to place the issue of women before society.

Within her research object, Aparecida Joly presented the history of Brazilian researchers and sought to highlight the experience of these women, and how their trajectory served as motivation to reach this position, consequently, discussions around gender studies emerged, especially about the process of feminization of teaching presented by Scherer that expose two classifications:

A first classification would correspond to conflictive processes in which compulsory schooling and the professionalization of the task of educating together with the formation of a male teaching staff preceded the process of feminization. And a second classification whose process occurred without conflicts when compulsory schooling and the professionalization of the educational task happened in parallel (SCHERER, 2018, p. 322-323).

Although rapidly and broadly, the feminization of teaching remained contained under the domination of male public authorities, which erroneously ended up controlling and not measuring the consequences of the decisions made regarding education. This meant that through his research methods, Joly raised criticisms of the current educational system and the society that was still based on traditionalism, which consequently influenced the maintenance of patriarchy.

Given all that has been exposed so far, some reflections were made by the author regarding the feminization of teaching: Why did women choose to be teachers? Would teaching be an escape valve for the emancipation of women?

In response to these questions, Gouveia (1965) states that, in the process of change in an industrial society, women from the upper social class saw teaching as an opportunity to gain more autonomy in the face of the male centralizing role. For women of low social class, teaching ended up becoming an opportunity to support their family environment.

Scherer (2018, p. 324) cites Jane Soares Almeida (1998; 2006) who says that "for the researcher, the opportunity to leave the limits of the domestic sphere for a social sphere may have been a determining factor for many women's choice to teach". Aparecida Joly makes me question how many other educators have not been silenced by the history of Brazilian education. The researcher was very concerned with fostering these reflections so that society would think about the role that was conferred on women and the way this happened



during the process of feminization of teaching.

Scherer goes on to say "In Brazil, teaching at first became an activity allowed for women and, later, an activity indicated for them". The words "permitted" and "indication" only highlight the idea of submissive women who adopted teaching because someone allowed it or someone indicated it. In the hope of renewing Brazilian education in a broad, fair, and egalitarian way and the transformation of society, we perceive Joly's struggle as a researcher who, through her methods, became a feminist practitioner educationally, even if it was not in an assumed and open way, but who here, we consider as a staunch militant of the cause.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The article sought to present in a general way how the remnants of patriarchal society influence the invisibility of women from the formation of education to the present day. Given these perceptions presented, we sought to list the feminist educational practices in the formation of Brazilian education through the life and work of the Poet-Educator Cecília Meireles who, through her works and productions, sought to position herself in an assertive and militant way, always in favor of a broad education that was different from an excluding and unequal education, and the Researcher-Educator Aparecida Joly Gouveia, who made use of her research in a way that would quantify the problems of a society with a high illiteracy rate and, above all, problematize the entry of women into teaching. Given this, both with their ways of (r)existing leads us to affirm that not only the writing of these two women but also their struggles become timeless, as it touches on serious issues that are present to the present day, both in education and in society.

The retelling of the historicity of these women in the formation of Brazilian education served not only to highlight their presence but also to present discussions that enhance feminist educational practices through the advancement in the production of new knowledge that enabled and will enable the modification of this exclusionary and patriarchal educational scenario, which even today needs breaks that are complex and conflicting but that signal great importance for the renewal and transformation of education because the presence of women is indispensable for the collectivization of social, racial, gender and political struggles, as well as a claim in educational spaces so that they stop occupying the place of "objects" of study and that through the empowerment of their struggles and their educational practices, they are the producers of science, of art and its history.



In addition, we hope that this writing will cross not only space but also time, as well as the feminist educational practices of these authors so that it will always problematize the erasures, silencing, and forms of gender prejudice through all people placed as inferior or placed on the margins of society. It is for the creation of other scenarios and other possibilities that this article arises.



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